**What is the Mental Capacity Act?**

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<td>A law designed to protect adults who are unable to make decisions for themselves.</td>
<td>It helps individuals to plan for the future if at a later date they become unable to make their own decisions.</td>
<td>It offers protection to care workers and others who either have to make decisions on behalf of people who lack mental capacity or have to provide care that is restrictive.</td>
<td>The act enables people to make advance decisions about whether they would like future medical treatment if they later lack capacity to consent. Some treatments are excluded.</td>
<td>The act provides a framework that encapsulates previous good practice.</td>
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**There are five important principles everyone must follow when using the act:**

1. **Start off by thinking that the individual can make their own decision.**
2. **Give all practicable support to enable the person to make their own decision.**
3. **Never say someone can’t make a decision just because someone else thinks it’s wrong or bad.**
4. **When an individual can’t make their own decision someone has to make it in the best way for them.**
5. **When someone makes a decision for an individual they must consider whether there is a less restrictive option, i.e. one that does not limit their rights or freedom more than necessary.**