

Aging & Disability Resources Options Counseling Program Overview

What is options counseling?

Options counseling is talking with a trained professional in the field of aging and disability who helps you create a plan for meeting your basic needs, including your care. Options counselors explain the different things to consider as you age and then support you in making a plan and decision about what you want to do. Options counselors sometimes provide advocacy to make sure that the voice of the older adult or adult with a disability is heard and respected. The goal of options counseling is for you to feel supported through the process of

making decisions. Options counselors will provide education, referrals and advocacy to access the resources you need to maintain your dignity and independence.



**How do I know
if my loved ones
or I need options
counseling?**

Some common reasons why people seek options counseling include:

- I (or someone I love) is getting older and I want to know what is available in terms of financial assistance and care.
- Someone I love and care for has a disability and I need to know what my options are in terms of financial assistance and care should something happen to me.
- I (or someone I love) is getting older and I want to have a plan for how to make sure I'm cared for as needs for care increase or if there is an emergency.

- I want to make sure that my friends and family are all on the same page about how I want to be cared for as I age — I would like support in sharing my wishes.
- I would like to learn what is out there to support me and how to get those resources so that I can age the way I want to.

If you or your loved one are over 60 years old or over 18 and have a disability, and you answer “yes” to any of these questions, you might benefit from options counseling.

What to expect from options counseling 



What to expect from options counseling

The options counselor will meet with you—or with you and your family, if you desire—and ask a lot of questions about what you think you need and want as you get older. This is called a “needs assessment.” They will ask questions like:

- How are you doing right now?
- What would you like to change?
- What have you seen work in the past for other people?
- What do you think would work for you?

Then the options counselor will help you create an action plan of the steps needed to meet your goals and support you in making these choices. They will give you information about services available in your community and ways to talk with others about your plans, and provide advocacy for many of their referrals.

Once the situation is stabilized, the options counselor will close the file but you can always call DRCOG if you have questions in the future.

