

SHOULD I STEP IN?

A quick reflection guide before providing more help

1

Is anyone unsafe?

Look for immediate risk to the individual or anyone nearby.

YES Step in and provide support

NO Continue to the next question

2

Is this a manageable mistake or challenge?

Consider whether the person could work through the situation without serious harm and learn from the experience.

3

Have they had enough time to think?

Remain quiet and observe. Avoid repeating the direction before the person has time to process and respond.

4

Can I wait and remain available?

Stay close enough to support without taking over. Watch for an attempt, decision, or request for help.

5

What is the smallest support I can provide?

Begin with the least support needed. Increase help only when the person needs it.

Natural cue

Gesture

Open question

Direct prompt

Model

More help

Support can mean staying close while creating enough space for someone to try.





How to Use This Visual

Use the Should I Step In? visual when an individual pauses, makes a mistake, becomes unsure, or completes a task differently than expected.

Start with the first question:

1. Is Anyone Unsafe?

If the situation presents an immediate risk, step in and provide the support needed to protect the individual and anyone nearby.

If everyone is safe, continue through the remaining questions.

2. Is This a Manageable Mistake or Challenge?

Consider whether the individual can work through the situation without serious harm. A manageable mistake may provide an opportunity to practice problem-solving, flexibility, and recovery.

3. Have They Had Enough Time to Think?

Pause before repeating the direction or adding another prompt.

Remain quiet and observe. The individual may need time to understand what happened, consider their choices, begin the next step, or ask for help.

4. Can I Wait and Remain Available?

Stay close enough to provide support without immediately taking over. Watch for an attempt, decision, or request for help.

5. What Is the Smallest Support I Can Provide?

Begin with the least amount of support needed:

Natural cue

Gesture

Open-ended question

Direct verbal prompt

Model

Additional assistance

Increase support only when the individual needs it.

After the Moment

Notice what the individual completed independently, which support helped, and where additional practice may be useful.

The goal is to protect safety while creating enough time and space for the individual to think, try, problem-solve, and grow.

