

## What is Options Counseling?

Community Options Counseling is a coaching process that supports informed decision-making regarding long-term services and supports. It is a core function of **empowerline**, the Atlanta region's Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), and offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to helping individuals understand what service options are available to them. This process helps people make informed, long-term care decisions that support their needs, preferences, and values while improving their quality of life.

The process consists of a certified Options Counselor engaging with an individual, caregiver, or family to identify current needs; provide an overview and thorough description of available services or choices; and assist in developing a written plan that identifies what steps need to be taken to meet goals. This is a short-term process that includes a final follow-up to clarify any areas of confusion, determine if additional assistance is needed, if any barriers to meeting goals exist, and if goals have been met.

Anyone calling **empowerline** is eligible for Community Options Counseling. Some situations that may warrant a referral to Options Counseling include:

- Person has received a lot of information about long-term services and supports and needs guidance in understanding the options and weighing the pros and cons.
- Person is considering institutional placement but hasn't considered community-based options.
- Person is trying to plan for future needs and is not sure where to start.

## MDSQ (Minimum Data Set Section Q) Options Counseling

MDSQ Options Counseling is a decision support model that assists nursing home residents and their caregivers as they consider long-term support options in the community. Nursing home residents may receive a face-to-face visit to provide information on community resources and to assist with referrals to support programs as requested. The counseling process considers each resident's unique needs and wishes and ensures person-centered care.

Options Counseling is appropriate for any nursing home resident (long-term or short-term) who has expressed a desire to return to the community and needs additional resources or counseling to make that desire a reality. Options Counseling does not indicate a commitment to leave the facility, but is a chance to explore options and connect with resources.

Referrals to MDSQ Options Counseling can be made in various ways including:

- Speak with your nursing home social worker and inform them that you would like an opportunity to learn more about options in the community.
- During the quarterly MDSQ assessment answer "yes" when asked, "Do you want to talk to someone about the possibility of returning to the community?"
- Contact **empowerline**, the Atlanta region's Aging & Disability Resource Connection, directly at (404) 463-3333 and request to speak with an Options Counselor.

Both Community and MDSQ Options Counseling are decision support processes to help people navigate long-term care needs in the community. MDSQ Options Counseling works with people who are currently in a nursing home and would like to know more about what resources are available to help them move back into the community.

To find out more about both Community and MDSQ Options Counseling, call **empowerline** at (404) 463-3333 or visit [www.empowerline.org](http://www.empowerline.org).