



Bringing autism resources together

Supported Decision Making

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or those that have difficulty communicating, may need help in making decisions in their lives. This resource provides information on Supported Decision Making, and how it can be used to help people make decisions.

What is Supported Decision Making?

Supported Decision Making (SDM) is an option for people who need help with decisions. It's an effort to provide every person the right to choose, no matter their challenges. This includes basic decisions, such as where to live, what to do, and whether to date. It also may include more complex decisions like marriage, health, and finances. SDM recognizes the natural support system of people in their lives.

What is the Difference Between Supported Decision Making and Guardianship?

Guardianship gives others the power to make decisions for the person. SDM allows the person to be a part of the decision making process. It recognizes the individual and their right to choose. This can help the person feel more independent and empowered. It may also provide more safety from abuse of by involving a number of people in the decision making process rather than just one.

Is Supported Decision Making Always Appropriate?

SDM is usually an informal process and plan rather than a legal document or process. Some professionals like doctors and lawyers have concerns about whether this way of making choices works with more complex decisions. Because of this, sometimes formal written agreements are used which provide detailed information about who is assisting with the types of decisions, and outlines the topics included in making the choice.

To Learn More About Supported Decision Making:

- ADACAS: Advocacy site for SDM providing information and support targeting the individual requiring support <https://support-my-decision.org.au/>
- ACLU Supported Decision-Making resource library: Variety of informational sources regarding SDM, examples of SDM agreements, court cases endorsing SDM <https://www.aclu.org/other/supported-decision-making-resource-library>
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network: Site run for and by people with autism, with large number of resources, including SDM <https://autisticadvocacy.org>
- National Center for State Courts: Provides free online training course regarding how to support the individual in making decisions <https://eji.courtllms.org>
- National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making: Information on SDM, transitions to adulthood, Webinars, & examples of SDM agreements SupportedDecisionMaking.org
- Pennsylvania Disability Rights: Number of self-advocacy guide <https://www.disabilityrightspa.org/resources>
- Supported Decision Making New York: Information regarding decision making, and examples of SDM agreements <https://sdmny.org/resource-library>



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