

SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING

A TOOLKIT



CAUTION

The tools in this guide are not intended to help you “fix” people, as they are not broken. Instead, use these tools to help people “build” capacity to make their own decisions.

A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING

1. People have the right to make decisions about things that affect them.
2. Capacity to make decisions must be assumed.
3. Every effort should be made to support people to make decisions.
4. Capacity is decision-specific.
5. People have the right to learn from experience.
6. People have the right to change their minds.
7. People have the right to make decisions that others might not agree with.

LAYING A STRONG FOUNDATION



The tools in this section will help you learn more about Supported Decision-Making, and about the limitations of guardianship and common misconceptions we might have about it.



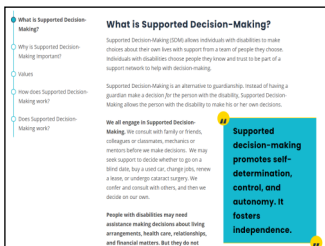
[Guardianship in Ohio](#)

This offers a comprehensive overview of guardianship and alternatives in Ohio in a question and answer format. The information is written for families who have a child with a developmental disability but may be relevant for others who need to navigate the often confusing and intimidating world of probate court and guardianship.



[Guardianship Myths](#)

There are many myths about guardianship that people with IDD and their families should understand. This quick guide addresses 5 of them. [Also available in Spanish.](#)



[What is Supported Decision-Making?](#)

This brief guide answers questions like:

- What is Supported Decision-Making?
- Why is Supported Decision-Making Important?
- How Does Supported Decision-Making Work?
- Does Supported Decision-Making Work?



[Getting Started with Supported Decision-Making \(SDM\)](#)


This guide breaks SDM down into easy-to-understand steps and addresses topics like:

- Understanding SDM
- Identifying Supporters
- Talking to Your Supporters
- Drafting an Agreement
- Educating Third Parties

CAPACITY TO MAKE DECISIONS



The tools in this section will help you explore, assess, and support a person's capacity to make decisions.



Needing help to understand options and weigh benefits and risks does *not* disqualify a person from making their own decisions.

CHARTING the LifeCourse

Tool for Exploring Decision Making Supports

This tool was designed to assist individuals and supporters with exploring decision-making support needs for each life domain.

Name of individual: _____
 Relationship to individual (circle one): Self Family Friend Guardian Other: _____
 How long have you known the individual? _____

For each question below, mark the level of support you need when making and communicating decisions and choices in the Charting the LifeCourse life domains.

1 I can decide with no extra support 2 I need support with my decision 3 I need someone to decide for me

DAILY LIFE & EMPLOYMENT

Can I decide if/when I want to work?			
Can I find for and find a job (read with, with, and personal contacts)?			
Do I know what my day will look like?			
Can I decide if I want to learn something new and how to begin?			
Can I manage my decisions about money (open bank account, make bill payments)?			
Can I make everyday purchases (food, personal items, recreation)?			
Can I give my bill on time (rent, cell, electric, internet)?			
Can I have a budget to know how much money I have to spend?			
Am I able to manage the eligibility benefits I receive?			
Can I make sure to show up on time or using (for themselves)?			

HEALTHY LIVING

Charting the LifeCourse Tool for Exploring Decision-Making Supports

This tool was designed to assist individuals and supporters with exploring decision-making support needs for each life domain. For each question, mark the level of support needed when making and communicating decisions and choices.

Brainstorming Guide

How Are We Already Using Supported Decision-Making?

Supported Decision-Making can sound like a new, foreign idea. But most families, people with disabilities, and advocates are already using supported decision-making, even if they don't call it that. In fact, most people without disabilities are also already using supported decision-making!

Supported decision-making means helping a person understand, make, and communicate her own decisions. This will look different for everyone.

This tool can help people brainstorm ways that they are already using supported decision-making, and think about new ways supported decision-making could help the person with a disability learn to make her own safe, informed choices.

How to use this tool:

- Go through each area of the individual's life. Brainstorm whether you work together to make choices in this area. You might not yet be using supported decision-making in all of these facts. If you think of supports you could start using, write these down too.
- If you are considering conservatorship, supported decision-making can sometimes be formalized into arrangements that prevent the need for conservatorship. For example, the person with a disability could sign a form to let you access her medical records so you can make health decisions together.

Brainstorming Guide

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Decision making profile

How I like to get information?	How to present choices to me?	Ways you can help me understand?	When is the best time for me to make decisions?	When is a bad time for me to make a decision?

Decision-Making Profile

This tool creates a clear picture about how a person makes a decision by breaking the decision making process into 5 sections:

- How I like to get information
- How to present choices to me
- Ways you can help me understand
- When is the best time for me to make decisions?
- When is a bad time for me to make decisions?



Adult Advocacy Centers' Informed Consent Guide

This comprehensive guide for advocates, providers, and medical professionals who serve people with disabilities provides information about informed consent. It includes background, definitions, useful information, alternative supports, and examples of informed consent.



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE



To make this work, we have to take the tools off the shelf and practice using them. The tools in this section will help you practice and get good at supporting people to make their own decisions.



SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING AGREEMENT

About this document:

- By using this form, I am asking for help to make my own decision(s), and giving away my right to make decisions for myself. I am the **Decision-Maker**.
- The people who will help me are called my **Supporters**. They are not allowed to make decisions for me.
- I am using this form to identify my Supporters and how I want them to help me.
- I can change this agreement anytime. I might want to add, replace, or remove Supporters or change the way they help me. When I want to make changes to this agreement, I can cross out words and write my initials next to the changes, or I can sign and attach another piece of paper that has the changes on it to this agreement.

[Supported Decision-Making Agreement](#)

This form can be used to document a person's chosen supporters, what decisions supporters will help with, and what that help will look like. (Click "Go to link" at the bottom of the page to download the form.)

Making My Own Healthcare Decisions A Letter for My Doctors

Today's Date: _____

Dear doctors and other healthcare providers:

This letter explains how to help me make my own decisions about my health.

It also explains who I want to help me when I'm making decisions. Those people are called my Supporters.

[Making My Own Healthcare Decisions: A Letter for My Doctors](#)

The goal of this letter is to help more people with disabilities make their own decisions about their health. The letter can:

- Explain how you make decisions to your doctors.
- Explain how you act when you are upset, worried, or confused.
- Explain what the doctor can do if you are upset, worried, or confused.
- Tell the doctor when you want help making decisions and when you don't.
- Explain that you want someone else to make decisions for you only if you can't make the decision by yourself, with help.

Brainstorming Guide:

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Power of Attorney

- [Common Questions About Living Wills and Healthcare POAs](#)
- [Law Facts: Living Wills and Healthcare POAs](#)
- [Healthcare POA Form](#)
- [State of Ohio Advance Directives: Healthcare POA and Living Will Declaration](#)
- [Financial POA: Understanding the Basics](#)
- [Financial POA Form](#)

CHOSEN REPRESENTATIVE FOR DD SERVICES AND PROGRAMS (Ohio Revised Code Section 5126.043B)

Name (Print or Type Person Receiving Services/Program)

Part I CHOSEN REPRESENTATIVE

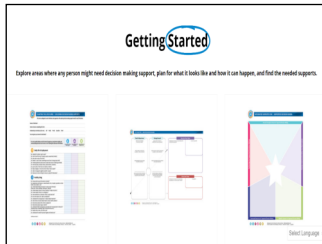
I choose this person, _____ (Print or Type Name and Address) to act as my representative in connection with services I receive or programs I participate in that are provided for or funded pursuant to Chapters 5123 or 5126 of the Ohio Revised Code.

This person may, entirely in my place, make any request or give any notice, give or seek information, receive information, and receive any notice and make decisions about these services or programs. I authorize the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, the _____ County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and my providers to release information about the services I am receiving or the programs I am participating in, or the services or programs I might be eligible for, to this person.

[Chosen Representative](#)

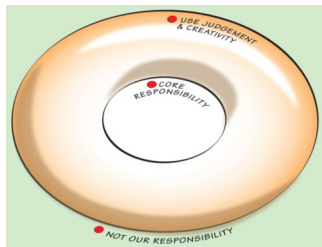
A person receiving services in the developmental disabilities system can now authorize an adult to make decisions for him or her about developmental disabilities programs and services if he or she does not have a guardian and is not comfortable making those decisions him or herself. DODD has developed a [form](#) for such authorizations.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE



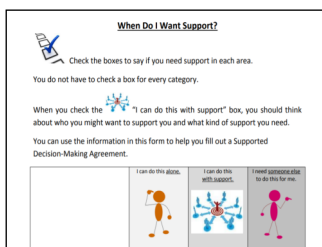
[Charting the LifeCourse Library: Supported Decision-Making](#)

These materials are designed to help a person, family, or a professional explore areas where any person might need decision making support, plan for what it looks like and how it can happen, and seek out the needed supports. Includes familiar LifeCourse tools designed specifically for Supported Decision-Making, as well as a Supported Decision-Making Portfolio, and sample Supported Decision-Making Agreement Forms.



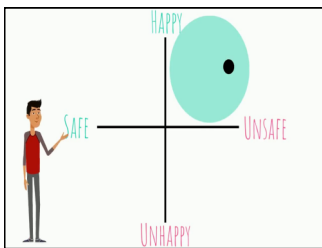
[Donut Sort](#)

Use this tool to help people understand what is and isn't their responsibility when it comes to decision-making. This can also be useful when using Supported Decision-Making alongside guardianship. It can help people understand where they have decision-making authority and where they don't, and ways they can work together to make decisions.



[When Do I Want Support?](#)

A checkbox guide which helps people identify situations and areas of life where they want support. This information can then be used to help the fill out a Supported Decision-Making Agreement.



[Happy/Safe Grid](#)

Use this tool to help people and teams identify choices that take into account both happiness and safety.

You can also watch a video about the Happy/Safe Grid [here](#).



[Future Decisions: Why Should I Plan for Decision-Making in the Future?](#)

This easy-to-read guide helps explain how decision-making and planning for the future go hand-in-hand. It includes definitions and things to think about as people either learn to make decisions or as their ability to make decisions decreases.