

Supported Decision-Making & Other Less-Restrictive Options



CHOOSING TRUSTED OTHERS

Supported Decision-Making happens when people choose trusted others (family, friends, professionals, experts, etc.) to help them understand information so they can make their own decisions.

MAKING DECISIONS

Unlike other approaches that use a "substitute decision-maker", like guardianship, with Supported Decision-Making the person asking for help to make decisions retains the authority to make the final decision. Their supporters do *not* make the decision for them.

SUPPORTERS

The person's chosen supporters can help by role-playing, making pros vs cons lists, researching information, explaining information in a way that is easy to understand, or in any other way that is helpful to the person. Supporters can also help the person communicate their decision to others.

SDM AGREEMENT FORMS

Sometimes the person might choose to formalize these relationships by creating a *Supported Decision-Making Agreement*. In it, they would list their supporters, what kind of decisions they want them to help with, and what they want that help to look like.

BETTER LIFE OUTCOMES

We know from studies that people with more self-determination - more control over their lives and their decisions - have better life outcomes. They are also better able to recognize and resist things like abuse and exploitation.

DIGNITY OF RISK

Being able to make mistakes and learn from them is an important part of life and decision-making. We sometimes learn more from our mistakes than we do from the things that go well in life! If we don't get to make our own decisions or make mistakes, it's really hard to take ownership of them and learn from them.

THE SDM MOVEMENT

Supported Decision-Making is about people asking for help to make decisions when they need it, but the worldwide Supported Decision-Making Movement is all about respecting people's rights to make their own decisions. We can do this by exploring and practicing supports that are less-restrictive than guardianship.

LESS-RESTRICTIVE OPTIONS

Asking for help is often the mature and wise thing to do! It's important to remember that we all need help to make decisions sometimes. On the next page, you will learn about some other ways to help people learn and practice decision-making skills.

Exploring Less-Restrictive Options

Guardianship should be the last resort when trying to help people learn and practice decision-making skills. Below are some other less-restrictive options, but there are many more out there. This is just a place to get started!

RELEASE OF INFORMATION



A person can sign a release of information to allow important information (medical, educational, etc.) to be shared with others. This can keep them in the loop with doctors, teachers, caseworkers, etc. so they can help support the person to make important decisions about those things later on.

TECHNOLOGY



There is an abundance of technology that can help people live more independently than ever, but also stay connected to others with ease. From tablets to smart phone apps, to smart home and personal assistant devices, and even wearable technology and safety devices, there's something out there for everyone!

SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING



Supported Decision-Making happens when people choose trusted others (family, friends, professionals, experts, etc.) to help them understand information so they can make their own decisions. It can be formal or informal, and the person using it isn't doesn't give up their rights, they're just asking for a little help!

CHOSEN REPRESENTATIVE



In Ohio, a person who receives services from the I/DD system can designate someone else to make some or all decisions about those services for them. The person can modify or end this arrangement anytime they want to.

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE



A person who has a case with their local Job and Family Services Department can identify someone to receive important information and notifications about their Medicaid benefits and make related decisions on their behalf. This designee is called the Authorized Representative.

PAYEE



A payee is a person or organization who is assigned to receive and manage someone's benefit money. The payee is assigned by the Social Security Administration and is responsible for making sure all bills and living expenses get paid, and for making sure the person has access to money that's left over.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY



A person can appoint someone else to make certain financial or medical decisions for them by creating a Power of Attorney form. The person can put specific limitations on their "agent's" authority, and they can change or end the agreement as long as they still have decision-making capacity when they do so.

CONSERVATORSHIP



Conservatorship is like voluntary guardianship. A person can choose someone else to make certain decisions for them and then petition the Probate Court to approve and oversee this relationship. The person retains authority to change or end this relationship.

LIMITED GUARDIANSHIP



Sometimes a person needs someone else to make some but not all decisions for them. In this case, the Probate Court can appoint a limited guardian who has authority to make a more limited set of decisions for a person, but does not have the same scope of authority as someone who is awarded full guardianship.