


SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING



Supported Decision-Making (SDM) helps individuals with disabilities to make decisions about their lives. They choose the people they trust to help them gather and understand information, compare options, and communicate their decisions to others. It's how most people make decisions.

LET'S TALK ABOUT SUPPORTED DECISION- MAKING

Supported Decision-Making helps individuals make their own choices with guidance from people they trust, such as family members, friends, or support staff. It can be used in everyday decisions, including managing healthcare, finances, housing, and more.

Other tools, such as designated forms, allow someone to assist with sharing information or making certain decisions. These options support families while preserving a person's autonomy, avoiding the need for court involvement or removing their right to choose.

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. **Self-Advocacy:** Learn to speak up for wants and needs. Gradually use Supported Decision-Making, instead of a guardian making choices.
2. **Start the Conversation:** Talk about goals and the help needed to reach them. Focus on current abilities and what skills to build.
3. **Identify Supporters:** Choose trusted people who know the person well and communicate clearly.
4. **Plan & Communicate:** Meet with helpers to agree on how to work together and communicate.
5. **Set Up an Agreement:** Create a tailored agreement that fits the person's needs.
6. **Share & Organize:** Distribute copies to doctors, banks, schools, etc., and use a checklist to stay organized.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Students with disabilities can use Supported Decision-Making (SDM) to get help making choices at school. Instead of someone else making all the decisions, students work with people they trust—like parents, teachers, or aides—to understand their options and make their own decisions.

HOW TO GET STARTED IN SCHOOL

- 1. Setting Goals:** The student can talk with their team about what they want to learn or do in the future.
- 2. IEP Meetings:** The student can take part in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, with support to understand what is being talked about.
- 3. Choosing Classes:** The student can get help understanding class options and pick the ones that fit their goals and interests.
- 4. Asking for Help:** The student can learn how to ask for the support they need, like extra time on tests or help taking notes.
- 5. Planning for Life After School:** The student and their team can talk about what they want to do after high school, like going to college, getting a job, or learning new skills.

With **Supported Decision-Making**, students are included in decisions about their own education. It helps them learn how to speak up for themselves and be more independent.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- [SPAN Youth in the Know](#)
- [Supported Decision-Making Forms](#)
- [When Do I Need Support?](#)
- [Supported Decision-Making: Why the Right to Make Choices with Support Matters](#)

Scan the QR code for more resources

