

Supported Decision-Making for Youth and Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)



What is Supported Decision-Making?

Supported decision-making (SDM) is a way for adults to get help from other people to make choices and decisions for themselves. These decisions could be about things like healthcare, money, and other important life matters. It is a valuable tool that you can use instead of guardianship. SDM helps people be more independent.

How Does Supported Decision-Making Work?

Everyone, regardless of ability, benefits from support when making decisions. With SDM, your family member can get the help they need from trusted people, while still being the one to make the final decision. The person or people that help them make decisions are called supporters. The supporters help someone understand information, discuss options, and communicate their choices.

New Law in Maryland

As of October 1, 2022, a new law in Maryland allows all adults, starting at age 18, to use supported decision-making to understand, consider, and make decisions themselves. This means that doctors, bankers, and other professionals must respect the decisions a person makes with support, just as they would any other legal decision.

Why Supported Decision-Making Matters

Supported decision-making empowers people with disabilities by helping them maintain control over their lives, while still getting the assistance they need. Some of the key benefits include:

- **Maintaining control:** The person with a disability gets help to make their own choices.
- **Flexibility:** Each person decides how much or how little help they need.
- **Empowerment:** SDM helps people keep their rights and have more choice and control over their lives. As a result, people feel more confident and in charge of their own lives.



How Supported Decision-Making can help people with IDD lead the life they want

- Your loved one can become more independent with the right amount of support
- Make informed choices about their health, safety, and future
- Stay safe while being in control of their decisions
- They can be more involved in the community
- They retain their legal rights

Guiding Principles of Supported Decision-Making

- **Freedom to make choices is a human right for everyone.**
- People can get help without giving up their right to make choices.
- All people need help understanding, making, or communicating their choices.
- All people, with and without disabilities, are presumed to have the ability to make decisions with and without support.

For more information, contact PPMD by visiting our [website](#) or calling (410)768-9100.



This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$1,258,085 with 100% funding by ACL/HHS. The

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