



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Supported Decision-Making

Did you know?

A new law just passed in Maryland. Maryland now allows adults to use supported decision-making to get support to understand, consider, and make decisions themselves.

What does the law say?

Beginning October 1, 2022:

- An adult can use supported decision-making to get help to make choices and decisions. That means an adult can get help to make decisions about health care like whether or not to get a shot or have surgery. An adult can also get help to make decisions about money like whether to open a savings account. These are just two examples. There are many more.
- Other people must allow the adult to make those choices and decisions with support. A supporter can help the adult think about all the parts of a decision. The supporter does not make the decision. The adult makes their own decision.
- A supported decision-making agreement can be used to describe the help the adult needs and wants. It makes clear how the adult uses supported decision-making, the rights of the adult, and what the supporter can and cannot do. There are some rules to follow if a supported decision-making agreement is used.
- A court must consider supported decision-making before putting someone under guardianship. If an adult is already under guardianship, they can use supported decision-making. If they use supported decision-making, a court can now end or limit the guardianship.

What is supported decision-making (SDM)?

- It is a way for adults to get help from other people to make choices and decisions for themselves.
- The person that helps an adult is called a supporter. A supporter can be a family member, friend, staff, or professional. It is someone the adult knows and trusts. The adult who uses SDM must choose the supporter. There can be more than 1 supporter.
- It is another tool in the toolbox that you can use instead of guardianship.

Supported decision-making helps people keep their rights and have more choice and control over their own lives.

Guardianship takes away a person's basic rights to direct their life. A person can lose their right to vote, their ability to marry or partner with the person they love, their ability to control what medical care they receive, or who can visit them, and other decisions.

Where can I get more information?

National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making:

<http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>

Center for Public Representation:

<https://supporteddecisions.org/>

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 \$1,201,464 with 100% funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.