



Hope. Vision. Voice.

A Project of The Council on Developmental Disabilities

What is Supported Decision-Making?

The Council on Developmental Disabilities was recently awarded a grant from the Special Hope Foundation to develop a Supported Decision-Making (SDM) pilot project for Kentucky. This project is in partnership with the Lee Specialty Clinic and focuses on improving health care delivery for adults with a developmental disability through SDM.

Supported Decision-Making is a process of supporting and accommodating an adult with a disability through a trusted network; to enable the adult to make life decisions, including decisions regarding the services, supports and medical care they want to receive, without impeding their self-determination.

Support and accommodation is provided through a trusted network of Supporters. Supporters can be trusted friends, family members, professionals or advocates. Facilitators are also part of the SDM process, helping the supported person and their supporters in their efforts. All SDM network members work together to help the supported person:

- Understand situations they face
- Express their will and preferences
- Make and act on decisions

Supported Decision-Making mirrors how most adults make decisions—sign legal documents, make financial investments and consent to medical procedures. In all of these situations, individuals seek advice, input and information from knowledgeable friends, family and professionals; so they may make their **own** informed choices.

Benefits of Supported Decision-Making

Research demonstrates self-determination and the right to make life choices are key elements for a meaningful and independent life. SDM has been shown to increase self-determination in individuals with disabilities, these same individuals have:

- Higher employment at increased wages and more community integration
- Increased health, welfare and safety

Texas was the first state to recognize Supported Decision-Making as a substitute for guardianship in 2015. The State of Massachusetts has initiated a pilot study of SDM. North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland are also exploring the value of Supported Decision-Making within their communities.



How Can You Become Involved with Supported Decision-Making?

The Council is currently recruiting volunteers to serve as SDM Supporters and Facilitators. To learn more about becoming one and the Supported Decision-Making Project, please contact Donovan Fornwalt at dfornwalt@councilondd.org or (502) 584-1239.



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