

Supported Decision-Making Plan

Supported decision-making (SDM) is getting help from people you trust so you can make your own decisions about your life. Your supporters can be friends, family, or professionals. They help you understand situations and choices so you can decide for yourself.

A supported decision-making plan is when you and your supporters agree that they will help you in areas you choose. This way, you can make your own decisions. Your supporters can also help you share your plan and your choices.

Steps for Developing a Supported Decision-Making Plan

Step 1. Decide what types of decisions you want help with.

There are many areas where you might want support. With a supported decision-making plan, you choose people you trust to help you understand your choices, make decisions, and communicate them. You might have more than one support person, depending on the area.

Examples of Areas Where You Might Want Support:

Healthcare and Other Health Treatments:

- Understanding and making good choices about your medical, dental, and health-related treatment.
- Assisting you in selecting your doctor, dentist, therapist, and caregivers.
- Talking with your doctor, dentist, and other healthcare staff, as needed.

Finances:

- Making decisions about everyday purchases like groceries and clothes and big decisions like renting an apartment and getting a credit card.
- Understanding your finances, communicating how you want to spend your money, and interacting with bank staff.

Community Living:

- Making decisions about roommates, housing, shopping, social activities, transportation, and dealing with peer pressure.
- Understanding and talking with roommates, friends, bankers, shopkeepers, transportation providers, and others.

Safety:

- Understanding your rights, recognizing when you are being taken advantage of, and identifying the risks of some decisions.
- Recognizing signs of danger.
- Having close relationships and knowing how to be safe.
- Avoiding harm, dealing with bullying, staying safe, using social media wisely, and more.

These are just examples of where you might want support. Some of these may not apply to you, and there may be other areas where you need help that are not listed above.

You might want to make some choices on your own, while for other choices, you might want a little bit or a lot of support. It's important to know how much and what kind of help you want.

Step 2. Choose your Supporters and talk to them.

Think about the people you trust. Consider choosing them to be your Supporters. Your Supporters can be anyone, or any group of people. They could be a family members, friends, professionals, or anyone else you choose. You get to choose how you want to be supported. For example, you may want your doctor to support you in healthcare matters and a family member to help you with money management.



Once you've picked whom you want as your Supporters, ask if they will help you. Tell them how you would like them to help you.

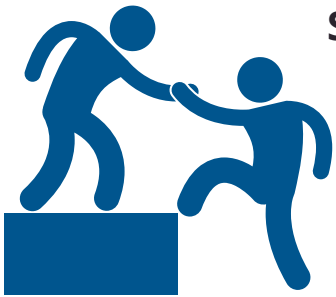
It is important that they know what is involved so that they can best support you. Remember, you can change your mind about whom you want to help you. Your Supporters can change their minds, too.



Step 3. Learn about tools and other resources that you and your Supporters can use.

There are many tools and other resources that can help you with setting up your personal plan and communicating with important people, such as your doctor. These are sometimes called **“Less Restrictive Alternatives”** or LRAs. You can learn about them at the Rethinking Guardianship NC website.

www.rethinkingguardianshipnc.org



Step 4. Decide if you want a formal or informal SDM plan.

Asking for advice is a regular part of life. No one has all the answers. Your Supporters can help you make choices.

This can be done informally or formally.

Only you know what will work best for you.

The level of support that you want will guide you. Informal support is a good choice if you feel confident making choices. It is also good if you only want a little bit of help. Make sure to tell your Supporter how much help you want.



You may want more formal support. A Supported Decision-Making Agreement is a written agreement that you (the Decision-Maker) and your Supporters sign.

You and your Supporters can make this together. There is no required form or layout for a Supported Decision-Making Agreement in North Carolina. You can create what works best for you.



Step 5. Write your SDM Plan.

It is a good idea to write down what you want to do for yourself and what your supporters can do to help you. Being specific is a good idea. Your SDM plan should include

- Areas where you want support making decisions, understanding and communicating your choices, and planning and performing various activities.
- Who your Supporters are for each area.
- How each Supporter will help.
- Who will be a backup Supporter if yours is not available.
- A way to handle if you and your Supporter don't agree.

Step 6. Share your SDM plan.

Share copies of your SDM plan with your Supporters and other people who are important to you. You may also want to keep copies of your SDM plan on your phone, in your room, and anywhere else you want to keep it.

Resources

You can learn more about supported decision-making at the [National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making](#) website.

The website also has [examples of Supported Decision-Making Agreements](#).

Get Started Making a Supported Decision-Making Plan

Step 1. Decide what types of decisions you want help with.

Step 2. Choose your Supporters and talk to them.

Step 3. Visit the [Rethinking Guardianship NC](#) website to learn about tools and other resources that you and your Supporters can use.

Step 4. Decide if you want a formal or informal supported decision-making plan (see Resources, above).

Step 5. Write your SDM Plan. See details in Step 5 on this page.

Step 6. Share your supported decision-making plan with your Supporters and other people who are important to you.