

What is Supported Decision-Making (SDM)?

Supported decision-making (SDM) is a way in which people use friends, family, and professionals to understand their choices and exercise self-determination.

In SDM, the person decides who they want to assist them in specific areas of their life. Those supporters agree to help the individual understand their choices, weigh their options, and communicate their decisions. The final decision is up to the person, not their supporters.

A supported decision-making plan can be either a formal or informal arrangement. Through SDM, people can live their best life.

Examples of How to Use SDM



Health

- Understand and make choices about medical and dental treatment, caregivers, or providers.
- Understand the possible consequences of medical, dental, and health-related choices.
- Talk with medical, dental, and other health care providers.
- Decide what treatment is right for them.
- Schedule regular checkups, follow prescribed treatments, and take medications as directed.



Finances

- Make decisions about everyday purchases like groceries or big purchases like a car.
- Recognize signs of possible financial exploitation.
- Understand finances, including benefits.
- Interact with bank staff.
- Pay bills, make purchases, and handle money.



Safety

- Recognize signs of danger or not feeling safe.
- Have close relationships and understand boundaries and limits.
- Avoid harm, deal with bullying, stay safe, and use social media wisely.



For more information, visit website:
SupportedDecisionMaking.org

The examples provided are just some ways to use SDM. Each SDM plan is unique. Each individual should decide where they want help and who should support them.

“People with disabilities who used [supported decision-making] SDM showed increased independence, decision-making abilities, made better decisions, and had better quality of life.”

-Martinis & Beadnell, 2021



Ways to Help as a Supporter



Create ways to help the individual make decisions with room for flexibility.



Provide context by listing pros and cons about the decision to be made.



Consider asking closed-ended questions with fewer options instead of open-ended questions, when useful to the individual.

