

Let's talk: Supported Decision-Making

What is supported decision-making?

How does this benefit me?

Supported decision-making is working with a team of supporters and people you trust to help you reach your goals and plans of life after high school. You make a supported decision agreement; that can be changed at any time.

Supported decision-making strengthens your self-determination, you become in control of your choices, and you empower your own self-sufficiency. With the help of others, you can make good decisions, choices, and improve your quality of life.

When you turn 18, it will be up to you to plan your future and have responsibilities. With supported decision-making, we want you to use your strengths, be an effective communicator, and find your trusted people.

Supported decision-making is about making easy or hard choices with your trusted supporter. You choose who you want to support you. They inform you of possible choices and you make the decision. Supporters are there to help you consider all the possibilities, give you details about them, and have you choose, and accept the choice in any life aspect you want.

But what is guardianship?

Guardianship is someone who can make decisions for you with or without your permission. There are partial guardianships and full guardianships. Both are appointed by a judge. Partial guardianship is someone who makes decisions about **some** aspects of your life. A full guardianship is someone who makes decisions for you in **every** aspect of your life. This usually happens when you turn 18 and is very difficult to reverse.

Think about:

- What are your goals in life?
- What do you want to do after high school?
- Can you do this alone?
- Do you need help making the right choice?

Who do I choose?

Four things to think about

One. What are your preferences?

In choosing a supporter, you have to sit down and think about, what are your values and preferences. Do your potential supporters align with your values, or are you always budding heads with them?

Two. What life areas are you needing help in?

You can have support in any area of your life. They are not limited to safety; daily living; health choices; physical and or mental health; home; work; friends; money and finances; education; training; transportation; dating/partners; socialization; caring for a child; pet care; etcetera.

Three. Communication

Can you communicate with your potential supporter? People will not be able to read your mind, so being an effective communicator is highly needed! Will your supporter be able to communicate effectively with you and others? You want someone who will listen to your voice and respect your decisions.

Four. Trust

Do you trust them? Are they always honest with you? You want someone who will follow through with your decisions and help you throughout the process.

Is it right for me?

Answer the following questions

- Question 1: Do you believe that you can make good choices for yourself but may need someone to guide you or help from others?
- Question 2: Are you interested in exploring new possibilities?
- Question 3: Are you willing to look at your own strengths and challenges to decide on the supports that you will need in order to be successful?
- Question 4: Are you willing to work with a team of supporters to achieve your goals?
- Question 5: Are you willing to take personal responsibility and accept the consequences for the choices that you make?
- Question 6: Are you interested in taking the time and effort to create a written agreement to help you and your support team achieve your goals?

What were your answers to the questions?

If you answered yes to all of them, then you are ready!

If you only answered yes to some of them, continue to talk about it with people you trust, you might just be nervous to start your journey!

Where to find resources

- [DisAbility Rights Idaho](#)
- [Idaho Legal Aid Services](#)
- [Idaho Parents Unlimited](#)
- [IDHW, Division of Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [Idaho Council of Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [Idaho Commission on Aging](#)

- [Idaho Supreme Court](#)
- [Idaho Volunteer Lawyer Program](#)
- [Living Independent Network Corporation](#)
- [Living independently for everyone Inc](#)
- [Disability Action Center NW](#)