

# ***YOUR Life, YOUR Choices: Supported Decision-Making***

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## **A Note Just For YOU**

This guide is a tool to help you learn, practice, and build your confidence. It gives you ideas and information, but it's not the same as getting legal advice from a lawyer. Your life and your goals are unique. Making big decisions sometimes means getting expert help, and that's a smart choice **YOU** can make!

## **What Is Supported Decision-Making?**

Supported Decision-Making means **YOU** make your own decisions about your life with help from people you trust. **YOU** stay in charge, but you get the support you need to understand your options and make good choices.

## **Why This Matters to YOU**

When you turn 18, you have the legal right to make your own decisions about:

- Where you live
- Where you work or go to school
- How you spend your money
- What medical care you get
- Who you spend time with
- And much more!

## **Your Rights, Your Voice**

- **YOU are the expert** on your own life
- **YOU get to choose** who helps you make decisions
- **YOU have the final say** even if your supporters disagree
- **YOU can change your mind** or choose different supporters

## **How Supported Decision-Making Works**

1. **YOU decide** what decisions you want help with
2. **YOU choose** who you trust to help with different decisions
3. **YOU work with** your supporters to understand your options
4. **YOU make** the final decision
5. **YOU take action** with help if needed

## **Who Can Be Your Supporters?**

Anyone **YOU** trust and feel comfortable with:

- Family members
- Friends
- Teachers or school staff
- Coaches or mentors
- Other trusted adults

Different people can help with different types of decisions!

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## **Examples of How Supported Decision-Making Works**

### **School Decisions:**

"I want to choose my classes for next year. My teacher helps me understand what each class is about, and my older sister helps me think about which ones match my interests. I make the final choice about which classes to take."

### **Work Decisions:**

"I want to find a job. My job coach helps me look for openings, my dad helps me practice interview questions, and my friend helps me figure out transportation. I decide which jobs to apply for and accept."

### **Health Decisions:**

"I need to understand my medication. My doctor explains what it does, my mom helps me remember when to take it, and my case manager helps me track how it makes me feel. I decide whether the medication is working for me."

## **What This Looks Like In School**

A specific section that provides concrete examples of how students can use SDM in their daily school life, such as in IEP meetings or when choosing classes. What should this look like???

## **Getting Started with Supported Decision-Making**

- **Think about** what decisions are important to you
- **Identify** who you trust to help with different decisions
- **Talk to** those people about how they can support you
- **Practice** making decisions with their support
- **Share** your Supported Decision-Making plan with your school and others

## **Remember:**

- Everyone needs help with decisions sometimes
- Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness
- You can start small and try bigger decisions as you practice
- Your support needs might change over time - that's OK!
- **YOU** are the expert on what works best for you