



Virginia Department of  
Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Services

## Supported Decision- Making & Supported Decision-Making Agreements: An Overview for Individuals and Families



Presented by the Office of Provider Development

DBHDS Vision: A life of possibilities for all Virginians

## Pre-Training Quiz



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## Pre-Training Quiz

1. Supported Decision-Making is a concept that occurs when a person makes decisions (choices) with the support (help) of people they trust.
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. A Substitute Decision-Maker makes the final decision when using Supported Decision-Making.
  - A. True
  - B. False
3. Someone must have a Supported Decision-Making Agreement to receive Medicaid Services.
  - A. True
  - B. False
4. Supported Decision-Making Agreements increase a person's chances of being abused or exploited by others.
  - A. True
  - B. False
5. Supported Decision-Making can help people increase capacity (understanding) in different parts of their lives in order to avoid restrictive decision-making options, such as legal guardianships.
  - A. True
  - B. False

## Training Agenda

- What is Supported Decision-Making?
- History of Supported Decision-Making
- Virginia Laws and Codes
- The Three (3) C's
- What are Supported Decision-Making Agreements?
- Other Types of Representation
- SDM within Substitute Decision-Making
- Using SDM in Different Places
- Information and Resources
- Post-Training Quiz



## Supported Decision-Making: What is it?

**Supported Decision-Making**- “decision-making model in which an individual makes decisions with the support of trusted individuals” (American Bar Association)

**There is a belief (expectation) that people with DD have the chance (opportunity) to:**

- Practice maximum self-determination
- Receive supports with making decisions in the least restrictive manner possible
- Tell others who they want to help them make decisions and how

**SELF DETERMINATION**



## Supported Decision-Making: What is it?

**Informal –or- Formal**

**4 Principles:**

1. The individual retains legal decision-making authority.
2. The relationship is freely entered into and can be terminated at will.
3. The individual actively participates in decision-making.
4. Decision made with support are generally legally enforceable.



## Supported Decision-Making: What does it look like?

- Individualized-
  - How you learn
  - What you like and don't like
  - How you communicate
- Americans with Disabilities Act → Effective Communication
- HCBS → “...must have every opportunity to live with the same rights, freedoms, and degree of self-determination...”



## Supported Decision-Making: What does it look like?

- Learn and understand how you best understand and learn information
- Learn and understand how you communicate
- They tell you what they know and do not know
- They make sure you have the information needed to make an informed decision



## Supported Decision-Making Around the World

### United Nations: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

*“Promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”*

#### Countries Must:

1. Recognize legal capacity for all persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.
2. Eliminate all systems of substituted decision-making.
3. Establish supported decision-making mechanisms of differing kinds and intensities.
4. Put in place safeguards to secure the respect for the rights, will, and preferences of individuals who receive support.



Sources: Backman, S. (2019). *Law Reform on Legal Capacity & Supported Decision-Making: Initiatives from Around the World*  
[http://timemapper.okfnlabs.org/sdm\\_timeline/sdm-international#0](http://timemapper.okfnlabs.org/sdm_timeline/sdm-international#0)



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## Supported Decision-Making in the United States

### 2012 legal cases:

- Jenny Hatch (Virginia)
- Dameris L. (New York)



### 2013 - 2014:

- 'Supported decision-making: An agenda for action' report

### 2014:

- The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making website

### 2015 - 2016:

- The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making State Project Partners
- Ryan King (Washington D.C.)

### States with Laws Specific to SDM- currently 17

Sources: [http://timemapper.okfnlabs.org/sdm\\_timeline/sdm-international#81](http://timemapper.okfnlabs.org/sdm_timeline/sdm-international#81), <http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>



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## History of Supported Decision-Making in Virginia

**2012/2013:**

- Jenny Hatch’s case

**2014:**

- Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources study; Study conducted

**2019:**

- Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources study; Request failed
- The Arc of Northern Virginia Pilot Project

**2020:**

- Senate Bill 585/Chapter 855
- Supported Decision-Making Workgroup #1

**2021:**

- House Bill 2230/ Chapter 232

**2022:**

- Supported Decision-Making Workgroup #2



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## Virginia Codes

**1. § 37.2-314.3. Powers and duties of the Department related to supported decision-making agreements.**

- Development of a supported decision-making agreement model
- Development & implementation of educational material regarding supported decision-making agreements
- Development of information regarding abuse and exploitation
- Data collection
- Report annually to Governor & General Assembly

**2. § 54.1-2983.2. Capacity; required determinations.**

- “Every adult shall be presumed to be capable of making an informed decision unless he is determined to be incapable of making an informed decision...”

**3. 12VAC35-115-70. Participation in decision making and consent.**

- “...each individual has a right to participate meaningfully in decisions regarding all aspects of services affecting him.”



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## The Three (3) C's

1. *Capacity*
2. *Competency*
3. **Consent**- 1. Simple consent- when you make decisions about regular activities during the day; 2. Informed consent- when you make decisions about things that involve some risk



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## Supported Decision-Making Agreements: What are they?

**Supported Decision-Making Agreement-** The formal process of documenting who an individual wants to support them, in what areas of life, and how they want to be supported.

**People in an Agreement:**

- Principal/ Decision Maker
- Supporter(s)
- Facilitator (optional)



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## Supported Decision-Making Agreements: What are they?

The Decision Maker keeps ALL rights and makes ALL decisions.

Can be changed or cancelled at any time.

How is one created?

- Conversations and discovery with people you trust and know you well:
  - Support Coordinator,
  - Providers,
  - Family members, etc.



## Supported Decision-Making Agreements: What AREN'T they?

- They ARE NOT a backdoor to guardianship.
- They DO NOT permit the Supporter to make decisions for the individual.
- They ARE NOT a way for a parent to take away an individual's rights.
- They DO NOT take the place of Advance Medical Directives or POAs.

## Roles and Responsibilities of those in Supported Decision-Making Agreements

Decision Maker	Supporter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make your own decisions</li> <li>• Self-determination and dignity of risk</li> <li>• Select who you want as Supporters, when you receive help and how you receive help</li> <li>• Change or end your Supported Decision-Making Agreement at any time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be available</li> <li>• Know they do not make decisions</li> <li>• Provide honest and fair information</li> <li>• Understand dignity of risk</li> <li>• Not offer advice or help if not asked for</li> <li>• Not provide advice about things that could be a conflict of interest and/or they do not know about</li> <li>• Take into consideration your feelings, needs, and things you like</li> <li>• Respect privacy and information</li> <li>• Help plan and get supports and services</li> </ul>

## Roles and Responsibilities of those in Supported Decision-Making Agreements

### Supported Decision-Making Facilitator

- Help schedule meetings with Supporters
- Provide help and advice
- Monitor your Supporters
- Monitor for abuse, exploitation, manipulation, neglect, or undue influence

OPTIONAL


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## Benefits and Risks of Supported Decision-Making Agreements

### Risks

- Nothing is free of risk/danger
  - Abuse and exploitation



## Is a Supported Decision-Making Agreement right for me?

- ✓ Can take information in and get it out
- ✓ Make decisions about your life on your own or with help from people you trust
- ✓ 18 years old or older
- ✓ Have a diagnosis of a developmental disability (including intellectual disabilities)
- ✓ Do not have a court-appointed legal guardian or conservator.



**Is a Supported Decision-Making Agreement right for me?**



**Do I need to have a Supported Decision-Making Agreement?**



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**Virginia's Supported Decision-Making Agreement**

**Public comment started June 6<sup>th</sup>!**

**Draft includes:**

- Instructions on how to complete the Supported Decision-Making Agreement
- Completed example of the Supported Decision-Making Agreement template
- Discovery tools



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## Virginia's Supported Decision-Making Agreement

### All Supported Decision-Making Agreements should include:

1. Who the Decision Maker wants as their Supporter(s)
2. When the Decision Maker wants help
3. How the Decision Maker wants to receive help
4. Indication that the Decision Maker and Supporter(s) agree to the information documented



## Other Types of Representation

- **Power of Attorney-** a person or multiple people you select to help make decisions about your care or different parts of your life when you are not able to do so
- **Advance Medical Directive-** a formal document that tells others what medical and/or psychiatric care you want
- **Representative Payee-** someone who takes care of your money for you



## Other Types of Representation

- **Authorized Representative**- someone who is able to consent (agree) to treatment, services, or to the release of information to others for you
- **Full Legal Guardian**- someone chosen by the court to make all decisions for you once the court has found you to be legally incompetent
- **Limited Legal Guardian**- someone chosen by the court to make decisions for you only for certain parts of your life
- **Conservator**- a person chosen by the court to take care of your money for you



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## Supported Decision- Making within Substitute Decision- Making

Substitute Decision- Making Type	➔	Supported Decision- Making
• Power of Attorney	➔	• SDM and/or SDMA
• Authorized Representative	➔	• SDM and/or SDMA
• Limited Legal Guardian	➔	• SDM and/or SDMA*
• Full Legal Guardian	➔	• SDM*



## Supported Decision-Making in Different Settings

Home

School

Work

Health

Money

Services



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## Supported Decision-Making: Key Points

<p><b><u>Supported Decision-Making:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual (Decision Maker) keeps ALL rights</li> <li>• Individual (Decision Maker) makes ALL final decisions</li> <li>• Increases the individual's feelings of self-determination</li> <li>• Decreases the risk of abuse and exploitation</li> <li>• Can reduce the need for restrictive alternatives (i.e. legal guardianship)</li> </ul>		<p><b><u>Substitute Decision-Making:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual loses their rights</li> <li>• Someone else makes decisions FOR the individual</li> <li>• Can take away an individual's sense of self-determination</li> <li>• Does NOT remove abuse or exploitation</li> <li>• Restrictive</li> </ul>
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## Supported Decision-Making: Key Points

### Supported Decision-Making →

- A concept, practice, action
- We all do this



### Supported Decision-Making Agreements →

- A written form
- Decision Maker, Supporter, Facilitator
- Must meet eligibility criteria to have one
- Flexible



## REMINDER!!!

Your input is important!

**The Virginia Supported Decision-Making Agreement draft is available for public comment from June 6<sup>th</sup>- July 6<sup>th</sup>.**

You can access it here-

<https://townhall.virginia.gov/I/GDocForum.cfm?GDocForumID=1861>



## Resources

ACLU- <https://www.aclu.org/issues/disability-rights/integration-and-autonomy-people-disabilities/supported-decision-making>

The Arc of Northern Virginia- <https://thearcofnova.org/programs-services/sdm-resource-library/>

disAbility Law Center of Virginia- <https://www.dlcv.org/supported-decision-making>

PEATC- <https://peatc.org/services/transition-to-adulthood/>

Supported Decision Making- <http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>

Virginia WINGS booklet- [https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/circuit/resources/guardian\\_options\\_pamphlet.pdf](https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/circuit/resources/guardian_options_pamphlet.pdf)



## Post-Training Quiz



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  - A. True
  - B. False

## Post-Training Quiz Answers

1. Supported Decision-Making is a concept that occurs when a person makes decisions (choices) with the support (help) of people they trust.
 

**A. True**
2. A Substitute Decision-Maker makes the final decision when using Supported Decision-Making.
 

**B. False**
3. Someone must have a Supported Decision-Making Agreement to receive Medicaid Services.
 

**B. False**
4. Supported Decision-Making Agreements increase a person's chances of being abused or exploited by others.
 

**B. False**
5. Supported Decision-Making can help people increase capacity (understanding) in different parts of their lives in order to avoid restrictive decision-making options, such as legal guardianships.
 

**A. True**

## Questions



## Contact Information

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