

Supported Decision Making and Health Care

For Doctors and Medical Professionals

People with disabilities have the right to make their own decisions about their health care. A person may choose to have a supporter there to help, but the person with the disability has the final say in making decisions about their own health.

Types of decision making supports...

- Supported decision-making agreement
- Advanced directives
- Release of information
- Health care advocate
- A Supporter



A supporter is someone who the person with a disability trusts, like a family member or friend, who can help the person communicate, understand their options and support them with medical decision making.

Supported Decision Making and Guardianship...

"As a physician, you should only recommend guardianship after all other less restrictive alternatives have proven to be ineffective or unavailable"
American Bar Association and the National Guardianship Association.



- A person with a disability has the right to make decisions that others don't agree with or support.
- Supported decision making (SDM) is an agreement between people to provide assistance with decision making.
- SDM should be used even when guardianship is in place to ensure the person is supported in leading their own healthcare decisions.

Supported Decision Making and Health Care

For People With Disabilities and Their Supporters

You have the right to make decisions about your health care and can ask for help if you want it. A supporter can help you with making decisions about your health and medical treatments, but remember you have the final say.

Ask a supporter for help.



Medical decisions can be hard and it's okay to ask for help when you need to make decisions about your health.

A supporter is someone you trust, like a family member or friend, who helps you understand and choose what's best for you. Supported Decision Making can help you continue on a path of independence.

Ways to support medical decisions:

- Ask your doctor for different options
- Consult another doctor for a second opinion
- Watch videos from patients and medical professionals
- Visit the medical building before your appointment
- Request longer visits or follow-up appointments for questions
- Understand the risks and benefits of treatments and medications
- Bring a support person to appointments for communication and note-taking
- Sign a release of information for chosen supporters to talk to your doctor and make decisions together.

