



Supported Decision Making:
An Alternative to
Guardianship
By Tylor Freeman

What if you could not...

- ▶ Decide where you lived?
- ▶ Decide who your friends were or who could visit?
- ▶ Make decisions about your health care?

What is supported decision making?

- ▶ An individual asks for help or ideas from a trusted support person in areas where you think you might need help.
- ▶ The individual is in full control, not the guardian.
- ▶ The plan may or may not be formalized.
- ▶ All of us get support from others.

Those who use supportive decision making

- ▶ Have increased independence, confidence, and decision-making abilities
- ▶ Made better decisions
- ▶ Have enhanced quality of life
- ▶ And for women, were **less** likely to be sexually abused.

Examples of supported decision making

- An individual goes to parents or friends for guidance about financial or health care decisions.
- An area agency assists with job training and placement.
- An agency or friend assist with finding housing options.
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How can support be given?

- Use plain language and materials as needed. Including video, audio and print.
- Allow extra time if needed for the individual to make decisions . Provide information and discuss choices.
- The supporter may help generate a list of pros and cons.



How can support be given? (continued)

- Prepare the person to communicate their decisions by role playing how they will inform others of their choices.
- Accompany the person to important appointments to take notes and discuss their options.
- Set up and help monitor payment tools such as auto-payments or bill management notification apps.



Why supported decision making should come before guardianship- my story

- ▶ SDE allows the individual to make their own decisions and allows individual to select the person they want when they need help in making decisions.
- ▶ Not being able to make your own decisions being told you are incompetent can be traumatizing and demoralizing.
- ▶ It's an option when one needs support.
- ▶ A person under supportive decision making may not always make the best decisions, but who does? We learn from experience.

News article about me being under guardianship

- ▶ [Changes to guardianship may be coming to NC | NC Health News \(northcarolinahealthnews.org\)](https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/changes-to-guardianship-may-be-coming-to-nc/)

Resources

<https://rethinkingguardianshipnc.org/>

Work Cited page

- ▶ Bhattarai, Deodonne. "What Is Supported Decision-Making?" *DRCNH*, 19 Nov. 2021, drcnh.org/flyers/what-is-supported-decision-making/.
- ▶ Thomas Goldsmith, Rose Hoban. "People under Guardianship in NC Would Have More Rights and Information, under Proposed Revamp of Statutes." *North Carolina Health News*, 1 May 2023, www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2023/05/01/new-guardianship-law-nc-brings-changes-rights/.
- ▶ "Welcome." *Rethinking Guardianship*, 4 Jan. 2023, rethinkingguardianshipnc.org/.