

Intent of this Proposal: Why is the DDPC making this Investment?

Supported Decision-Making Overview

Supported decision-making (SDM) is a model that provides people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) with the individualized supports and services necessary to make informed decisions. SDM emphasizes that the majority of individuals with disabilities, even those with significant disabilities, have the ability and the right to make important decisions impacting their lives.

The United Nations Handbook on the “***Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities***” states that:

“Supported decision-making can take many forms. Those assisting a person may communicate the individual’s intentions to others or help him/her understand the choices at hand. They may help others to realize that a person with significant disabilities is also a person with a history, interests and aims in life, and is someone capable of exercising his/her legal capacity.”

SDM is an alternative to the court process of appointing a guardian whereby the individual maintains the legal right and ability to make decisions impacting his or her life. Individuals without disabilities often rely on family, non-family, members of their church, and others to aid them in making decisions. SDM replicates the natural process that non-disabled individuals use to make important decisions. Typical SDM models surround the individual with family, friends, advocates and others who assist them with understanding the potential choices and options they have so that they can make their own decisions.

The outcome of this DDPC initiative is to demonstrate that SDM is a functioning alternative to surrogate decision-making and should be exhausted prior to anyone seeking or being granted guardianship over a person with I/DD. The goal will be to expand the models statewide for all individuals at risk of guardianship.