

RIGHT TO DECIDE

We anchor our position on the right to decide in [Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and are guided by the global movement we are part of through [Inclusion Canada](#) and [Inclusion International](#).

The foundation of a valued, meaningful life is our ability to have authority in our lives by making our own choices and decisions. It is by making choices, taking risks, and sometimes getting it wrong that we ALL learn and grow. When people are in control of their own lives, they are less vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and are more likely to develop stronger self-advocacy skills.

Some adults with intellectual disabilities may require some support to make decisions. This reflects the natural interdependence most people rely on to make decisions. Most of us turn to others for advice and support when making big decisions. Supported Decision Making is a rights-based approach that ensures people can use support to make their own decisions rather than having decisions made for them.

Supported Decision Making IS

- Flexible and individualized in ways that respect an individual's wills and preferences
- Grounded in trusted relationships, where the person who is making the decision chooses who supports them and remains in control of the decision
- A safeguard against abuse, with mechanisms to ensure that support is free from pressure or coercion, and respects the person's will and preferences
- Tailored to the individual and may take many forms such as communication support, time to process information, peer support or personal support networks, accessible information formats, assistive technology, environmental supports and decision-making tools
- Understanding that everyone has the right to make decisions that may not always turn out as planned, recognizing that mistakes are a part of life and learning through experience builds confidence and growth

Adults with intellectual disabilities are often treated as incapable. Their right to make decisions is restricted or removed when they are placed under guardianship orders or similar mechanisms that limit opportunity and personal growth. Systems, services, policies and procedures often create barriers that push people toward guardianship mechanisms.

Supported Decision Making IS NOT

- About making existing substitute decision-making systems "better" or "more supportive"
 - Overriding an individual's own wills and preferences through undue influence or in favour of what others believe is "in their best interest"
 - Rigid or a one-size-fits-all process
 - Shielding an individual from the opportunity to experience the natural ups and downs of life
- Everyone has the right to make choices about their own life, including where they live, who they spend their time with and how they manage their personal affairs

Having our decisions and choices respected leads to inclusive lives.