

# Let's Talk About

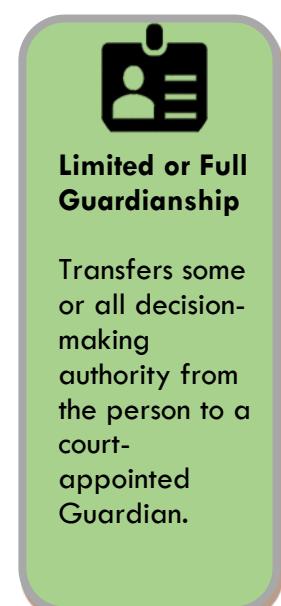
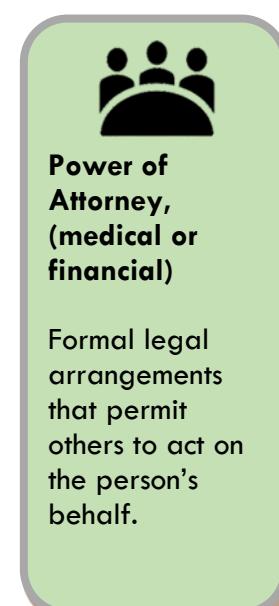
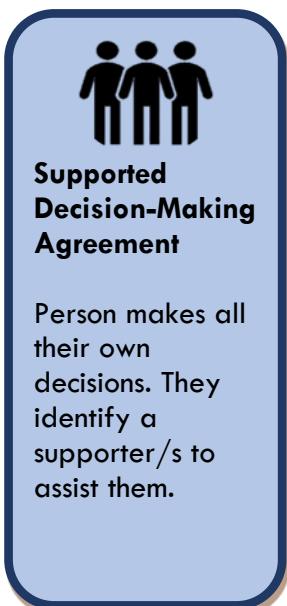
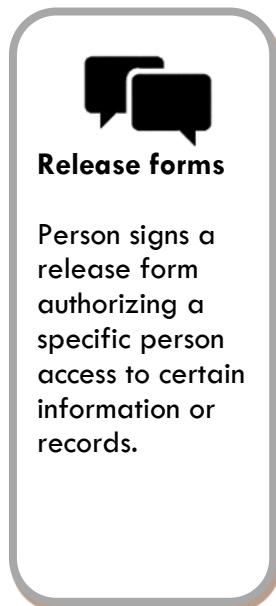
## Supporting Individuals To Live Full Lives

Supported Decision-Making helps individuals with disabilities to make decisions about their lives. They choose the people they trust to help them gather and understand information, compare options, and communicate their decisions to others. It's how most people make decisions.

### WHAT IS SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING?

Supported Decision-Making is an alternative to guardianship through which people with disabilities get help from trusted family members, friends and professionals to help them understand the situations and choices they face, so they can make their own decisions. Supported Decision-Making enables people with disabilities to ask for support where and when they need it. Supported Decision making agreements can be used for many kinds of decisions including medical, financial, housing and other life matters. Powers of attorney, representative payees and simple release of information forms can also help families provide the needed supports and safeguards without going to court and imposing guardianship restrictions.

### Current decision-making support tools



# GETTING STARTED WITH SUPPORTIVE DECISION-MAKING

Supported Decision-Making can help people with disabilities stay in control of their own lives. Each person with a disability decides the amount and type of support he or she wants and needs. People with disabilities need people they trust to support them in reaching their goals.

## STEP 1: START THE CONVERSATION

Talk about goals and needed supports to achieve them. Think about an individual's current abilities and areas where growth can occur.

## STEP 2: IDENTIFY PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING AND ABLE TO ASSIST

A support person should know the individual well and be able to understand and communicate with her or him.

## STEP 3: PLAN AND COMMUNICATE

Bring the support team together to determine how team members will communicate.

## STEP 4: SET UP AN AGREEMENT

Supported Decision-Making agreements are as individual as the people using them.

## STEP 5: LET EVERYONE KNOW

Once the Supported Decision-Making agreement is signed, share copies with doctors, financial institutions, schools, and others who are involved. (use a tracking form to keep yourself organized)

## HOW SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING AGREEMENTS WORK?

A Supported Decision-Making agreement includes a list of decisions the person with a disability wants assistance in making and identifies a Supporter(s) they want to help them. WisStats.Ch 52 includes the Supported Decision-Making agreement form and requires the following elements are included:

- Name and contact information
- Types of decisions which a supporter may assist with
- Role the supporter plays (ex: A supporter helps understand and figure out complex medical information)
- Signatures of the person and supporter(s), and two witnesses or a notary.



# SUPPORTIVE DECISION-MAKING AGREEMENTS

## HOW TO FILL OUT AN AGREEMENT

1. Name and contact information of your supporter

2. Define what you want your supporter to help you with (circle yes or no)

3. Define how you want your supporter to help you with (circle yes or no)

4. Date you want agreement to end

5. Print your name, sign your name and date it

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
STATE OF WISCONSIN  
SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING AGREEMENT  
Version 1.0 (Effective January 1, 2013)  
Agreement of Supporter  
I, \_\_\_\_\_, make this agreement.  
(Print name of person designating a supporter)  
Understanding and I my own free will, I agree and designate that:  
Name of supporter (Print)  
Address of supporter  
Email address of supporter (If applicable)  
If my supporter, for the following everyday life decisions, if I have checked "Yes," my supporter may help me with that type of decision, but if I have checked "No," my supporter may not help me with that type of decision:  
 Yes       No      1. Making medical decisions about my health.  
 Yes       No      2. Taking care of my physical health.  
 Yes       No      3. Managing my money.  
 Yes       No      4. Taking care of my mental health.  
 Yes       No      5. Making decisions about my home.  
 Yes       No      6. Assistance with seeking vocational rehabilitation services and other community resources.  
The following are other decisions I have specifically identified that I would like assistance with:  
  
If I have not checked "Yes" or "No" specifically identified and listed a decision differently above, my supporter may not help me with that type of decision.  
Age 18+  
  
My supporter is not allowed to make decisions for me. To help me with my decisions, my supporter may do any of the following, if I have checked "Yes":  
1. Help me access, collect, or obtain information, including records, related to a decision. If I have checked "Yes," my supporter may help me access, collect, or obtain information, including records, related to a decision. If I have checked "No," my supporter may not help me access, collect, or obtain information, including records, related to a decision.  
 Yes       No      Medical  
 Yes       No      Financial  
 Yes       No      Personal  
 Yes       No      Transportation  
 Yes       No      Other (If yes, specify the type(s) of information with which the supporter may assist):  
  
2. Help me understand my options so I can make an informed decision.  
 Yes       No  
3. Help me communicate my decision to appropriate persons.  
 Yes       No  
4. Help me access appropriate personal resources, including protected health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and other personal records that may or may not require a release for specific decisions I want to make.  
 Yes       No  
  
Effective Date of Supported Decision-Making Agreement  
This supported decision-making agreement is effective immediately and will continue until \_\_\_\_\_ or until the agreement is terminated by my supporter or me or the termination of law.  
(Print name of person designating a supporter)  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Age 18+

6. Supporter fills out

7. Signed by two adult witnesses or

8. Signed by a notary

Consent of Supporter  
I, Name \_\_\_\_\_ (name of person designating a supporter) personally or I have received proof of me or her identity and I believe him or her to be at least 18 years of age and entering this agreement knowingly and voluntarily. I am at least 18 years of age.  
I, Name \_\_\_\_\_ (name of supporter) consent to act as a supporter under this agreement.  
Name of supporter (Print)  
Address of supporter  
Email address of supporter (If applicable)  
Phone number(s) of supporter  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Statement and Signature of Witnesses or Signature of Notary  
This agreement must be signed either by two witnesses who are at least 18 years of age OR by a notary public.  
OPTION I: WITNESSES  
Witness No. 1:  
Name (Print)  
Address  
Phone number(s)  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness No. 2:  
Name (Print)  
Address  
Phone number(s)  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
OPTION II: NOTARY PUBLIC  
State of \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_  
I, Notary Public, acknowledge before me on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (name of adult with a functional impairment)  
and \_\_\_\_\_ (name of supporter) \_\_\_\_\_ (Notary Seal)  
Signature of Notary \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Notary (typed or printed)  
My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_  
Fees of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Notary: Most banks and credit unions have Notaries and their services are free of charge.

## THE ROLE OF THE SUPPORTER

A Supporter is available to help when needed. The individual with a disability chooses who they would like to support them and determines when and for what reason they would like the assistance of a Supporter.

### A Supporter can:

- Help the person read and/or understand their options
- With permission from the person, access information needed to help the person make the decision
- Attend meetings and assist the person in asking questions
- Help communicate the person's decisions and preferences to others.

## WHERE CAN I FIND THE FORM?

Sample documents can be found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/f-02237.htm-0>

## RESOURCES:

FIND OUT MORE AT [WWW.WI-BPDD.ORG](http://WWW.WI-BPDD.ORG)

- Supported-Decision-Making Tracking Form [[wi-bpdd.org/index.php/SupportedDecision-Making](http://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/SupportedDecision-Making)]
- Wisconsin Guardianship Support Center [[www.gwaar.org](http://www.gwaar.org)]
- The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making [[www.supporteddecisionmaking.org](http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org)]



*"We wanted our son to have the chance to grow and learn to make decisions that affect his life. As his parents, we won't always be around to guide him, and we didn't want to restrict his life and future happiness. So, we chose not to pursue guardianship and instead to develop a circle of supporters to help him make those big decisions in life."*

-- Parent

## WISCONSIN STATE LAW

Wisconsin state law formally recognizes Supported Decision-Making agreements as legal arrangements<sup>1</sup> that allow persons to retain their right to make their own decisions, while also choosing trusted people (called Supporters) to help them gather and understand information, compare options, and communicate their decisions to others.

<sup>1</sup> Wis. Stats. Ch 52. (2017 Wisconsin Act 345)

## Planning for the future using Supported Decision-Making

Supported Decision-Making does not require one individual to take on full Supporter responsibility. Multiple family members or other trusted persons can be Supporters, increasing the breadth of the support network and making transitions easier as family members age and roles change.

Supported Decision-Making can be an important part of the person-centered planning process, which focuses on outcomes driven by the individual and implemented through the support of family, trusted allies and professionals of the individual's choosing to achieve those outcomes.

Inviting Supporters to person-centered planning can help the discussion focused on the individual's talents, gifts, and dreams for the future.

**We all want to improve our lives,  
not just maintain them.**

Person-centered planning and Supported Decision-Making can:

- Help an individual with a disability share their hopes and dreams for the future and identify goals to improve quality of life.
- Identifies strategies and opportunities to help achieve a goal.