

Supported Decision Making (SDM)

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A process that enables individuals with disabilities to make important decisions without having to relinquish their legal right to make their own choices. SDM involves the individual designating trusted people, such as family members, friends, and professionals, to help them understand their options and the consequences of their decisions, while allowing them to make choices for themselves.

Guardianship

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A legal process that allows someone else, called a guardian, to make decisions for another person who is deemed unable to make safe and informed choices on their own. Guardianship can include decision making in areas such as managing money, making medical decisions, or handling everyday tasks such as where to live, who they may date, and all other personal life choices. (**Called Conservatorship in some states, such as CA*)

Independent Living

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A philosophy and movement that advocates for the right of individuals with disabilities to live in the community with the same choices, control, and freedom as people without disabilities. Independent living emphasizes the importance of autonomy, self-determination, and the availability of support services to enable individuals to live in their own homes, participate in their communities, and make decisions about their lives.

Capacity

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The ability of an individual to understand information, make decisions, and communicate their choices. In the context of guardianship and supported decision making, capacity refers to an individual's cognitive and decision making abilities, which may be assessed to determine the level of support or protection they require. It is important to recognize that capacity can vary depending on the situation and the type of decision being made, and that individuals with disabilities should be presumed to have capacity unless proven



Autonomy

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The ability of an individual to make their own decisions and live independently, without being controlled or unduly influenced by others.

Self Determination

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The ability of an individual to have control over their own life, make choices, and pursue goals based on their personal values, preferences, and interests. Self determination is an important aspect of personal autonomy and is essential for individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling, independent lives.

Dignity of Risk

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The concept that individuals with disabilities have the right to make choices and take reasonable risks in order to learn, grow, and live fully. It recognizes that everyone, regardless of their abilities, should have the opportunity to experience both the positive and negative consequences of their decisions, as this is essential for personal development and self-determination.

Legal Rights

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The rights and protections that are granted to individuals under the law, such as the right to make decisions about one's life, property, and personal affairs.

Diversity

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A range of different qualities, characteristics, or experiences among individuals or groups, including differences in age, ethnicity, gender, industry, and abilities. Embracing diversity can lead to more informed decision making and more effective strategies.

