



# Supported Decision- Making Agreements

For Clients and Families

ACRC 2026

What is  
Supported  
Decision-  
Making?



# California

## Law says...

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*Everyone needs help or support in their lives sometimes and not just people with a disability*

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As an adult with a disability, you have the right to get support with making decisions from the people you want and exactly the types of support you want

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Other people have to honor your wishes that you put into a document called a Supported Decision-Making Agreement.

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What you are able to do must be measured as what you are able to do with support, and not what you can do without help.



# Supported Decision-Making (SDM) is...



A way for you to get HELP with making choices (decisions) where

- You make your own choices
- You choose what types of help or support you want
- You choose the people you want to help or support you – friends, family, staff – who are called your Supporters
- Supporters are there to help you...

YOU ARE THE DECIDER

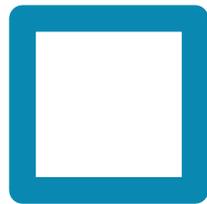
You make the final decision, not your Supporters.

# SDM Agreement



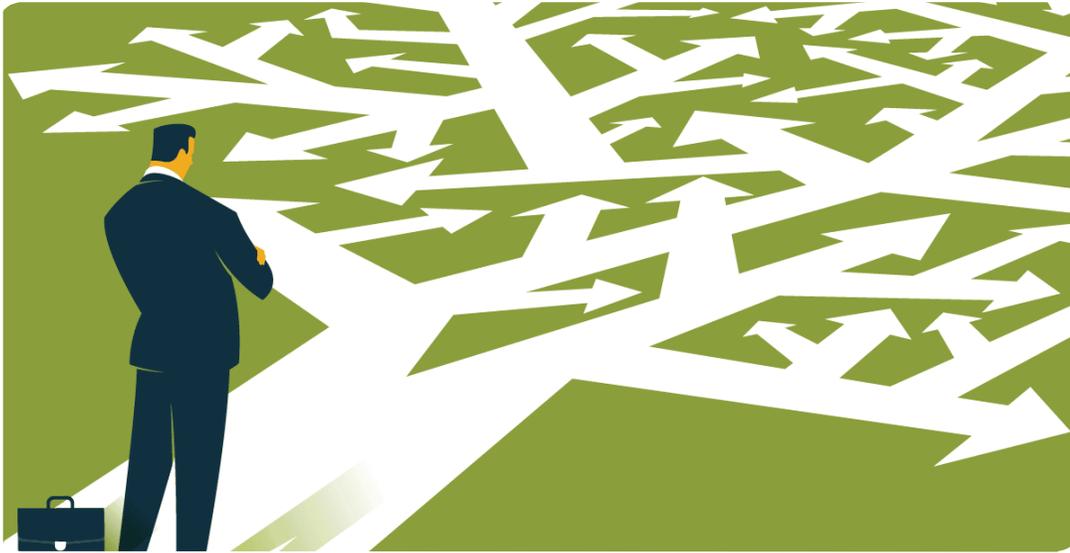
- A document you fill out to tell others who your Supporters are and the type of support help you want (and don't want).
- You provide others with a copy of the SDM Agreement
- Other people have to respect your choices about your Supporters and the type and areas of support you want!

SDM:  
Thinking about  
choices



## Choice = Decision

- You have the right to make choices/decisions in your own life



- You have the right to get support to help you make those choices

# Kinds of choices -- Examples

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Where you want to live

What you do for fun

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Who you want to live with

When to go to the doctor/dentist

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Where/If you want to work

What medical treatment you want

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What day program you want to go to

What to purchase

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What clothes you wear

What classes you want to take

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Who you want to be friends with

Whether to date, and who

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How you spend your money

What to eat

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What other kinds of CHOICES can you think of?



SDM:  
Thinking about  
support



# Kinds of support

- Plain-language information: Written information in simple words
- Pictures, drawings or photos
- Someone explaining things to you
- Research: Asking questions, looking at documents or websites
- Trials or visits: Trying out different things to see what feels right to you



# More kinds of support

- Reminders about important dates, times or events
- Help listing Pros & Cons
- Coming to meetings and appointments with me
- Talking to experts who know a lot about the choice



# Even more kinds of support!

- Classes to learn about healthy choices.
- Technology: Using a phone, computer, or other device to help with choices.
- Help communicating my choice to others

OTHERS???



# What do I want support with

You may have many choices that you want to make on your own.

There may be other choices that you want some support with.

And there may be other choices that you cannot do without support.



# Thinking about supporters



# Who do I want to be my Supporters?

A Supporter should be:

- Someone you trust
- Someone who knows you and what you want
- Someone who agrees to be a Supporter

You can have just one Supporter, or as many as you want!



# Talking to Possible Supporters

- Make time to meet with all of the people you think you might want to be a Supporter.
- You can meet with them one at a time, or all together
- Provide them written information about what SDM is and what Supporters do.



# Talking to Possible Supporters

Talk about

- What kind of help/support you would want from each
- Whether the person agrees to be a Supporter
- How you would get help from the Supporter
- Whether your Supporters can talk to each other when you're not there





# Filling out the *SDM* Agreement Form

# SDM Agreement

## Supported Decision Making Agreement

A trusted friend, family member, or staff person can read and explain the form to you and help you complete the SDM Agreement!



# Filling out the Form

- Add your name in the blank at the top of page 1 to let people know this is YOUR agreement.
- Under the section “Areas I Want Support With and the People I Want to Support Me, add as many supporters and areas and type of support as desired.
- Only add those people who have agreed to be your Supporters



# Attachments—Other Agreements

- You can attach copies of any other agreements or documents that you may already have that relate to types of support that other people are providing you.
- For example, you can attach:
  - Durable General Power of Attorney
  - Power of Attorney for Health Care or Advance Directive
  - Assignment of Educational Decision-Making Rights
  - Letters of Conservatorship
  - Release of Information
  - Representative Payee Agreement



# Your Signature

- YOU can read the document yourself, or you can have a trusted person read the document aloud to you before signing.
- YOU must sign the document either:
  - In the presence of a Notary Public, who will certify that you signed the document OR
  - In the presence of two witnesses who are not named in the Agreement, who will need to sign the document to state they saw you sign the Agreement.
    - Supporters cannot sign as a witness
    - Your Service Coordinator CAN sign as a witness
- The Agreement is not valid unless your signature meets one of those requirements



A stylized, cursive signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John J. ...'.

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# Supporter Agreements

- Each Supporter you have identified in the Agreement must receive a copy of this Agreement along with the signed SDM Agreement.
- The Supporter must date and sign this Agreement
- All of the signed Supporter Agreements will be attached to your signed SDM Agreement



# Glossary

- This is a list of the words that are included in the SDM Agreement so that everyone (you, your Supporters, and anyone who might read the Agreement) knows and can agree on what they mean.
- SDM is new, so this helps others in the community understand what you want and how they can support you just like your Agreement instructs them!



# Information for Recipients of the SDM Agreement

- You will be providing copies of the signed SDM Agreement to other people and businesses (like doctors, the regional center, schools, service providers, or other agencies).
- This document helps those people understand what they need to do to ensure that you are able to have the support you want!
- This is important because SDM is new so not everyone knows about it.



After SDM  
Agreement is  
Signed



# Assembling the Attachments

- Make sure that you have the signed SDM Agreement and all of the signed Supporter Agreements together with all other agreements you want to attach, as well as the SDM Glossary/Definitions and the SDM Information for Recipients.
- Make photocopies and provide those to people you want to know what type of support you want:
- Doctors and dentists, schools, your Regional Center SC, family members, friends, service providers, others!
- **KEEP THE SIGNED ORIGINAL SDM AGREEMENT SOMEWHERE SAFE**



# Renewing/Changing the SDM Agreement

- SDM Agreements must be REVIEWED by you and all of your Supporters at least every two years.
- SDM Agreements can be updated/changed at any time, including at the two-year review, to show any changes you want and need.
- Whenever an SDM Agreement is updated/changed, you must sign the New Agreement, all of your Supporters must sign new Supporter Agreements, and you must provide copies of the new SDM Agreement and all attachments to all of the people/businesses you did before to replace the old agreement.



# Terminating/Ending an SDM Agreement

Your SDM Agreement is good until it is terminated (ended) when:

- You say you don't want it anymore (or you pass away ☹️)
- All of your Supporters say they don't want to provide you support anymore, or aren't eligible to support you anymore for legal reasons

If just some of the Supporters don't want to or can't provide you support anymore, the Agreement stays in place as to everything else



# How to Terminate Support, or the SDM Agreement

- A Supporter can terminate their involvement by telling you or providing you something in writing that states they will not provide support anymore.
- You can terminate your SDM Agreement in any way that shows to other people your intent to terminate it: telling someone else, tearing up the document, scratching out the language on the document, or other means in the presence of another person.



# Your Rights

- Even if you have an SDM Agreement that says you want a Supporter to help you in an area, you still have the right to make all of your own decisions and choices without their Support if you want.
- Supporters CANNOT sign documents on your behalf (unless there is another document like a Power of Attorney that permits this)

REMEMBER:

YOU MAKE THE FINAL DECISIONS/CHOICES ABOUT YOUR LIFE, WITH OR WITHOUT AN SDM AGREEMENT



# QUESTIONS???

Where to get more information about SDM:

The ARC of California

Phone: 916-552-6619

Website: <https://thearcca.org/info-resources/supported-decision-making/>

SDM Technical Assistance Program (in development)

State Council of Developmental Disabilities

Website: <https://scdd.ca.gov/sdm-tap/>

Welfare and Institutions Code sections 21000-21008

California Legislature website: [Codes Display Text \(ca.gov\)](https://leginfo.ca.gov/)



Completing your SDM Agreement  
[INSERT LINK to RECORDED GUIDE](#)



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