

# Exploring Supported Decision Making

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Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, 1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219, (800) 846- 4464, or visit the Board's [website](#).



# Overview

- Basics Supported Decision Making
  - What is SDM?
    - Usage with other supports
  - Why do it?
- The “What Ifs”
- Putting SDM into action
- Examples of SDM in practice
- SDM Resources



# What is Supported Decision Making?

- At its most basic, Supported Decision Making is having people you trust to help you make decisions
- Part of our culture for everyone
- Can be formal or informal



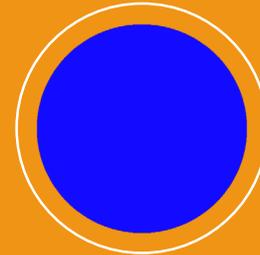
# The Spectrum of Decision Making Supports



No defined needs or supports



Power of Attorney and/or formal SDM agreement, Rep Payee or Trust

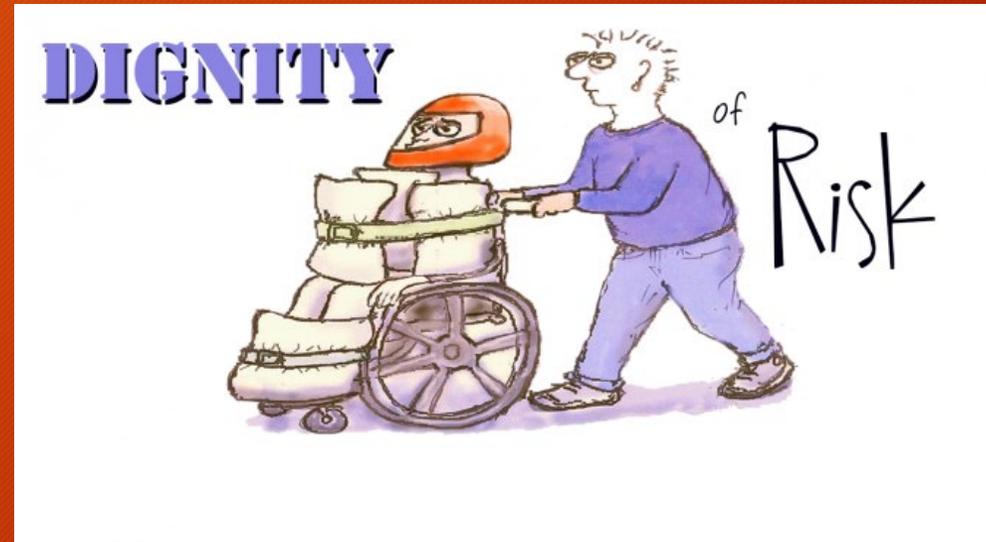


Limited or full guardianship or conservatorship

Supported Decision Making can be Used

# Why Should You Consider SDM?

- Self-determination studies on safety and quality of life
- Increasing independence
- Dignity of Risk and learning from mistakes
- Preservation of Rights
- Minimal to no cost



# Why Should You Consider SDM?

- Can be implemented immediately and changed as needed
- Growing a culture of support network and reducing reliance on one person
- Virginia law, National Guardianship Association, and best practices all emphasize the least restrictive options being fully explored before other options are pursued
- Virginia is considering additional SDM legislation

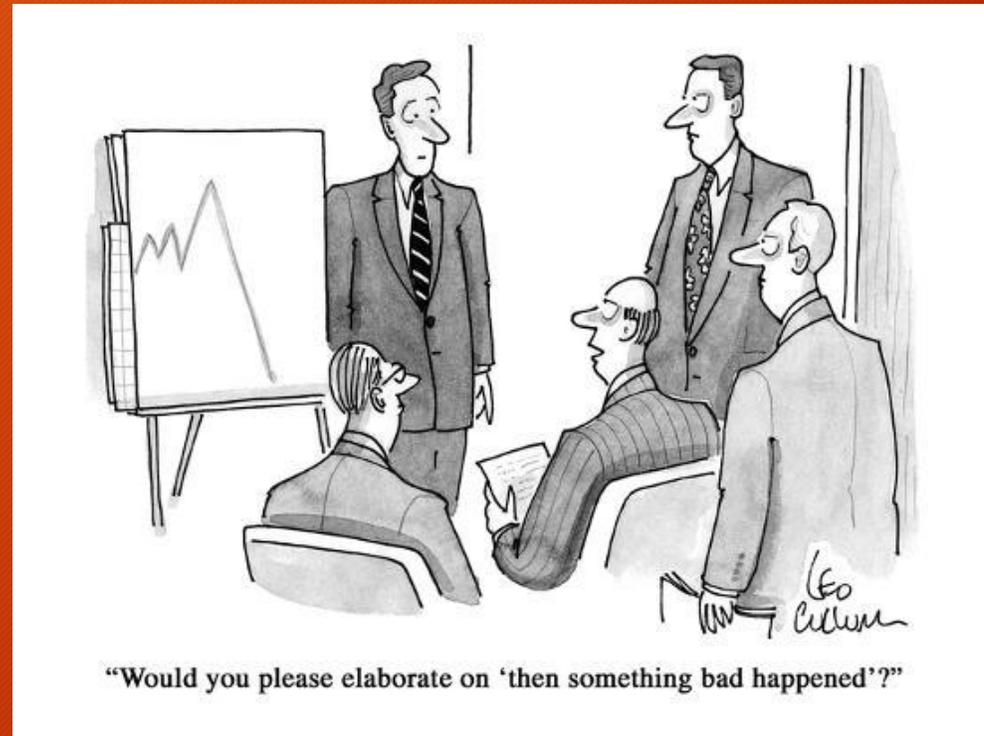


# National Guardianship Association Statement on SDM

- Guardianship should be utilized only when lesser restrictive supports are not available. Alternatives to guardianship, including supported decision making, should always be identified and considered whenever possible prior to the commencement of guardianship proceedings.
- Under all circumstances, efforts should be made to encourage every person under guardianship to exercise his/her individual rights retained and participate, to the maximum extent of the person's abilities, in all decisions that affect him or her, to act on his or her own behalf in all matters in which the person is able to do so, and to develop or regain his or her own capacity to the maximum extent possible.
- Supported decision making should be considered for the person before guardianship, and the supported decision-making process should be incorporated as a part of the guardianship if guardianship is necessary.

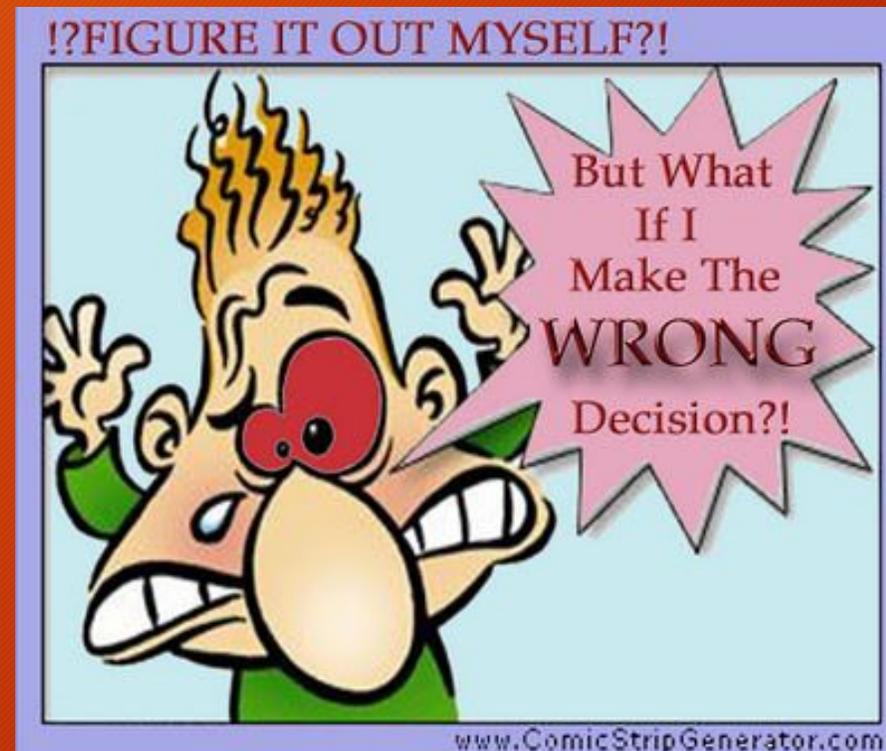
# What if Something Bad Happens????

- We are all vulnerable
- No studies have show guardianship increases safety, but studies do show self-determination does
- SDM utilizes and builds on strengths of the individual and their team
- We all learn to make better decisions by making mistakes
- Most people make some bad choices everyday, and that is okay



# Getting Started with SDM

- Setting the Wheels in Motion article
- Notes on napkin, paper, or spreadsheet
- When Do I Want Support from ACLU
- Determining Supporters
  - Paid and unpaid
  - Use as a lens when you meet new people



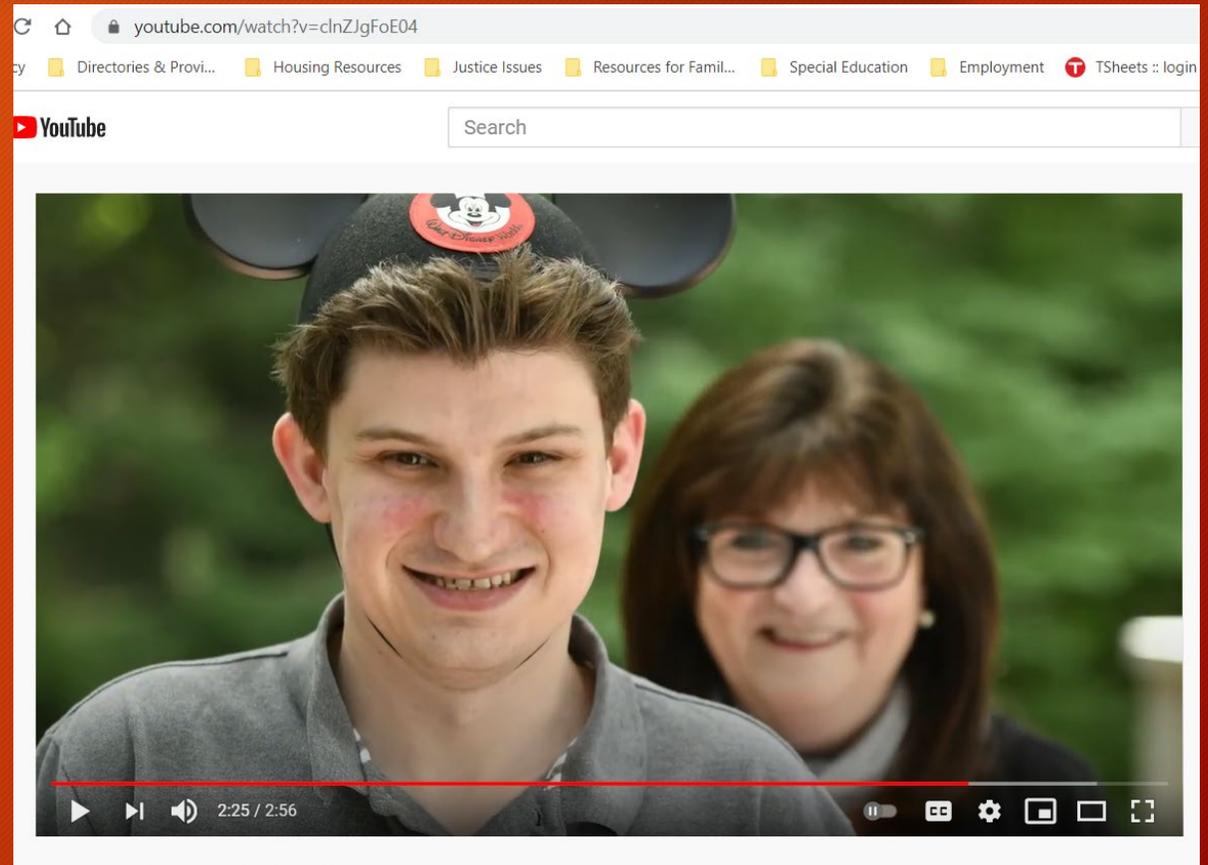
# Putting SDM into Action

- Read about it and get some ideas onto paper (see resource section at the end of this presentation)
- Talk to your supporters and plan to communicate regularly
- If you want to use legal tools (e.g., POA), then put them into place
- Keep evaluating over time



# SDM in Practice: Pilot Project

- 10 people of a range of ages, abilities, genders, and guardianship status
- 10 individual plans and groups of supporters
- 10 very different sets of goals for the future



All Questions Welcome

# Learning More about SDM

- [The Arc of Northern Virginia SDM library](#) - SDM videos, presentations, handouts, and ways to ask questions.
- [National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making](#) - Stories, videos, agreements, and research.
- [Center for Public Representation](#) - SDM forms, stories, news, and laws.
- [disAbility Law Center of Virginia](#) - Free Power of Attorney builder, help with advanced directives, and information on rights and choices.
- [“Supported Decision Making”](#) - A book by Jonathan Martinis and Peter Blanck with ideas on wording for Powers of Attorney, background on SDM in the courts, and data on self-determination and SDM increasing safety.
- [“Setting the Wheels in Motion”](#) - An article by Suzanne Francisco for a description of how a mom of three kids with DD implemented SDM for all of them, including her worksheets on getting started
- [Jenny Hatch Justice Project](#) - Information on the beginnings of SDM in Virginia, and SDM data.
- [“When Do I Want Support”](#) - SDM tool for a tool you can use to start creating your own SDM plan.
- [The Arc of the United States](#) - SDM toolkit with a SDM agreement building tool and more SDM in action stories.