

Supported Decision Making (SDM) is a term used to describe a process that allows people with disabilities to retain their decision-making capacity by choosing supporters to help them make choices. A person using SDM selects trusted advisors, such as friends, family members, or professionals to serve as supporters. The supporters agree to help the person with a disability understand, consider, and communicate decisions. This opportunity to make informed decisions is something that is important to every individual, with or without disabilities.

For too long families have been led to believe that the only way to make sure their son or daughter with a disability is “safe” after they turn 18 is to seek conservatorship. Now, people with disabilities and advocacy organizations have been working to ensure that family members, legislators, educators, and community members have accurate information on subjects around this topic.

The age of majority in Tennessee is eighteen (18) years of age or older. A new law about decision making was passed in Tennessee on April 2, 2018.

Learn more about this concept and how it works with these fantastic resources:

- The TN Council on Developmental Disabilities has a SDM resource page here: <https://bit.ly/tncdd-sdm>
- National Resource Center for SDM: supporteddecisionmaking.org
- Parent Guide to Getting Ready for the Age of Majority: bit.ly/2nssKCX
- Supported Decision Making — Call to Action Video: youtu.be/_vqF3NiTeWg
- Supported Decision Making — Gabby’s Story Video: youtu.be/duyJkZ2mIQ
- TNSTEP’s Transition Guide on Decision Making: bit.ly/step-transition-sdm

