

# 5 Frequently Asked Questions About Supported Decision-Making

## 1. What is Supported Decision-Making?

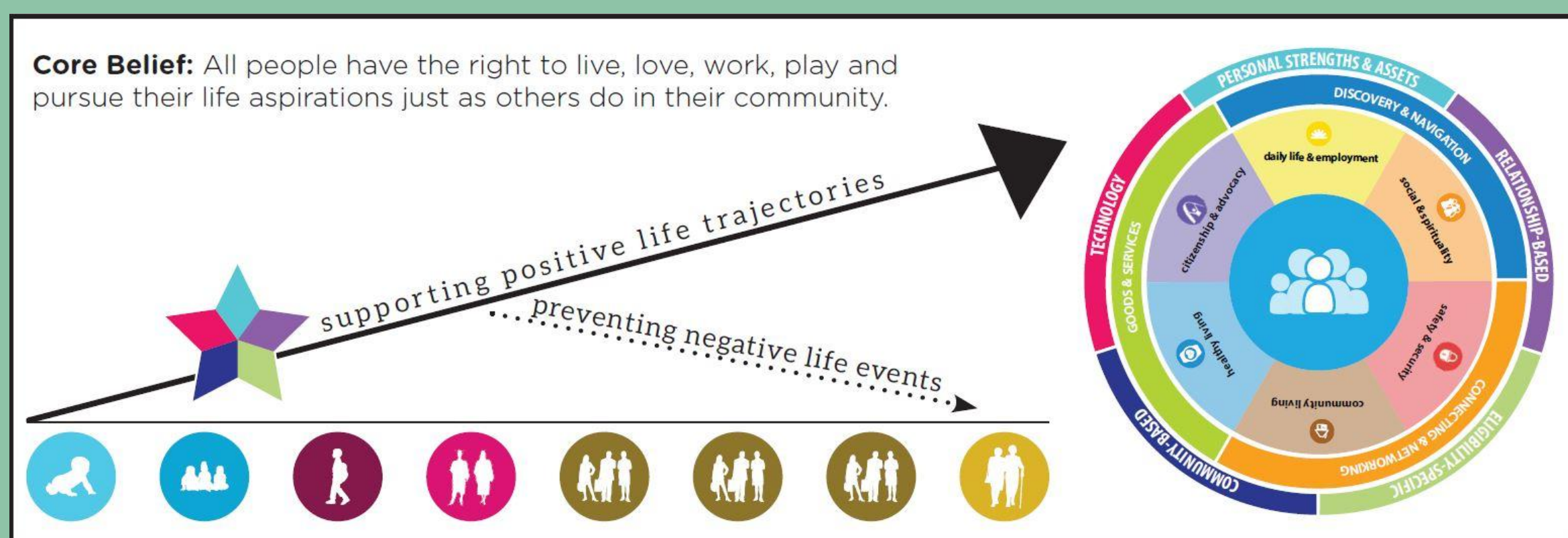
Supported Decision-Making (SDM) is an alternative to guardianship which empowers people with disabilities to make choices about their lives using a team based-approach. In other words, the individual with a disability selects people to be part of a team to assist with making decisions. All of us engage in supported decision-making. From where we live and what we do as a job or career path, most of us reach out to others for guidance when making life decisions.

## 2. How can I help myself, a friend, or family member use Supported Decision-Making?

Have an open conversation with the individual about what a good life would be for him or her. This conversation could happen during the first brainstorming session. During the first session, think about different areas of life such as housing, employment, finances, recreation/leisure, etc.

## 3. Who should be on the Supported Decision-Making Team?

The individual with a disability selects people on their team based on how well he or she knows the person. Examples of people to have on a team include friends, family members, direct support staff, teachers, and the list goes on. Some characteristics that should be considered are having knowledge in a particular area (finances, employment, healthcare, etc.), being trustworthy, flexible, and open to new ideas.



## 4. Who sets the goals for the individual?

The individual's goals should be determined during a person-centered session (possibly using the vision and/or trajectory tools and integrated support star) with the team. Each person's goals will be different but teams should think about the "big picture" by discussing the person's goals, challenges to reach the goal and available supports and resources.

## 5. How do we schedule Supported Decision-Making team meetings?

Scheduling team meetings will depend on the individual's needs; although it is strongly recommended to meet frequently in the early stages of the process. This helps team members get to know each other and learn how to work with each other. Once everyone on the team is familiar with each other, create a meeting schedule that works best for the individual and the team.

To learn more about Supported Decision Making, check out the National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making at <http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>.

The South Dakota Department of Human Services website includes an article called "Supported Decision-Making—An Alternative to Guardianship"—it can be found at <http://dhs.sd.gov/docs/Supported%20Decision-Making%20Article,%20SDR%20March%202018.pdf>.

More information on the Vision, Trajectory and Integrated supports star can be found on the Life Course Tools website at [www.lifecoursetools.org](http://www.lifecoursetools.org)

or

the South Dakota Community of Practice webpage at <http://supportstofamilies.org/states/south-dakota/>

or

Contact the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities for a Lifespan folder at 605-773-6369 or by email at [infoDDC@state.sd.us](mailto:infoDDC@state.sd.us).



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