

SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING AGREEMENTS

Could this help me?

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Supported Decision-making

We all need help to make some decisions. We might talk with a friend or family member before choosing to have an operation. Or we might talk to a mechanic before we buy a car. We all rely on some support for some decisions.

Perhaps you need help making decisions about money — paying bills, how much to put in the bank and how much to spend on food. Or maybe you need help making decisions about a job or where you should live. Perhaps you need help making a choice about whether to have your teeth fixed.

Generally, we get this support from the people we know and trust. Sometimes people are paid to provide support. Job coaches and Supported Independent Living (SIL) workers are examples of people who get paid to support people.

Support can come in many forms. For example, a support person might listen and explain things in plain language. They may help you break down the information and the choices. They may help you sort out the pros and cons of a decision. Once you understand the choices and the good and bad things that could happen for each choice, you can make your own decision and be your own boss.

What is a Supported Decision-making Agreement?

You don't need to sign any papers to have someone help you make decisions. You can just talk to someone about the support you want. But if you want to make your support more formal, you could sign an agreement between you and your support person.

In a Supported Decision-making Agreement, your support person is called your **associate**. An associate (or assistant) helps you make decisions. An associate **does not** make decisions for you. This is set out in the *Adult Protection and Decision-making Act*.

Why sign an agreement?

A Supported Decision-making Agreement gives recognition to your associate. You will have a piece of paper that says that you want your associate to help you make decisions.

This agreement also allows your associate to go to appointments and meetings with you to listen and support you.

Who can sign a Supported Decision-making Agreement?

- You must be 19 years of age or older.
- You must be able to understand the nature and effect of the agreement — what you have written and what it will mean to your life.

What do I have to put in my agreement?

You must use the form created by the Yukon government for Supported Decision-making Agreements.

- List the reasons you want an associate to help you.
- Name one or more associates to help you make decisions.
- List the types of decisions that you want the associate to help you with.
- List any kinds of decisions that you do not want the associate to help you with.

What kinds of decisions can an associate help with?

An associate can help with all kinds of decisions, including:

- monthly budget making;
- banking;
- how much money to spend on food;
- where to live;
- whether to go to the doctor;
- whether to get an operation;
- whether to get your teeth fixed;
- whether to take a holiday;
- whether to apply for benefits;
- whether to take a job; or
- anything else you decide you want help with.

What is the job of an associate?

The associate:

- helps get information you need to make a decision;
- explains the information, as well as choices you have;
- helps you sort through the choices and come to a decision;
- helps you communicate your wishes; and
- helps you put your decision into action.

The associate cannot:

- make decisions for you;
- do things without you knowing;
- get information about you without you knowing and agreeing; or
- talk about you with other people without your permission.

Who should I pick as my associate?

Pick someone you trust and who understands you. This could include a friend, relative, support worker or approved home operator.

You cannot pick:

- your boss who pays you for work;
- anyone you pay as an employee; or
- anyone who has had a court order against them under the *Family Violence Prevention Act* or Part 4 of the *Adult Protection and Decision-making Act*.

How do I make an agreement?

Think about why you want support and what you want support for. Then find someone who is willing to be your associate.

Fill out the Supported Decision-making Agreement form. Make sure the form has a date, and is signed by you, your associate and two other people (witnesses) at the same time.

Give a copy of the agreement to your associate and keep the original copy in a safe place.

You may also want to give a copy to other people, such as your doctor, social worker or Supported Independent Living worker.

What if I don't involve my associate in a decision?

If you have agreed that your associate will help you make decisions, you must talk to them before you make a decision.

For example, if your agreement says that your associate will help you make all decisions that involve more than \$50, then you must talk to your associate before you buy anything over \$50.

In this example, if you bought a \$300 TV or got credit to buy the TV without first talking to your associate, someone could ask the Yukon Supreme Court to order that the TV be returned to the store and that you get your money back.

What if I don't want this agreement any more?

If you don't want a Supported Decision-making Agreement any more, tell your associate and other people close to you. Then ask them to return the copies you gave them so you can destroy all copies of your agreement.

The agreement will automatically end if you no longer understand what you have written and what it means to your life.

For more information

To obtain more information and copies of the Supported Decision-making Agreement form, go online to www.hss.gov.yk.ca.

