

# Living Your Best Life

Supported Decision-  
Making and Person-  
Centered Planning

6

Supported Decision-Making Series

Have you ever heard someone say,  
“Today is the first day  
of the rest of your life?”

What does that mean to you?

Doesn't it tell you that you have the  
power to decide what kind of person  
you'll be tomorrow, and the day after,  
and the weeks, months, and years  
after that?

Doesn't it mean that you should  
plan today for the life you want in  
the future?

If you think about it that way, today  
really is the first day of the rest of  
your life.

In this brochure, we'll show you ways to work with providers to make plans for your future so you can get what you need to live your best, most independent life.

## That's called Person Centered Planning.

We'll also show you how you can use Supported Decision-Making with formal teams, friends, family members, or anyone you trust to help make sure your support plans focus on you, what you want, and the life you want to live.



## Person-Centered Planning: What's It About and Who Does It?

Person Centered Planning helps you choose and receive what you need to live as independently and well as you can.

In other words, **Person-Centered Planning is all about you.**

It's about identifying what you want to do with your life and what you need to make that happen.

When you work with a provider that uses Person Centered Planning, like the ones we'll talk about in this brochure, you'll have a support team that meets with you. Together, you'll develop a support plan (also called an Individual Support Plan or ISP) that lays out your goals and sets up the supports and services you need to reach them.

These meetings and your support plans should focus on four important questions:

1. What's important to you?
2. What's important for you?
3. What kind of life are you living now?
4. What kind of life do you want to live?<sup>1</sup>

These questions are all about your values, hopes, and dreams. They make the people and professionals you're working with focus on who you are and what you want.





In Person Centered Planning, your supports and services should all be focused on helping you:

- Live where and how you want
- Do activities and learn things that interest you.
- Work at a job that you want.
- Save, spend, and budget money to buy the things you want.
- Spend time with people you like.
- Take care of yourself and your health.<sup>2</sup>

The next few pages list providers you can use Person Centered Planning with to get what you need to live your best life.

## MEDICAID WAIVER PROVIDERS

Missouri has Medicaid Waiver programs that help people live, work, and do the things they want in their community as independently as possible. We recommend that you contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities to find out if you are eligible for one of the Waiver programs. To find the office nearest you, go to: <https://dmh.mo.gov/dd/facilities/> or call 1-800-364-9687.

If you qualify for a Waiver program, there are many supports and services you can receive, including:

- **Assistive Technology** like computers and other tools to help you be more independent.
- **Career Planning** to help you identify a job you want and what you need to get it.
- **Supported Employment** to help you receive training and support to get the job you want and succeed at it.
- **Community Integration** to help you live, work, and take part in programs and

activities in your community.

- **Changes to your home or car** to make them easier to use so you can be more independent.
- **Individualized Skill Development** to help you learn what you need to do what you want.
- **Personal Assistants** to support you at home, on the job, and in the community.
- **Physical, Occupational, and other therapies** to help you take care of yourself and your health.
- **Transportation** so you can go to work, the doctor, or community activities.<sup>3</sup>

## **DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

Even if you're not eligible for a Waiver program, you could still qualify for services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities like Support Coordination (sometimes called Case Management). If you contact the Division to find out if you're eligible for a Waiver program, we recommend that you also ask to apply for services from the Division.

When you receive Support Coordination from the Division, they'll work with you to identify your goals for the future and develop



a plan so you can receive the support you need to achieve them. The Division can also provide advocacy to help you in school or to receive community supports.

The Division can also help you apply for Medicaid and, if you qualify, receive medical, employment, and independent living supports.<sup>4</sup>

## CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Centers for Independent Living (also called CILs) help people with disabilities live and work independently.<sup>5</sup>

To find the CIL nearest you, go to:  
<https://mosilc.org/mo-centers-db/>

CILs can provide or help you receive supports including:

- **Independent living skills training** so you can live well in the community.
- **Counseling** to help you identify what you need and how to get it.
- **Housing services** to help you find and keep a home.
- **Personal assistance** and other supports to help you live, work, and take part in community activities.



# It's Your Plan Because It's Your Life:

## *Self-Determination and Supported Decision-Making*

Person Centered Planning is about being Self-Determined. When you're self-determined, you decide what your plans say and what supports you get. You choose what you do, who you spend time with, and where you live.

It feels good to be self-determined, doesn't it? It feels right to "call the shots" – because you should be in control of your life as much as you can.

It's also good for you. Studies show that when people with disabilities are more self-determined, they're more likely to be independent, happy, safe, and have a job.<sup>6</sup>

That means, when you're using Person Centered Planning, you're not just making decisions about your plans and supports, you're doing the best thing for you!

But, being self-determined doesn't mean you never need help. Everyone gets help, every day, especially when they make decisions about their lives. We all need to learn about our options, think about what to do, and make the choices that are best for us.

When you get help to make decisions and be self-determined, that's called Supported Decision-Making. When you use Supported Decision-Making, you work with people you trust so you can understand and think about your choices. Then, you decide what to do.

You can find some strategies for using Supported Decision-Making in our brochures *Do I HAVE to get Guardianship* and *My Health, My Decisions*, on our website at:

[moddcouncil.org/?page\\_id=whatsnewstory&id=68](http://moddcouncil.org/?page_id=whatsnewstory&id=68)

Here are some ways you can use Supported Decision-Making (and probably already have):

- Asking friends or family for advice about relationships so you can decide whether to date or marry someone.
- Talking to a professional about saving and budgeting your money, so you can choose what to buy.
- Working with a mentor or job coach, so you can pick a job and work.
- Learning about community activities from your support coordinator, so you can try new things.

It's simple. They give you advice and information. You make the decision. They support, you decide. **That's Supported Decision-Making.**

You can use Supported Decision-Making with friends, family members, professionals, or anyone you trust. But, there's no one and only way to use it. Some people like to set up formal Supported Decision-Making teams. Some like to just "talk it out" with friends. We recommend that you use whatever works best for you.



## Supported Decision Making and Person Centered Planning:

Supported Decision-Making and Person Centered Planning go hand-in-hand. You should use Supported Decision-Making to make sure that your Person Centered Plans have goals, supports, and services that you want and choose.

Here are some ways you can use Supported Decision-Making in Person Centered Planning:

## BE PREPARED

Before your Person Centered Planning meeting, spend some time with someone you trust and think about the things that are important to you and what you want to do.

Don't think about your support plan, just think about the type of life you want – where you want to live and work, who you want to be with, and what you want to do.

Then, think about what's stopping you from getting there and what you need to get past it.

*Do you need education or training to get the job you want?*

*Do you need more money or support to live where you want?*

*Do you need to learn about activities in the community or have someone help you to do what you want?*

Those are the things your plan should be about: your goals for the future and the supports you need to reach them.





## BRING A SUPPORTER

Planning meetings can be hard. There's a lot of pressure. People may talk at you instead of with you or be hard to understand when they talk about supports and services with strange names. For all those reasons, it makes sense to bring someone to the meeting who can help.

That person can be a friend, family member, or anyone you trust. Your supporter can help you understand what your team is saying and make sure the team understands you. He or she can also take notes and help if you forget to talk about something that's important to you.



## FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT

At the meeting, talk about the things that are important to you. Don't get stuck talking about specific supports or services – like whether “community integration supports” or “a community specialist” is the specific thing you need. Don't let the meeting be about their services, make it be about you and what's important to you.

Talk about what you want to do and why. If you want to work as a computer programmer, or spend more time outdoors, or live in your own apartment, say that. Then ask what they can do to help make that happen. That way, the meeting and your plan will focus on what you want instead of what they do.

## PLAN TOGETHER

You may be receiving supports from more than one provider – like a school, CIL, Waiver Provider, or Vocational Rehabilitation. If that's the case, you should make sure that each provider knows what the other is doing. Bring your plans from the other providers to your meetings. Even better, invite someone from the other providers to come to your meetings.

That way, you and your providers can talk about how you're doing and work together to make sure that all of your plans focus on what you want. Working together also saves time because your providers will focus on the same goals.

## GO OVER YOUR PLAN BEFORE YOU SIGN IT

At the end of your planning meeting, or a little while after, your provider will give you a copy of your plan and ask you to sign it. Before you do, you should go over it carefully. Read it yourself or with someone you trust. Make sure that you understand what it says, including the goals it says you have and the supports you'll get.

Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask that supports or goals be added or taken out of the plan. Remember, it's your plan. So, everything in it should be important to you!

# Guardianship, Person-Centered Planning, and Supported Decision-Making

If you have a guardian, you still have a right to use Person Centered Planning and Supported Decision-Making.

Guardianship is a legal process where you go to court and a Judge decides whether you can make decisions for yourself. If the Judge decides that you can't, he or she will choose a guardian to make some or all decisions for you.

**Even if guardianship is right for you, your guardian must still help you use Supported Decision-Making to make as many decisions as you can.**

That should include:

- Giving you a chance to say what's important to you.
- Making sure your providers listen to you and answer your questions.

- Making sure your support plans say what you want to do, who you want to spend time with, and where you want to live.
- Letting you review your plans and talk about things that you want or don't want in them.

## References

1. e.g., Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities (n.d.). Got choice? Self directed supports and self-determination. Available at: <https://dmh.mo.gov/dd/progs/docs/gotchoicehandbook.pdf>
2. U.S. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2014). Fact sheet: Summary of key provisions of the 1915(c) home and community-based Services (HCBS) waivers final rule. Available at: <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/hcbs/downloads/1915c-fact-sheet.pdf>
3. Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities. (2018). Missouri's medicaid waivers for individuals who have developmental disabilities (fact sheet). Available at: <https://dmh.mo.gov/dd/progs/waiver/docs/waiverfactsheet.pdf>
4. Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities. (n.d.). Individual, family, and guardian info. Available at: <https://dmh.mo.gov/dd/individualFamilyGuardianInfo.htm>
5. United States Administration on Community Living. (n.d.). Centers for independent living. Retrieved from: <https://www.acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/centers-independent-living>
6. e.g. Wehmeyer, M.L., & Schwartz, M. (1997). Self-determination and positive adult outcomes: A follow-up study of youth with mental retardation or learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 63(2), 245-255; Wehmeyer, M. L., & Palmer, S. B. (2003). Adult outcomes for students with cognitive disabilities three-years after high school: The impact of self-determination. *Education & Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 38(2), 131-144; Khemka, I., Hickson, L., & Reynolds, G. (2005). Evaluation of a decision-making curriculum designed to empower women with mental retardation to resist abuse. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 110(3), 193-204.



## We Can Help!

Whether you're just starting to think about how you'll plan for your future or you already know what you want to do, we can help! We can answer your questions or connect you with people and organizations that may be able to work with you.

Feel free to contact us at:  
**(800) 500-7878**  
**[moddcouncil.org](http://moddcouncil.org)**



## OUR NETWORK PARTNERS

### **Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services**

(800) 392-8667  
[moadvocacy.org](http://moadvocacy.org)

### **UMKC Institute for Human Development, UCEDD**

(816) 235-1770  
[ihd.umkc.edu](http://ihd.umkc.edu)

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