

Shelter from the Storm

Supported
Decision-Making and
Emergency Planning

What will you do in an emergency?

What if you have to leave your home and go to a shelter?

How will you get what you need and connect with your friends, family, doctors, case managers, and other people you depend on?

In the last few years, Missouri has had tornadoes, ice storms, floods, and power outages. Buildings and streets were badly damaged. People lost their homes and cars and had to evacuate to shelters.

If you have disabilities, these hard times can be even harder.

You may need help finding a place that is accessible to you, or getting health care and personal support.

In this brochure, we'll show you how you can use Supported Decision-Making to make a plan to keep you as safe and healthy as possible when – not if – the next emergency happens.



Supported Decision-Making: What is It?

Supported Decision-Making is getting help when you need it, from people you trust, so you can make your own decisions about your life.¹

Isn't that how everyone – people with and without disabilities – makes decisions?

When you have to make a tough choice, or a decision about something you're not

familiar with, or just want to “talk it out,”
what do you do?

You get help, don't you? You go to your friends, family or people you work with so they can help you understand your options, think about what to do, and make the best decision for you.

Here are some ways you've probably used Supported Decision-Making in your life:

- Asking friends for advice about relationships, so you can decide whether to date or marry someone.
- Talking to family members about budgeting and spending money, so you can decide whether to buy something.
- Working with a job coach or mentor so you can choose where to work.
- Learning about community activities from your case manager so you can meet new people and do new things.

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

Supported Decision-Making is a great way to make your own plans and decisions for your life.

It feels good to be the one in control, to be the one who makes the plans and decides what to do, doesn't it? It's also good for you! When you make your own decisions and control your life, that's called being self-determined. Studies show that when people with disabilities are more self-determined, they have better lives: they are more likely to be independent, employed, and safer.²

Using Supported Decision-Making to Make Emergency Plans³

Emergencies can be scary and confusing. Your power may be out. You may lose touch with people you depend on. Roads may be flooded or blocked. You may need to leave your home in a hurry and go somewhere you've never been for shelter, food, and health care.

Those are things you can't control. But, you can be self-determined and use Supported Decision-Making with people you trust to make a plan for what to do in an emergency. That way, when an emergency happens, you'll be ready and can put your plan into action.

This guide includes some things you can do and ways you can use Supported Decision-Making to get ready for emergencies.



MAKE A LIST OF WHAT YOU NEED IN AN EMERGENCY

The first thing to do is think about what you'll need to get through an emergency. Imagine that you have no power and that you can't leave your home because of damage from a storm. What would you need to survive for a week or more? What are the things you absolutely must have to get by?

You can use Supported Decision-Making to work with people you trust who can help you think of and make a list of things you need to stay healthy and safe.

We recommend that you include:

- Food and bottled water to last at least a week.
- A charger and battery pack for your cell phone, if you have one.
- A radio and batteries so you can listen for news updates.
- A first aid kit.
- Any equipment you need, like a wheelchair, hearing aid, eyeglasses, or other assistive technology, and supplies like batteries to keep them working.
- Your medicine and a list of the medicines you take, what you take them for, the dose you take, and how you can get refills.
- A copy of your insurance card.
- Supplies for your service animal, if you have one, for at least a week.

Once you've made your list, you should make sure that you have those things in your home at all times. That way, if you have to wait out a storm or other emergency in your home, you'll know you have what you need to get by until it's safe to leave.



MAKE A LIST OF YOUR SUPPORTERS

Your supporters are people you trust, who help you live your best life. They can be family, friends, neighbors, or professionals you work with like doctors, case managers, counselors, job coaches, or personal care attendants.

Think about who your supporters are and how they help you. For example: your doctors provide medical care and prescribe your medication. Your friends

and family members help you do things in the community and in your day-to-day life. Your personal care attendant helps you take care of yourself around the house and in the community. Your case manager helps you set up supports and take part in activities.

All of these people support you and can help you in an emergency. So, you should make a list of your supporters, how they help you, and how you can get in touch with them in an emergency.

Your list should include their name, address, telephone number, cell phone number and email.

For example, your list might say this for your doctor and personal care attendant:

Dr. Jada Jackson

Gives me medical care and prescribes my medicine

Address: 555 Main Street,
Jefferson City, Missouri.

Email: JadaJackson@DrJackson.com

Office phone: 555-555-5555

Cell phone: 333-333-3333

Thomas Jones, Personal Care Attendant.

Helps me take care of myself in my home
and in the community

Address: 111 South Street,
Jefferson City, Missouri.

Email: TommyJones@email.com

Office phone: 555-444-333

Cell Phone: 444-333-2222

You can use Supported Decision-Making to work with your supporters and make the list. They can help you identify people who should be on your list, talk to them about how they can help you and how you can get in touch with them in an emergency, and put the list together.

The “Setting the Wheels in Motion” guide⁴, at <http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/sites/default/files/Supported-Decision-Making-Teams-Setting-the-Wheels-in-Motion.pdf>, has worksheets that can help make your list by thinking about the kinds of help you want, when you want it, and who you want to help you. The guide was designed to help parents work with their children with disabilities, but you can also use it work with the people in your life.



MAKE A “GO BAG”

In an emergency, you may have to leave your home in a hurry and go to a shelter. To prepare for those times, you should pack a bag or suitcase you can take with you that has the things that are the most important for your health and safety. We call this a “Go Bag.”

This is another time to use Supported Decision-Making. Ask the people who know you best what you should have in your Go Bag. Your doctor can tell you the most important medications you take

and might give you an extra prescription for emergencies. Your counselors or case managers can help you make a list of the things you need to stay in touch with them, like an extra cell phone battery pack or a list of people you can contact.

We recommend that your Go Bag have, at least:

- Your medications and a list describing what they're for and how you can refill them in an emergency if you can't reach your doctor.
- A copy of your insurance card and identification material like a driver's license or some other form of ID.
- The list you made of your supporters and how to contact them.
- The list you made of the things you need for your health and safety.
- Communication devices, if you use them.
- Extra hearing aids, batteries, and glasses, if you use them.
- An extra cell phone charger or battery pack, if you use one.
- Some cash or credit cards.
- Extra clothes and personal hygiene supplies.
- Supplies for your service animal, if you have one.

After you've worked with your supporters to make the list of what you need for your Go Bag, make sure you have those things in your home either packed or kept in a place where you can pack them in a hurry. Also, you should review your Go Bag at least once a year or when you've had a change in your life or health to make sure it has what you need.

MAKE AN EMERGENCY PLAN AND PRACTICE IT!

As we said, emergencies are confusing and scary. When they happen, it may be hard to think or figure out what to do. That's why you should make a plan for emergencies and practice it with your supporters. That way, you'll know what to do, and how to do it, in an emergency.

You can use Supported Decision-Making to talk with your supporters about what they will do to help you in an emergency and how you'll be able to contact them. You should also work with them to develop back up-plans to make sure you'll be able to get what you need for your health and safety if you can't get in touch with them. For example, ask your doctors for the name and telephone number of another doctor in case you can't reach them and need a refill of your medicine.

We recommend that you include the following things in your Emergency Plan:

- Where you will go in an emergency and how you can get there.
- What you will take with you.

- The place where you and your supporters will meet in an emergency. If you're not able to go there, how you'll contact your supporters to tell them where you are and to find out where they are.
- How you'll make sure your supporters have up-to-date versions of the lists you made of the things you need and the contact information for your other supporters.
- A list of people who will contact you in an emergency to make sure you're ok.
- The names and contact information of people you can contact for support if you can't reach your supporters.
- A list of the things you'll need if you have to evacuate to a shelter and where you keep them or can find them
- How you'll get medicine, food, and other supplies while you're out of your home.
- How you can take care of your service animal, if you have one, while you're out of your home.

Once you've developed your Emergency Plan, practice it! Work with your supporters to set up "dry runs" where you pretend it's an emergency and you have to go to a shelter, or you're stuck in your

home. Practice packing your Go Bag. Go through your supplies so you know that you have what you need if you can't leave your home. Check your lists of supporters and the things you need to confirm that they're up to date and your supporters have them.

We recommend that you practice your Emergency Plan regularly and take part in any emergency exercises in your community. You should also review your plan and update it whenever you've had a change in your life or health. That way, when the next emergency happens, you'll be sure that your information is up to date and that you and your supporters know what to do and how to do it!

LEARN ABOUT AND CONTACT EMERGENCY SERVICES IN ADVANCE

In an emergency, first responders will be helping and rescuing people. Shelters will be setting up and making sure they have supplies. Paramedics and hospitals will be working overtime to take care of people who are hurt. In all that chaos, they may not know how to help you or have the time to learn the best ways to support you.

Therefore, we recommend that you use Supported Decision-Making to learn about and reach out to emergency workers in advance to make sure they know who you are, what you need, and the best ways for you to work with them. You can find the contact information for the Local Emergency Management Agency for your county here: <https://sema.dps.mo.gov>.

We also recommend you contact your local fire department, ambulance services, and the Red Cross. You find the Red Cross serving your area here: <https://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter.html>.

If you need accessible transportation or have a service animal, let them know. Give them the lists of your supporters and the things you need in an emergency.

You should ask them to keep your information on file. When you practice your Emergency Plan, ask if they have your information and go over it with them again. That way, they'll be prepared to help you in an emergency. Also, ask them what you can do to help them be prepared for you.

Finally, you should learn about and plan to use the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Case Management Program. When the President declares that an area has been in a disaster, the program helps people in those areas work with case managers to set up a recovery plan. You can learn more about the Program here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnjmTi0LC7o>

By working together and supporting each other, you'll make sure that they can help you stay safe and healthy!

References

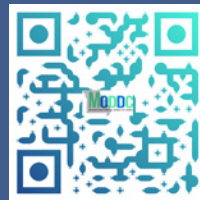
1. Blanck, P. & Martinis, J. (2015). "The right to make choices": The national resource center for SDM. *Inclusion* 3(1), 24-33.
2. Wehmeyer, M.L., & Schwartz, M, (1997). Self-determination and positive adult outcomes: A follow-up study of youth with mental retardation or learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 63(2), 245-255; 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.
3. There are many guides that can help you prepare for an emergency. These include:
Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council. (n.d.) Preparedness begins with you. Retrieved from: [file:///C:/Users/BB1%20ADMIN/Downloads/Preparedness-Begins-with-You%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/BB1%20ADMIN/Downloads/Preparedness-Begins-with-You%20(1).pdf)
FEMA. (n.d.) Preparing for disaster for people with disabilities and special needs. Retrieved from: https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness___Disaster_Recovery/General_Preparedness___Recovery/Home/A4497.pdf
American Red Cross. (n.d.) Disaster safety for people with disabilities. Retrieved from: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/disaster-safety-for-people-with-disabilities.html>.
4. Francisco, S. & Martinis, J. (n.d.) Supported decision-making teams: Setting the wheels in motion. Retrieved from: <http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/sites/default/files/Supported-Decision-Making-Teams-Setting-55the-Wheels-in-Motion.pdf>,



We Can Help!

Whether you're just starting to think about making an Emergency Plan or want help finding and working with supporters and emergency service providers, 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



OUR NETWORK PARTNERS

**Missouri Protection and
Advocacy Services**

(800) 392-8667
moadvocacy.org

**UMKC Institute for Human
Development, UCEDD**

(816) 235-1770
ihd.umkc.edu

This document was developed in partnership and with support from the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (PL 106-402) and Something Else Solutions, LLC (somethingelsejm@gmail.com).