



# Supported Decision Making Workbook

Inclusion Saskatchewan's Supported Decision Making Series





# INCLUSION SASKATCHEWAN

supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities

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These committee members, many of whom identify as Self-Advocates and as people with intellectual disabilities, met with Inclusion Saskatchewan staff every week for over a year to create this workbook. Together we listened, learned, and thought of how we can best support people to make decisions. The most important thing we learned about Supported Decision Making is that people must be respected and feel connected to the people in their life. We are excited to share this workbook with you and hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it.

For more information about Inclusion Saskatchewan, visit [www.inclusionsk.com](http://www.inclusionsk.com)



## Meet Other Self-Advocates Through ICAN!

You can connect with other Self-Advocates in Saskatchewan by joining ICAN (The Individual and Collective Advocacy Network). Inclusion Saskatchewan's members teach people how to be more inclusive by giving presentations or being a part of committees. ICAN members have created resources like this workbook. Sharing ideas, talking about important issues and encouraging positive change is what ICAN is all about.

Anyone over the age of 18 can join ICAN. It is free to join and you can decide how often you participate. [Find more information here.](#)

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"I had a new support come into my home. I was used to supports coming in, looking at my care plan, and providing me with support based on that. Instead, she introduced herself and said, "I'd like you to tell me what I can do for you." I was surprised that she actually cared to hear about my wishes directly from me. The next time she came, she remembered everything we had talked about. It made me very confident in her ability to support me and I felt very comfortable with her."

- Charlene, INSK Self-Advocate



## Chapter One

### Introduction

Supported Decision Making is a process to help you make decisions with the support that is right for you. You will find worksheets and tips in this workbook that can help you tell others what is important to you. You will also find information about your rights so that you can feel confident talking about what you want or need.

The Supported Decision Making process can look different for everyone. You can make your own decision-making process and it can look different each time you make a decision. You may need more support with some decisions than others or you may want different people involved depending on the type of decision you are making. There may even be times where you decide that you do not want any support and this should be honoured.

You should always feel comfortable with who is involved in the process because you get to choose who is involved! The people you choose to support you are called your supporters. Your supporters should understand the process so they can support you in the best way possible. We have even created a supporters section just for them. Your supporters should always respect your right to make decisions and have a good idea of who you are and what your wishes and goals are. If you would like, your supporters can help you go through this workbook and they may learn even more about who you are.

## What do I need to know about Supported Decision Making?

- It is a way for you to make decisions with support that you choose.
- It is a process where you are at the centre of making decisions about your life.
- It is based on your dreams, goals, and wishes.
- It helps protect what is important to you and makes sure that your rights are respected.
- It helps other people understand your choices.
- It connects you with the people in your life who can support you.

## Who can be my supporters?

- Your supporters can be family, friends, or anyone else that you trust and feel comfortable with. You can have as many supporters as you would like, but it is a good idea to have 3-5 people who you spend time with regularly.
- You should be able to choose your supporters. Your supporters can change over time or can be different depending on the decision you are making.
- You get to decide which supporters you would like involved when you are making a decision. You do not have to invite each of your supporters to help you with every decision you make.



### **When you have a Guardian or Co-Decision Maker**

If you have a guardian or co-decision maker, you may need to include them depending on the type of decision you are making. A court document should have been given to you and you should have received support to understand what the document means.

If you are an adult and someone has told you that they are your guardian or co-decision maker, but you have not been given any paperwork, you can ask for more information. You can ask a supporter you trust to help you with this.

**If you feel your guardian is not acting in your best interests, please contact Inclusion Saskatchewan for more information about supports in the community that may help you.**

### **What is the role of my supporters?**

Your supporters must commit to listening carefully to your wishes and ideas and they should make sure that you feel as comfortable as possible. You may not always agree with what they say, and you should feel safe to express yourself if you do not agree.

The most important thing about Supported Decision Making is that you feel supported.

Your supporters should	Your supporters should not
Help you understand your choices and decisions.	Make choices or decisions without you.
Help you get information and help you understand the information to make decisions.	Support dangerous or illegal choices (your supporters should help you understand your options).
Help you tell your decisions to other people.	Tell others about your decisions without your permission.

### What kinds of decisions can I ask for support with?

- You get to choose how, when, where, why, and for how long you would like support.
- You can ask for support with making big decisions and also with smaller, everyday decisions.
- If you want support with making a decision, there are tools you can use to guide you.
- You get to change your mind if you want, and your supporters should be understanding if you do.



"I want people to know that my rights are not different than anyone else's rights - they are important and should never be ignored. Sometimes people think that people with disabilities don't have rights because people don't always see us as equal people. Everyone should be able to live a good life in the community and be respected. If you don't know about the rights of people with disabilities, please educate yourself."

- Tina, INSK Board Member



## Chapter Two

### My Rights

#### Rights

Rights are laws passed by government. It is something that helps protect your ability to live a good life. Everyone has rights in Canada that cannot be taken away from them. For example, as a Canadian citizen, if you are over the age of 18, you have the right to vote in an election.

It is important to know that no one should take away your rights. If this happens, it means that someone made a mistake and that the mistake needs to be fixed. Knowing about your rights can help you make sure that your rights are respected. Everyone in your life should support you to have your rights upheld.

#### Freedom

Freedom means a person has the power to believe something, say something, or do something. You are free to believe and say what you like, but you are not free to take another person's rights away. For example: You have the freedom to believe what you want to believe. You can express your beliefs through speech, art, dance, movement, writing, and many other ways.

It is important to know that if you commit a crime that breaks a Canadian law, you may lose some of your freedom. An example of this is when someone breaks a serious law and they go to jail.

## Discrimination

Discrimination is when a person is left out, singled out, or denied an opportunity that other people have based on their gender, age, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation (LGBTQ2+). For example, it would be discrimination if someone was not hired for a job because of their disability.

It is important to know that sometimes people notice that there are differences, and these differences should be accepted. But if a person leaves you out because of that difference, it may be discrimination.

## How are my rights protected in Canada?

Every person has the right to be treated equally and with respect. In Canada, your rights are protected by a document called The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter is a part of a larger document called The Constitution, which is like a rule book for our country. The Charter helps protect us and makes sure our rights are respected and honoured in all levels of government. This includes laws, programs, and services.

## The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

In 1982 with the adoption of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada became the first country to guarantee rights to persons with disabilities.

There are 2 very important sections of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Section 2 and Section 15.

## From The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Section 2

### *Fundamental Freedoms*

*2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:*  
*(a) freedom of conscience and religion;*  
*(b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression,*  
*including freedom of the press and other media of*  
*communication;*  
*(c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and*  
*(d) freedom of association.*

### What this means:

- This section tells us that all Canadians have the right to make decisions about how they want to live and to have their decisions respected. This is called, 'self-determination'.
- This section also talks about your right to express yourself. An important part of self-expression is making decisions.
- If our right to express ourselves by making decisions is not respected, we are not equal citizens.

**From The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**  
**Section 15**

*Equality before and under law and equal protection and benefit of law*

*15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability*

*Affirmative action programs*

*(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.*

**What this means:**

- This sections tells us that you have the right to be considered equal to all other Canadian citizens no matter your race, your gender, how old you are, or if you experience a disability. This means even if you have a disability, you have the right to make decisions.

- Section 15-2 says a person with a disability has the right to the support that will help them live their lives and make decisions. This is called the right to accommodations.
- We all have people in our life who help us, including friends, family, paid supports, medical professionals, and more. It is okay to get help when and how you want help.
- You have the right to choose and access the supports that are a good fit for you.
- The people you choose to help you make decisions have a responsibility to uphold your wishes. They must also help you gather all of the information for you to make the decision you feel is best for you.
- A person with a disability may need more support and accommodations. This does not mean that their rights are less important than other Canadians or that those rights should be taken away. No matter what supports a person needs, they still have a right to make decisions.

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In March, 2010, Canada signed a document called the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This means that Canada agrees with what the United Nations said about the rights of people with disabilities. The document says that people with disabilities:

- Are worthy of respect (this means that people with disabilities deserve the same respect as any other person).

- Should have the freedom to make choices.
- Have the right to independence. Sometimes people with disabilities need other people to help them so that they can live the way they choose to live.

## Other documents that speak to the rights of people with disabilities

### The Canadian Human Rights Act

The Canadian Human Rights Act ensures that people are treated equally when they are employed by or are receiving services from the federal government, First Nations governments, or private companies that the federal government oversees, which includes things like banks. This means that if you work for, or receive services from the federal government, your rights are the same as everyone else's and do not change if you have a disability.

### The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code ensures that people are treated equally when they are receiving services from the provincial government. The Code states that everyone in Saskatchewan has equal rights and cannot be treated differently based on things like race or disability.

### Comprehensive Personal Planning and Support Policy (CPP&SP)

The CPP&SP guides Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) staff and agencies to support people with intellectual disabilities in Saskatchewan in respectful, person-centred ways. Services and Supports for individuals experiencing intellectual disability are guided by this policy.

[Click here for a Plain Language version of this policy.](#)

## The Saskatchewan Disability Strategy

The Government of Saskatchewan spoke with members of the disability community to understand how to improve supports and services. They created this 10-year strategy that aims to support people who experience disability to live the life they choose.

[Click here for more info about the Saskatchewan Disability Strategy.](#)

## Saskatchewan Person-Centred Framework:

Person-centred means that the needs of the person with the disability are at the centre and their team listens to them to understand what they need and want in life. The Person-Centred framework supports the disability community to be more person-centred. The framework includes the individual, their family, and other stakeholders.

[Click here for tools and resources to support person-centred practices and culture.](#)

## Do you have questions about your rights?

- You can look for more information online. Make sure you are looking up rights for Saskatchewan or Canadian citizens in your search. Every country has different rights for their citizens.
- Ask organizations to provide accessible, plain language information to you, or help explain information in a way that helps you understand your rights.
- You can ask someone in your life to help you learn more about your rights.



"Sometimes it takes people time to get to know me because I can be shy at first, so I like when people talk to me and try to get to know me. Sometimes when people first meet me, they don't think I'm able to do much or that I don't want to make my own decisions because I'm quiet, but I do, and people just have to take the time to get to know me and listen."

- Darren, INSK Self-Advocate



## Chapter Three

### Who I Am

Use this worksheet to share information that is helpful for your supporters to know. If you have known your supporters for a long time, you may be sharing new ideas or feelings. If you have new supporters, it is helpful for them to know what is important to you.

What am I proud of? This could be anything about who I am, things or people in my life, accomplishments, or anything else.

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What do people say that they like, admire, or appreciate about me?

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Who are the important people in my life?

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What is important to me? What makes me feel happy?

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What activities am I involved in? What are my interests?

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What is important for me to be healthy and safe? For example, with eating, medical appointments, or with how I spend my money.

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What decisions do I think I need support with? These could be big decisions or everyday decisions.

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Who do I want as my supporter(s)? Why did I choose this/these people?  
Remember that I get to decide how and when I receive their support.

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Is there a time when I wasn't supported to make a decision? How did  
that make me feel?

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"For my medical care, I wouldn't know what decisions to make for myself because I've never really thought about it. No one has ever talked about it to me or asked me. Now that I have been doing this work, I decided to call my doctor and asked for an updated physical and to talk about my wishes for my medical care."

- Jamie, INSK Self-Advocate



## Chapter Four

### How I Communicate

Communication is how you share ideas, express yourself and build relationships. This chapter will help others understand what accommodations you may need to communicate. Remember that you have the right to accommodations and accessible communication.

I communicate by/with (check or circle all that apply):

- Talking
- Writing or typing
- Pictures
- Sign Language
- Pointing to words
- Assistive technologies, using a device or using a voice app
- Lip reading
- Hearing aid
- Facial expressions or other gestures
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- I may not communicate in a way you will understand, please contact:

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
(name) (phone)

Is there anything else your supporters should know about how you communicate? For example, what does it look like when you are happy, excited, frustrated, or sad?

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"When I was a teen, I was made to share a room with my 5 year old sister. This was uncomfortable for me because I felt that I had no autonomy or the capacity to make my own decisions. I didn't have a place where I could emotionally debrief from what happened throughout the day and felt like I was handcuffed to a room with someone who had no experiences I could relate to. During the decision-making process, I was excluded. My parents had the conversation without me, and they were making major decisions on my behalf. Had I been included in the discussion I could have made suggestions such as having blinds in the room to give us each some privacy. I didn't feel that it was emotionally healthy to share a room with someone more than half my age."

- Aiden, INSK Self-Advocate



## Chapter Five

### How I Like To Be Supported

You know what you like, what you need and what will help you feel comfortable. It is helpful to tell the people in your life so they can try to support you. This chapter will guide your supporters to know more about you before they support you to make decisions.

How do I like to have information given to me?

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Where do I like to make decisions? For example, in a room with windows, in my home, or in a nice cool room?

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Is there a time of day that I prefer to make decisions? For example, after I have had a cup of coffee, late at night, or early in the morning?

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Do I prefer one-on-one or group conversations with my supporters?

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Do I need extra time at meetings to talk, process information, or to take breaks?

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Is there anything else my supporters need to know about me?

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"I used to have a landline but I thought I would feel safer with a cell phone. That way, if I have a problem when I am out, I can call someone for help. I asked my mom and nephew to help me learn about my options so they took me to the store and the person at the store was very helpful. My mom and nephew helped me pick a phone and a plan that works for me. I feel safer knowing I can call someone if I have an emergency."

- Leanne, INSK Self-Advocate



## Chapter Six

### Making a Supported Decision

Before you make a decision, answer these questions to help you or your supporters understand your needs. Think about how you can feel more comfortable as you make decisions in your life.

Do I have my basic needs met? For example, am I hungry, thirsty, or tired?

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Am I feeling overwhelmed? If yes, why am I feeling this way?

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Am I feeling comfortable in the room or environment I am in? If not, is there a different environment where I would be more comfortable?

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Am I feeling connected to my supporters? If not, what do I need from my supporters?

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Am I trying to please anyone? If so, how could I be more comfortable sharing my own wishes and not what I think my supporters want me to share?

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Do I feel respected and heard? If not, is there something my supporters can do to help me feel respected and heard?

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**Tip: Take Your Time**

Making a decision can be a complicated process, so take as much time as you need to make it. If you need to have more than one meeting with your supporters that's ok.

# My Supported Decision

What decision needs to be made? What is the outcome that I want, or what do I want to happen? What are my goals?

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Do I need or want support to make this decision or can I do it by myself?

- I can make this decision myself.
- I would like support making this decision.

If I want support, who do I want to support me? I can have as many supporters as I want. My supporters should understand my short-term and long-term goals.

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### Tip: Working with Your Supporters

If you know what you want to do but want to talk about your decision with someone, you can tell them. You may start off by saying something like, “I already know what I want to do, but I would like to talk with someone about my decision.” If you change your mind, you can always ask for help later.

**If you feel like you don't have the right people in your life to help you make a decision, contact Inclusion Saskatchewan, or another community support that you trust.**

What are my strengths?

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What do I need support with?

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What other information do I need to make the decision? If I need my supporters to gather more information, I will be clear about who will be helping me with what.

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Some people like to make a Pros and Cons list where they list the good things that could happen on one side of the list and the bad things that could happen on the other. Putting thoughts in a list may help see what decision will work best for you.

<b>Pros</b> (good things that may happen)	<b>Cons</b> (bad things that may happen)

I've made my decision. Is this decision the best option for me? Will this decision help me reach my goals?

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How do I feel about my decision?

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What did I learn making this decision?

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**Tip: Making the Final Decision**

Most of the time, you will be making the final decision but there may be times that you ask a supporter to help you with your final decision.

Did making this decision work out how I wanted it to?

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Is there another decision I would like support with?

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**Signature of Decider:** I am signing this Supported Decision Making Agreement because I made a supported decision. I will tell the people in my life how I want to be supported. I know that I can change my mind about a decision, or who is involved, at any time.

My Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Tip: Making Your Next Decision**

Every decision is an opportunity for you to be independent. When you make your next decision, remember to begin at step one each time, as every decision is different and you may decide to have different supporters or share new information.





## Chapter Seven Empowering Myself

Depending on the type of decision, the Supported Decision Making process may be very easy and go smoothly, or it may take a while and there may be some challenges that come up as you work through your options. Even if some challenges arise, it's important to celebrate all of your successes, no matter how small they are.

Relationships are the key to Supported Decision Making so keeping your connections to the important people in our life is very important. While your supporters are there to support you, it's also important to let them know how much you appreciate them. You should also let your supporters know if they make you feel uncomfortable or have done something you do not agree with. Learning about each other and taking care of each other is all part of the process.

As you become more comfortable with Supported Decision Making, you can also lend your support to others. When we let others know that we are there for them, it can help them gain confidence in their decision making. If you feel comfortable, you may choose to share your experience of being supported to make decisions.

Supported Decision Making allows us to feel empowered to advocate for ourselves and others. As you continue using Supported Decision Making, you will become more comfortable standing up for yourself and your wishes. Make sure you take some time to look back at how far you have come and how much you have grown!