Nuts and Bolts: Wisconsin’s Supported Decision-Making Agreement Law
Today we will talk about:

• Challenges and fears families face when people with disabilities (physical, I/DD, mental health) transition into adulthood,

• Options including Supported decision-making (SDM), powers of attorney, and guardianship.

• Myths parents, and professionals have about guardianship.

• Long-term consequences of overly restrictive guardianships.

• Wisconsin’s Supported Decision-Making law & using SDM agreements.

• Ways to presume competence and engage with people using SDM agreements and their Supporters.
Wisconsin law presumes all adults are competent to make decisions

- Decision-making is a learned skill.
- Everyone needs opportunity, experience, and support in order to learn how to make well-informed decisions.
- Ways people practice decision-making before age 18
  - Simple daily choices (what to wear, what to eat, asking preferences, allowing ‘no’ to be a choice)
  - Choosing interests, ways to spend free time, who to interact with and how
  - Practice with increasing responsibility, and “higher stakes” decisions
People with greater self determination are

- Healthier
- More independent
- More well adjusted
- Better able to recognize and resist abuse (safer)

**HIGHEST correlation to impact on people’s lives.**

- People exercise rights
- People are treated fairly
- People are respected
- People choose where and with whom to live
- People choose services
Cultural bias (Ableism) presumes people with disabilities are incompetent

What can Ableism look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Visible disability, assume person has guardian.</td>
<td>• Deference to family member over decisions made about the person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Invisible disability, presume ability/skills, fail to recognize stress,</td>
<td>• Deference to family members in meetings, even when person with a</td>
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<tr>
<td>coping strategies/behavior.</td>
<td>disability is present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assume whomever is with the person makes decisions for them</td>
<td>• Lack of involvement of person with a disability in decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<td>• See guardianship, POAs, SDMs as the same</td>
<td>• Lack of practice with small/low stakes and larger/higher stakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Policies, protocols assume there is a guardian</td>
<td>decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policies, protocols do not include space for</td>
<td>• Actions driven by service system (medical, disability services/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporters, POAs, or informal attendees</td>
<td>supports, schools etc.) needs/requirements not person with a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural bias (Ableism) presumes people with disabilities are incompetent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does Ableism feel like/teach person with a disability?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Learned helplessness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t control my own life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I can’t do everything perfectly, then I can’t do it at all</td>
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### Transitioning to adulthood is scary and hard

#### Challenges for Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges for Families</th>
<th>Fears of Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navigating Social Security eligibility</td>
<td>How can I advocate for my person for supports/services/medical care?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s LTC system to adult LTC (functional screen, selecting program)</td>
<td>Will they be safe? How can I prevent abuse/neglect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 18-21 Transition program</td>
<td>Are they ready to make decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric to new doctors</td>
<td>What if they make the “wrong” decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating employment (DVR etc.)</td>
<td>Will people listen to my person if I’m not the guardian?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating other programs (housing, Foodshare, etc.)</td>
<td>How can I keep them eligible for public programs? How will they navigate system without me?</td>
</tr>
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Families are also working, managing caregiving challenges, transportation, appts, other children etc. while taking on these added challenges.

All these decision points are occurring at the same time and are time sensitive. Families feel pressure and expectation they make final decisions quickly (crisis decision mode).
**Current formal tools for people who need help with decisions**

- **Release forms**
  - Person signs release forms authorizing a specific person(s) access to certain kinds of records (health, financial, etc.).
  - Release forms may provide one-time or time-limited access to records, others releases may remain in effect in perpetuity.

- **Supported Decision Making agreements (Wisconsin)**
  - Person makes all their own decisions.
  - The Supported Decision-Making agreement outlines what types of decisions the Person wants support with and the role of the Supporter.
  - Agreement can be changed or stopped at any time by the Person or Supporter.

- **Conservatorship**
  - The person voluntarily petitions the court to appoint a conservator and nominates the person they want to manage their finances and property.
  - The person may apply for termination of the conservatorship, which the court will grant unless the person is deemed incompetent.

- **Power of Attorney**
  - Powers of Attorney (POA) designate another (an Agent) individual to make certain decisions (generally health care or financial) on the Person’s behalf.
  - POAs can be set up in different ways. Some POAs are activated (or triggered) only when a person is incapacitated.
  - Or a POA can be written so an individual other that the Person is always the designated decision maker in certain areas.

- **Representative payee**
  - The Social Security Administration (SSA) appoints an individual/organization to receive SSI/SSDI benefits for a person who cannot manage or direct the management of their own benefits.
  - To change a Representative Payee, the Person must complete an application process with the SSA.

- **Guardianship**
  - Requires a court finding the person to be legally incompetent.
  - Removes some or most of a person’s civil rights to make their own decisions.
  - Transfers decision making authority from the Person to a court-appointed Guardian.
  - Once guardianship is in place it is difficult (and costly) to modify or reverse the guardianship; Courts have oversight. Changes must be made through a formal court process.
Administrative tasks required of guardians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guardian of Estate</th>
<th>Guardian of the person</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duties (Ch 54.19) include management of real and personal property and money management including rep payee duties.</td>
<td>Duties (Ch 54.25) include securing necessary care and services for the ward and reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative requirements (Ch 54.19 and Ch 54.62) requires at least annual accounting of ward’s assets, income, investments, receipts/expenditures of guardian, etc.</td>
<td>Administrative requirements include an annual report on the condition of the ward to the court and county. <strong>Counties develop reporting requirements</strong> and may require more than categories listed in statutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courts may require more frequent accounting. Courts may set their own financial oversight requirements</strong> within a county. Some are onerous requiring court authorization before spending even low dollar amounts.</td>
<td><strong>The guardian of the estate and guardian of the person have separate and distinct duties and powers under the statute. Frequently the same person may be appointed both a guardian of the estate and person, but that is not always the case.</strong></td>
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### Common misconceptions about Guardianship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FAMILIES hear or believe</strong></th>
<th><strong>PROFESSIONALS hear or believe</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I need to be a guardian to attend an IEP or other meeting”</td>
<td>“All people with disabilities have a guardian to make decisions for them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If you are the guardian, you make all the decisions”</td>
<td>“I can’t ask for the person who claims to be the guardian for documentation of their appointment”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I tell the court how we want the guardianship set up”</td>
<td>“When a person has a guardian, the guardian makes all the decisions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A guardianship can easily be changed later”</td>
<td>“I must call and ask the guardian for permission for all decisions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can pick who will be the next guardian”</td>
<td>“A person with a disability needs any help, they must have a legal guardian”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If I’m a guardian and my ward violates the law, they will not go to jail.”</td>
<td>“All guardians are acting in the best interest of their wards”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
<td><em>(false)</em></td>
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</table>
### Serious long-term consequences of guardianship

<table>
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<tr>
<th>For families</th>
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<tr>
<td>Petitioning for guardianship is rarely done in the context of long-term family future planning.</td>
<td>Once the Court has found someone incompetent and appointed a guardian, it is difficult (and costly) to reverse or change. The court approves or denies petitions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Many petitioners do not know what rights they are taking away</td>
<td>Courts are charged with oversight of guardianship cases. They may appoint a new guardian at any time for cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many petitioners are not aware limited guardianship is an option</td>
<td>When there is no willing or appropriate successor to a family guardian, courts will appoint another guardian. It may be a corporate guardian. Many corporate guardians have multiple wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts are not always willing to grant limited guardianships.</td>
<td>Guardians have roles, responsibilities, and administrative duties required by state law.</td>
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## Serious long-term consequences of guardianship

| People with disabilities are rarely consulted about decision-making support needs or guardianship | Many Guardians maintain or assume increasing control over daily decision-making regardless of the terms of the guardianship |
| May not be aware someone is petitioning to become their guardian. | |
| Many wards are unaware of what rights they have and what rights have been removed. | Most providers and third parties assume the guardian makes all decisions. |
| No training for wards about the rights they retain, ways to reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect. | Third parties rarely check to confirm who is the guardian or what the terms of the guardianship are. |
| Many people with disabilities experience and describe an erosion of their rights. | Once imposed, a guardianship usually lasts a lifetime. |
• The gravity of a judicial declaration of legal incompetency cannot be understated.

• Wis. Stats. Ch. 54 reflects the serious impact appointment of a guardian may have on an individual’s life, freedom, and decision-making autonomy

• The ward loses their civil rights to make decisions about some or most things in his or her life.

• The most restrictive option should not be the first option (but it often is the only option presented or considered).
Even when full guardianship is granted...

Guardians of the person shall do the following (Wis. Stats. Ch 54.25(2)(d)3.a and b)

- Place the least possible restriction on the individual's personal liberty and exercise of constitutional and statutory rights, and promote the greatest possible integration of the individual into his or her community.

- Make diligent efforts to identify and honor the individual's preferences with respect to choice of place of living, personal liberty and mobility, choice of associates, communication with others, personal privacy, and choices related to sexual expression and procreation. In making a decision to act contrary to the individual's expressed wishes, the guardian shall take into account the individual's understanding of the nature and consequences of the decision, the level of risk involved, the value of the opportunity for the individual to develop decision-making skills, and the need of the individual for wider experience.
Wisconsin’s Supported Decision-Making law
Three principles of Supported Decision-Making

1. Everyone has the right to make choices
2. People can get help making choices without giving up that right
3. People will often need help in understanding, making, and communicating their choices
Who in Wisconsin can use Supported Decision-Making agreements?

• While all of us use Supported Decision-Making as strategy in our daily lives, only certain people in Wisconsin can use formal Supported Decision-Making agreements.

• People who can use Supported Decision-Making agreements are defined within Wisconsin’s law as people with “functional impairments” and include:
  
  • People of any age with degenerative diseases
  • People of any age with conditions that substantially interfere with the ability to provide self care
  • People with physical disabilities or conditions that substantially limits one or more of their major life activities
  • People with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities
  • People with mental health conditions
What Supported Decision-Making agreements do NOT do.

They do not restrict a Person’s rights to make any decisions.

- Having a supported decision-making agreement does not preclude the Person from acting independently of the agreement or making decisions that the Supporter does not agree with.
- The Person is always in control of their own decisions.

It does not give Supporters any new rights

- The Supporter has no authority to make the person’s decisions. The Person makes all their own decisions.
- Supporters cannot sign legal documents for the Person or bind a Person to a legal agreement
- Supporters have only the authority/role granted by the Person under the terms of the supported decision-making agreement.
What is the role of the Supporter?

The possible roles of the Supporter are limited to:

1. Access, collect, or obtain information relevant to a decision area the Person has chosen
2. Helping the person understand that information;
3. Helping the Person understand their options, responsibilities, and consequences of that person's life decisions, without making those decisions on behalf of that person
4. Assisting with communicating the Person’s decision to others
What is the role of the Supporter?

• The law limits access to personal information. Only information that is relevant to the decision with which a Supporter has been asked to assist is accessible by the Supporter.
  • Note: A Supporter is allowed to access records that require a release only if the Person has signed a release allowing the Supporter to see the information

• Supporters are required to ensure all personal information they access when fulfilling a Supported Decision-Making agreement is kept privileged and confidential and is not subject to unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.
Can a Person have more than one Supporter or agreement?

- A Person may have multiple Supported Decision-Making agreements.
- The Person can choose different Supporters for different decision types.
- The Person can identify more than one Supporter in the same Supported Decision-Making agreement.
How are Supported Decision-Making agreements changed or terminated?

• The Person is always in control of their own decisions and their Supported Decision-Making agreement.

• The Person can include a specific date when the agreement ends.

• Either the Person or the Supporter can revoke a Supported Decision-Making agreement at any time.

• Agreements are automatically revoked if the Supporter has a substantiated allegation of neglect or abuse of the person, the Supporter has been found criminally liable for abuse or neglect, or there is a restraining order against the Supporter.
## More features of Wisconsin’s SDM law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liability Protections for Professionals</th>
<th>Protections against fraud, abuse, neglect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals who receive a Supported Decision-Making agreement are required to rely on that agreement as a legal expression of the Person’s wishes.</td>
<td>Anyone who suspects that a Supporter is abusing, neglecting, or financially exploiting a person with a functional impairment may report their concerns to the elder or adult at risk agency, or appropriate law enforcement agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liability protections for professionals and Supporters are included for actions done in the context of a valid Supported Decision-Making agreement</td>
<td>Those who are required by law to report abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation (i.e. mandated reporters) must still follow those requirements.</td>
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</table>

### Other changes made by SDM legislation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A supported decision-making agreement may not be used as evidence of incapacity or incompetency of the Person.</th>
<th>In guardianship proceedings judges are now required to consider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools are now required to provide students and parents with information on supported decision-making and other alternatives to guardianship.</td>
<td>1. Whether any alternatives to guardianship, including Supported Decision-Making, have been tried, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Whether less restrictive means, including Supported Decision-Making, could be used.</td>
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</table>
Using Supported Decision-Making Agreements
Supported Decision-Making agreements

• Agreements can be used for any decisions the Person feels they need additional support—such as housing, health care, financial affairs, employment, etc.

• Supported Decision-Making agreements are flexible and can be updated easily as the Person’s ability and capacity to make decisions changes over time.
What is included in a supported decision-making agreement?

The law includes standard elements that must be included in all Supported Decision-Making agreements.

- The name and contact information of the Supporter(s)
- Type(s) of decisions the Person wants Support with;
- The role(s) the Person elects to allow the Supporter to do
- The effective date of the agreement and any end date the Person chooses to specify
- The signatures of the Supporter(s), two witnesses or a notary public
What is included in a supported decision-making agreement?

Types of decisions included on the form:

- Obtaining food, clothing, and shelter
- Taking care of my physical health
- Managing my financial affairs
- Taking care of my mental health
- Applying for public benefits
- Assistance with seeking vocational rehabilitation services and other vocational supports
- Other decisions I have specifically identified that I would like assistance with
What is included in a supported decision-making agreement?

- Check either Yes or No to give permission for a Supporter to help.
- You can also list other kinds of decisions not on the form that you want a Supporter to help with.
- The law presumes if you do not check Yes or No (i.e. leave both options unchecked) that you do not want the Supporter to help with that kind of decision.
Practical Examples
Using Supported Decision-Making agreements
Ensure friends, non-family, or extended family can act as Supporters

- Sometimes the closest relationships are with extended family.
- Family members are not always geographically close, and some people do not have family.
- Many people with functional impairments do have close relationships and social networks with non-family members who want to help.
- Supported Decision-Making agreements ensure that non-family members are recognized as carrying out roles and responsibilities specified by the Person.
Can adjust based on person’s support needs

- Can help people experiencing changes in memory and cognition, and other abilities that may decline over a long period of time.
- Many people need a little help for a long time.
- Allows for a transition to more support when needed.
Places people use SDM agreements

- IEP meetings.
- DVR meetings
- Care plan meetings
- Medical appointments
- Financial planning
- housing/living arrangements,
- choosing a service provider (Examples - internet, cellphone, cleaning service),
- filing taxes etc.
Better communication person to professional

• Helps ensure the Person is clearly understood by medical or other staff.

• People who have challenges with speech, use sign language or communication devices, and/or who are non-verbal communicators might use a Supporter to ensure the other party understands them.
• Supporters can help people understand information and their options in ways that make sense to them.

• A Supporter can help professionals more effectively communicate complex information and understand the person’s questions/concerns.
Resources
Official Wisconsin Supported Decision-Making Agreement form

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed is the Supported Decision-Making Agreement form you requested. The Supported Decision-Making Agreement makes it possible for persons to choose trusted people (called supporters) to help them gather and understand information, compare options, and communicate their decisions to others. Supported decision-making agreements DO NOT restrict the person’s rights to make decisions; the person makes all their own decisions.

Supported decision-making is a way for people with disabilities to get help from trusted family members, friends, and professionals, to help them understand the situations and choices they face so they can make their own decisions. Supported decision-making enables people with disabilities to ask for support where and when they need it. Supported Decision-Making is NOT a form of guardianship or a power of attorney.

When entering into a supported decision-making agreement, those who can provide help in making decisions are called supporters. Supported decision-making agreements DO NOT take away any rights from the person asking for support. Supporters agree to help explain information, answer questions, weigh options, and let others know about decisions that are made. Supporters DO NOT make the decisions.

The form includes a list of decisions the person with a disability wants assistance in making and identifies supporters they trust to help them with those decisions. Be sure to read all four pages of the form carefully and understand it before you complete and sign it. The agreement must be signed with two witnesses who are at least 18 years of age OR by a notary public.

More information is available to assist you in filling out this form. The Board for People with Developmental Disabilities has additional information on supported decision-making available on its website:


*https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/f02377.pdf*
Supported Decision-Making Resources


• Supported Decision Making statute (Wis. Stats. Ch 52, http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/52)
Questions?
Professionals
What I want you to know about my Supported Decision-Making Agreement

Wisconsin law (Wis. Stats. Ch 52) formally recognizes Supported Decision-Making (SDM) agreements. People who difficulty taking care of major life activities themselves or communicating – including certain people with disabilities, older adults and people with chronic conditions—qualify to use SDM agreements.

SDM agreements allow individuals to retain their civil rights to make their own decisions while allowing friends, family and trusted allies (Supporters) to support them as they make their own decisions.

Please remember these things when interacting with me:

- Sometimes I need help making decisions, but that doesn’t mean I can’t make my own decisions.
- Sometimes my Supporter will come to my appointment with me. Please talk to me, not to my Supporter.
- My Supported Decision-Making agreement tells you the role of my Supporter.
- Sometimes my service provider will bring me to my appointment. My Provider is someone from an agency that provides me services for my disability.
- Please talk to me, not my service provider. They don’t make decisions for me.
- Explain things in a way that I can understand.
- Check to make sure that I understand what you are saying; Ask me if I have any questions.
- Give me important information in writing. Make sure it is written in a way that I can understand.
- Give me time to think about what you are saying.
- When I am upset, worried, or confused, it may take me longer to make decisions. Get to know me; ask me how I might react when I am upset worried or confused, and what might calm me.
- Ask me if I would like to talk with my Supporter; Give me time to talk to my Supporter, if I want to.
- My Supporter may ask questions to help me understand my options.
- My Supporter may help me tell you what my decision is. The decision is mine.
- Please respect my decision.
Engaging with people using SDM agreements and their Supporters

1. Make sure your agency’s forms and technology systems include ways to denote Supporters and Supported Decision-Making agreements.

2. Include SDM agreements in client files/records, just as you include POAs, Letters of Guardianship, or release forms (if applicable).

3. Review and revise policies to reflect Supporters (not just guardians or Powers of Attorney) may be present in meetings or other procedures to fulfil their duties under the SDM agreement.
Engaging with people using SDM agreements and their Supporters

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<tr>
<th>Communication tips</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Talk to the person, not their Supporter.</td>
<td>• Explain things in a way the person can understand (plain language)</td>
<td>• Read the SDM agreement so you know the role of the Supporter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check to make sure the person understands what you are saying; Ask if they have questions.</td>
<td>• Give the person time to think about what you are saying.</td>
<td>• Give important information in writing. Make sure it is written in a way the person understands (plain language).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Some people take longer to make decisions. Allow time for this.</td>
<td>• Ask the person how they react when upset worried or confused, and what calms them.</td>
<td>• Ask the person if they want to talk with their Supporter and give them time to do so.</td>
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<td>• The Supporter may ask questions to the person to help them understand their options.</td>
<td>• The Supporter may help the person tell you their decision. The decision is theirs.</td>
<td>• Please respect the person’s decision.</td>
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Guardianship and Supported Decision Making: The Continuum of Support Options

Transition Talk Tuesdays
10/03/2023

Liz Kennedy, Transition Coordinator, SPSD
Tami Jackson, Public Policy Analyst and Legislative Liaison for the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD)
How Sauk Prairie School District helps with this process…

Transition Coordinator will:

- assist families in referring to the ADRC at 17.6 (see 09/26 TTT webinar for info on ADRC)
- coordinate with any outside agencies with whom you may be collaborating
- help provide any needed documentation of disability (with a signed release of information)
- scan any needed documents for you and send to person you work with (with a signed release)
- obtain any information, pamphlets and documents you may need to learn about the options
- help you plan through the PostSecondary Transition Plan (PTP) for the steps you need to take in this process
- assist in answering questions and pointing you in the right direction
Some links for you….

BPDD website:
https://wi-bpdd.org/

Toolkits:
https://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/toolkits/
Self Determination and Self Advocacy

These are important assets to develop in our students.

Studies have shown that individuals who have higher levels of self-determination at high school exit tend to have more positive adult outcomes (better employment, better community participation) Self determination can be developed at age and developmentally appropriate ways and is very individual to each student.

(Adapted from NTACT)
Transition Services and Predicators

- Use a student driven IEP process to allow students to demonstrate self-awareness, goal setting, problem-solving and self advocacy. They can work on running parts of their meetings and have meaningful involvement. (with vs to)

- Collaborate with general education teachers to embed choices into the general curriculum and daily lessons and provide opportunities for students to practice their self-determination skills. It is ok to try and not succeed…this builds resilience and provides opportunities for staff to support the student to gain these skills.

- Ensure all students, including those with significant disability/support needs have a functional communication system to engage in choice-making, problem-solving, goal setting, taking initiative to reach goals and accepting consequences for one’s actions

(Adapted from NTACT)
How can we develop self determination and self advocacy?

- Talk about your job, other jobs
- Ask questions of school counselors, case managers, teachers, community members
- Visit new places
- Checklists
- Begin Portfolio with your child
- Encourage your child’s **active** participation in IEPs
- **Assist** them in expressing their thoughts or ideas/allow them the opportunity to answer questions first
- Become informed, campus visits, online searches
- Have student:
  - make their own doctor appointments, pack own lunch, do own laundry, order for themselves, make grocery lists
- Talk on the phone
- Email teachers with questions
- Check on grades, progress reports
Tips for Self Advocacy

1. Know and understand your rights and responsibilities
   •

2. Learn all you can about your disability, needs, strengths, and areas of difficulty
   •

3. Know what accommodations you need as well as why you need them
   •

4. Know how to effectively/assertively communicate your needs and preferences (verbally, visually, through use of switches or other communication avenues)
   •

5. Find out who the key people are and how to contact them if necessary
   •

6. Be willing to ask questions when something is unclear or you need clarification
It’s not always easy…

1. Know and understand your rights and responsibilities
2. Begins with parents or guardians
3. Explain to your child the reasons for the IEP, why the IEP helps and what it means for their success in school. Your level of comfort leads the way. (Sometimes kids think…)
4. Contact your case manager if you want to discuss
5. Model how to ask questions so your child sees this is OK
Learn all you can about your disability, needs, strengths, areas of need.

1. Do you know why you/your child is in special education?
2. Do you know what their label/category (SLD, A, ID, OHI, etc.) means?
3. Do you understand the components of the IEP and what is required by law?
4. If it is difficult for us as parents and adults, it can be very difficult for the child/student to understand. Learn along with your child. (Explain as developmentally appropriate).
5. Involve child in IEP as early as possible. Can be for a few minutes or portions of the IEP. Elementary and beyond can introduce people, talk about themselves a little, etc.
Know what accommodations you need and why you need them

1. Accommodations level the playing field
2. Work with the student to facilitate their understanding and have them practice explaining what their accommodations are
3. As student gets older, they will take on more responsibility for their education and needs. In college and in the workplace, the young adult will have to advocate for specific needs, no one will do it for them. Practice, failing and trying again, is key to this becoming a permanent skill.
How does self advocacy and self determination relate to today’s topic?

- As you may need to explore guardianship and other means of support, having the the skills to be an active participant helps navigate this process.

- Where your young adult is right now is not where they may be in 5 years. Developing these skills helps them to live as independent a life as possible and allows them to more fully participate in the life they dream to have.

- It helps them become active participants in the process to the best of their ability

- Sets them up for the greatest success, living as independently as they are able

- Includes them in the process and helps them understand themselves and who they are as individuals - that gives them a sense of empowerment.
Student led IEPS - some resources to explore

- [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org) **Student Led IEP’s** Council for Exceptional Children
- **Self-Directed IEP** [www.sopriswest.com](http://www.sopriswest.com)
  Improving student’s attendance and involvement in their IEP by using 11 steps
- **My Future, My Plan** A Transition Planning Resource for Life After High School for students with disabilities and their families [www.myfuturemyplan.com](http://www.myfuturemyplan.com)
- [NTACT the Collaborative](https://transitionta.org/effective-practices/pd-self-determined-iep/)
- [Pacer Center My IEP](https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-a55.pdf)
- [I’m Determined](https://www.imdetermined.org/tool/student-involvement-in-the-iep-modules/)
Success is individually driven
More Transition Talk Tuesdays Coming up…

Transition Tuesdays
9/19-10/24

✅ Sauk Prairie Transition: PTP, Post secondary education planning, financial aid discussion with college reps

✅ The ADRC, Long Term Supports and SSI application

✅ Guardianship and supported decision making – The continuum of support options
  - Healthcare for people with disabilities
  - Working while on social security, Ticket to Work, PASS program, Benefits Analysis

- Sauk Prairie Beyond 18 programs and employment
How to sign up for the other TTT sessions...

Here is the link for families to sign up:
Registration --  [https://go.wisc.edu/RegTTTSauk](https://go.wisc.edu/RegTTTSauk)

Website -- [https://go.wisc.edu/TTTSauk](https://go.wisc.edu/TTTSauk)
Todas las charlas se interpretarán simultáneamente al español.
Para descargar un folleto en español. flyer
También está disponible una página de inscripción en español. [https://go.wisc.edu/9g3174](https://go.wisc.edu/9g3174)

All talks will be simultaneously interpreted into Spanish.
A registration site in Spanish is also available. [https://go.wisc.edu/9g3174](https://go.wisc.edu/9g3174)

Families can register online and we will also be offering in-person for those who do not have access to technology outside of school. I have reserved the BOE room for each of the evenings at 440 13th Street, Prairie du Sac, 53578

We had one virtual Transition Talk about Special Needs Trusts already. You can access that at the website to watch at any time.
Questions and Contact Information

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608.644-2863 * new number

Questions and special thanks to Tim Markle and Tami!