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Social Policy Research Centre

Report about supported decision making



Easy Read

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Contents

About this report	1
<hr/>	
About the study	2
<hr/>	
About supported decision making	4
<hr/>	
Important things about supported decision making	6
<hr/>	
Issues with supported decision making	8
<hr/>	
Making supported decision making better	16
<hr/>	
Guide for supported decision making	19
<hr/>	

About this report



This report is about supported decision making.

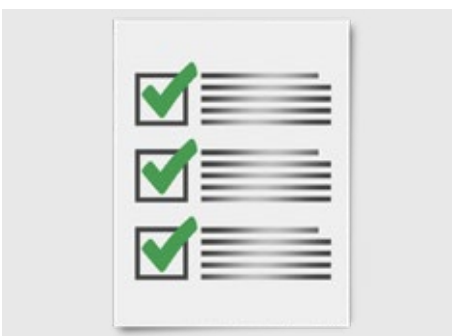
Supported decision making means that a support person helps you make your own choices.



We did a study to learn how supported decision making is done in Australia.



We wanted to find out what is good and what needs to be better.



This report talks about

- What is important when you do supported decision making
- Problems with supported decision making
- How to make supported decision making better.

About the study



We talked to many people about supported decision making.



We talked to

- Disability organisations
- The Commonwealth Government
- Trustees and guardians



A **trustee** is a person or organisation who looks after your money for you.



Guardians are people who make decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself.



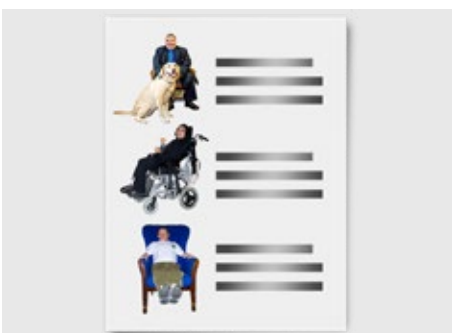
We wanted to know what helps people make different kinds of decisions.



We wanted to know when it is hard to do supported decision making for groups of people with disabilities.

This could be

- Young people
- Women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- People with disability from other cultures and languages.



We wrote this report about all the things we found out.

About supported decision making



Every person has the right to make their own decisions.



People with disability have the same rights as everyone else.



The law says that people with disability have rights.



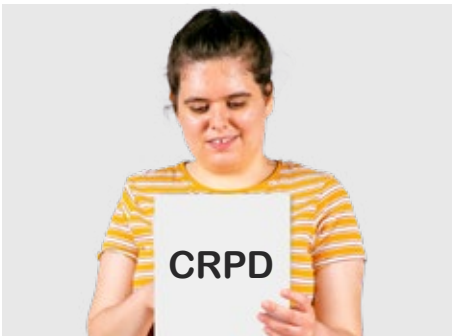
The law is called the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability.

CRPD for short.

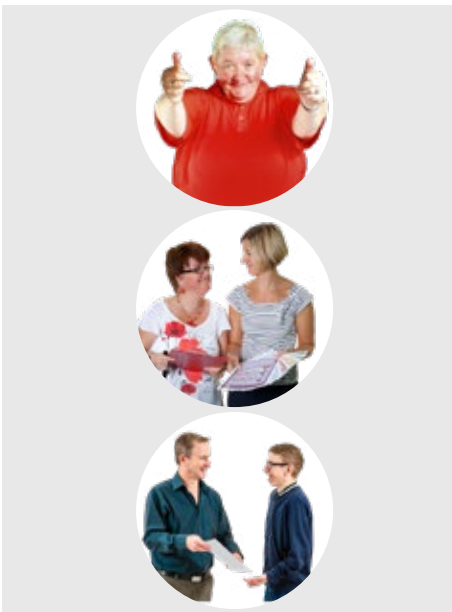


Some people get help to make their own decisions.

This is called **supported decision making**.



The CRPD says everyone has the right to support to make decisions.



Supported decision making can be

- Getting information in a way you can understand
- Someone helping you understand everything about your decision
- Someone talking to you about risks.

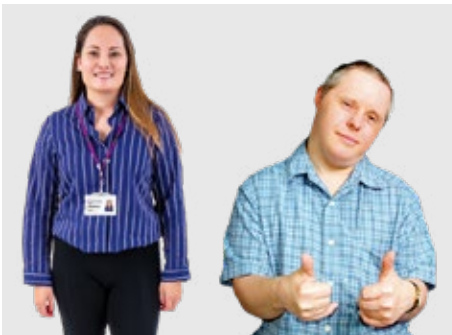


Risks are bad things that can happen when you make your decision.

Important things about supported decision making



Some things are important to do supported decision making well.



You need to trust your support person.

It is good when you know each other well.



Other people need to make sure it is your decision and not what someone else wants.



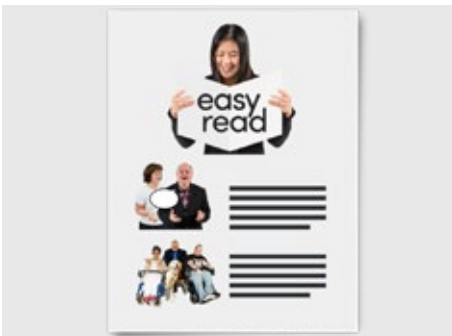
The support person should

- Make sure you have enough time to think
- Talk about all of the choices you have and what they mean
- Talk about risks



Support people need to be ok with

- You choosing something they would not choose
- You making a decision that has risks



It is important to have information in a way you can understand like Easy Read.



It is good to talk later about how well making the decision went.

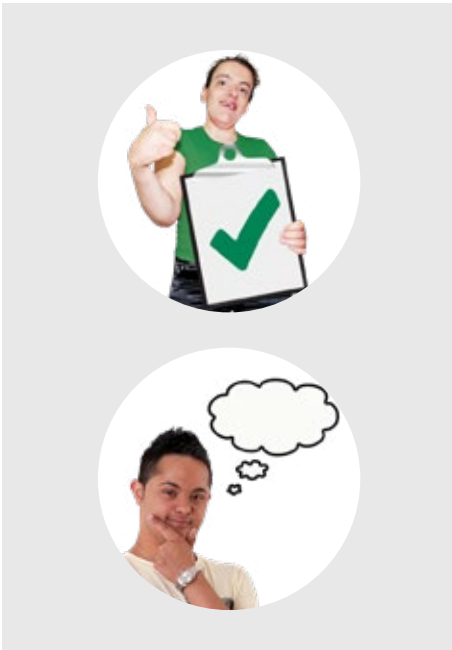
This way you know what can be better next time.



It is also good to look back to see if you are happy with the decision you made.

This way you can learn from mistakes.

Issues with supported decision making



Everyone in the study said that

- Supported decision making is a good thing
- There are issues we need to think about



Different groups have different issues with supported decision making.



The next page is about the issues for the different groups.

Issues for young people



Young people with disability need support when they get older.



Support could be when they need to move from services for children to services for adults.



Parents often help children to make decisions.



It can be hard for children who do not have a family to make their own decisions.



It is important that children without families also get support to make decisions.

Issues for women with disability



Women and girls with disability need support to make as many decisions as men and boys.



Women and girls need as much time as men and boys to

- Think about their decisions
- Make their own decisions



Some women and girls with disability get abused.

Abuse means someone hurts you or does bad things to you.



The support person needs to make sure the person who might abuse a woman or girls does not control her decisions.



Some women with disability feel pushed by other people to not have a child.

The support person needs to support the woman to make her own choice.

Issues in regional and remote areas



It can be hard to get the services and supports you need in areas far away from the big cities.

It can be hard to get support for decisions too.



Other ways to get support away from cities are

- Telephone or online
- From a friend or person you know

Issues for people from other cultures and languages



Supported decision making can be hard for people with disability from other cultures or languages.



They might not understand what services and supports they can get in Australia.



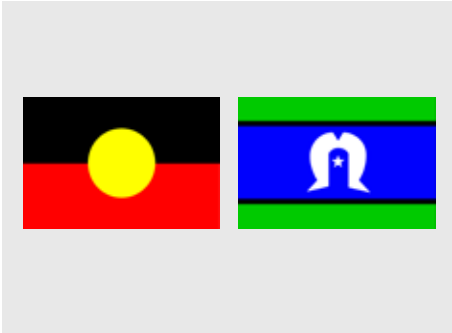
Family members who support them might also not understand all the information.



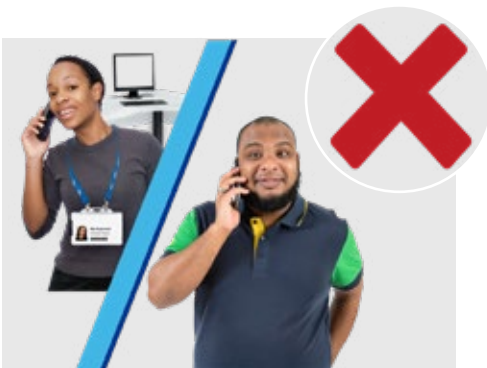
The families might

- Think about disability in a different way
- Not know that people with disability have the same rights as everyone else

Issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



Supported decision making can be hard for people with disability who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.



People may not trust services.



They might not know about all of the services and supports.



This means Aboriginal people with disability may not get the support they need.

Issues for support people



Supported decision making is often done by family members or friends.



They may not have enough training to get supported decision making right.



They might not see how they sometimes make the person do what they want.



Parents also want to keep their children safe.

This makes it hard for children to make choices against what their parents want.

Issues for services and organisations



Services often do not make time to do supported decision making.



It is often easier for them if the family or guardian makes the decision for the person with disability.

This is called **substitute decision making**.



Staff might also not be trained to support decision making.



The person with disability needs to trust the staff.

If they do not trust the staff they will not feel ok to make decisions with their help.

Making supported decision making better



We asked people in the study how supported decision making can be better.

This is what they said.



Capacity building is important.

Capacity building means that people with disability learn skills to make decisions.



Learning from other people with disability is a good way to get these skills.

We need more friend networks so that people with disability can learn from each other.



We need more information and training about how to do supported decision making well.



People with disability and support people must be part of putting the information and training together.



People with disability and support people must

- Know the rights of people with disability
- Understand these rights
- Respect these rights



Services and organisations must train their staff to do supported decision making well.



They must be able to see who needs support with decisions.



More people in the community need to know about how to do supported decision making.



There need to be safeguards to make sure

- Risks are low
- No abuse happens

Safeguards are things to keep you safe.



A safeguard could be that there is more than 1 person to support with decisions.

This is to make sure that it really is the decision of the person with disability.



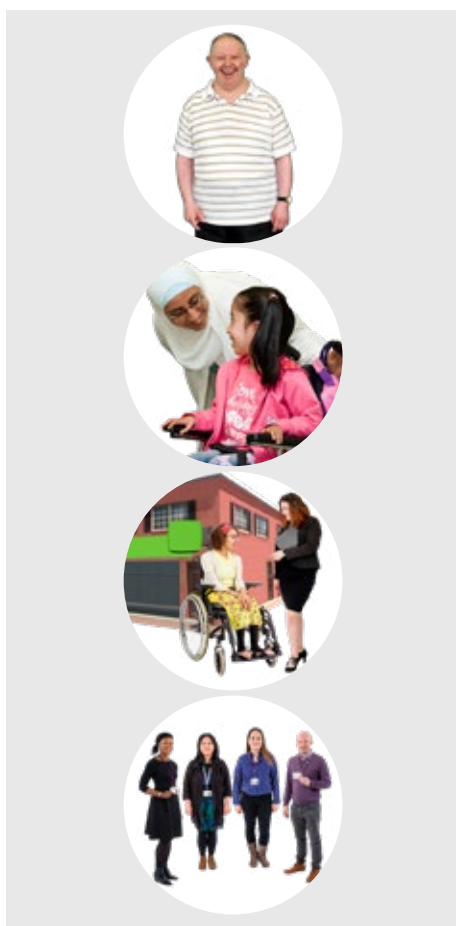
Services can also be safeguards.

They can help make sure it really is the decision of the person.

Guide for supported decision making



We used the study to come up with a guide to do supported decision making well.



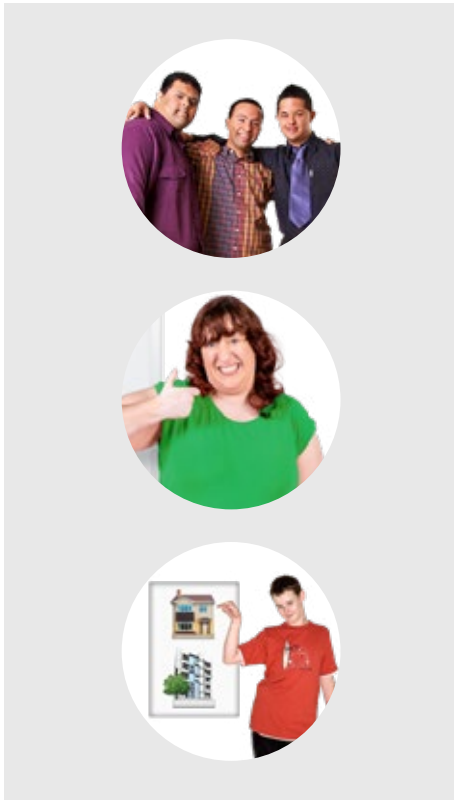
This guide is for

- People with disability
- Family and friends of people with disability
- Disability organisations and services
- Government



We want the guide to help them use supported decision making in everything they do.

What the person with disability can do



People with disability who want support to make decisions should think about

- Who could support them well
- What is the best way to support them
- What decisions they want help with



Making their own decisions will help them feel independent and respected.

What the support person can do better



The support person should know the rights of people with disability and respect them.



They should make sure the person with disability understands what supported decision making means.



They should support the person with disability to learn from their decisions.



This will help them get better at making their own choices in life.

What organisations and services can do better



Organisations and services need to look at

- When they use supported decision making
- How they do it
- What can be better



Their staff needs to have more training and time to do supported decision making well.

What government can do



The government needs to make rules and laws that keep everyone safe.



They also need to think about dignity of risk.

Dignity of risk means that you have the right to take risks in your life.



People need to follow rules that make supported decision making available.



Supported decision making needs to be available in different places.

This includes

- Courts and the police
- Health services
- Schools



Government should do more to tell the community about supported decision making.

Too many people do not know what it is.



Government could give money to organisations to get better at supported decision making.

Council for Intellectual Disability made this document Easy Read. **CID** for short. You need to ask CID if you want to use any pictures in this document. You can contact CID at business@cid.org.au.