

## **Maryland's Cross-Disability Supported Decision-Making Coalition's Guiding Values**

1. Every person has the right to self-determination. Supported decision-making promotes every person's own decision-making.
2. We should never assume that someone cannot make decisions because of their disability. We believe that everyone can make a decision.
3. Historically, many people, including people with disabilities, have not been given the opportunities to make their own decisions. Because of this history, some people may think that they cannot make decisions. We need to both give them that chance to make decisions and recognize that they may need time to learn how to make good decisions.
4. We have a strong belief that everyone who is at least 18 years of age and has the ability to make decisions with support is able to access a formal supported decision-making agreement.
5. In determining whether someone has the ability to make decisions with support in a formal supported decision-making agreement, all forms of communication should be recognized, including non-verbal communication.
6. Supported decision-making should be available for all types of decisions.
7. People under guardianship should be able to use supported decision-making to either get rid of or limit guardianship or informally to promote their self-determination.
8. People should be able to select supporters of their own choosing. People should be educated and informed about what to consider when they select a supporter.
9. Getting support with decision-making means that people should get effective but not restrictive support. A supporter's role is to provide support with decisions, not to make decisions for a person.
10. Our purpose is to protect people and organizations who rely honestly on supported decision-making. They should not face legal liability for doing so.
11. Supporters should promise that they will not unfairly influence a person or undermine their self-determination. When they provide support it should be based on the person's expressed will and preference.
12. Abuse and neglect in supported decision-making should be reported to existing and appropriate agencies.