

IFSP State Council Meeting

April 25, 2025 from 12:00 to 2:15 p.m.

Registration link: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/458b6c73-ac15-4393-9f76-7d9dd704ef23@620ae5a9-4ec1-4fa0-8641-5d9f386c7309>

Attendees: Deanna Parker (DBHDS); Heather Hines (DBHDS); Rhonda Gaines (DBHDS); Lynne Fetter (DBHDS); Sara Thompson (DBHDS); Karen Yates (Hamilton Relay); Rebecca Stickler (Western VCU CFI); Jennifer Reese (Northern VCU CFI); Lisa Richard (Southwestern VCU CFI); Renée Soniat (Central VCU CFI); Donna Robel (Eastern VCU CFI) Joan Brunner (Eastern VCU CFI); Monica Mann (Central); Sarah Horne (Central); Carrie Redden (Northern); Brandon Cassady (Northern); Anthony Almodovar (Northern); Nikki Jackson Plaster (Southwestern); April Johnson (Southwestern); Anita Frazier (Eastern); Tammara Herbert (Eastern); Tia Webb (Western Council)

Hamilton Relay link: <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=HamiltonRelayRCC-0425-VA4364>

I. Introductions and Agenda

- a. Staff introductions and welcome
- b. Icebreaker: What song reminds you of spring? What does spring look like where you live?
- c. Educational presentation: Sara D. Thompson, DBHDS
- d. Council updates
- e. IFSP-Funding Program updates
- f. IFSP Satisfaction Survey FY 2024 highlights
- g. Communications updates
- h. Wrap-up and adjourn

II. Educational Presentation

- a. Sara D. Thompson is the Supported Decision-Making Community Resource Consultant Lead at DBHDS.
- b. Sara gave an overview of supported decision-making that addressed guardianship vs. supported decision-making, and how to create and implement a supported decision-making agreement. The Council had no questions for Sara.
- c. Please see the attached PDF of Sara's presentation following these minutes. Helpful links about Supported Decision-Making are included.
- d. To get in touch with Sara, please email Sara.Thompson@dbhds.virginia.gov or call 804-869-0591.

- e. Questions:
 - i. Brandon asked Sara for information about the Person-Centered Thinking trainings. Sara responded to him in chat.

III. IFSP Council Updates

- a. Self-Advocate Forum announcement: Led by the IFSP Support Specialist
 - i. The IFSP Support Specialist is working with The Arc of Virginia's peer engagement director to develop 2 self-advocate forum sessions. These forums are being developed to gain self-advocate Councilmembers' perspectives on accessibility and inclusion on their Council.
- b. Regional Workplan Reports and Updates
 - i. Each Regional Council shared their Regional Council workplans and any updates made to them before their next workplans are implemented in July 2025.
- c. Charter Revisions: Led by the IFSP Community Coordination Supervisor
 - i. The Charter format looks different, but a lot of the information is still the same.
 - ii. The Charter is an agreement between Councilmembers and the IFSP about Council responsibilities and limitations regarding policies and regulations.
 - iii. Everyone will receive a copy of the new Charter to read and sign in May.
 - iv. Please let the IFSP know if you have any questions before you sign.
 - v. The Community Coordination Supervisor shared the purpose of the Charter, important charter definitions, the makeup of the Councils, the role of the RNCs, the regions, and specific information pertaining to Regional and State Council responsibilities.
 - vi. Attendance requirements and grounds for dismissal were reviewed.

IV. IFSP-Funding Program Updates: Led by the IFSP Program Manager

- a. General information about the IFSP-Funding Program includes:
 - i. What it is,
 - ii. Who is eligible and who can apply,
 - iii. Funding categories,
 - iv. Funding limitations and applicant prioritization, and
 - v. Where to access information such as the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines and FAQs on the My Life, My Community website:
<https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-funding>.
- b. The history and enhancements of the IFSP-Funding Program from 2022 to the present were shared, including the most recent changes to the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines.
- c. The process for updating the guidelines for Fall 2026 (FY 2027), and the role councilmembers play were also discussed.
- d. Comparing FY 2025 to FY 2024 and FY 2023
 - i. Questions asked by the IFSP:
 - Is there anything that stands out to you in this data?

- Do you see anything that feels new or unexpected?
- What other questions or thoughts do you have?
- ii. Councilmember comments and questions:
 - Brandon: The most important thing is to get the information out there. The more people know about it, the better.
 - April: Is there a way to track old families and new families so we know where the uptick in applications is coming from?
- e. Funding data highlights:
 - i. Funds awarded per region,
 - ii. Total number of applications received vs. approved by region,
 - iii. Approved request categories by region, and
 - iv. Percent of people on the Waitlist vs. percent of approved applicants by region
 - The Richmond area is overrepresented
- f. Councilmember comments and questions
 - i. Anthony: Is there a flyer or some sort of literature that can be handed out to guide people to the application process?
 - Heather: Yes. The IFSP sends information every year through email, Facebook, and paper mail. We also have information about it in the First Steps guide.
 - ii. Anthony: A lot of people in his community were not aware of the program. Until last year, he did not know about it, either. He also learned that not everyone has an assigned Support Coordinator at their CSB.
 - Heather: The IFSP would like his feedback. Perhaps the IFSP can develop something else that the program does not have already.

V. IFSP Satisfaction Survey FY 2024 Highlights: Led by the IFSP Program Manager

- a. Results of the FY 2024 Annual Satisfaction Survey include:
 - i. The number of people who received the survey (15,177), and
 - ii. The number of respondents (247).
- b. Councilmembers can help the IFSP to spread the word about the survey.
- c. Additional data:
 - i. 19% of respondents were familiar with family mentoring
 - ii. 30% of respondents were familiar with peer mentoring
 - iii. Overall satisfaction was 79%
- d. Survey takeaways:
 - i. For results to be meaningful, a higher response rate is needed.
 - ii. Can we explore alternate ways to increase knowledge of the IFSP's programs?
- e. What Councilmembers can do to help:
 - i. Share information about the importance of the survey and importance of sharing resources.
 - ii. Be creative in working with Councils.
 - iii. Share ideas with the IFSP
- f. Councilmember feedback:

- i. Brandon: Shared information about a Department of Rail and Public Transportation survey.
- ii. April: Likes the idea of handing out leaflets and increasing social media presence, but she thinks an invitation is best received with a personal touch.
- iii. Tia: Suggested quick surveys to providers, partners, and others who service the community quarterly or semi-annually.
 - Heather: The Annual Satisfaction Survey is required in the regulations and the annual mailer contains a postcard with the survey link.
 - Tia and Heather discussed giving council members some of the postcards to hand out.
- iv. Brandon: Person-to-person feedback is very important.

VI. The IFSP State Plan: Led by the IFSP Program Manager

- a. Councilmembers received an overview of what the IFSP State Plan is and why it is important. The IFSP Program Manager shared why Councilmembers' input is important and how the IFSP collects that input.
- b. The IFSP State Plan and progress updates are posted on the My Life, My Community website at <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-state-council-and-state-plan>.

VII. Communications Update: Led by the IFSP Community Coordination Supervisor

- a. The IFSP Communications and Program Coordinator sent the IFSP's social media guidance to all State and Regional Councilmembers.
- b. The IFSP's annual notification to all individuals on the Waitlist will be discussed at the June 2025 meeting.
- c. Please send Digest or Facebook suggestions to IFSPCom@dbhds.virginia.gov.

VIII. Wrap-up and Adjourn

- a. Next Coordinated Regional Council meeting: Thursday, May 22nd from 6 to 8:15 p.m. It is called "It's Never Too Late: Transition Planning Resources for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DD)".
- b. Next State Council Meeting: Friday, June 27th from 12 to 2:15 p.m.
- c. IFSP Charters will be emailed to each member and RNCs for review and signature in May 2025.
- d. Meeting minutes will be distributed by email and posted to the My Life, My Community website at <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-state-council-minutes>. If Councilmembers have any questions, they may email the IFSP at IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov.



Empowering Choices: An Overview of Supported Decision-Making in Virginia



Presented by Sara D. Thompson,
Supported Decision-Making Community Resource Consultant Lead



- Definitions
- Supported Decision-Making
- Virginia's Supported Decision-Making Agreement documents
- Frequently Asked Questions





Have you ever made a decision that didn't turn out well?





Terminology explained in plain language?

Research online to better understand your options?

Make a pro/con list?

Reminders for important appointments/dates?



Advice from a friend or family member?

Time to think through complex choices?





Supported Decision- Making- “decision-making model in which an individual makes decisions with the support of trusted individuals” (American Bar Association)

vs.

Substitute Decision-Making- a decision-making model in which a person (or multiple people) is appointed to make “decisions on behalf of an individual who is incapable of making those decisions for himself” (*Guide to Consent and Substitute Decision Making*, VACSB)





Supported Decision- Making → Self Determination

- Power and Control (autonomy)
- Improve health (mental/physical) and relationships (relatedness)
- Responsibility and Independence (competence)
- Better employment outcomes
- Be able to make bigger/riskier decisions
- Advocate for themselves
- Everyone can use it

(I'm Determined; J. Martinis & P. Blanck 2018)



Informal –or- Formal

Supporters should:

- ✓ Learn and understand how the Decision Maker best takes in information (understands, learns)
- ✓ Learn and understand how the Decision Maker communicates
- ✓ Be clear about what you know and do not know
- ✓ Ensure the Decision Maker has the information needed to make an informed decision





Supported Decision-Making Agreement - The formal process of documenting who an individual wants to support them, in what areas of life, and how they want to be supported.

Comprised of:

- Decision Maker
- Supporter(s)
- Facilitator (optional)



Decision Maker- the person making the Supported Decision-Making Agreement

Must be: at least 18 years old, have an intellectual or developmental disability, and be able to legally make your own decisions

Supporter(s)- the person/people the Decision Maker asks to support them in their SDMA, Supporters agree to help

Facilitator (optional)- the person the Decision Maker asks to make sure Supporters to what they agree to, can be a Supporter or can be someone else



Virginia Supported Decision-Making Agreement template

3 Discovery Tools

- When Do I Want Support?
- What Kind of Support Do I Want?
- Relationship Map/
Selecting Your Supporters



Many other forms to help!





Life Areas



Health & Personal Care



Friends & Partners



Money



Where I Live & Community Living



School & Education



Working



My Rights & Safety



Meeting & Talking with My Supporters



Other



Commonwealth of Virginia:
Supported Decision-Making Agreement

This agreement should be read out loud or otherwise communicated in a way that is accessible and understandable to all parties. The form of communication should be appropriate to the needs and preferences of the person with a disability. A Supported Decision-Making Facilitator may be assigned to oversee this agreement, but is not required. Additionally, a notary may sign the agreement, but it is not required.

I, Sara Thompson, am the creator of this Supported Decision-Making Agreement which is all about me, and that makes me the "Decision Maker". I made this agreement with my choices and have selected people that I trust to be my "Supporters".

The people I select as my Supporters are the people who have agreed to help me understand and make choices.

My Supporters **DO NOT** make decisions for me. They give me information, advice, and other support so that I **CAN make decisions for myself**.

This agreement can be changed at any time. I can change it by crossing out words and writing my initials next to the changes, or I can change it by writing new information onto the form and writing my initials next to what I add. I will keep track of anything I add by filling out and signing the "Changes" page attached to this agreement. I will also write the names of any Supporters that I no longer want to support me on the "Cancellation" page attached to this agreement and sign it.

If I decide that I no longer want to have a Supported Decision-Making Agreement, I can fill out the Cancellation of Supported Decision-Making Agreement section at the bottom of the "Agreements" page attached to this document.

Name of Decision Maker: Sara Thompson

Preferred Method of Contact (e.g. email address, phone number, how to contact you):
Texting on cellphone: ***.***.***

Initial Effective Date of Agreement: 08/01/2022

In addition to this Supported Decision-Making Agreement, I have the following forms of support:

- Durable Power of Attorney Documents Attached/ Documents NOT Attached
- Advance Medical Directive Documents Attached/ Documents NOT Attached
- Financial Fiduciary Documents Attached/ Documents NOT Attached
- HIPAA Release Form Documents Attached/ Documents NOT Attached
- Educational Release Form Documents Attached/ Documents NOT Attached
- Other: _____ Documents Attached/ Documents NOT Attached (e.g. BHDS Authorized Representative, Health Passport, Person Centered 1 Page Health Profile)

Supported Decision-Making Agreement for: Sara Thompson

Commonwealth of Virginia:
Supported Decision-Making Discovery Tool

When do I want support? Everyone needs support with making some decisions, not just people with disabilities. Some people ask for help from a doctor when they are sick or before taking medicine. Some people ask a mechanic before buying a new car, or ask a friend before moving into a new apartment. When you get help from others with making decisions this is called Supported Decision-Making.

You can use this form to help you fill out the *Commonwealth of Virginia's Supported Decision-Making Agreement*. Place a check (✓) in box next to each sentence to say if you can do this on your own, if you can do it with support, or if you need someone else to do the task for you. You do not have to place a check in each area.

If you check "I can do this with support" think about who you might ask to support you, as well as what kind of support you want or need. You can also use the attached *Relationship Map* and/or *What Kind of Support Do I Want?* tools to help answer these questions.

	I can do this on my own.	I can do this with support.	I need someone else to do this for me.
Health and Personal Care			
Get my health care information.			
Choose when to go to the doctor.			
Make and keep my doctor and dentist appointments.			
Understand and make medical choices in serious situations (for example, surgery, big injuries, mental or behavioral health crisis).			
Understand and make medical choices in an emergency.			

Commonwealth of Virginia:
Supported Decision-Making Discovery Tool

What kind of support do I want? Support (help) can look different for everyone and can be different for each choice or activity.

You can use this form to help you think about the different ways people can help and how you might want your Supporters to help you. Place a check (✓) in the box next to each type of help you think you might want or need.

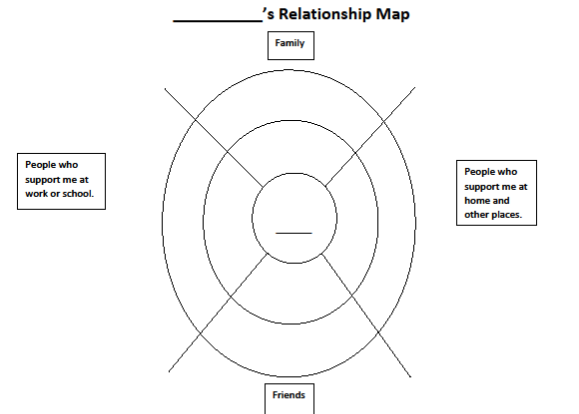
Types of Support	
Have help filling out/writing on forms, such as my Supported Decision-Making Agreement.	
Have information written and/or spoken in simple words (plain-language).	
Have information provided in pictures.	
Talk to your Supporters to know what your choices are.	
Research to learn more about your choices on your own or with help from your Supporters.	
Talk to experts (people who know a lot about your choices) about your options and choices.	
Talk to your Supporters to get advice.	

Commonwealth of Virginia:
Supported Decision-Making Discovery Tool

Who do I want to support me? Supported Decision-Making Agreements are made up of Supporters and Decision Makers. You are the Decision Maker and the people you choose to help you are the Supporters. You can choose anyone you want to be your Supporter and you can choose to have many supporters. Some Supporters might help you in one area of life and others might help you in several areas. The decision is up to you.

When thinking about who you want as a Supporter, think about people that you trust and talk to them to see if they will agree to be your Supporter.

You can use this form to help you think about the different people who already help you in your life. Your name goes in the center circle. Write the names of the people who help you in the category that best fits them. People who you feel closest to will go in the circle closest to your name. People that you do not feel as close to or that you do not look to for help as often can go in the outer circle.



The Relationship Map is a Person Centered Thinking tool developed by The Learning Community for Person Centered Practiced.

Front

It's My Right!

Please talk to me about my choices. I am able to and have the right to make my own decisions. If I want help, I will ask for it and use supported decision making. This includes medical, financial, and legal decisions. The law says that people should follow the decisions I make.

My Signature

Back

For Service Providers: Acknowledging and following my decisions is the right thing to do. It honors my autonomy and follows Virginia's law about presumed competence.

Virginia Code § 54.1-2983.2.(A)

For more information about my rights and supported decision-making scan this QR code.



The screenshot shows the DBHDS website homepage. A red box highlights the URL `dbhds.virginia.gov` in the browser address bar. Another red box highlights the 'For Individuals & Families' dropdown menu. A third red box highlights the 'Developmental Services' link in the left-hand navigation menu. A fourth red box highlights the 'Supported Decision Making' link in the main content area. Red arrows point from these boxes to their respective elements on the page.

This screenshot shows the content of the 'Supported Decision-Making and Supported Decision-Making Agreements' page. It includes an introductory paragraph, a photo of hands joined in a circle, and a list of resources. The 'Supported Decision Making' link from the previous page points to this content.

Supported Decision-Making and Supported Decision-Making Agreements

Virginia now formally recognizes Supported Decision-Making Agreements as an alternative to more restrictive, substitute decision-making options, such as legal guardianships. Supported Decision-Making Agreements are a way for adults with developmental disabilities living in Virginia to document when they want to receive support with making decisions, how they want to receive support, and who they want to help them. Supported Decision-Making Agreements give individuals with developmental disabilities the ability to receive support with making various choices in their lives, while also retaining all of their rights, including the right to make their own decisions.

For questions regarding Supported Decision-Making and/or Supported Decision-Making Agreements please contact Sara Thompson at Sara.Thompson@dbhds.virginia.gov.

Virginia's Supported Decision-Making Agreement template and Supplemental Documents/ Acuerdo para la toma de decisiones con apoyo del Estado de Virginia - Plantilla

English

Español

Making My Own Decisions- It's My Right!

Everyone has the right to meaningfully participate in making decisions about their life. Human Rights Regulations say that anyone who has capacity (can take in information, make a decision using that information, and then communicate their decision to others) can consent (agree) to services, treatment, or research, or agree for others to see and/or get information about them. Even if you have capacity, you still might want help with making some decisions and that is okay. If you have questions about your right to make decisions or about your other rights, please see information on the Office of Human Rights' website by clicking [here](#).

Training Videos and Documents

- [Supported Decision-Making and Supported Decision-Making Agreements: An Overview Training \(June 2022\)](#)
- [Supported Decision-Making and Supported Decision-Making Agreements: The Details Trainings \(August 2022\)](#)
- [PEATC Series 3 Discovery Tools and the Virginia Supported Decision-Making Agreement template \(January- February 2023\)](#)

To get more help with decision-making options and supported decision-making agreements click on these resources:

- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- disAbility Law Center of Virginia
- National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making
- Disability Resource Advocacy Training Center (DRATC)
- The Arc of Northern Virginia
- The Arc of Virginia
- Virginia Department of Education
- Virginia WINGS booklet

<https://dbhds.virginia.gov/supported-decision-making-supported-decision-making-agreements/>





How do I create a Supported Decision-Making Agreement?



- With TIME!- Break into sections/ life areas/ Discovery Tools
- Decision- Maker: Conversations and discovery with trusted people
- Support Coordinator, Providers, Family Members, etc.
- Ensure Supporters and Facilitator agree to what is written

Contact me!

Sara D. Thompson,

Sara.Thompson@dbhds.virginia.gov

804-869-0591





How can I learn more about supported decision-making in Virginia?

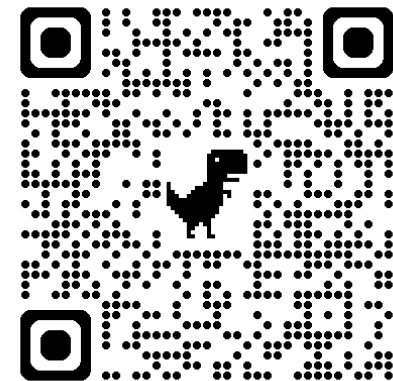


2025 Virtual Training Registration is Open!

Rotation of 3 trainings on a quarterly basis:

- *Supported Decision-Making in Virginia: An Overview for CSBs and Providers*
- *Supported Decision-Making in Virginia: An Overview for People with DD and Their Families*
- *The Spectrum of Decision-Making Options in Virginia: Supported Decision-Making to Guardianship & Everything In Between*

More information and registration → <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2025-Training-Schedule.pdf>





“May your choices reflect
your hopes, not your
fears.”

– Nelson Mandela







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*DBHDS Supported Decision-Making
- 2025 Training Series*

*disAbility Law Center of Virginia
- Decision-Making Resources page*

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)

Partnership for People with Disabilities

Person Centered Thinking Training

Virginia WINGS booklet





American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Center for Public Representation

National Council on Disability- 2018 Report

National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making

The Arc of the United States

