

It's My Right! Self Advocacy Pocket Card and Letter

Instructions:

1. Print this page.
2. Cut on the dotted line around the outer edge of the card. Do not cut the solid line in the middle.
3. Fold in half using the solid line as your guide.
4. Tape around edges or laminate card.
5. Print the letter written on the 2nd page to give to people you think need more information than what is written on the pocket card.

Front of Card

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 of Card

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.



To Whom It Concerns:

This letter explains how I make my own decisions and my right to do so.

Virginia Code § 54.1-2983.2.(A) states, “Every adult shall be presumed to be capable of making an informed decision unless he is determined to be incapable of making an informed decision in accordance with this article... No person shall be deemed incapable of making an informed decision based solely on a particular clinical diagnosis.” This means **that I have the legal right to make my own decisions and consent (agree) to services, and my disability is not a reason to take away this right.** The only person who can say that I no longer have this right is a judge.

Sometimes I want help making decisions, but that doesn't mean I can't make my own decisions. The people who help me are called my Supporters. These are people I trust and who have agreed to help me when I ask for it. I may have a document called a Supported Decision-Making Agreement that says who my Supporters are, how they help me, and when they help me. It is my right to decide if I want to use supported decision-making and/or a Supported Decision-Making Agreement.

- Sometimes my Supporter or other people I ask will come to my appointment/meeting with me. Please talk to me, not them. They don't make decisions for me.
- Ask me how I like to have information provided and explain things in a way that I can understand. It might also be helpful to have things written down or in pictures, especially if it is important information.
- Confirm with me that I understand what you are saying.
- Ask me if I have any questions and give me time to think about what we have talked about.
- Ask me if I would like to talk with my Supporter.
- Give me time and privacy to talk to my Supporter, if I want to.
- My Supporter may ask you questions to help me understand my options.
- Give me time to think about my options and my decision.
- My Supporter may help me tell you what my decision is if I am having a hard time communicating or if I ask them to tell you directly.
- Please respect my decision.

Please know that it may take me time to make my decision, especially if I am upset, overwhelmed, or confused. I may want to think about my options after our appointment/meeting and need to schedule another appointment/meeting to give you my decision. I also have the right to change my mind and, if I do, **respect my decision!**

Thank you.