



Supported Decision Making Policy

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1. Executive Summary

Valued Lives is committed to supporting people that we work for to make their own decisions, so they can develop and pursue their own goals, make choices about their life and exercise some control over the things that are important to them.

People that we work alongside have heightened vulnerability to risk due to their disability or mental health concern and may need support to make decisions and to ensure that their views are taken into account.

2. Policy

Valued Lives will ensure that:

- Each person will have the opportunity to express their will and preference.
- Each person will be able to exercise the right to make decisions.
- Each person can expect to have access to appropriate support to make decisions.

Occasionally, a person may be unable to make decisions, or may require assistance to make decisions that are in their own best interest. Children, and adults with reduced decision-making capacity, may require assistance to have their views and best interests considered when decisions are made on their behalf, as well as needing to be protected from exploitation, so that best outcomes are achieved.

Adults with reduced decision-making capacity in most situations, the family of the person will assume the decision-making role. Informal care and supports (including support from an advocate), are often preferred for a person with reduced decision-making capacity, as this provides an existing relationship where the person's best interests are paramount.

3. Guardianship and Administration

If there is not anyone available or willing to appropriately assume the informal decision-making role for adults with reduced decision-making capacity. In these cases, a person may require an alternative decision maker.

If a person does not have appropriate informal supports and has reduced capacity to make informed decisions, Valued Lives may consider making an application for the appointment of a formal guardian and/or administrator, in accordance with the WA Guardianship and Administration Act 1990.

The appointment of a guardian or administrator is made by the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT), which may decide upon a person within the person's existing support network. If there is no one in the person's life who is suitable or willing to take on this responsibility, the SAT can appoint the Public Advocate to manage the affairs of the person and act as their guardian to make certain decisions. The SAT may also appoint the Public Trustee as administrator to make decisions about the person's financial matters.

4. Children

Valued Lives respects that parents will make decisions for their children. Although those with parental responsibility have the decision-making responsibility, Valued Lives should encourage children to participate with planning and decisions that impact on their lives and future.

5. Children under the care of the CEO of Child Protection & Family Support

In some cases, a child may be living in alternative family care and be in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the CPFS. This means that the CEO has parental responsibility for the child, including decision making for the child's funded supports through NDIA or Disability Services Commission. Valued Lives Team members will work alongside the CPFS to assist the person to achieve their goals.

6. People who may be at risk

Valued Lives acknowledges that people we support may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation than other members of the community. If a team member becomes aware of allegations or is concerned that any person we are working for is at risk of abuse, neglect or harm, they are to report directly to the CEO, who has oversight over Serious Incident Reporting.

7. Resources

<http://www.support-my-decision.org.au/>

<http://www.advokit.org.au/further-information/supported-decision-making-resources/>