

Since 1969, The Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities, through research, training, technical assistance, and community service activities, has strived to enhance the quality of life, self-determination, and inclusion of Kansans with developmental disabilities and their families. KUCDD is recognized as a national leader in research on self-determination and supported decision-making (SDM).

Years of research on self-determination has demonstrated that when people have increased opportunities to make decisions in their life, they experience better quality of life, employment, community participation outcomes (Algozzine et al., 2001; Burke et al., 2018; Lachapelle et al., 2005; Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Rifenshark, et al., 2015).

Further, research has shown that people under guardianship (who inherently have less opportunity to make decisions in their life) are less likely to live in their own home, work in integrated employment, have employment goal in service plan, and have their rights respected (Bradley, et al., 2019).

These outcomes are particularly concerning in Kansas, where 63% of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive state services have a guardian – well above the national average of 41% (Health Services Research Institute, 2018).

SDM represents a way for people with disabilities to have more opportunities to make decisions in their life. The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) defines SDM, as “the process whereby a person with a disability is enabled to make and communicate decisions with respect to personal and legal matters.”

For more information on SDM, including voices of people with intellectual disability and their families, please refer to KUCDD's website on SDM: <https://selfdetermination.ku.edu/supported-decision-making/>

Evan Dean

Associate Director

Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities