



Whaimana
Support My Decisions

Always remember whose life it is

Adapted in 2026 by Accessible Formats Service,
Blind Low Vision NZ, Auckland

Transcriber's Note: There are two logos at the top of the page. The logo on the left is Whaikaha—Ministry of Disabled People. The logo on the right is Whaimana—Support My Decisions.

Always remember whose life it is

Supported decision-making helps people to make their own decisions about their own lives. It is not about what the supporter thinks is best.

It is not about what the supporter thinks is best

Sometimes, supporters take over and make decisions based on what they think is in the person's best interest.

Fred's story

Fred's wife died recently. His children noticed he seemed quieter than usual at a family dinner. The children were worried.

In their Facebook group chat, the children decided Fred needed more company. They didn't think it was a good idea that Fred's favourite hobby was going fishing on his own.

They signed Fred up for Lawn Bowls. They arranged for a grandson to move in to keep Fred company.

The children made these choices without asking Fred what he wanted. They thought they were helping but they were:

- ignoring Fred's wishes
- deciding what was best for him
- changing his life without his input
- removing his control.

Supported decision-making would help Fred to make his own decisions.

The decision-maker is in charge

In supported decision-making, when the person makes a decision:

- they are in control
- they choose what they want
- their life, their choice.

A good decision-supporter:

- helps, not controls
- does not push their own ideas
- listens to the person's feelings
- accepts the person can take risks they understand.
Safety matters, but control belongs to the person
- respects the person's decision, even if the supporter doesn't agree with it

- realises that people can change their mind.
Sometimes we need to try things to figure out what we really want or need.

Alex's story

With the support of his family Alex decided to go flatting in a new suburb. After a while, Alex wanted to move.

Alex says that deciding where to live is a big decision and is not something people do every day. Alex talked to his Mum and Dad and family and they helped support his decision-making.

He decided to move back to his old suburb. He decided to live in a house with his sister and his niece. Alex enjoys living with them. He enjoys walking to the shops and the local area.

Checking for conflicts

Supporters must be honest with themselves.

- Do they have personal reasons for wanting a certain choice?
- Would the decision benefit them?
- Are they truly supporting the person's wishes?

It is not okay for a supporter to influence decisions so that they benefit themselves. To help avoid and spot undue influence:

- always ask: "Whose choice is this?"
- include several supporters
- step aside as the decision-supporter if there is a conflict. Tell other supporters about this conflict.
- keep communication clear
- respect the person's right to choose
- help the person to stay connected with their community.

Find out more

If you are worried about any form of abuse, you can ring a free helpline:

- Elder abuse helpline 0800 32 668 65.
- Adults at risk Personal Advocacy and Safeguarding Adults Trust (PASAT) 0800 728 70878.
- Are You Ok? Family violence helpline 0800 456 450.
- Oranga Tamariki (Ministry for Children) 0508 326 459.

Visit our Safeguarding page

(<https://www.supportmydecisions.nz/why-is-sdm-important/safeguarding> or

www.supportmydecisions.nz/204) for information on safeguarding people's rights, wellbeing, and safety.

For more information visit

<https://www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/always-remember-whose-life-it-is> or

www.supportmydecisions.nz/102

End of Always remember whose life it is