

18pt



Whaimana
Support My Decisions

Everyone has a right to take risks

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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.

Everyone has a right to take risks

People should be supported to live the life they choose, even if there are some risks involved. This is called the dignity of risk.

Risk is part of making decisions

- There is usually a chance that things might go wrong when we make a choice. This can't be totally avoided.
- Risk is part of making decisions, and it can be good for us.
- We can learn from our mistakes.
- Taking reasonable risks can make us feel better about ourselves and our lives.
- For people who experience mental distress, supporting dignity of risk can help them to recover.

Risk is part of supported decision-making

- The supporter helps the decision-maker understand the good and bad things that may follow a choice.
- The decision-maker and supporter try to come up with ways to reduce the risk while still helping the person achieve what is important to them.
- If the decision-maker understands the good and bad things that might happen, then the supporter should respect the decision.
- The person's choice should only be "over-ruled" if there is an unreasonable risk that can't be understood and managed. For example, a supporter can't support a decision that would break the law.

Belinda's story

Belinda talks with her support worker, Kate, about her holiday plans.

Belinda wants to visit Hobbiton. She loves the Lord of the Rings movies. She wants to go on her own. She will have to go on a long bus trip and stay overnight.

Kate is worried. Belinda usually needs help with cooking and money. Kate knows Belinda is very friendly and trusting.

At first, Kate thinks she should tell Belinda that going alone is a bad idea. But Kate remembers that she can help Belinda understand the risks and options.

They talk about why Belinda wants to travel alone. Belinda says she always goes on holiday with her parents. She wants to show she's grown up.

Kate and Belinda talk about ways to make the trip safe. They come up with two ideas:

- a package tour with a group
- going with her cousin.

They look at the costs and details. Belinda chooses to go with her cousin. She will travel without her parents, which makes her happy.

Sarah's story

Sarah is 20 years old and lives with a mental health condition. She receives support from her community mental health team. Sarah lives at home with her family.

Sarah decides she wants to move away from her family into a house by herself. She wants to do this so she can become more independent.

Molly, her keyworker, is worried. Molly can see that family support really helps Sarah to manage her distress. She is

concerned that Sarah will feel isolated and lonely without the support of her family and could become distressed.

Sarah and Molly discuss this idea. Molly listens carefully and understands Sarah's reasons for wanting to live independently. Molly now understands why it's so important for Sarah to become more independent. Even though there are risks, Molly decides to support Sarah with her move.

Together they decide what additional support Sarah might need in order to live independently. Molly introduces Sarah to a Peer Support Worker who will provide Sarah with additional support through this change. Molly and Sarah make a plan together so Sarah knows what she can do to help herself if she feels distressed. Molly also offers to ring Sarah every few days to check in and see how she is doing.

For more information visit

<https://www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/risk> or www.supportmydecisions.nz/104

End of Everyone has a right to take risks