



Whaimana
Support My Decisions



Whaimana – Support My Decisions:

What is Supported Decision-Making?

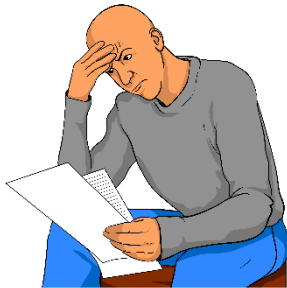


Published: June 2026

Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.

Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.

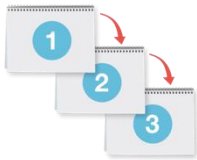


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About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is about the website
**Whaimana – Support My
Decisions.**



Whaimana – Support My Decisions
is a website that shares things about
supported decision-making like:

- information
- **resources.**



Supported decision-making is a
way to:

- support people to make choices
about their own lives

with

- the support of the people they
choose.





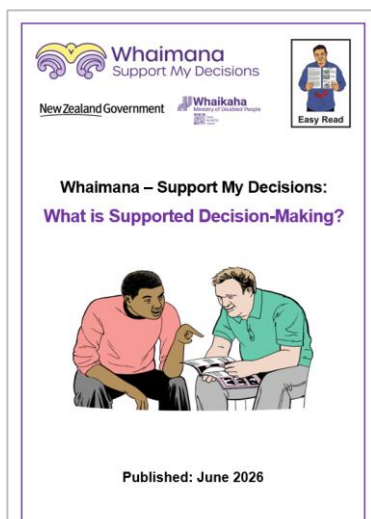
Here **resources** are things to assist people with supported decision-making like having information from different organisations.



Whaimana – Support My Decisions is called **Whaimana** for short in this Easy Read.



In this document the people who make decisions are called **decision-makers**.



This Easy Read is called:

Whaimana – Support My Decisions: What is Supported Decision-Making?



There are 5 other Easy Reads about what is on the Whaimana website:

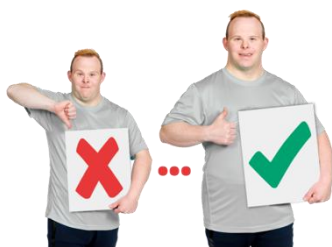
- About our website
- Why is Supported Decision-Making Important?
- How to do Supported Decision-Making
- Supported Decision-Making Stories
- Changes to New Zealand Laws to do with Decision-Making..



You can visit Whaimana at this website:

www.supportmydecisions.nz

The Whaimana website has been made by the **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha**.



The **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha** works to make change for disabled people to make their lives better.



The Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha makes things better for disabled people by working with:

- the Government
- the community
- businesses.



When you see the words **we / us / our** in this document they mean the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.

What happens in supported decision-making?



Supported decision-making means supporting someone to make their own choices.



Supported decision-making is where you have:

- a decision-maker

and

- 1 or more decision **supporters**.





The **decision-maker**:

- chooses their decision supporter / supporters
- is at the centre when making a decision
- makes the final decision.

The **decision supporter / supporters** are people who support you to make a decision.

Supporters can be someone the decision-maker trusts like a:

- family member
- friend
- someone who supports the decision-maker as a job.



Supporters also:

- get to know what:
 - is important to the decision-maker
 - support works best for them
- support the decision-maker to:
 - understand the options
 - think about the options.



A person might need support to:

- get information they need to support them to make a decision
- make information easy to understand
- look at the good / bad parts of each option
- think about what matters to them.

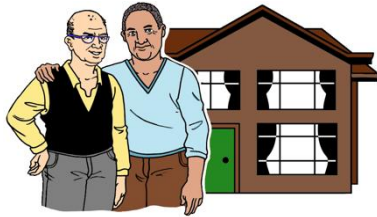




A person might also need support to:

- understand what the decision will mean for them
- make the decision
- feel confident / happy about having made the decision
- put the decision into action like:
 - buying the new pair of glasses you decide to get
 - moving to the place you decide you want to live.

Having this support respects the **right** of the decision-maker to make decisions about their life.



Rights are things that the law says every person should:

- have
- be able to do.

Rights are things like:

- having a safe place to live
- getting the healthcare you need.

Supported decision-making is about 2 human rights:

- everyone has the right to make their own choices
- everyone has the right to support to make their own choices.

The different kinds of decisions



Supported decision-making can be a good thing for all sorts of life decisions.



The decision-maker has the right to be supported to make their own decisions:

- whatever the decision is about
- whenever it will work.



Supported decision-making can help people decide day to day things like:

- what to eat
- what to wear
- how to spend free time.





Supported decision-making can also support people to make big life decisions like about:



- what they can eat like special diets
- what exercise they want to do
- relationships
- medical / healthcare
- things about money
- working / their job.



Everyone should get the support they need to make decisions



Everyone can make their own choices when they get the right support.



Everyone should be able to get support when they need it.



How thinking has changed about decision-making

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** says that:

- everyone has the right to make decisions about their own life
- everyone has the right to get the support they need to do this.





The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is a law lots of countries have agreed to.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is also called the **UN Disability Convention**.

It can also be called the **UNCRPD**.



It says what governments must do to make sure disabled people get the same rights as everybody else.



We used to ask if a person could:

- understand the decision
- make a decision on their own.





The UN Disability Convention now says it is important to ask what support a person will need to make a decision.



This can be things like if they can:

- understand what the decision is about
- communicate / tell people what they want
- take part in making the decision.



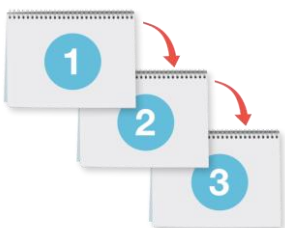


Decision-making capability

Here **capability** means being able to do something like make a decision.



It is important to think about the decision-making capability of the decision-maker when using supported decision-making.



The first steps are looking at what a person:

- can do

and

- not what they cannot do.



Everyone makes decisions in their own way.



Having the right support can mean someone is able to make their own decisions.

Supported decision-making:



- makes a lot of sense
- is good for the decision-maker.



In supported decision-making the focus is on what support the person needs to make a decision.



The supporter needs to find out things about the decision-maker like:

- what things can they do to make a decision?
- what kind of support do they need to make each decision?





Finding these things out will help the supporter to know what capability the decision-maker has to make decisions.

1 decision at a time



The support needed to make a decision can be different each time.



A person may:

- be happy to make decisions in one part of their life
- want support to make some decisions in other parts of their life.



A person may want more support for a decision they:

- find hard
- feel overwhelmed with / cannot make a choice about.





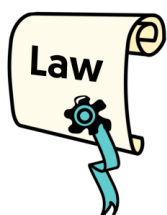
What if the supporter has a formal legal role?

When someone has a **formal legal role** it means the law has said they have been chosen to:

- make decisions for someone else
- speak for the person they are making decisions for.



This support role is needed when someone does not have the capacity to make decisions.



A special support role can be set up as a **legal** document when a person is found to be not capable of making decisions.

Legal means to do with the **law**.



A **law** is a rule made by the Government that everyone must follow.



The document says the law lets the supporter:

- communicate / speak for the person
- make decisions for the person.



Sometimes this role is set up before it is needed as an **enduring power of attorney / EPOA**.



An enduring power of attorney / EPOA is a legal document that says who you want to make decisions for you if you cannot make decisions for yourself.



Sometimes this role is set up by the courts.



This support person role may be called a:

- welfare guardian
- property manager / property administrator
- adult legal guardian.



Supported decision-making is still important when the supporter has a formal legal role.



The law wants supporters in these roles to:

- support the person to make decisions
- support the person to develop / grow their decision-making skills
- talk to them about decisions being made as much as possible.

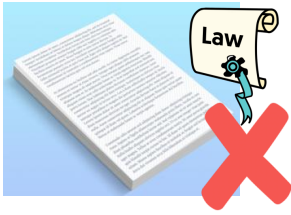


Remember that:

- everyone has a right to the support they need to make decisions
- support can make decision-making better.



This is true for everyone using supported decision-making.

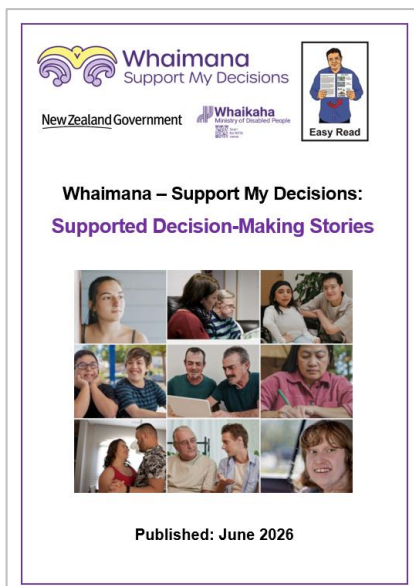


The supporter of a decision-maker does not need a legal role to support them to make decisions.



You can read the story about how Ben uses supported decision-making at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/the-support-they-need



You can find an Easy Read translation of Ben's story at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>

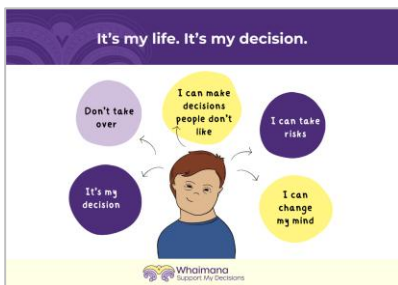
The decision belongs to the decision-maker



It is important to know when supporting someone that the decision belongs to the decision-maker.



The decision is not about what the supporter thinks is best for the decision-maker.



We have made a poster to tell people about this called:

It's my life. It's my decision.



You can download it at our **website**:

<https://tinyurl.com/WhaimanaPoster>



Sometimes supporters:

- take over

and

- make decisions on what they think is best.



You can read the story how supported decision-making would have supported Fred to make his own decisions at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/always-remember-whose-life-it-is



Whaimana
Support My Decisions





**Whaimana – Support My Decisions:
Supported Decision-Making Stories**



Published: June 2026

You can find an Easy Read translation of Fred's story at:

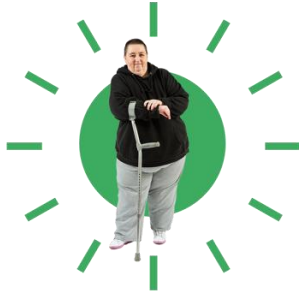
<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>



The decision-maker is in charge

When the decision-maker makes a decision in supported decision-making:

- they are in control
- they choose what they want.



It is important to remember it is:

- their life
- their choice.



A good decision-supporter:

- supports the decision-maker
- does not control the decision
- does not push their own ideas
- listens to the feelings of the decision-maker
- accepts the decision-maker can **take risks** they understand
- understands safety is important but that control belongs to the decision-maker
- respects the decision if the supporter does not agree with it
- understands people can change their minds.





Here **take a risk** means making a decision that could go wrong.



For example if a person decides to go bike riding there is a risk they may hurt themselves if they fall off.



You can read the story about how supported decision-making assisted Alex to move at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/always-remember-whose-life-it-is



New Zealand Government

Whaimana – Support My Decisions:
Supported Decision-Making Stories



Published: June 2026

You can find an Easy Read translation of Alex's story at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>

Checking for conflicts



Here a **conflict** can happen when something about a person makes it harder for them to make a fair decision.



For example a supporter might want to rent a house they own to the decision-maker they are supporting.



This means the supporter would get money if they rented the house to the decision-maker.



Conflict makes it hard for the supporter to support the decision-maker in a fair way.



The supporter might decide to rent the house to the decision-maker even if the house is not the best place for them to live.



Supporters need to ask themselves:

- do they have their own reasons for wanting a decision-maker to make a certain choice
- would the decision be good for the supporter
- are they supporting what the decision-maker really wants?





It is not OK for a supporter to support a decision-maker to make a decision that:

- is good for the supporter

and

- is not good for the decision-maker.



To make sure supporters are doing the right thing for the decision-maker they should:

- remember to ask who the choice belongs to
- have more than 1 supporter supporting the decision-maker.





To make sure supporters are doing the right thing for the decision-maker they should also:



- get someone else to support the decision-maker if there is a conflict
- tell other supporters about any conflicts



- keep communication clear
- respect the right of the decision-maker to choose



- support the person to keep being part of their community.



Are you worried about abuse?

Abuse is when someone hurts another person.



There are places you can call if you are worried someone is being abused.



These calls do not cost you money.

These places are:



- Elder Abuse Response Service

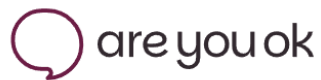
0800 32 668 65

- The Personal Advocacy and Safeguarding Adults Trust / PASAT

0800 728 70878.



Other places are:



- Are You OK? Family violence helpline

0800 456 450



- Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children

0508 326 459.



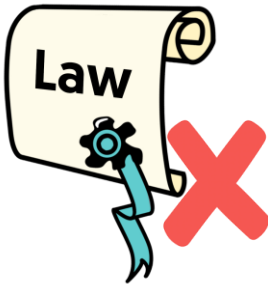
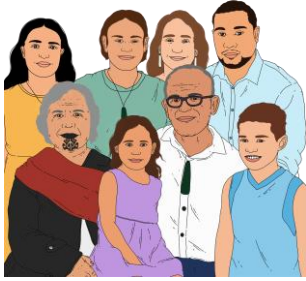
Visit the Whaimana **website** for more information about **safeguarding** at:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/204



Here **safeguarding** means keeping people safe.

Wills and preferences



Here **will** means the things about the decision-maker like:

- their long term goals like wanting to stay healthy
- values / what is important to them like staying connected to their family.

Here will does **not** mean a legal will were someone says what they want to happen when they die.



Here **preferences** are the things that the decision-maker likes right now.

A decision-maker can let their supporters know about their preferences by:

- telling them
- showing them.



Sometimes wills and preferences do not match.



It can be hard to decide on our own when we have to **balance** things when making a decision.



Balance means trying to make a choice by looking at the:

- good parts of each option
- bad parts of each option.



When making decisions we need to think about:

- what we want right now

with

- what we want in the **future**.



Future is the time that has not happened yet.

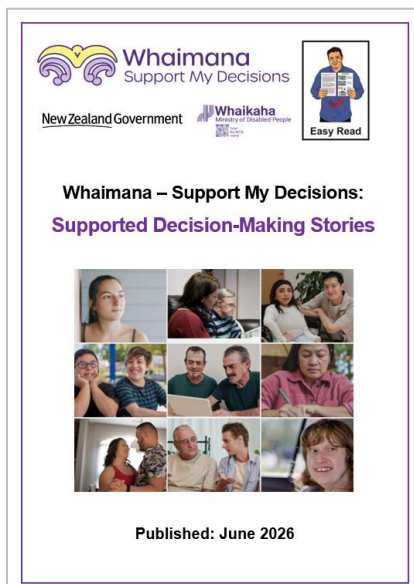


Supported decision-making can support people to balance their will and preferences.



You can read the story about Sasi using supported decision-making when she needed an operation at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/what-the-decision-maker-wants



You can find an Easy Read translation of Sasi's story at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>

Is more support needed?



Sometimes people find it hard to say what:

- they want
- is important to them.



Supporters need to:

- listen carefully
- watch how the person acts.



Supporters may need to try to work out what the person wants by looking closely at what they do.

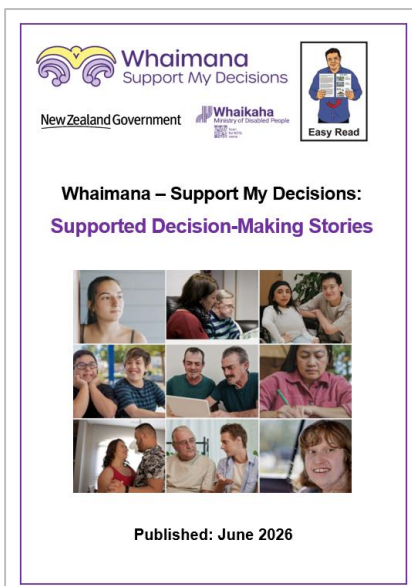


For example a decision-maker might look very sad if they do not like the options of food for dinner.



Read the story about how supported decision-making assisted Wiri to stay living near his friend at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/what-the-decision-maker-wants



You can find an Easy Read translation of Wiri's story at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>



Supported decision-making is always led by what the decision-maker wants.



It is not led by how much support they need to make the decision.



A person should not be left out of decision-making because they find it hard to say what they want.

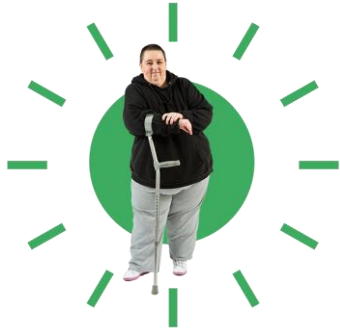


The supporter has to try to understand what the person wants.



Usually the decision can be about what the decision-maker:

- says
- does.



The supporter must base the decision on what they believe the decision-maker wants.

This is called a principled approach.

Planning for the future



Sometimes people can say what they want to happen if they become unwell in the future in a document.



This can help supporters to know what the will and preferences of a person are.



The document can have things like:

- what they want for:
 - **treatment**
 - care
 - **end of life care**
- an **advance care plan**
- a **shared goals of care conversation**.





Here **treatment** is the things that can be done to try to make someone well when they have a medical condition.



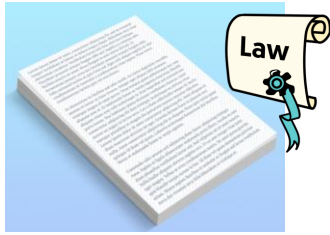
End of life care is the care a person gets when they are dying / nearing the end of their life.



Advance care plan is a way for you to tell people how you would like to be cared for in the future.



A shared goals of care conversation is when you talk to your supporters about the sort of care you would like when you are getting care.



Planning for the future can also be about things like:

- setting up an Enduring Power of Attorney
- what treatment you would like if you are mentally distressed by putting it in a **mental health advance preferences statement**.

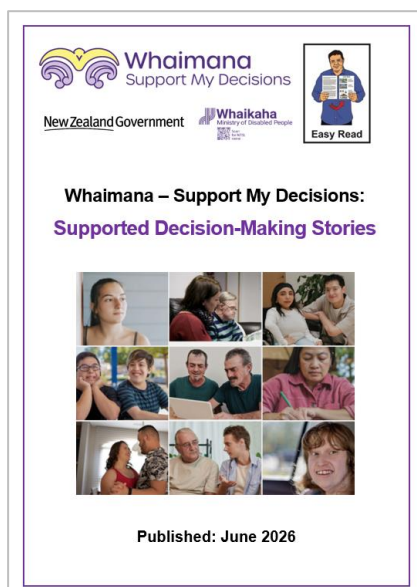


A **mental health advance preferences statement** is a document that says what you would like to do if you are in mental distress.



Read the story about how supported decision-making assisted Courtney to get the care she needs at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/what-the-decision-maker-wants



You can find an Easy Read translation of Courtney's story at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3mwshsmn>

Taking risks



Everyone has the right to take risks.



People should be supported to live the life they choose.



This can mean there will be some risks when someone is making decisions.

This is called the dignity of risk.



We have an **I can take risks** poster at our **website**:

<https://tinyurl.com/RiskSDMPoster>



Risk is part of making decisions

There is usually a chance things might go wrong when we make a choice.



This chance of risk cannot always be removed / taken out when making a decision.



Risk is:

- part of making decisions

and

- can be good for us.



We can learn from our mistakes.



Taking risks can make us feel better about:

- ourselves
- our lives.



Having support about the dignity of risk can support some people with mental distress to recover.



Risk is part of supported decision-making

The supporter supports the decision-maker to understand the things that can happen because of making a choice like the:

- good things
- bad things.





The supporter works with the decision-maker to:

- try to think of ways to lessen the risks

and

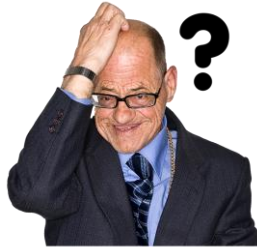
- support the decision-maker to make the decision that is right for them.



The supporter should respect the decision when they know the decision-maker understands the:

- good things that might happen
- bad things that might happen.





The decision should only be stopped by the supporter if the risk cannot be:

- understood
- controlled.

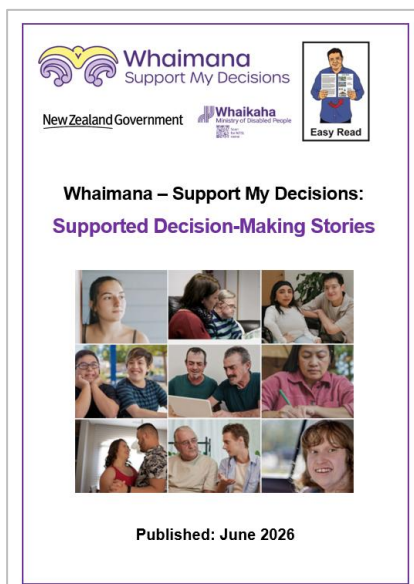
For example a supporter cannot support a decision that would break the law.

Read the story about how supported decision-making assisted Belinda with her holiday plans at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/risk

You can find an Easy Read translation of Belinda's story at:

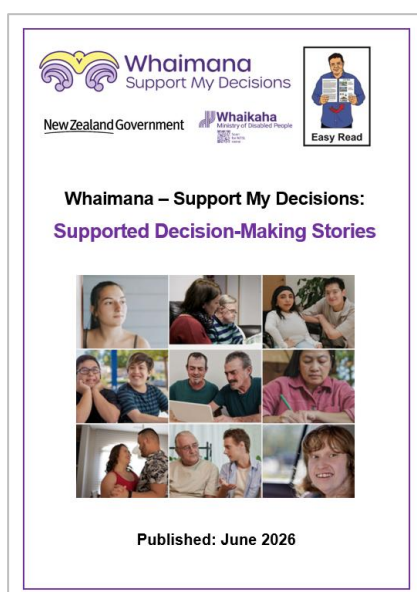
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Read the story about how supported decision-making assisted Sarah to move out of her family home at this **website**:

www.supportmydecisions.nz/what-is-sdm/risk



You can find an Easy Read translation of Sarah's story at:

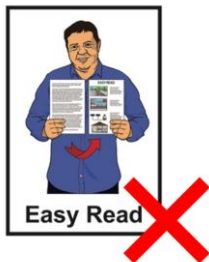
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More information



For more information about supported decision-making visit our **website** at:

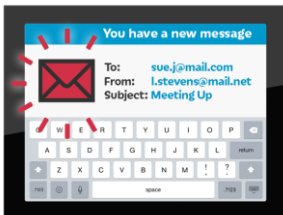
www.supportmydecisions.nz



This website is not in Easy Read.



You can also contact us if you have any questions about Whaimana by:



- **emailing** us at:

contact@whaikaha.govt.nz

- **calling** us at:

0800 942 452.





If you find it hard to use the phone
the **New Zealand Relay** service is for
people who are:

- Deaf / hard of hearing
- deafblind
- speech impaired / find it hard to talk.



You can find out more about the
New Zealand Relay service at:

www.nzrelay.co.nz

This information has been written by the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



The ideas in this document are not the ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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