



What is self-determination?

Self-determination means individuals make choices and decisions based on their own interests and preferences, set goals, and monitor their own progress.

DD Act Self-Determined Actions:

An individual with developmental disabilities, with assistance:

- has the ability and opportunity to make choices and decisions;
- has the ability and opportunity to exercise control over services, supports, and other assistance;
- has the authority to control resources and obtain needed services;
- has the opportunity to participate in and contribute to their communities;
- has the support, including financial, to advocate, develop leadership skills, become trained as a self-advocate, and participate in coalitions and policy-making.

How do we live a self-determined life?

Practice! Living a self-determined life means taking control of planning and decisions, as well as experiencing consequences of making choices. This takes practice. It also takes support from family and friends or a mentor. Start early by engaging in ample opportunities to make as many choices as possible.

What is person-centered thinking?

Person-centered thinking is a strengths-based approach that shifts ideas about people with developmental disabilities away from their deficits or needs. In a person-centered approach, we see the person first, not the diagnosis. At the systems level, person-centered thinking transforms the idea of people with disabilities from consumers of services to engaged, active members of the community.

How do I support person-centered thinking?

- Use People-First language (*See guide)
- Ensure the individual with the developmental disability is involved and is the center of any person-centered plan.
- Create a one-page profile!