

Supported Decision Making: Background and Expert Panel

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VIRGINIA BOARD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, 1100 BANK STREET, 7TH FLOOR, RICHMOND, VA 23219, (800) 846-4464, OR VISIT THE BOARD'S [WEBSITE](#).



Overview

- ▶ Basics Supported Decision Making
 - ▶ What is SDM?
 - ▶ Usage with other supports
 - ▶ Why do it?
- ▶ The “What ifs”
- ▶ Putting SDM into action
- ▶ Examples of SDM in practice
- ▶ SDM Resources



What is Supported Decision Making?

- ▶ At its most basic, Supported Decision Making is having people you trust to help you make decisions
- ▶ Part of our culture for everyone
- ▶ Can be formal or informal



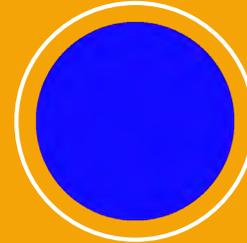
The Spectrum of Decision Making Supports



No defined needs or supports



Power of Attorney and/or formal SDM agreement, Rep Payee or Trust



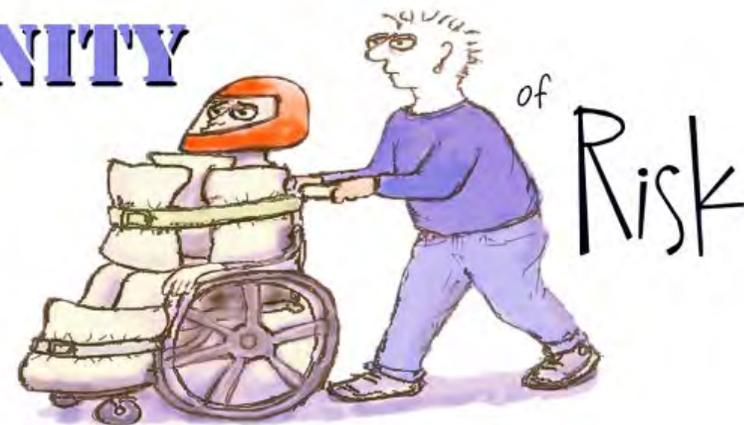
Limited or full guardianship or conservatorship



Why Should You Consider SDM?

- ▶ Self-determination studies on safety and quality of life
- ▶ Increasing independence
- ▶ Dignity of Risk and learning from mistakes
- ▶ Preservation of Rights
- ▶ Minimal to no cost

DIGNITY



Why Should You Consider SDM?

- ▶ Can be implemented immediately and changed as needed
- ▶ Growing a culture of support network and reducing reliance on one person
- ▶ Virginia law, National Guardianship Association, and best practices all emphasize the least restrictive options being fully explored before other options are pursued
- ▶ Virginia is considering additional SDM legislation



What if Something Bad Happens????

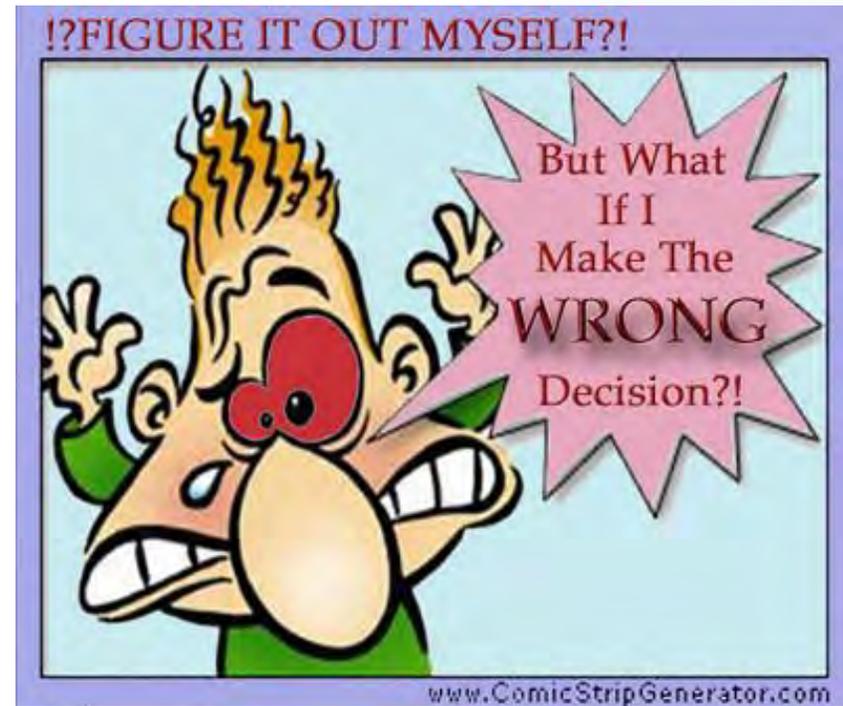
- ▶ We are all vulnerable
- ▶ No studies have show guardianship increases safety, but studies do show self-determination does
- ▶ SDM utilizes and builds on strengths of the individual and their team
- ▶ We all learn to make better decisions by making mistakes
- ▶ Most people make some bad choices everyday, and that is okay



“Would you please elaborate on ‘then something bad happened’?”

Getting Started with SDM

- ▶ Setting the Wheels in Motion
- ▶ Brainstorming sheet
- ▶ When Do I Want Support
- ▶ Determining Supporters
 - ▶ Paid and unpaid
 - ▶ Use as a lens when you meet new people



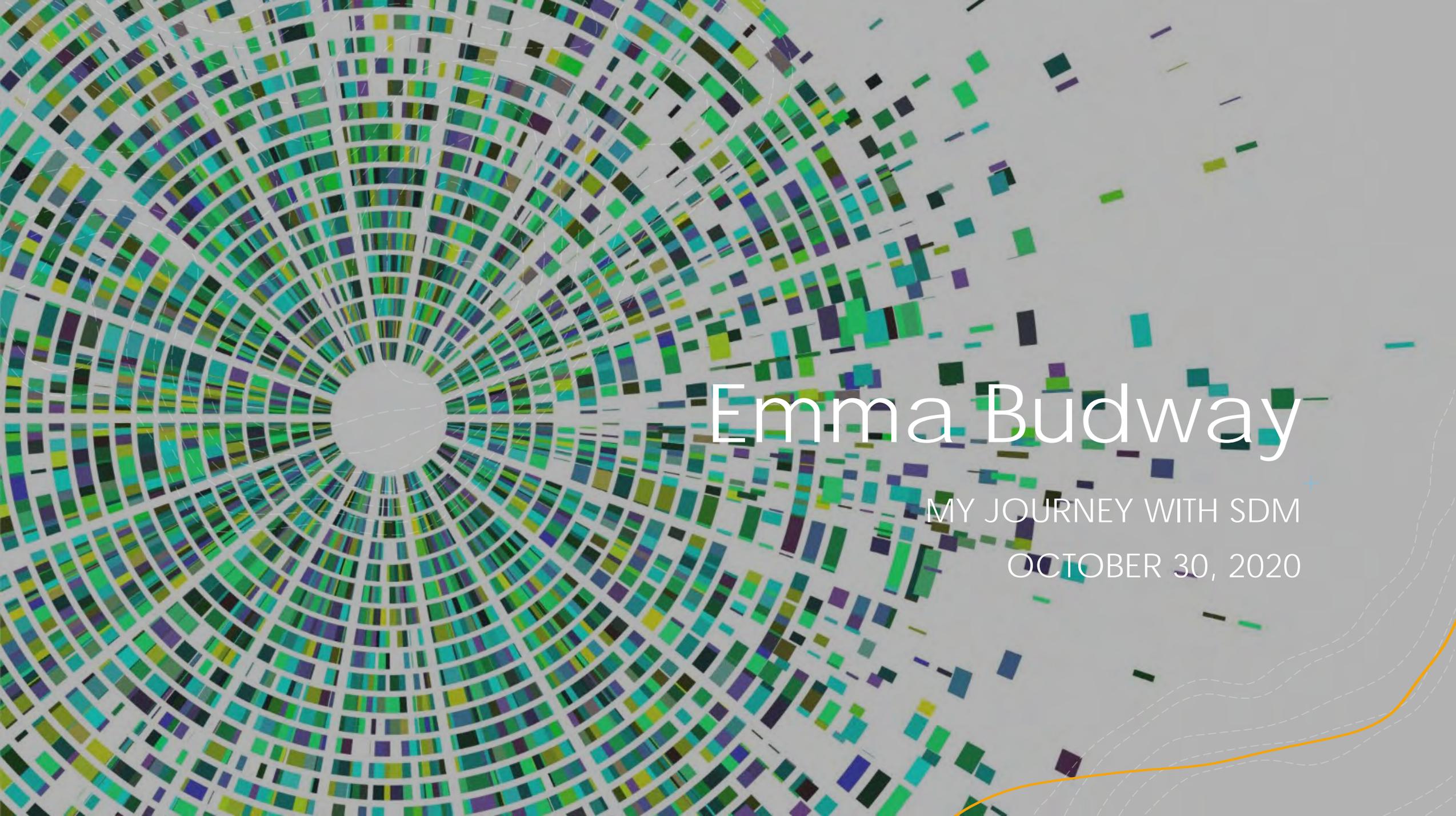
Putting SDM into Action

- ▶ Read about it and get some ideas onto paper (see resource section at the end of this presentation)
- ▶ Talk to your supporters and plan to communicate regularly
- ▶ If you want to use legal tools (e.g., POA), then put them into place
- ▶ Keep evaluating over time



Expert Panel

- ▶ Jonathan Martinis with Syracuse University
- ▶ Emma Budway, SDM user
- ▶ Donna Budway, SDM team member
- ▶ Conner Cummings, SDM user
- ▶ Sharon Cummings, SDM team member



Emma Budway

MY JOURNEY WITH SDM

OCTOBER 30, 2020

I am a 23-year-old autistic speller.

- "I love to walk, read and travel."
- "I moved into my own apartment in December, shortly after I started working with my friends at the Arc on SDM."
- "I vote!"





My Decision Making Supports

Circle of Support – Mom,
Dad, David, Micah, Allison,
Katie and Kate, Loan and
Hada

POA and Rep Payee – Mom
and Dad (“but I make the
decisions.”)



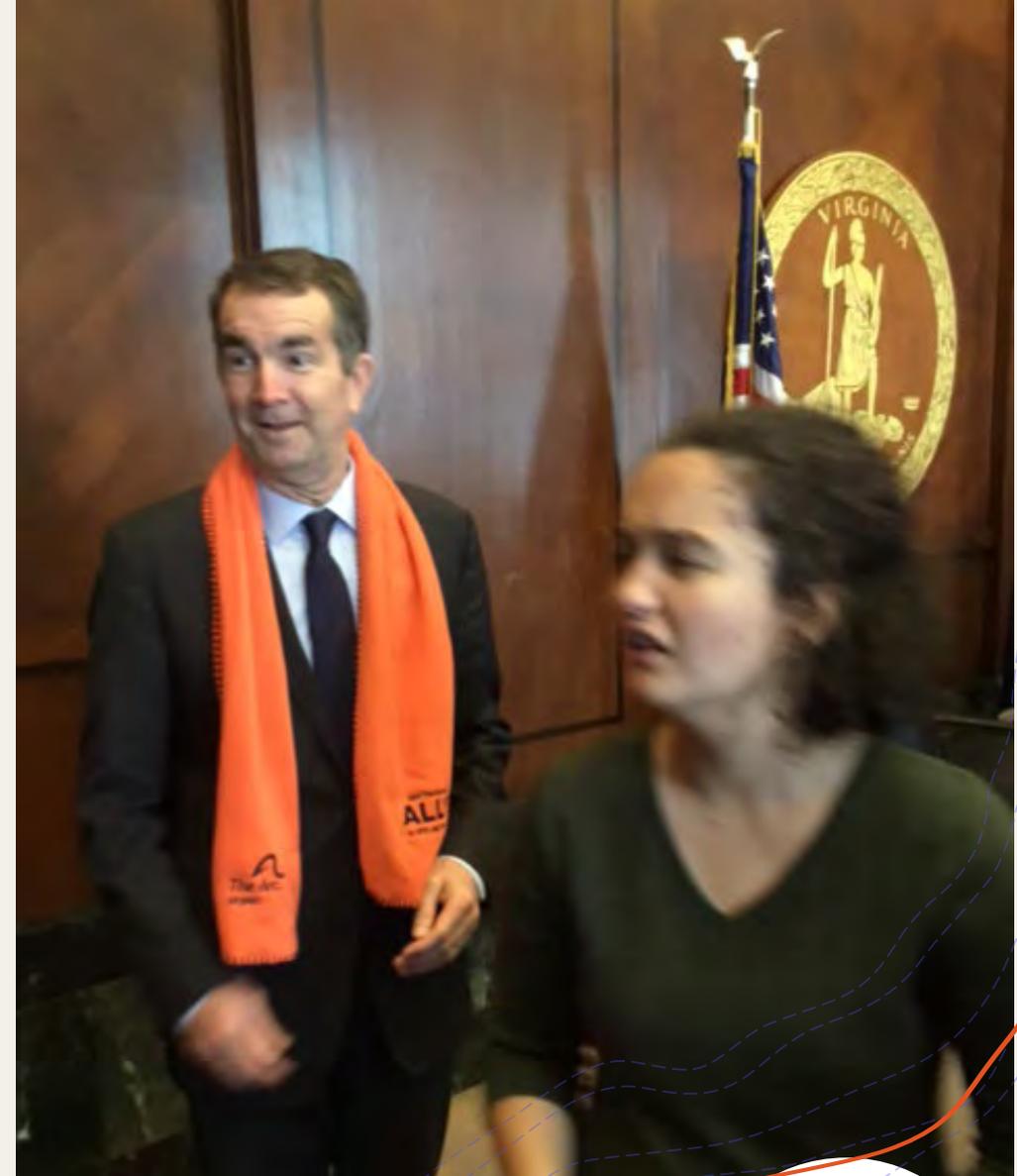
Putting SDM into Action: Education

- “I decided I wanted to return to school to take an American History class with my nonspeaking peers.”
- “I decided I wanted to take a class at George Washington University.”
- “I am not sure if I will complete my high school degree, but I know I will be a life-long learner.”



Putting SDM into Action- Advocacy

- + “We have traveled to the State Capitol to meet the governor and our state legislators where we advocated for higher wages for our support staff.”
- + “We have spent a lot of time demanding that our communication method be supported in our schools. We have pleaded for inclusion.”
- + “With my friends, Ben and Huan, I will meet with the sheriff in November to discuss equity and social justice issues. There is so much work to be done.”





Putting SDM into Action - Housing

- "I decided to move out of my parents' house."
- "I picked Katie to be my roommate."
- "I can be alone safely for up to 4 hours without being lonely."
- "I needed to live near my friends and see them often."



Putting SDM into Action: Leisure Time

- + "I like to see my friends every day."
- + "I need to be outside for walks daily."
- + "I select my reading material. We are currently reading a book about Ida B. Wells, *A Sword Among Lions* and *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabelle Wilkerson."
- + "I select all of my electives and activities."





What if something bad happens?

+
The Dignity of Risk.

We are balancing risk with growth.

"I use technology to keep me safe and give me more independence."

"I have spent my first night alone in my apartment."

What I have learned through the process:

- "I have learned that I have many strengths, and my challenges are not insurmountable. I have come a long way."
- "You can do it if I can!"
- "Thank you to my friends at the Arc for this amazing opportunity and everything they do for all of us!"
- Contact me at emmabudway@gmail.com

SDM Resources

- ▶ The Arc of Northern Virginia
 - ▶ <https://thearcofnova.org/programs-services/sdm>
- ▶ National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making
 - ▶ <http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/>
- ▶ Center for Public Representation
 - ▶ <https://supporteddecisions.org/>
- ▶ disAbility Law Center of Virginia
 - ▶ <https://www.dlcva.org/>