

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Title: *Supported Decision-Making Guide – Making a Practical Difference*

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Overview:

An overuse of the states' guardianship regime has seen unnecessary and premature applications to the Guardianship Tribunals/Boards reach all-time high numbers. An appointment by a Tribunal limits a person's human rights, reduces their autonomy, and often results in them being excluded from decisions about their life.

ADA Law has developed a Supported Decision-Making Guide, which uses very basic, small steps to demonstrate a person can retain decision making control, and how a supporter can better assist them.

Abstract:

An overuse of the states' guardianship regime has seen unnecessary and premature applications to the Guardianship Tribunals/Boards reach all-time high numbers. An appointment by a Tribunal limits a person's human rights, reduces their autonomy, and often results in them being excluded from decisions about their life. Where the person is a hospital patient, a Tribunal application often results in delayed discharge.

Even in states where legislation provides for alternate support with decision making, both formal and informal, stakeholders are often unaware of their options and the consequences for the older person.

Most people mean well, and are trying to be helpful, however, unintentionally they often lose sight of the power imbalances, the powerlessness of the older person, and don't understand the ways they can assist a person without taking over their life.

As a way to address this, ADA Law has developed a Supported Decision-Making Guide, which uses very basic, small steps to demonstrate a person can retain decision making control, and how a supporter can better assist them. The guide is influenced by tools developed by the American Bar Association, and the National Disability Services Ltd.

The guide is divided into chapters according to areas of need, for example, an older person needing help with Aged Care Services; or a person needing help with the NDIS. As well there are chapters that explain what an attorney under an enduring document can do; how to work through the Centrelink system; and how to support a person to make a healthcare decision.

This presentation by Karen Williams and Rebecca Anderson will apply a de-identified case study to demonstrate how the guide can be used, and the benefit not just for the older person, but also the systems around them, resulting in less Tribunal applications, shorter hospital admissions and more engaged clients. This presentation addresses both *A rally cry for equality; See me, hear me, back me* as important conference themes.

The guide is available online from the ADA Law website.

Format:

Through an in person PPT presentation, Karen and Rebecca will discuss a case study applying the SDM Guide in practice.