

KNOW YOUR IMPACT

Just because

- an individual has a diagnosis of a disability
- an individual has an IEP
- an individual receives Developmental Disability services
- an individual doesn't speak
- an individual needs help making decisions



Doesn't mean they are incompetent and need a GUARDIAN.

Physicians may be approached by parents of patients with disabilities and asked to complete an expert evaluation form to be used as evidence in a guardianship proceeding.

These parents may have been led to believe or even told outright that they **must** take guardianship of their child when they turn eighteen. Parents may think they will be unable to keep their child safe as well as have access to their educational, medical, and financial records. This is, in fact, not true.

**What is true, however, is this:
Taking guardianship over someone effectively
strips them of their civil rights.**

There are methods available that allow individuals to include supporters in important decisions related to healthcare and education. A person who has reached the age of majority can invite people to be involved.

In addition, guardianship does not remove all risk; even under guardianship an individual may be financially exploited. Other measures are available to address vulnerabilities with financial matters including representative payee, banking tools (online monitoring), etc.

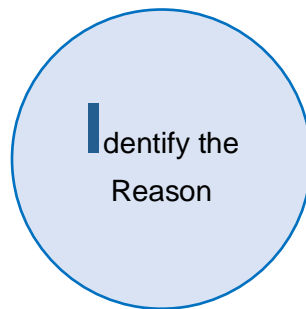
While the taking of guardianship is sometimes absolutely necessary, it is the most restrictive approach and there are other less drastic measures that can be utilized.



BEFORE MAKING A RECOMMENDATION FOR GUARDIANSHIP, PLEASE FOLLOW THESE **P-I-C-K** GUIDELINES:



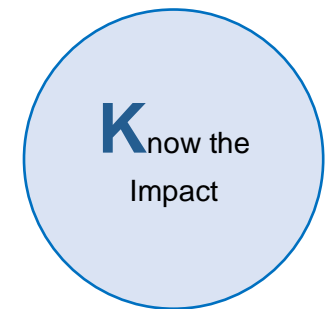
- Start out by presuming the individual is competent and work back from there.



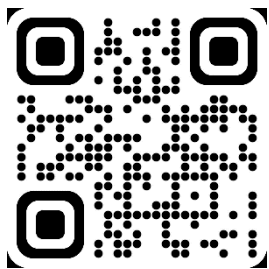
- What does the parent hope to gain from this?
- Does the individual understand what guardianship is and want it to be taken? -Ask if they have questions or need more information



- **Power of Attorney (financial and medical)**
- **Representative Payee**
- **Family/community resources of support**
- **Identification of specific areas of strengths and challenges that can be accommodated**
- **Using supported decision-making tools**



- Your signature on a form can play a significant part in the removal of a person's civil rights



We **ALL** have the right to make decisions that affect our own lives.

We **ALL** need help with making decisions at one point or another.

Don't deny your patient the **DIGNITY OF RISK**.

People who use supported decision-making say they have greater self-determination, live more independently, are more likely to be employed, have better health outcomes, are happier, have more privacy, and generally feel more safe and secure.

To learn more, please go to SDMNO.org