What do the Principles of Self-Determination Mean for Me?

FREEDOM - People with disabilities must be free to decide how to live their own lives. *That means:*

- Choosing where and with whom you want to live
- Choosing what you want to do and where and when you want to work
- Being free to do the things that interest you
- Creating the support system you want and choosing support that fit your needs and your personality
- Taking risks and possibly failing

AUTHORITY - People with disabilities must have the authority to determine where and how to spend the public funds. *That means:*

- Knowing and controlling the public funds allotted to you
- Deciding what aspects of your life should receive the most attention
- Having the authority to hire and fire people who serve you
- Having your preferences heard and your decisions followed

SUPPORT - People with disabilities must be allowed to organize resources in formal and informal ways that enhance their lives and are meaningful to them as individuals.

That means:

- Being free to choose your caregivers
- Gathering input from people who care about you
- Being allowed to fund the support services that are best suited to your situation
- Being free to switch services and service providers if your situation changes or you're dissatisfied

RESPONSIBILITY- people with disabilities must be given responsibility for the wise use of public funds and must be recognized for the contributions they make to their communities. *That means:*

- Receiving competitive wages for competitive work
- Being held accountable for the decisions you make
- Making good financial choices that support clearly defined goals
- Being given the chance to volunteer in the community and participate in community events

CONFIRMATION

People with disabilities must be allowed to play important, meaningful roles in restructuring the system. *That means:*

- **Sharing your opinion with people in decision-making roles**
- **Being free of retaliation**
- **Acting as a change agent by taking part in the legislative process**
- **Offering constructive ideas for change**

Reprinted from Partners in Living-- a self-study course created to help people with developmental disabilities, their family and friends explore four important elements that, together, can help them create a meaningful life: Self-Determination, Family Support, Community Living and Assistive Technology. The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities