

Name of Resource:	"Kansas BELIEVE Guardianship Toolkit for Self-Advocates"
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Link to Resource:	Full Resource

Purpose: The information in "Kansas BELIEVE Guardianship Toolkit for Self-Advocates " is to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) learn about guardianship and various topics related to guardianship.

Unique Experiences: People are often labeled and defined by their disability experience. People have feelings, ideas, beliefs, and values that are not limited by disability or experience. People with disabilities also have feelings, beliefs, and values. Each person is the expert in their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and knows what is best for them. As the expert of their life, people have the ability to direct decisions about their life, and this is self-determination. Choice, independence, knowledge, safety, and self-care are basic parts of self-determination.

Regardless of disability or guardianship status, each person has the ability to make choices in their life according to their needs, beliefs, values, and desires. The level of independence and support varies based on the needs, abilities, skills, and experience of each person.

Barriers:

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities may have not had the opportunity to learn about the importance of making decisions for themselves OR may not had the opportunity to learn in a way that works best for them. People may have experienced a lifetime of others making decisions for them, including parents, teachers, and legal guardians.

A legal guardian is someone who is appointed by a court to act on behalf of a person in need of help making decisions and taking care of their needs. Many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have a legal guardian that helps make financial, housing, and medical decisions. It is important for a legal guardian to know the person on whose behalf they make decisions including what the person wants and needs.

Letting a legal guardian know what is important is an extension of self-determination. People need to make decisions everyday. Some decisions are less important and don't need to involve a legal guardian such as where to go to eat or where to go to shop; some decisions are more important and do need to involve a legal guardian such as spending a large amount of money or having a medical procedure. No matter what the decision, people get to tell what they want. It is important for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be empowered and given as much control as possible over the choices they make.

Promising
Approaches:

Sometimes people need help with making decisions. There are many ways to get help to make decisions and get things done. "Kansas BELIEVE Guardianship Toolkit for Self-Advocates" is an easy to understand resource that includes plain language and pictures to assist people in learning about ways of making decisions with help including

- Supported Decision Making
- Social Security Representative Payee
- Durable Power of Attorney
- Conservator
- Guardian

Recommendations: KCSDV (Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence) has a KCSDV Disabilities Project.

The KCSDV Disabilities Project and the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK) partnered to create the Kansas Building and Expanding Leaders and Individuals, Experience the Vision of Empowerment (BELIEVE) Partnership Project (Kansas BELIEVE Project).

The mission of the Kansas BELIEVE Project is to improve services and support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who have experienced sexual violence. Learn more about KCSDV's Disabilities Project [here](#).

Other resources developed by the Kansas BELIEVE Project include

- [Self-Advocate Accessible Zoom Guide](#)
- [Self-Advocate Toolkit on Accommodation](#)
- [Sexual Assault Advocacy Toolkit on Accommodation](#)
- [Sexual Assault Advocacy Toolkit on Guardianship](#)