



# Ethical Dilemmas Related to Self Determination

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Callie Allen-Boone MSW, Westland, MI  
Janine McKinney, BSHS, Center Line, MI

## A Matter of Ethics

The National Association of **Social Workers** states **self-determination** is an ethical principle of professional practice.

“**Social workers** respect and promote the **right** of clients to **self-determination** and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals.”

## Why is Self Determination Important?



- The more practice individuals receive in developing and strengthening self-determination skills, the more likely they are to make better decisions in life.
- Service Coordinators provide opportunities for residents to practice skills that support self-determination.
- This leads to greater independence and self-advocacy.

## Working Together for the Residents

- Each person must be treated with dignity and respect.
- The principal of “aging in place” makes it possible for our residents to live independently, with dignity and self-determination.
- The Community Manager, the Service Coordinator and the Maintenance Staff must work closely together to provide the best in supportive services.

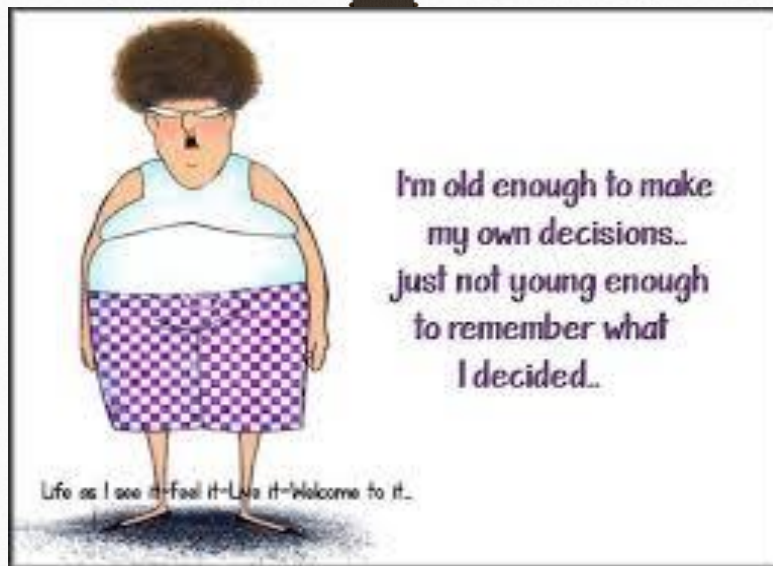


## Respecting a Residents Rights

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- Good decisions
- Ones we don't agree with, but do not violate lease
- Bad decisions





## What is Self Determination?

- 1. The power or ability to make a decision for oneself without influence from outside.
- 2. Freedom to live as one chooses, or to act or decide without consulting another or others.





## Ethical Standards

- Residents Right to freedom of choice over personal safety

(A resident has the right to choose to live at risk of harm or leave needs unmet, providing they are capable of making that decision, and harms no one and commits no crime.)





## Ethical Dilemmas

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- Right to Die with Dignity
- Criminal Activities
- Abuse or Neglect
- Lease Violations
- Resident Safety
- Drug Abuse

## Capacity Vs. Competency

Adults who demonstrate capacity are able to:

- A. Retain information
- B. Consider and process a scenario
- C. Provide a reasonable or sensible answer
- D. Demonstrate an appreciation for and understanding of the risks and consequences of decisions as they relate to specific situations



## Capacity Vs. Competency



### Competency

Competency is a legal term determined by the probate court, after a person has been evaluated by a psychiatrist.

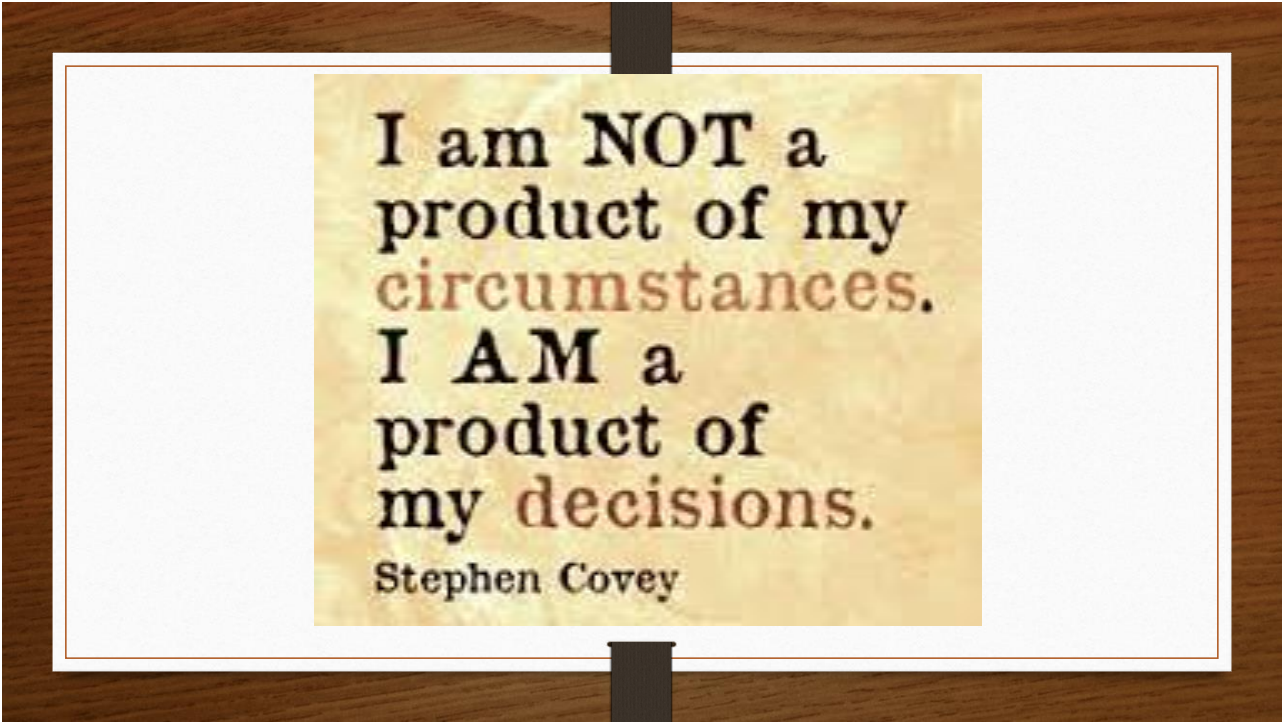
### Note:

*Individuals with the capacity to make informed decisions and individuals who have been determined to be competent have the right to make poor decisions.*

## Self Determination and Service Coordinator Role

- Link residents with services to help maintain their independence
- Assist with entitlement programs
- Advocate on behalf of the residents
- Respect the residents right to refuse the services of the S.C. or Service Coordination program if they choose





I am NOT a  
product of my  
circumstances.  
I AM a  
product of  
my decisions.  
Stephen Covey

## Self Determination and Management Perspective

- #1 goal is to create happy residents
- Maintain occupancy standards
  - What happens when residents do not comply with lease agreement/house rules
  - Interrupts the peaceful enjoyment of others
  - Cause damage to building/apartment



## How Managers Can Help

- If it is determined that a resident has a disability that hinders their ability to meet deadlines.
- A reasonable accommodation may be requested to allow the resident time to meet the requirements of a lease agreement (i.e....health and safety).





## Ethical Standard

All residents have a right to choose their own life-style, as long as there are no lease violations and they are fulfilling their obligations of tenancy.



## How to Deal with Resident “Bad Decisions”



- Make sure resident is educated on the consequences of the decision
- Make sure resident is capable of understanding consequences
- Document - EVERYTHING
- Recognize confidentiality limitations of S.C.
- Understand that there may be reasons for bad decisions: pride, mental/physical illness, belief systems

## Acceptance

- Finally accept that you have done all that was within your job description to help the resident
- And that sometimes bad things happen to good people
- Sometimes whether they wanted or not residents have to move
  - More suitable environment
  - Higher level of care



## What Would You Do?

- Break into small groups
- Come up with the best solution for your ethical dilemma





## POP QUIZ!

A client tells a social worker that she plans to take a psychedelic drug over the weekend in an effort to decrease her anxiety. What should the social worker do?

- A. Explain the dangers of psychedelic drugs to the client.
- B. Discuss the pros and cons of the plan.
- C. Notify police about the planned illegal drug use.
- D. Refer the client to a psychiatrist for anxiety medication.

## Remember the 4 Agreements

- **Be impeccable with your word.**

Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using your words to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your words in the direction of truth and love.

- **Don't take anything personally.**

Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.



## 4 Agreements

- **Don't make assumptions.**

Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

- **Always do your best.**

Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse, and regret.

"The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom"

By Don Miguel Ruiz



## SC Self Determination Tip



- Start by asking the clients what they want for themselves? Ask those open-ended questions and see where it goes.
- Help them clarify their goals and set concrete hopes. Make sure they are the client's goals – not what you think they should work on.

## SC Self Determination Tips II

- Be cautious of having an agenda. There might be things you want to cover in a session but the client should determine where the conversation goes.
- Ask yourself – Is this what the client wants or is it me who thinks this is a good idea?
- Is what the client plans to do put them or someone else at imminent risk for harm.

## SC Self Determination Tips III

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- Consult with other social workers to get different perspectives.
- Remind yourself that your client's reactions and their situation is not about you.
- Ask yourself – Is there a really good reason I am taking away this person's right of choice?

Questions???

