

## Developmental Disabilities- Person-Centered Approach to Risk Toolkit

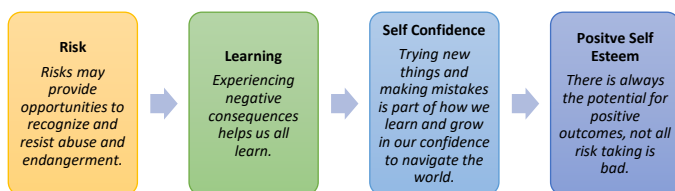
### Quick Reference Guide



Dignity of Risk = Dignity of Choice

**Dignity of risk is the right of every person, including those with a disability, to make informed choices and take reasonable risks to learn, grow, and have better quality of life.**

People have the right to make choices about their life and to have the same rights and responsibilities as others. Everyone has a right to self-determination, to live their life to the fullest, make decisions, have independence, and live the life that they choose.



Dignity of risk is about choices, considering potential risks, and the right to take reasonable risks. This can lead to learning, which results in people gaining self-confidence, positive self-esteem, and dignity.

*"Overprotection may appear on the surface to be kind, but it can be really evil. An oversupply can smother people emotionally, squeeze the life out of their hopes and expectations, and strip them of their dignity. Overprotection can keep people from becoming all they could become. Many of our best achievements came the hard way: We took risks, fell flat, suffered, picked ourselves up, and tried again".*

-Robert Perske, 1972

People should feel heard and supported on their **vision for a good life** and what choices are important to them.

Minimizing risks, supporting people's choices and their safety involves the balance of what is important to the person and what the team thinks is important for the person.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

1. **Treat people fairly.** People with disabilities have the same rights as everyone.
2. **Be an advocate for promoting people to exercise their rights to the full extent possible.** Assure due process is adequately completed for any right restrictions.
3. **Support the person's preferences and values, rather than your own.** Avoid placing your personal values and expectations on the person.
4. **Provide supports for health and safety by using least restrictive methods.** Support people to exercise their rights responsibly while promoting dignity of risk.
5. **Be realistic with expectations.** Allow flexibility and do not hold people with disabilities to a higher standard than what we would expect for ourselves.

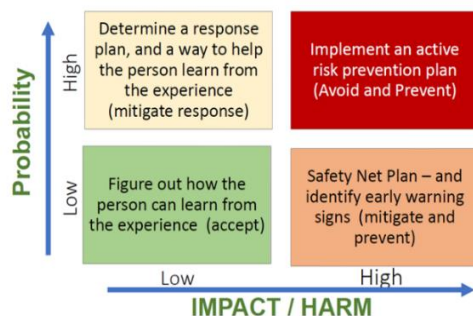
## Balancing Choice and Risk

- The goal is to **minimize and manage** risk vs risk elimination or avoidance and overprotection.
- Dignity of risk is **individualized** for the person, and it's important not to impose our own values and beliefs.
- Because **risk is individualized**, there is no mandated threshold for acceptable levels of risk.
- Dignity of risk does not mean there is no commitment to health and safety. Some **interventions** are necessary based on impact.
- Balancing provides for **reasonable or tolerable** risk, which are those that one is willing to accept or take while using the risk mitigation strategies.
- Develop strategies that are **least restrictive**, which are solutions that have the least impact and least amount of influence or interventions that still provide people the most freedom to exercise their rights and have independence.

## Person-Centered Service Planning Components

- Involves the person, legal decision maker, service provider, DD Program Manager, and others selected by the person.
- Assess, identify, and document people's choices, the associated risks, prior mitigation strategies, and outcomes experienced.
- Discuss and document individualized strategies to honor people's choices, rationale, risk mitigation, and how the effectiveness of strategies will be measured and monitored.
- Monitor people's risks, analyze data, revisit discussions, and modify service plans.

## Determining the Likelihood of Occurring and the Impact/Harm



## Thoughtful Team Planning Questions

- What is it that the person does (actions taken, behavior observed)?
- What is it about this action that worries others or creates fear (the risk)?
- Are we putting protections in place for a true risk versus a perceived risk?
- What do we understand about the action (context or conditions)?
- What are the results of the action (impact or consequences)?
- What keeps the person from doing it (prevention)?
- What do people do when the person engages in the action (response)?
- Who are the concerns/risks important to?
- Are these protections important to the health and safety of the person?
- Are these protections important only to the system?
- Is this a reasonable protection or extreme?
- Is the risk a “what if” that does not factor into the person’s recent history or situation?
- Are we overcompensating, over generalizing, or exaggerating the risks?
- What are the persons strengths, desires, skills, and abilities that can be used? What are both the potential benefits with potential harm?
- Be mindful and inquire with the person instead of only talking among team members. Are we engaging the person and asking them “What do you think about this?”
- Are we inquiring and understanding the behavior or why the person wants to make that choice?

Ensuring people’s rights and least restrictive strategies are in place is the responsibility of everyone.

### How likely is the risk in this situation?

- What circumstances contribute to the risk?
- In similar settings/circumstances, how frequently has the risk occurred?
- What other factors contribute to the likelihood the risk will occur?

### How significant is the potential impact for the person/others?

- What might happen to the person/others as a result?
- Would the results be long or short term?
- Are the results likely to cause trauma, be life changing, life threatening, or devastating to person/others?