



Guardianship, Conservatorship, and Decision-Making Options to Help Your Loved One

Mental health conditions, cognitive impairments, developmental disabilities, or other factors can significantly affect a person's capacity to make clear and healthy decisions. In some cases, individuals may experience periods of crisis or instability that compromise their judgment and ability to care for themselves. Guardianships, conservatorships, or another decision-making protective measure may need to be put in place to protect your loved one, ensure their safety, and facilitate choices that are in the interest of their wellbeing. Here, you'll learn the options that are available to you and how Monroe Community Mental Health Authority can help.

Understanding Guardianship and Conservatorship

Guardianship is a legal arrangement in which a person (guardian) is appointed by a court to make decisions on behalf of another individual (ward) who is deemed to lack the capacity to make certain decisions independently.



There are two main types of guardianship:

- **Guardian of the Person:** Involves making decisions about the individual's personal matters, such as healthcare, living arrangements, and other day-to-day activities.
- **Guardian of the Estate (Conservatorship):** Pertains to decisions about the individual's financial affairs, including managing assets, paying bills, and handling other financial responsibilities.

Each arrangement is customized to meet the individual's specific needs and promote maximum independence.

Decision-Making Alternatives

Alternatives to guardianship are approaches that aim to support individuals in making decisions while preserving their capacity to participate in choices about their own lives.

- **Power of Attorney (POA):** A person who is named by a legally notarized document (agent) to make financial, medical, or other specified decisions on behalf of another individual (principal).
- **Supported Decision-Making:** Instead of naming a guardian or POA, a supportive network of trusted people, including family, friends, and professionals, is named to help make decisions.
- **Medical Proxy:** A person who is identified to make medical decisions, like consenting to or refusing treatment, on behalf of someone else when an individual is temporarily incapacitated.

How MCMHA Can Help

Monroe Community Mental Health Authority is your partner in ensuring thoughtful and informed choices. Together, we can navigate the path toward the best possible outcomes for those in our community who may need assistance making decisions.

You are not alone. Call us today.

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