

Self-determination refers to having control over one's life to the fullest extent possible. In the words of Michael Kennedy, "self-determination means running my own life and directing my personal care assistants on how best to assist me in my personal care. Now, people treat me like a human being who knows what I want and who needs support to live my life."



What is my role as a Personal Assistant in Self-Determination?

- Supporting your employer to live independently based on individual choices
- Assisting with tasks that cannot be performed independently or require additional support
- Talking with your employer to learn what assistance is needed and how best to provide it

Resources:

1. Center for Self-Determination:
<http://www.self-determination.com/>
2. *Self-Determination*
by Michael Kennedy:
<http://thechp.syr.edu/mikeself.htm>

What are the Principles of Self-Determination?

- **Freedom** - to develop a personal life plan
- **Authority** - to control a targeted amount of resources
- **Support** - to help organize resources to achieve personal goals
- **Responsibility** - to contribute to one's community and to use public dollars wisely
- **Confirmation** - of the important role people with disabilities must play as leaders in the service system

According to the National Council on Independent Living, [The Independent Living Philosophy](#) states that individuals with disabilities have the right “to live with dignity and with appropriate support in their own homes, fully participate in their communities, and to control and make decisions about their lives.”

What role do I play in Independent Living?

As a personal assistant, you play a crucial role in supporting a person with a disability to [live independently](#). In order to be able to support someone, it is important you have an understanding of independent living.

What are some of the Main Principles of Independent Living?

- **Consumerism** - a person knows what is best for himself or herself
- **De-medicalization** - people with disabilities are not permanently ill and incapable of meeting their needs, a common misconception based on the [medical model](#). This belief reinforces the dependence on others
- **Inclusion** - people with disabilities living and participating in their communities as full citizens

- **Consumer Control** - organizations best suited to work with people with disabilities are staffed and run by people with disabilities
- **Advocacy** - community-wide change initiatives designed to ensure that people with disabilities benefit from all that society has to offer
- **Additional principles can be found [here](#)**



Resources:

1. *The Independent Living Philosophy*: <http://www.mtstcil.org/skills/il-intro.html>
2. *The Disability Rights and Independent Rights Movement*: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/drilm/>
3. Medical Model vs. Social Model: <http://www.fvkasa.org/resources/history-model.\html/>
4. *Ten Principles of Independent Living*: <http://www.abilitycenter.org/webtools/links/factsheets/tenprinciples.html>