There are rules when we get services. The rules are all about our right to make our own choices and decisions. The rules say we control our lives. Other people should NOT make choices for us.

**We can make choices like:**

- where we live
- where we go to work
- how we spend our free time
- what we want to eat
- how we decorate our homes + rooms
- who we make friends with
- who takes care of us if we need help
Everyone Can Make Choices

Some people might have a harder time showing other people what their choice are. They might
● not be able to speak.
● take longer to answer a question.
● need tools like an iPad or letterboard.
● not use words.
● show what their choices are with their actions.

This does not mean they can’t make choices.
It means we need to take more time and work harder to find out what their choices are.
The rules say, when you are getting services, you have the right to:

1. Live in the community with people without disabilities
2. Have a person-centered services plan
3. Have freedom
4. Have respect and privacy

You have more rights. Today we will talk about these 4 rights.

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That means you have the right to:

- live in the community
- go into the community
- get services in the community,
- and choose how to spend your time.

Your agency can not decide when you go out into the community or stop you.
The Rule says that you need to have choices about where to live. You can’t only be given one choice. You can’t get forced to have a roommate or live in a group home. You can’t be forced to choose only places to live that are just for people with disabilities.
The Rule says you can’t be forced to get services in one specific place. *You* choose where you get your services. You also have the right to **choose who gives you services**.
The Right To Choose What Kind Of Services You Get. You have a lot of choices about your services. You make these choices when you do your ISA. This is also called a person-centered plan. At your ISA meeting you get to choose what you want staff to help you with.
Freedom means that you make your own choices about your life.

**Real freedom means real choices.**

This means that you can make small choices and big choices. For example:

- You can choose to eat your cereal with milk or without milk. This is a small choice.
- You can choose to move to another city, or stay where you are. This is a big choice.

The rule says that UCS has to let you make all kinds of choices.
We all have boundaries.

You say what parts of your life you want staff to know about.

Staff should only be involved when you say so.
They must respect you.
This means having time alone.

It can be hard to have people watching us all the time.
Okay now we will "switch gears". We talked about the rules that give you rights. AND there are also rules agencies must follow to make sure you have choices. These rules are about you making decisions. The rules say we control our lives.

1. Having a lease or it is called a residency agreement
2. Privacy
3. Places must be accessible
4. Controlling your everyday life
5. Having Visitors
6. Getting Food
If you live in a home run by an agency or with a shared living provider, you must have a **residency agreement**. This is like a lease.

This is a contract between you and your agency. It says what you can and cannot do where you live.

It also says what your agency has to do to protect your rights.
#2 Privacy Rights

Agency staff and shared living providers have to do more to show they respect our privacy.

For example:

- You have to be able to lock the door to your room.
- Only roommates and in-home helpers can get the keys to your room or house.
- If you have a roommate, you get to pick your roommate.
- You can decorate your room or house any way you want.
#3 - Places Must Be Accessible

If you use a wheelchair, your house has to be wheelchair-accessible. If you work at UCS, it has to be accessible. It does not matter what kind of disability you have. UCS has to make sure your house is accessible to you.
#4 Right to Control Your Daily Schedule

You have the right to decide and do whatever you want to do every day. You get to set your own schedule. You get to decide how to spend your time. You get to decide where you want to go.

UCS can’t control how you spend your time. They can’t force you to do something you don’t want to do, like making you go to bed at a certain time. They have to follow your schedule.
#5 Visitors At Any Time

You can always have visitors.

You can have visitors at any time.

You can have visits from anyone you want.

That means your friends, family, partners, or anyone else you want can visit. UCS can’t control what you do with visitors while they are there. You can have people sleep over if you want.
#6 Access to Food at Any Time

You can eat whatever you want in your house. You get to eat whenever you want to, even if it is late at night.

If you need help to get food, your provider has to help you.

They can’t make you only eat certain foods or make you only eat at certain times.
Can my rights get taken away?

Sometimes, our rights can get taken away, but it is very hard. They can’t take away your main rights, like your freedom or privacy. They can’t take away your right to live in the community.

Some people need help being safe, but getting the right kind of help breaks a part of the Rule. That’s the only time UCS can break the rules. UCS can only break the rules if they tried other ways to help already. They can only break the Rule if no other kind of help works for you. Breaking the rules can’t be the first thing an agency tries.
If your agency has to break the Rule, they can only break it for you.

For example, let’s say you live in a group home. UCS still has to follow all of the parts of the rules for everyone else.

Remember, everyone getting gets a person-centered service plan or an ISA. Your plan says what kinds of help you get. If UCS needs to break a rule to help you, your plan needs to be changed. You need to have a meeting to get your plan changed.
At this meeting, your agency has to:

- Write down why they want to break a Rule.
- Talk to you about why breaking the Rule will help you.
- Tell you about the other ways they tried to help you.

You have to agree that breaking the rule is the right way to help you. Once you agree, it gets put in your person-centered plan, your ISA.
What can I do if someone tries to take away my rights?

There are lots of different people you can talk to about your rights. You can talk to:

- Your provider agency
- GMSA - 802-229-2600
- Call the State at 802-241-0304
- Disability Law Project - 802-383-2217
- The DD Council - 802-828-1310

They help people with disabilities fight for our rights.

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