

Understanding Independent Living

Independence Is About Choice, Control, and Living Life on Your Terms



**Scan the QR code to learn
more or contact our team.**

www.thewholeperson.org



Start With One Simple Question

What Kind of Help Do You Need?

When people hear the phrase independent living, they often imagine someone who never needs help. They picture doing everything alone without relying on family, friends, or support services.

But that's not what independent living means.

Independent living is about having the freedom to make decisions about your own life. It's about having choices, maintaining control over the services and supports you use, and pursuing the goals that matter most to you. For every person, independence looks a little different, and that's exactly the way it should be.



Learn more on our website:
www.thewholeperson.org

A Different Way to Think About Independence

Instead of asking:

“Can I do everything myself?”

Ask:

**“Do I have the choices and
support I need to live the life
I want?”**

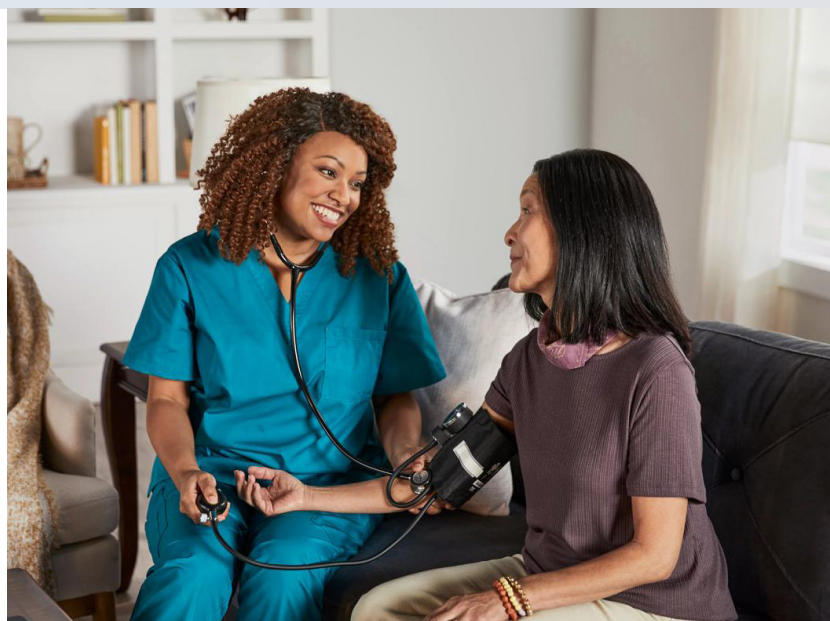
That’s what independent living
is all about.



Independence Looks Different for Everyone

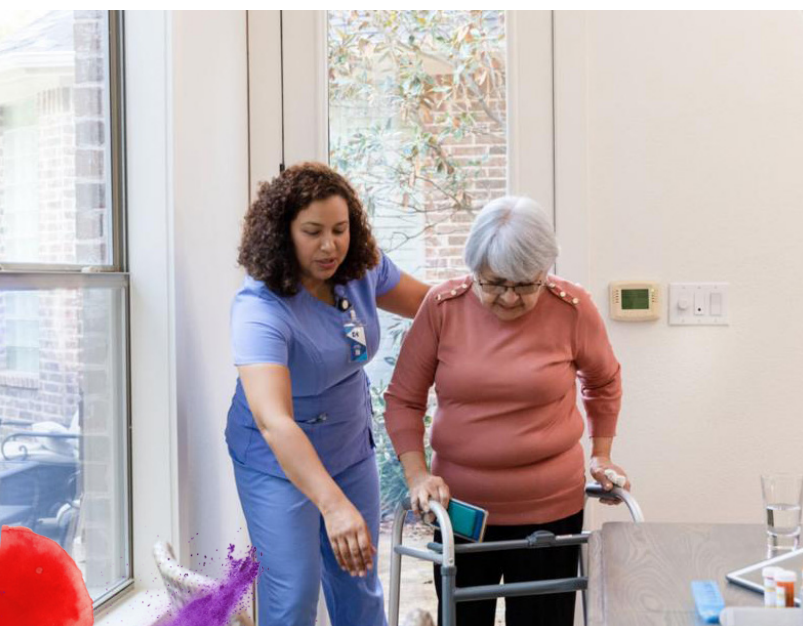
There isn't one definition of independence because every person's life, goals, and circumstances are unique.

For one person, independence may mean living in their own apartment.



For another, it could mean returning to work after an injury, using public transportation, choosing their own caregiver, making decisions about their healthcare, learning new skills, or simply participating more fully in their community.

Independence isn't measured by how little help you receive. It's measured by how much choice and control you have over your own life.



Independence Looks Different for Everyone

- ✓ **Living at home with personal assistance.**
- ✓ **Using a wheelchair while working full time.**
- ✓ **Choosing your own caregiver through Consumer Directed Services.**
- ✓ **Installing a ramp or grab bars to make your home safer.**
- ✓ **Learning skills that help you live more independently.**
- ✓ **Using transportation services to stay connected to work, family, and friends.**

Every journey looks different.



Learn more on our website:
www.thewholeperson.org

Support and Independence Go Together

One of the biggest misconceptions about disability is that accepting help somehow makes a person less independent. In reality, the opposite is often true.

The right support creates greater independence.

A caregiver can make it possible to remain at home, accessible transportation can make it possible to keep a job, home modifications can improve safety and confidence, and assistive technology can create new opportunities for communication, education, and employment.

Support isn't the opposite of independence. More often than not, it's what makes independence possible.



Independence Is About Choice

Independent living means having a voice in decisions about your life.

That includes things like:

- Where you live
- Who helps care for you
- Your daily routines
- Your goals
- Your employment
- Your education
- Your participation in the community

The person living with a disability should always be at the center of those decisions whenever possible.



At a Glance

Independent Living Is...

Independent Living Is...

- ✓ Making decisions about your own life
- ✓ Using supports that help you succeed
- ✓ Choosing services that fit your goals
- ✓ Living with dignity and respect
- ✓ Participating in your community
- ✓ Having control over your future

Independent Living Is Not...

- ✗ Doing everything by yourself
- ✗ Refusing help from others
- ✗ Accepting whatever others decide
- ✗ Being defined by your disability
- ✗ Being isolated from your community
- ✗ Giving up your ability to choose

Remember

Every person deserves the opportunity to live a life defined by their own goals, preferences, and choices.

There isn't one "right" way to be independent.

Common Questions

“Can I still be independent if I have a caregiver?”

Absolutely.

Receiving support doesn't make someone less independent. In fact, being able to choose and direct that support is often one of the strongest examples of independence because it allows you to remain in control of your own life and decisions.

“What if I use a wheelchair or assistive technology?”

Using equipment or technology doesn't reduce independence. It often makes greater independence possible by removing barriers and creating new opportunities to work, travel, communicate, and participate in everyday life.

The goal isn't to avoid support. The goal is to remove barriers so you can live the life you choose.

“Does independence look the same for everyone?”

No.

Every person's goals, abilities, and circumstances are different. Independent living is about helping people define success for themselves rather than expecting everyone to follow the same path. important things we do.

How The Whole Person Supports Independent Living

Independent living isn't a single program.
It's the philosophy behind everything we do.

Our services are designed to help
individuals make informed choices, build
skills, access resources, and participate fully
in their communities.

Support may include:

- Information and Referral
- Peer Support
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Advocacy
- Employment Services
- Home Modifications
- Transportation Resources
- Home and Community-Based Supports

Whatever your goals may be, we're here to
help you explore the options that best fit
your life.



Independence Is Personal

For you, independence might mean:

- Returning to work.
- Living in your own home.
- Choosing your caregiver.
- Managing your own healthcare.
- Learning a new skill.
- Using public transportation.
- Making your own financial decisions.
- Spending more time with family and friends.
- Participating in your community.

There isn't one definition of a successful life.

The only definition that matters is yours.



Learn more on our website:
www.thewholeperson.org



You Don't Have to Walk the Journey Alone.

Independent living doesn't mean facing life's challenges by yourself. It means having the freedom, support, and confidence to build the life you want.



Whether you're looking for information, exploring available services, or simply trying to understand your options, The Whole Person is here to help. Every conversation begins with listening, and every journey begins with a single step.

Learn more on our website:
www.thewholeperson.org

Want to Learn More?

If this guide helped you understand the basics of independent living, you may also enjoy one of our most popular educational articles.

What Independent Living Really Means

Understanding the Philosophy Behind the Movement

This companion article takes a deeper look at the Independent Living movement, explains why independence isn't about doing everything alone, and explores how choice, control, and self-direction empower people with disabilities to live the lives they choose.



Scan the QR code or visit our website to read the article.

thewholeperson.org/news-updates/



Learn more on our website:
www.thewholeperson.org



Continue Your Journey

Related Resource Guides

Where Do I Start?

A Simple Guide for Individuals and Families Looking for Answers

Understanding Independent Living

Independence Is About Choice, Control, and Living Life on Your Terms

Consumer Directed Services (CDS) Explained

A Simple Guide to Understanding How CDS Gives You More Choice and Control



Continue Your Journey
Visit us at www.thewholeperson.org/about-us/resources for more!



Learn more on our website:
www.thewholeperson.org



Contact The Whole Person

Main Office

3710 Main Street, Kansas City, MO 64111

Kansas Office

650 Minnesota Ave, Kansas City, KS 66101

Home Health Office:

1211 N Belt Hwy, St Joseph, MO 64506

Phone

816-561-0304

Email

hello@thewholeperson.org

Website

www.thewholeperson.org



**Scan the QR code to learn
more or contact our team.**

www.thewholeperson.org