

SDM meets Mediation

From the very beginning of SDMNy we have thought about what might happen if, down the road, disputes arise between supporters, or a supporter and a family member who wasn't chosen as a supporter, or between a Decision-Maker and a service provider, or one of their supporters. Mediation is a well-recognized, highly effective tool for dispute resolution that enables the parties to find mutually agreeable solutions to disagreements that may threaten otherwise important relationships. We imagined connecting what we do—empowering Decision-Makers and facilitating trusted persons in their lives to be their supporters—with what mediators do, to provide an ongoing resource for SDM.

This week, our dreams came true.



Participants at the SDMNy/OCI Mediation Training, March 16-18, 2021

We are partnering with the New York State Unified Court System Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution that works with Community Dispute Resolution Centers in every county in New York State. This week we held a 3-day training for staff and volunteer mediators on mediating disputes that may grow out of SDMAs in the future, and providing “conflict coaching” to Decision-Makers who may need just a little extra support in dealing with issues around the decisions they are making, or hope to make. We had representatives from four regions, covering much of the state—the New York Peace Institute in NYC, ACCORD in Broome and Tioga Counties, Dispute Resolution Center of Orange, Putnam Ulster and Sullivan, and Empowered Pathways in Oneida and Madison Counties. Three SDMNy Decision-Makers, Jessica Campbell, Tony Phillips, and Bobby Terry made incredible and deeply appreciated contributions to the training.



So, while we hope that everything goes well for every Decision-Maker and their supporters in the future, it's great to know that help is available if and when it is needed. We'll be sharing more details soon, but for now, thanks to Dan Kos and Alice Rudnick at the Office for Court Innovation; to all the mediators who attended; to our team, especially Naomi Miller and Joan Cornachio; to Olivia, Seren, Stephanie and Susan, the actors in our videoed simulations; videographer Erinnisse Rebisz; to Prof. Sue Bryant who taught us so much about implicit bias; to Jessica, Tony and Bobby; and especially to our amazing, dedicated mediation trainer, CUNY Law Professor Beryl Blaustone!