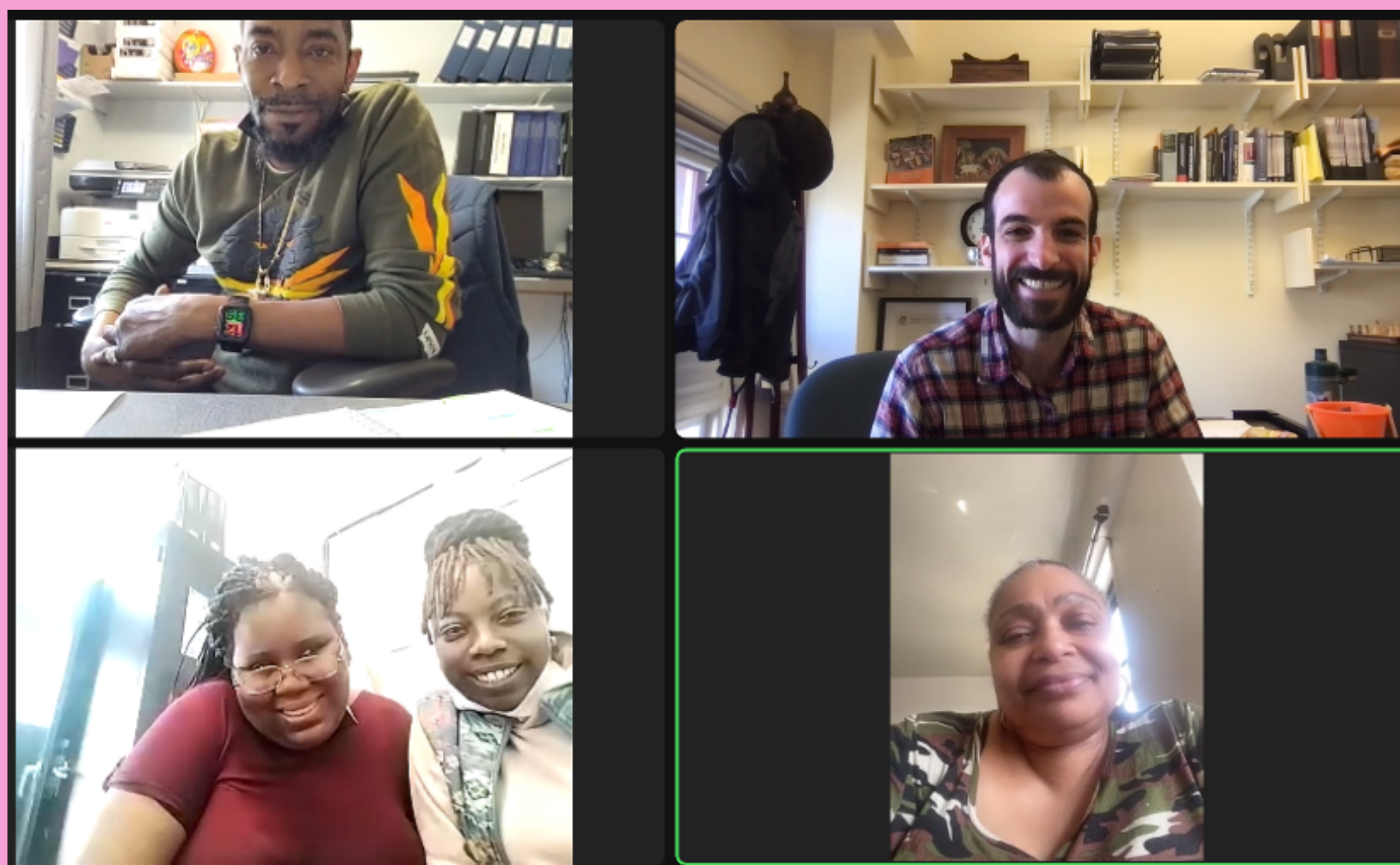


# ANOTHER SELF-ADVOCATE SIGNS HER SDMA ON THE WAY TO RESTORATION OF HER RIGHTS

Mary is 35 and lives in S:US [Services for the Underserved] housing in the Bronx where she is the president of her self-advocacy group. While she isn't currently employed, she'd like to find work helping other people with disabilities. She likes helping others and feels good about herself when she does. In her free time she likes to play basketball, listen to music and go to the park.

Mary recently signed her SDMA, having chosen a group of supporters who are people she has known for a long time, that give her space when she needs it, and who she knows she can rely on. One of those supporters said "[W]e're proud of your growth that we've been witnessed to all these years. We may have our ups and downs, and we may not always agree, but we always have your back, and we always have your best interest at heart, and we look forward to continuing to witness your journey and your growth."



Mary (far left bottom corner), Hezzy (right upper corner), and Mary's supporters

Mary is currently under guardianship, and is very excited about going to court with her attorneys from Disability Rights New York to ask the Surrogate to restore her rights. She wants to have a more independent life, and says that "I'm learning how to do things on my own and advocate for myself...do my own paperwork, not have to wait for my mom to do it for me ...it makes me feel more grown."

Mary credits the SDMNY process as having helped her to grow and prepare her to live more independently. Now, armed with her SDMA, instead of having others making decisions for her, she looks forward to "making my own choices, my own decisions." She thanked her facilitator, Hezzy Smith, SDMNY's first Project Coordinator, for being patient and supportive, and he shared how exciting the process and getting to the SDMA with her had been. Hezzy expressed all of our feelings at SDMNY saying, "Mary is a determined self-advocate who has clear goals and is highly motivated to achieving them. Facilitating her SDMA process was a privilege. She has put together a great team of dedicated supporters, and I can't wait to see how far she goes with their help." So...

## CONGRATULATIONS MARY, YOUR SUPPORTERS, AND FACILITATOR HEZZY!