

OUR NEW MENTORS ARE HARD AT WORK

A major piece of our new OPWDD grant (Good News [12/15/21]) is testing a model FTREC (Facilitation, Training, Resource and Education Center) that would have salaried Mentors in order to ensure the consistency, integrity and quality of SDMNY facilitation. The Mentors would also be involved in creating facilitation materials, training facilitators, doing outreach, and a variety of other activities to advance the use of facilitation and SDMA's for people with I/DD across New York State.

We welcomed our first group of four Mentors at the beginning of September (Good News [9/9/22]) and, after just two months, we are thrilled with how quickly they are learning and how much they are already contributing. Mentors must successfully complete at least three facilitations, so all four have now each been assigned three Decision-Makers and are moving through Phase 1 under the supervision/mentoring of Master Mentors Joan Cornachio and Jennifer Ivery. In addition, they are all meeting weekly, not only for support in their individual facilitations, but to identify new areas and materials to be used in training the multiple new facilitators who will be necessary to make the FTREC model successful.



Left to right:
Aylah, Joan, Jennifer
Karen, Jenna, Stephanie

The twelve Decision-Makers with whom they are working are a diverse group, including two from the Ideal School in Manhattan, a new SDMNY partner, as well as a "Melissa Riggio Scholar" at CUNY. We're also delighted with three referrals from the Court system, two from Queens and one from Oneonta (Syracuse). In addition, the Mentors are providing "new eyes" as we review our existing website before updating and potentially redesigning it. They are assisting in creating videos on facilitation skills for training and supporting facilitators, and two will be working with Advisory Council members in a working group aimed at incorporating SDM into transition planning in school districts across New York State. And that's just the beginning!

Our goal is to design and test a facilitation service delivery system that will enable everyone with I/DD in New York who wants to make a facilitated SDMA to do so. Experienced, thoughtful, well trained, well supported and committed Mentors are essential to making the model work, and, so far, we couldn't be more pleased with how this talented, hard-working, human rights-centered and thoroughly delightful group is doing!