

SDM AND ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION: AN AWARD AND A CONTINUING COLLABORATION

From the beginning of our project we have understood the connection between what we do and the work of conflict resolution; after all supported decision is a way of mediating the longstanding conflict between protection and autonomy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and the law. Early on, we reached out to the alternative dispute resolution community to plan and prepare for how to mediate conflicts that might arise out of SDMAs, conflicts, for example, between supporters, or a supporter and a family member who hadn't been chosen by the Decision-Maker, or the Decision-Maker and a provider agency.

We were fortunate to connect with the Office of Court Administration Office on Alternative Dispute Resolution, and the Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs) that exist in every New York county. We developed and then piloted a training for their volunteer mediators and were honored for that work in June 2021 by the Association for Conflict Resolution-Greater New York Chapter (ACR-GNY) (Good News [6/4/2021]). This week we were delighted to hear that ACR-GNY had presented its Chuck Newman Award for Contributions to the Community to our Founding Director, Kris Glen.



The virtual ceremony featured a “fireside talk” with Kris which spotlighted the many connections between our work and that of the conflict resolution community (the video of that conversation will soon be available on the resources page of our website) and which also seemed to spark tremendous interest in SDM among the hundreds of ACR members who attended from ACR chapters around the country.

It was also a matter of perfect timing, because the very next day we met with the OCA Office of Dispute Resolution to plan and develop new collaborations, including training a number of CDRC mediators as SDMNY facilitators, and drawing on the specialized skills that great mediators have developed for training mentors and facilitators to deal with issues that may arise in facilitation. We share so many of the same values, and there is so much that we can do together through this ongoing collaboration, that it was truly a great week, and a great honor to be recognized as contributing members of this wonderful community.