

THIS WEEK MARKS OUR 17TH TRAINING OF FACILITATORS!

SDMNY facilitation requires facilitators to work with Decision-Makers and their supporters; facilitators, wherever they come from (in our DDPC grant, they were all unpaid volunteers; now, as we model a statewide rollout, they are compensated through the grant and come from a variety of sources, see below) need to be trained in the 3-phase process we have developed and refined over the past 8 years. On Tuesday we held the first of three “live” sessions of the 17th “TOF” with many new features, but the same excitement we have experience over the years.

TOF 1 was held in 2017 at the Hunter School of Social Work over 3 full days, all “live,” with breakfast and lunch (and wine and cheese to celebrate the last day!) and the opportunity to meet and talk informally, as well as engaging in structured learning sessions and simulations. We loved, and learned from, those early iterations, but Covid brought an end to all in-person group gatherings, and we had to completely re-think how to do this critical work remotely. Over time we learned what worked and what didn’t, even as an increasing, and increasingly sophisticated variety of new tools became available (Remember when Zoom was still a novelty?) TOF 17 gave us a chance to employ 2 tools we hadn’t used before, Mentimeter and Padlet.

Mentimeter is an interactive online tool that allows you to create polls and “word-clouds” that participants engage with in real time. At the beginning of the session we asked participants what single word came to their mind when they heard “Supported Decision-Making”; Mentimeter created this “word cloud” (the larger the type, the more frequently a word was reported) reinforcing the commitment to Decision-Maker rights and autonomy we anticipated and hoped participants were bringing to the training.

What do you think of when you hear the word Supported Decision Making?

38 responses



Mentimeter

Padlet is an online collaborative tool that allows users to create virtual “walls” or boards where they can post and organize content. It functions like a digital bulletin board, where participants can add text, images, links, videos, and other multimedia elements in real-time. An important part of our facilitation process is “unpacking” and “mapping” decisions, designed to show the seven steps that go into everyone’s decisions, enabling Decision-Makers to explore what they are good at, where they may need support, what kind of support and from whom. Participants used Padlet to map decisions they had recently made or were contemplating. We can’t share those, but can assure you that everyone found the process, which they will soon be doing with Decision-Makers, both enlightening and fun.

Just as changing circumstances required a transition to remote learning, so has the challenge of scaling up our entire project to train many more facilitators, from all over the state, and from very different work and life situations. We found that almost no one could put aside 3 full days and, of course, that sitting in front of a computer screen for 6 or 7 hours is hardly conducive to real learning. So, over time, we’ve shifted to a mix of synchronous (“live”) and asynchronous (remote, on demand) material, with the latter also employing far more sophisticated and engaging tools than videos of talking heads and Power Point slides. When we all joined on Zoom on Tuesday morning, the 38 participants had already learned, and reflected on the principles underlying our work, including SDM’s origin in human rights, how SDM protects against guardianship and how the groundbreaking legislation we have passed in NY can protect people with I/DD from discrimination by third parties.



Some of the 38 participants and presenters

Reflecting the model we have been developing for statewide implementation of SDM facilitation, the participants came from a variety of settings—provider agencies, Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs), and Independent Broker practices, and included attorneys, social workers, and teachers and administrators from a K-12 school for students with disabilities among others. Over the next two weeks they will complete 2 additional asynchronous modules and 2 more live sessions covering all aspects of the 3-phase process they will soon be starting. And then, if past is prologue, they will be eagerly awaiting assignment to their first Decision-Maker and the Mentor who will guide them every step of the way.

We take pride in the training we have developed, adapted to changing conditions, refined and innovated. We are even more proud of all the facilitators who have completed our training and gone on to transform the lives of people with I/DD, their families and supporters as they create their now legally recognized Supported Decision-Making Agreements. We are thrilled to be able to share that work and accomplishment with a new group of participants in this, our 17th TOF.

THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE MADE OUR TOFS SO SUCCESSFUL, AND CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 38 NEW FACILITATORS-TO-BE!