

# A VERY SUCCESSFUL 18TH FACILITATOR TRAINING

Over the years, we have trained hundreds of facilitators in a variety of formats, from the original 2 full-day, in-person meetings at the Hunter School of Social Work, to our first efforts at remote trainings during COVID, to a new, and reportedly very successful, full-day live/remote session last week, with three separate and extensive asynchronous modules that trainees take on their own time. Associate Director Joan Cornachio and Faculty Associate Professor Gina Riley were the planners. Gina explains the choice of the new format in anticipation of the September turnover of facilitator training to the successful bidder under OPWDD’s recently issued RFP (Request for Proposals) (Good News, May 2, 2025):

“The model of one full day plus additional asynch (a blended or hybrid model) is a model most trainings sessions are moving towards, and is based on participant preference. We also do one-day trainings to advance accessibility/Universal Design for Learning, as it's easier for most people to attend a one-day event (especially those with caregiving duties or busy work schedules). One day trainings also make room for more extended, practical, professional learning through Communities of Practice and mentor meetings once facilitators are actually paired with a Decision-Maker.”

The training was attended by 32 enthusiastic participants, many from provider agencies, but also including independent brokers, representatives from CCOs, and even one lawyer!



Comments at the day’s conclusion reflected participants’ appreciation of the seriousness of their work, the value of a well-thought-out, structured process with a plethora of supporting materials, the value (and reassurance) of our robust mentoring system, and, universally, excitement about the ability to promote the autonomy, dignity, and human rights of the Decision-Makers with whom they will work. Here’s a little of what they had to say:

“Thought today was great. Learned a lot. I am most concerned about being a good facilitator and not a fixer. ...I think it is a great process and look forward to introducing supported decision-making to peoples’ lives.”

“I really like that the role of the facilitator is so clearly defined and has a specific scope, as it helps the facilitator not to be pulled into the actual decisions/needs/wants and more how decision-making works and who supports what!”

“Learned a LOT today and it does seem a bit overwhelming on paper but I am sure it will be fine when I practice. Especially with a mentor’s guidance!”

Joan, who has been a major figure in facilitator training from SDMNY’s inception, mirrored the participants’ enthusiasm and commitment, proclaiming this “the best training ever.”

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL INVOLVED IN TRAINING A NEW COHORT OF FACILITATORS TO ADVANCE EVERYONE’S RIGHT TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS, REGARDLESS OF DISABILITY!**