Supported Decision Making Pilot in Georgia

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Georgia SDM Project

Collaborative Effort

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

Partnership with Center for Public Representation and Michael Kendrick

Partnership with John McCarty **SARTAC** Fellow

Georgia SDM Project

Second Year of Grant

Goals:

- Support people to use Supported Decision Making
- Deflect Guardianship
- Advisory committee to guide the work
- Review GA guardianship statute & current SDM work
- Education/Outreach/Symposium
- Partnership with Citizen Advocacy

Citizen Advocacy

Citizen advocacy is built on:

- one-to-one
- freely given personal relationships
- people whose lives are diminished because of prejudice toward disability

The citizen advocate learns to **understand, respond to,** and **represent** that person's interests as if they were the advocate's own, thus bringing the person's gifts and concerns into the circles of ordinary community life, while protecting against abuse, neglect, or social isolation.

Advisory Committee Members

People who experience a disability (multiple people with a variety of experiences)

Director of Adult Protective Services

Director of Public Guardianship

Probate Court Judge

Director of Local Area Agency on Aging

Parent

Citizen Advocate

Education and Outreach

People with Disabilities
Parents/Parent Groups
Providers/Support Staff
Teachers/Schools/Transition Staff in Schools
Medical Professionals
Probate Judges
Probate Attorneys
Division of Aging/Adult Protective Services Investigators
Department of Public Health

What We Have Found

Ignorance of Alternatives
Belief that Guardianship = Safety (Control)
Simplicity & Convenience is Attractive
Impact on P&A work
    Resource Advocates
    PAIMI

Moving Forward

Continued Education & Outreach

Continued P&A Support to Individual SDM Arrangements

Partner Development

Systemic Impact

Lessons Learned

Curated Resources

- Toolkit for Overturning Guardianship

SARTAC Fellow 2019-2020

- Self Advocacy Research and Technical Assistance Center
- Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)
- One-Year, project focused
- Creative Consulting Services, Winder, GA
- “It’s My Life: Expanding Supported Decision Making”

Project Reach

Self Advocates
Parents
Attorneys and Paralegals
Support Coordinators
    120 SCs representing over 3400 families

Tool Kit

Brainstorming Questions
Sample Letter for Supporters
Personal SDM Plan
Steps to Terminate Guardianship
Attorney List

Impact

"perpetual child"

"I was a thing, with no rights"

need for physical support ≠ incompetence

"I'm gaining experience with each decision I make"

"getting out from under guardianship is a dream…"

Personal Journey

Termination of Guardianship

Too much information?

What did I actually know?

How could I get more information to get the support I want to have more control

Who presumes that I am competent

Conclusions

Critical need

We are having success

Social change requires many shifts