

DRAFT D.C. Focus Group Key Findings

The Primary SDM Goal Is Ensuring True Self-Advocacy – The Person As Decision-Maker. Everyone Involved in SDM Must Understand There Cannot Be A Default To The Supporter As The/A Decision Maker.

Supported Decision Making Is Flexible, and Should Always Be Described/Explained That Way. The Key Question Is “What Would It Take?” (Quality Trust) For the Person To Make Their Own Decisions. The Supporter Aims To Do What It Takes.

We Must Promote A General Understanding that SDM is a Civil Right. People With Disabilities Using SDM Are Entitled To The Dignity of Risk, And To Change Their Minds.

People with Disabilities in D.C. Need to Know Their Decision-making Options, Including Informal and Formal Supported Decision Making

Understanding of and Training on When, Whether and How to Use The New Supported Decision Making Agreement Form, Is Needed. Need To Know How To Properly Revoke, Too.

Education and Training about SDM Are Needed Across the District of Columbia, In All Sectors and Neighborhoods: Government, Law Enforcement/First Responders, Businesses/Professionals, Schools Families and People with Disabilities of All Ages. Children Should Be Taught SDM Concepts and Language from Early On.

SDM Empowers And Builds Confidence– Ensuring the Person has The Decision Making Power and the Confidence and Assistance Needed to Use It. At the Same Time, How to Prevent Abuse?

It Is Vital To Choose Effective Supporters, With Supportive Characteristics. Supporters May Need Training to Fully Know the Supporter Role, A Community of Learning And Experts With Whom To Consult.

Key Characteristics Of Good Supporters Are: Respectful, Committed, Honest, Dependable, Understanding, Caring, Patient, Empathetic, Sensitive, Curious, Trustworthy, Good Listener, Knowledgeable, Creative Problem Solver, Emotionally Intelligent, Good Communicator/Diplomatic, Empowering.

Trainings Should Be Straight-Forward And Tailored To Audiences, With A Range of Technical Information, Accessible Language, Visuals, Practical Examples and Take-Aways. Ideally, Videos are Developed. People with Disabilities Should Be Engaged As Trainers.

In A Person’s Life, Some Structure May Be Needed To Nurture SDM. Families and Professionals Should Nurture A Person’s SDM Needs and Wants. Those Who Support A Person With Disabilities Who Uses SDM Should Be Alert For Abuse.

Best Practice Resources Should Be Created And Be Made Widely Available. So Should Technical Materials Regarding SDM Agreements.