

SDM-TAP Community Conversations

Summary Notes from Breakout Sessions

Community Conversation Date: 10/27/23

Community Conversation Area of Focus: SDM in Financial Settings

1. Self-Advocate Experiences

No self-advocates wanted to share.

2. How do we reach the communities who need the most support with SDM?

Sharon: Use churches, school settings, try to get the information to the actual school district because we have to get this out. For rural communities the language may not translate. Community centers may be a good idea as well. Parent support groups as well, absolutely.

Maria: I am new, I am barely learning about SDM and related topics. I have a 22-year-old son with severe Autism. During the pandemic, we had a lawyer, it was costly, and I did not know any other option existed. We decided to stop everything [conservatorship] when another parent advised us of this option. Now, I am learning about this topic.

The person that is in charge of our family is my husband. My son spent 3 years with me in the house during the pandemic since his Service Coordinator said there is no adequate school for him. I thought it was fine to keep him home, but in the IPP they finally found a school for him. My son did not do well there, he began to engage in self-harm.

3. What challenges have you faced within financial settings when trying to utilize SDM?

If Banks won't talk to you that can make it hard to pay your bills. The bank was worried that the individual wasn't spending their money properly. There are a lot of decisions we make in terms of housing, credit cards, buying autos, etc. that we may need support in our decision making. What training is there for employees on how to handle POA or conservatorship or SDM?

Maria: Technology is good and bad. There is a lot of people that do not know how to use it. People might be ignorant or just elderly and that is why they struggle and is difficult for them.

Facilitator: Would correspondence be more important?

Maria: Yes, it would be important because it would be easier to read and respond.

4. What steps have you taken to overcome those obstacles? Did they work? If not, what else needs to be done?

We need to make sure both individuals and families know and understand how to use SDM and ALSO that professionals know how to respect it.

Sharon: The people we serve have rights and they don't want to give up those rights. Sometimes the school system can bully parents into ignoring their child's rights. There have been a lot of great ideas all week.

Ken: Starting early in the school settings, can you share about that – where do we start early and how can we start early? Who do we begin that outreach with?

Sharon: The 2-prong approach, going to hospitals and speaking to the board so that they can make sure their staff know about it. Going to the courts and making sure they know about SDM and respecting those rights. Banks in the community – going in and letting them know that folks and families may come in using SDM. This is something you may see, and it is valid. You can't just start in the school setting. The school setting comes up because people are in the school setting for so many years.

We need to start practicing decision making and listening to supporters early when they are children.

Maria: When we go out together as a family, my husband takes him to the men's bathroom, but when I am by myself, I take him to the women's bathroom. There has never been an issue until yesterday at a local Denny's. I took him into the stall, then waited outside, and an American woman looked at me like "what are you doing?" I felt bad and I thought she would call the manager. It was the first time I felt intimidated. My son is already 22 years, and I take him to the bathroom. I would not know how to react in those type of situations if people say something. There are people who understand and are patient and there are others who do not want my son near them.

Maria: I have gone to several notary public and they have not been able to help us obtain a conservatorship.

Facilitator: Notary publics are lawyers in other countries but not here. I suggest you contact DRC/OCRA for legal assistance or a referral.