

# SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING PILOT: Pilot Program Evaluation Year 2 Report

Prepared for the Center for Public Representation  
and Nonotuck Resource Associates, Inc.

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A selection of HSRI's evaluation findings are presented below.

- Regardless of age, diagnoses, or life histories, these SDM adopters understand that SDM means making their own decisions and receiving decision help when they want help. All adopters reported that SDM is a positive experience.
- Decisions made reflected the preferences of SDM adopters.
- SDM adopters and decision supporters were satisfied with the process of providing decision assistance as well as with the decisions made.
- A variety of decisions were made—from everyday decisions to very important decisions. SDM was most frequently used for health care decisions followed by financial decisions, areas of concern that often lead to use of guardianship and conservatorship.
- Involved community members acted on the expressed preferences of SDM adopters, and did so without documentation of decisional capacity or decision supporter role.
- Having multiple supporters worked well in this pilot. Decision supporters were committed to regular and ongoing communication.
- SDM adoption and use made a definite and positive impact on the lives of adopters. One individual's right to make decisions was restored when the probate court discharged his guardianship.
- Observable differences were noticed in the personal growth of SDM adopters, along with increased self-esteem and self-advocacy, more engagement in decision making, and increased happiness.
- SDM adopters did not experience abuse, neglect or financial exploitation as a consequence of SDM. Many pilot participants believe that the structure of SDM—selecting people one trusts to help make decisions and having more than one decision supporter—reduces such risks.
- For the SDM adopters, additional opportunities for expansion of decision making authorities exist, such as utilizing the self-directed services option for services funded through the state developmental disabilities agency.
- Decision supporters, care managers and CPR staff believe this intentional SDM pilot demonstrated that SDM is a viable means to provide people with I/DD and other disabilities customized decision making assistance that allows people to keep their decision making rights, has a positive impact on their self-respect, and can reduce society's use of guardianship.
- Pilot participants believe SDM would be helpful for other populations whose decision making rights are often removed—specifically older adults with early stage dementias, adults with psychiatric disabilities, and youth with I/DD who become legally recognized adults at age 18, an age when many families are counseled to secure guardianship.
- This pilot was faithful to the values and principles of SDM.