

CSS - Self-Determination Using Consolidated Supports and Services (CSS)

Self Determination/CSS in New York has created a means of developing the potential for individual driven services. It offers the opportunity to design services based on an individual's desires and needs as identified in a Person Centered Plan. It is a pilot project developed by NYS OMRDD (Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities).

Before much is said about the NYS Self Determination Project, it is important to understand that this opportunity for services is not going to be suited for every individual. It takes a commitment from a group of friends and family to have a successful, self-determined, service delivery program. It requires a well thought out plan for an individual and it takes having a good working relationship with a local DDSO (Developmental Disabilities Services Office).

Self Determination can be funded through a new HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) Waiver called Consolidated Supports and Services. It is a Medicaid funded program and individuals seeking services through CSS must be Medicaid and HCBS eligible through NYS OMRDD.

This model for accessing services gives an individual the mechanism to "purchase" needed supports and services which will enable the person to live a safe and fulfilling life in the community. The person and their support system manage the use of funds to choose supports and services as determined in a Person Centered Plan. There are some definitions that are important to understand in CSS. If a person is going to develop a CSS plan for services, NYS will be assisting in understanding the terms and definitions.

A Circle of Support is central to a plan under CSS. A Circle is a voluntary group of people who commit to assisting an individual. The commitment and strength of the Circle of Support will make or break a self-determined plan for service. The person's Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC) functions as part of the Circle and is a communication link to the local DDSO and OMRDD. The MSC involved in a Self Determination Project and the local DDSO liaison assist with:

1. Ensuring that the principles of Self Determination are followed,
2. Assisting the person in seeking out supports and services to identify and accomplish goals and valued outcomes,
3. Assisting the individual with planning and budgeting,
4. Assisting in protecting the health and welfare of the person – there are NYS Regulations that must be adhered to and the Circle is responsible for overseeing them,
5. Assisting the individual in health care decision making.

A Fiscal Intermediary (FI) is a necessary element. It is an agency that holds the funds and makes the payments for an individual's services. They act as the individual's fiscal

and business agent. Each DDSO has identified a Fiscal Intermediary for their region of the state.

Another component of CSS/Self Determination is a Support Broker. The Support Broker is an independent professional who may be hired by an individual to provide advice, information and technical assistance to the person and the person's Circle. The Support Broker "brokers" or negotiates for the services to be provided and can facilitate and develop a Person Centered Plan.

The Circle of Support, the Service Coordinator and if hired, a Support Broker, work closely with the person to help clarify goals, determine valued outcomes and assist with exploring different ways that the person might reach the desired goals.

Under Self Determination, all resources are portable. They are guaranteed available and associated with the individual and are not guaranteed to a specific provider. Spending changes can be made if desired by the person if prior approval is received from OMRDD.

This program is a Pilot Project with an initial plan to provide 200 Self Determination/CSS opportunities. For further information about Self Determination, contact Shelly Okure, Bureau of Planning and Service Design, at (518) 474-4904.

Information in this article is from the NYS OMRDD training manual on CSS dated May 9, 2003.

Parent to Parent of New York State is a nonprofit organization that connects and supports families of individuals with special needs. For more information, please visit our website at www.parenttoparentnys.org or call 1-800-305-8817 for information on our regional offices.