



## Welcome to the Individual and Family Support Program's October 2023 Coordinated Regional Council Meeting!

# Supported Decision-Making in Virginia

Featuring a presentation from Sara Thompson of DBHDS

*If you need closed captioning, please check the chat box for the link!*





- **Welcome & Ground Rules**
- **What is IFSP?**
- **Supported Decision-Making** - Sara Thompson, DBHDS
- **Regional Breakouts**
- **Panelists** - Maurice “Reese” Bellstewart and Bettie Bell
- **Questions and Answers**
- **Council Business and Adjourn**

\*\* If you need closed captioning, please check the chat box for the link! \*\*

\*\* If you need technical assistance, email [IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov)! \*\*





- **Tonight's main session is being recorded.**
- **Please rename yourself in Zoom to include your region** (e.g., Southwest, Eastern, etc.). If you don't know your region, that is okay!
- **Please place your questions in the chat!** We will answer questions at the end of the meeting, after the breakouts.
- **This meeting is hosted by IFSP's Regional Councils.** If you have questions about IFSP-Funding, please visit the My Life, My Community website's Funding page: <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.
- **Remember that tonight's meeting is public, so please refrain from sharing personal information.**

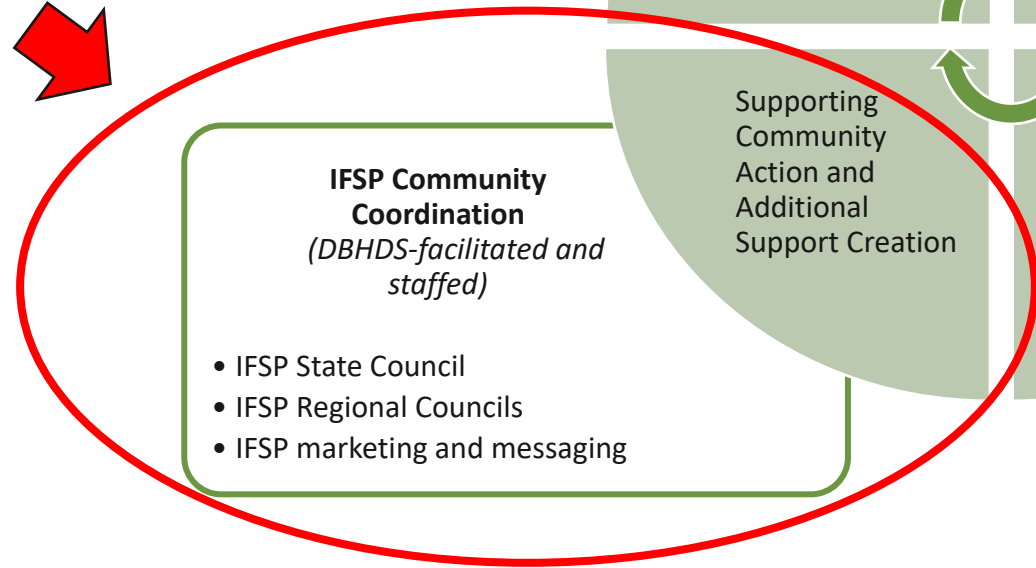
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You are here!



**IFSP-Funding Program**  
*(DBHDS-supported and administered)*

Financial Resources for Individuals and Families

Direct Supports to Individuals and Families through Social/Emotional Support and Training

**Partnerships to Provide Peer Supports for Families and Self-Advocates**  
*(DBHDS-supported)*

- Family to Family Program
- Peer to Peer program



**IFSP Community Coordination**  
*(DBHDS-facilitated and staffed)*

- IFSP State Council
- IFSP Regional Councils
- IFSP marketing and messaging

Supporting Community Action and Additional Support Creation

Education, Information, and General Referral

**Senior Navigator**  
*(DBHDS-supported)*

- My Life, My Community website
- My Life, My Community telephone resource





IFSP would like to recognize our outgoing Council members for their service and dedication to our mission:

## State Council

- Dana Koenig (Western)
- Sean Campbell (Western)
- Tiffany Cobbs (Eastern)
- Stephanie Thull (Northern)

## Regional

- Jan Rychtar (Central)



## Tonight's Speaker: **Sara Thompson**

Sara has over 15 years of experience working with children and adults in the areas of mental health and developmental disabilities. Prior to joining DBHDS as the Supported Decision-Making Community Resource Consultant for the state of Virginia, Sara worked in the Developmental Services Division of a community services board as a support coordinator, intake coordinator, and quality specialist. Sara's passion for helping others was fostered at a young age through her volunteer work in her community, as well as in other states and countries.

Sara is a Charting the LifeCourse Ambassador and a Person-Centered Thinking trainer. Her goal is to help everyone live the life they want through the use of person-centered practices. Sara hopes for everyone to understand that we all need support, not just people with disabilities and she is excited to be able to use her passion for person-centered practices and advocacy at the state level in order to identify and resolve barriers to more inclusive living for people with developmental disabilities. In her spare time, Sara enjoys spending time relaxing with her husband and cat, running and brunching with friends, and working in her garden.





## Also featuring: **Kendra Wormley**

Kendra Wormley is the RSA Project Coordinator with the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC). She is a proud graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University, where she received a degree from the School of Education in Therapeutic Recreation in 2002.

For over 18 years she has worked with families, professionals, and organizations to provide support to youth and young adults with disabilities to increase their independence and improve opportunities to actively participate in their community.





**Now it is time for the Regional Breakouts!**

**But don't forget to let us know what you think!**

- Please scan the QR code to fill out the Satisfaction Survey!
- You can also click the link that is being shared in the chat.

**THANK YOU!**

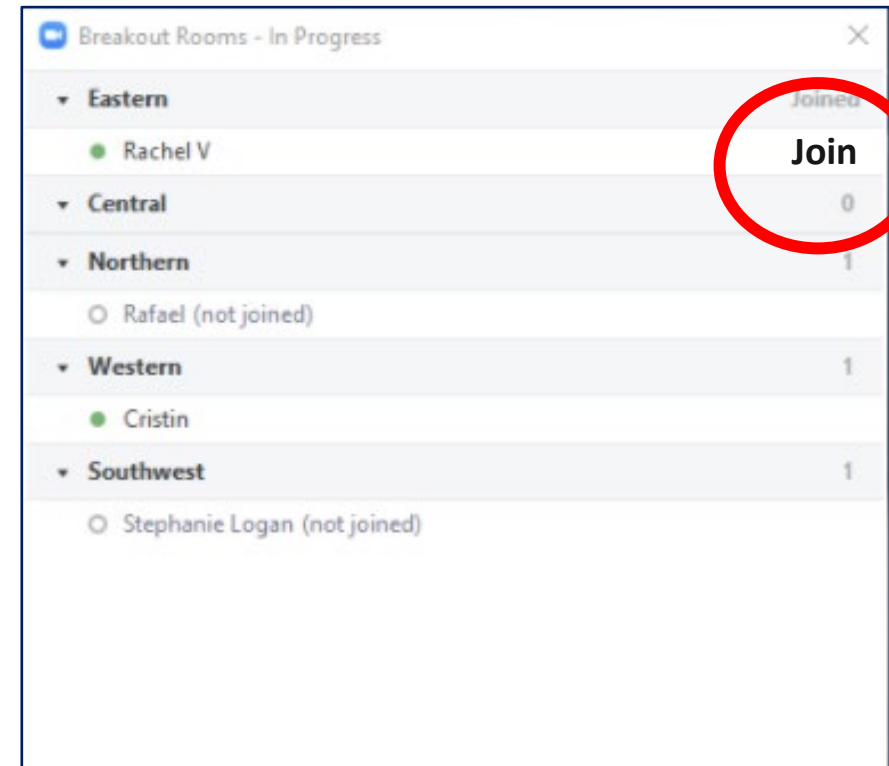
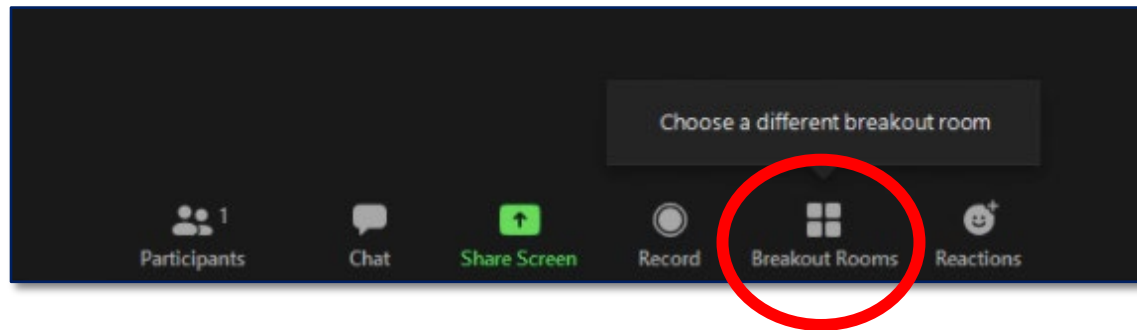






At the bottom of your screen, click “Breakout Rooms”:

Then, pick “join” for your region:







## Tonight's Featured Panelist: **Maurice "Reese" Bellstewart**

Maurice (Reese) Bellstewart and Bettie Bell live in Newport News, Virginia. Maurice is a graduate of Heritage High School and is currently attending Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center in their Food Service Program. Maurice enjoys cooking, anime, and drawing. He has been featured in national publications for his innovative work as an intern with CROP foundation, a nonprofit focusing on hospitality, food sustainability, and restaurant innovation. Maurice is a strong self-advocate and completed a supported decision-making agreement soon after turning 18.

Bettie Bell is Maurice's mother. She and Maurice have collaborated to increase his independence throughout his life. She is proud of his skills in asking for what he wants and needs, and his willingness to creatively consider all options when planning for his future. Bettie is a behavior and technology consultant who supports people with disabilities to live their best lives with the supports they need and the autonomy they deserve.



1. **If someone is already under guardianship, how do they change to supported decision-making agreement (SDMA)? How hard is it to make that change?**
  - **Sara:** For someone to change to an SDMA when they have guardianship, they would have to go through the circuit court the same way they did to get guardianship and file a petition. The disAbility Law Center of Virginia can provide further guidance on this process and is currently working on guidance for this process: <https://www.dlc.v.org/supported-decision-making>
2. **Do you need to bring SDMA paperwork with you to a hospital in the same way that you would bring POA or guardianship paperwork?**
  - **Sara:** It is helpful to have so that the medical providers know who you want as part of any decision-making process. You can also ask them to scan it into a patient file in the hospital's record system.
3. **What is the difference between the microboard program and SDMAs?**
  - **Sara:** Microboards are formalized groups of people that provide decision-making support to an individual. There is often a cost involved in setting up and maintaining a microboard as they are federally regulated. Additionally, people with legal guardians can have microboards, as the members of the microboard can have the authority to make decisions for the individual (i.e. substitute decision-making). In regards to SDMAs, these are free to create, updated, and remove, and there is no entity overseeing or regulating them. Individuals using SDMAs make all final decisions themselves and retain all decision-making ability/authority. Those supporting them have no authority to make decisions or signs forms on their behalf.





**4. What is the appropriate age to consider or begin the SDM process?**

- **Sara:** Any age! SDM is a lifelong skill.
- **Reese and Bettie:** It can be part of any stage in the lifespan, but could be a valuable part of the transition process in educational settings, as a natural way to introduce SDM.
- **Kendra:** Transfer of rights, IEPs, and transition planning conversations need to start a year before a student turns 18 in order to fully implement these supports.

**5. How can this information be shared with parents and other stakeholder partners (e.g., DARS and SpEd professionals)? Not everyone is knowledgeable about SDM/SDMAs, so when is it a good time to introduce it?**

- **Sara:** We are constantly reaching out to other organizations, school systems, and DARS to create partnerships and collaborate. DARS is working on a decision-making options training through their virtual PERT program where they talk about SDM. DBHDS has been working with VDOE since the beginning.
- **Reese:** Social media could be an option.

**6. Is there a way to make sure all agencies have the same information about SDM?**

- **Sara:** Organizations like PEATC that share resources already exist, so it is important to foster partnerships and collaborate to bring existing resources together, deliver consistent messaging, and learn what information is out there to meet needs and fill knowledge gaps. DBHDS is always working on fostering relationships with other entities to ensure that information consistent.





**7. What is the impact of using the SDMA tool in terms of decision-making rights?**

- **Sara:** You keep all of your legal rights when using SDM. With an SDMA, you choose the types of decisions or tasks you want support with, who will help you, and how they will help you. For example, someone might need support for medical decisions, but not for voting rights. Some rights can be taken away when using a full legal guardianship, but a person keeps all of the legal rights, including the right to make their own decisions when using an SDMA.
- **Bettie:** As a parent of children who have different support and medical needs, relationships are the most important thing. The principles of SDM and shared power are valuable for neurotypical individuals, people with developmental disabilities, and people who might need guardianship.

**8. What is the role of an SC (support coordinator) or CM (case manager) after discussing SDM with individuals and families?**

- **Sara:** If the SC/CM feels comfortable working on the discovery process, using the discovery tools, or helping create the SDMA, they can do that. If the SC/CM is not comfortable or if there is no one in the individual's life, the recommendation is to connect with me so I can assist with the process. I can be reached at [Sara.Thompson@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:Sara.Thompson@dbhds.virginia.gov).





- This fall, IFSP will begin recruiting to fill vacancies across our Regional and State Councils for the 2024 Council year.
- If you have questions or might know someone who could be a good fit, please email us at [IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov). We will share our application in the next week.
- Visit our [My Life, My Community](#) website to learn more about the Councils' history, regions, and Councilmember roles! Click on “Resources for Families,” then click on “Community Coordination.”
- Save the date: Our All-Council meeting will be held on **January 19, 2024**





- The recording and PowerPoint slides will be shared on the My Life, My Community website and on the IFSP Community Facebook page:
  - <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/IFSPCommunity>
- To receive the latest updates from IFSP, please make sure you are subscribed to our email list at <https://tinyurl.com/IFSP-List>





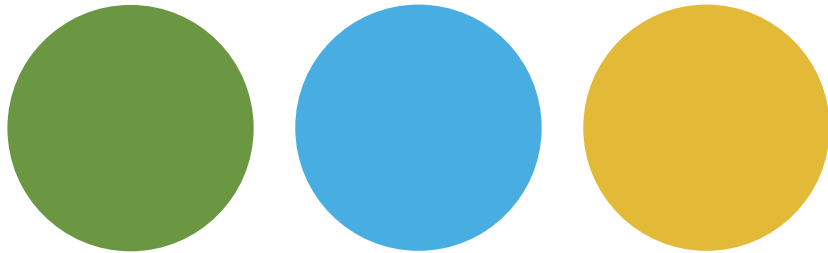


To our main session speaker  
and panelists:

**Sara Thompson** of DBHDS

**Maurice “Reese” Bellstewart  
& Bettie Bell**

**Kendra Wormley** of PEATC



And to each of outgoing Council members ...

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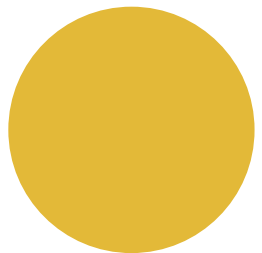
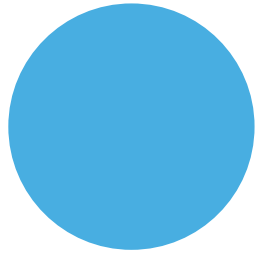
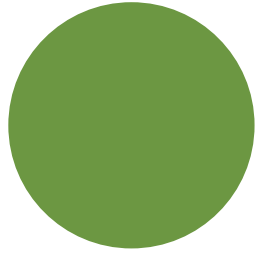


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**THANK YOU!**





# Thank you!

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