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Subject: QT's DC Olmstead Plan Draft Feedback
Date: Wednesday, July 17, 2024 1:38:39 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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Hi, Peter:

I hope you're doing well (and trying to stay cool)! On behalf of Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities, I'd like to provide some feedback on the first draft of the DC Olmstead Plan.

As you likely know, QT's Jenny Hatch Justice Project (JHJP) focuses on protecting and advancing disabled DC residents' decision making rights. This project is informed by research that has repeatedly shown that when people with disabilities are self-determined and have more control over their own lives, they have better life outcomes, including improved health and safety. We know that advocating for decision making rights—specifically Supported Decision Making—is integral for successfully implementing community integration. As you also likely know, Supported Decision Making is legally recognized in DC (DC Law 22-93).

In our work, we too frequently see disabled people being put under guardianship as they are transitioning to adulthood (as school professionals advise families this is the natural next step) and during transition from institutional settings to home and community based settings. Conversations and education about Supported Decision Making should be included in transition planning. The risk of disabled DC residents being forced into unnecessary guardianships impedes their access to meaningful community integration, as they no longer have the power to make decisions about their own lives such as healthcare decisions, decisions about where to live, etc.

Therefore, we'd like to encourage ODR to consider how to include Supported Decision Making in the new Olmstead Plan. For example, Strategy 3.3.1 of the first draft involves increasing compliance of IEP transition planning that complies with legal requirements, while centering around the unique strengths, needs, and aspirations of each student—it would make sense to include Supported Decision Making as a part of transition planning as a way for students to receive the support they want and need as they navigate their transition into employment. Another example would be including Strategies around increasing trainings for school personnel, facility staff, DDA staff, etc. on Supported Decision Making. While we recognize that advocating for Supported Decision Making may generally seem like a separate issue than the current goals of the DC Olmstead Plan, we ask that you consider how Supported Decision Making is actually a critical tool in implementing community integration and how it can be applied to the currently drafted goals.

I'm happy to chat with you more about these issues or to answer any questions you may have!
Thanks for your time and I look forward to attending the meeting this afternoon.

Best,
Keri Vandenberg

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