

Hi my name is James Cowell, I live in Pittsfield MA. I am proud to support the SDM Bill for many reasons. I have been involved in the Supportive Decision Making Pilot Project through Nonotuck and Center for Public Representation since 2018. When Nonotuck approached me about Supportive Decision making I thought of my future and how important it is to help me keep my voice. I have used SDM since Oct of 2018 and had my SDM agreement signed after doing a trial period in May 2019. I like SDM because it allows me to chose who I want to help me understand decisions. On my SDM Team, I chose, my mom Marie, my dad Ray and my sister Shannon who is also a person with disabilities.

Since joining Supportive Decision Making, I have made the decision to start traveling around the country visiting family. I leaned on my SDM Team to give me the big picture of what I would have to do to accomplish my goal. They sat down with me to have a one on one discussion to go over the pro's and con's. For this trip I would have to save the majority of the money I make from the Goodwill and spend less. I really wanted to see my relatives in Texas, so I chose to pursue this goal. In March 2019 I traveled to Texas to visit my family.

In April of 2019 my SDM team helped accomplish my greatest goal in life, to see Hulk Hogan at Wrestle Mania. A friend offered me a ticket, however I needed money for everything else such as travel, hotel, food, and souvenirs. I asked my mom and dad to help me understand what was needed and I went to the bank to take out the money. In this decision, I knew coming back from Wrestlemania things were going to be tight, so I managed for a few weeks and began saving money again.

My SDM Team has helped me so much in achieving my dreams. I love advocating for Supportive Decision Making. This past summer, I was asked to do an interview with Salon, a big time media news source on how important SDM is. This was such a great opportunity because they were trying to advocate on different models than Guardianship and conservatorship in Brittany Spears case. I was happy to advocate for SDM because it helps people with disabilities keep their voice and make the final decisions in things with support from a team if needed.