



# Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Naomi Brickel*

Naomi Brickel, MSEd is a nationally-recognized expert on disability issues and policy and has spent her career advocating and working on behalf of people with disabilities in New York State.

Ms. Brickel is the Project Director of Supported Decision Making NY (SDMNY) at Hunter College, recently recruited to succeed its Founding Director. In this role, she leads the effort to protect the legal and civil rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in New York State, overseeing an OPWDD implementation grant to develop an infrastructure for SDM as a less restrictive alternative to guardianship.

Previously, Ms. Brickel was Director for Community Support and Public Policy at Westchester Institute for Human Development (WIHD) and a member of WIHD's executive team; she is part of the core faculty for Disability Policy in the LEND Program at New York Medical College, where she was hired in 2009 to develop and direct a Parent Center. During her tenure, she created new programs and a department consisting of over 30 full- and part-time staff, including several self-advocates, focused on supporting individuals and their families and building inclusive communities.

At WIHD, Ms. Brickel was recognized as a leader in the disability field, delivering hundreds of presentations at state and national conferences including, most notably, the National State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). She co-authored a NYSED training curriculum, developing popular resources about the IEP process, and was appointed to NYSED's Special Education and Voc Rehab Advisory Councils, where she remains today. Ms. Brickel created inclusive and innovative community-based programs for people with IDD, as well as programs to provide technical assistance and capacity-building for stakeholders in all disability systems.

Ms. Brickel resides in New Rochelle, where her six children attended public schools. She served on the Board of Education from 2011-2015 and was President of the Special Education PTA. In 2021, she published an inspirational memoir, *Not To Spoil The Ending...but everything is going to be ok*, and she maintains a weekly blog. Ms. Brickel earned her MSEd in Special Education and Transition from the University of Kansas in 2015.

***Naomi Brickel was selected as a  
2023 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Shelley B. Mayer***

