



Self-Advocacy

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Self-Advocacy

Introduction

Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself to get your needs and wants met.

What happens when you advocate for yourself.....

- You make your own decisions
- Achieve your dreams and goals
- Freedom over what they do

Examples of Self-Advocacy

- Asking for more hours at work.
- Speaking up for yourself when someone treats you unfairly.
- Asking for help when you need it.

Identify Who Knows You Best

- ❑ The best expert on you is YOU. No one knows you better than you know yourself.
- ❑ When other people make decisions for you, those decisions often don't fit your needs.
- ❑ There are experts to come alongside people with disabilities to help them succeed.
- ❑ Having the support of experts is helpful, but regardless of their help, all PWD should be self-advocates.



Self-Advocacy

Know Yourself

- ❑ It is important to know yourself.
- ❑ Pay attention; know your strengths and your needs.
- ❑ It is hard to advocate for yourself if you can't explain your disability.
- ❑ Know about your disability and be able to talk about it.
- ❑ Friends, family, teachers, and other professionals can help you understand how your disability affects you.
- ❑ Remember, you are wonderfully unique.
- ❑ Make a list of your preferences, interests, needs, and strengths.



Know About Your Disability

- ❑ Embrace your disability.
- ❑ Appreciate your uniqueness.
- ❑ Know what your disability is.
- ❑ Know how it effects you.
- ❑ Be able to talk about it.
- ❑ Know what things you need help with and the things you don't.



Self-Advocacy

Having a disability often times creates positive opportunities for your life that you might not have otherwise. The friends you have, community recognition you have received, and many positive qualities that you possess are a result of your disability.

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Self-Advocate Stories



What Does “Assertive” Mean?

- Being assertive means that you communicate courage and stand up for yourself to show that you want to be treated fairly while, at the same time, remaining respectful of others.
- Example: If someone tries to take a book from you, you say, “I’m reading it right now. You may have it when I’m finished.”

“I tend to be a passive person by nature, and I have had to work really hard to be assertive. Every time I am assertive it gets easier. I have gotten stronger in being assertive.”

- Allison Haynes, self-advocate

An assertive person understands that his or her beliefs, ideas, needs, and feelings are just as important as someone else’s.

Opposite of Assertive: Passive

- ❑ Being passive means that you do not stand up for yourself and let others take advantage of you.
- ❑ A passive person is shy, fearful, submissive, or weak.
- ❑ Example: Saying, “You can have the book; I don’t need it,” when you do need it
- ❑ Being passive doesn’t sound too bad, but passive people don’t get what they need and want, and they often regret their passivity.
- ❑ To be less passive, avoid saying, “It doesn’t matter,” or, “I don’t care.” Practice voicing your opinion on small matters like where you’d like to go eat and what time you want to meet.

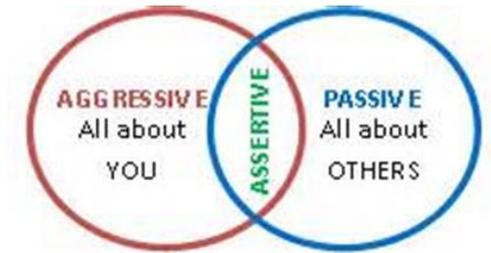
Opposite of Assertive: Aggressive

- Being aggressive means that you get what you want through force or confrontation.
- An aggressive person is often rude, argumentative, pushy, or angry.
- Example: “You have to give me that right now or I will take it.”
- Being aggressive might get you what you want, but in the long run people won’t respect you because they see you as rude or hurtful.
- To be less aggressive:
 - Always be kind while telling people what you want or need.
 - Let other people speak first, and don’t interrupt.
 - Be respectful of others’ rights.



Ways to Become More Assertive

- ❑ Be firm, direct, and honest.
- ❑ Be confident about who you are.
- ❑ Speak clearly and to the point.
- ❑ Have a good role model to follow.
- ❑ Realize you have the ability to make choices about your life.
- ❑ Pay attention to how you think and feel and what you want and need.



↑
Balances care for others
with care for self.