

# WHAT IS SELF ADVOCACY?

There are several ways that people with developmental disabilities describe and define self advocacy including:

- ▶ Speaking up for themselves;
- ▶ Making their voices heard;
- ▶ Making their views known;
- ▶ Making choices and changes in their own lives;
- ▶ Coming together to support each other and have a say in the policies and practices that affect their lives.

Activities of self advocacy groups include:

- ▶ Making people aware of their rights;
- ▶ Training and talking to other people about self advocacy;
- ▶ Making information more accessible by using audiotapes or pictures;
- ▶ Making concrete changes to improve their lives (i.e. improve voter accessibility);
- ▶ Working to increase choices and quality of supports;
- ▶ Planning and organizing self advocacy conferences;
- ▶ Assisting people to speak up about abuse and exploitation;
- ▶ Organizing to fight against discrimination.

In summary, self advocacy means:

- ▶ Thinking for yourself;
- ▶ Saying what you think;
- ▶ Having relationships like anyone else;
- ▶ People listening to you;
- ▶ Making mistakes;
- ▶ Taking risks;
- ▶ Taking responsibility;
- ▶ Making decisions;
- ▶ Standing up for your rights.



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