



# Self-Advocacy



## Definition

### Self-Advocating refers to...

an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.

(VanReusen et al., 1994)



## Benefits

### Building self-advocacy skills improves:

- Self-Esteem/Self-Worth
- Ongoing Learning
- Independence
- Success in Life
- Overall Happiness



## Skills

### Self-Advocacy Skills:

- Having a realistic view of self/ sense of self (disability, strengths and needs)
- Being able to communicate what motivates self (interests)
- Setting and working toward own goals (Post-Secondary)
- Understanding rights and responsibilities
- Recognizing situations that require self-advocacy
- Advocating for self when appropriate (communicate, ask questions, find supports)



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Self-Knowledge is the first step towards advocating for your rights.

## Tips

- Know and understand your rights and responsibilities
- Learn all you can about your disability, needs, strengths, and weaknesses
- Know what accommodations you need as well as why you need them
- Know how to effectively/assertively communicate your needs and preferences
- Find out who the key people are and how to contact them if necessary
- Be willing to ask questions when something is unclear or you need clarification

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Rubric

### Advocate for self

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Be able to describe what motivates self

- Describe what is important to self
- Describe what gives pleasure or satisfaction
- Describe wants, interests, dreams, and goals

#### Explain realistic view of self

- Describe capabilities and limitations
- Describe own strengths and weaknesses
- Recognize need for supports

#### Recognize situations that require self-advocacy

- Describe legal and civil rights
- Recognize that maintaining personal safety often requires self-advocacy
- Recognize that obtaining services often requires self-advocacy

#### Take action and advocate for self when appropriate

- Evaluate situations and decide whether self advocating is the best option
- Make a plan for successfully advocating for self
- Decide whether supports are needed
- Recognize fears associated with self advocating and have ways to overcome them

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