

THE ADVOCATOR

A quarterly newsletter for Self-Advocates

VOL. 1, ISSUE 1

2.20.2019

Self-Advocacy

Greetings, I hope everyone is well. This is the beginning of a new quarterly newsletter where we'll have topics concerning self-advocates. This quarter, I'd like to talk about the new Home and Community Based Settings Rule. People with disabilities will have access to services so they can live in the community on their own or with supports of their choice. Living in the community will help promote self esteem and independence. It will allow people with disabilities to make choices of where to go out to eat, where to shop, which friends to hang out with, and who to room with. Employment also develops self esteem and independence. While working, you earn your own money to pay bills, take trips, buy clothes or whatever you choose. Self-determination is controlling your own future it means you are in charge of your own life. If you need supports, as all people do, self-determination means you decide what those supports are and how you want to receive them. This means no one can make decisions or choices for you. You have the right to do it for yourself. People with disabilities have rights such as the ones listed below:

1. To be publicly educated in the same schools as non-disabled people.
2. To be competitively employed at the same workplaces as non-disabled people.
3. To use public transportation.
4. To vote.
5. To go to court.
6. To get recreation.
7. To have access to health care and social services.
8. To attend town meetings.
9. To join services, programs, and activities while giving them an equal opportunity to benefit from all these privileges like non-disabled people.
10. To go to golf courses, movie theaters, shops, retail stores, restaurants, day care centers, private schools, funeral homes, zoos, sports stadiums, hotels, and anywhere else non-disabled people can go.
11. To be treated like everyone else.

— George Neal

Consumer Corner

Hello!

We talked in self-advocacy about being independent and living on your own. This means you might rent an apartment. After the walk through and before signing the lease, make sure the apartment meets your needs. There shouldn't be any leaks, doors and windows should be airtight, and the appliances should work properly. Usually maintenance will go in and paint, put in new carpet, and make sure everything else is in good working order. If this is your first apartment, take someone with you to help walk you through the lease. I took a friend with me the first time I rented. That made things easier when I was ready to renew or move to another apartment. I was better able to understand the entire process. When looking for an apartment, consider location. You want to live where you feel comfortable and safe. You also want to be close to shops and restaurants and convenient to public transportation. Being near the bus line will make it easier to go to work, the movies, and to visit family and friends. Having a smartphone comes in handy too. There are apps you can download to help you track your bus, call an Uber ride, shop online, and keep in touch with family and friends via social media.

What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-Advocacy is learning to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your life, learning how to get information so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, problem solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about self-determination.

Self-Advocacy can be useful in many different ways and in so many different situations. It is important to draw on self-advocacy skills whenever it's important for the individual's voice to be heard. This includes situations in which medical/care plans are being reviewed or put in place, during assessments, or any time an individual feels that he or she is being treated unfairly. Self-advocacy is an essential skill for all individuals and can help individuals with disabilities build successful, happy lives.

Speaking up for yourself will definitely help you feel independent, but most importantly, it will help you be a role model to inspire others to speak up for themselves and want to be independent in the community as well.

— George Neal



Advocator Café

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There's always room for self-improvement!

Here's some suggestions:

- The library has computers. All you need is a membership card, and it's free! You can also print for a small fee of 10 to 25 cents per copy.
- The library has free computer classes to teach you how it works. Depending on the library, they'll teach you Microsoft Word and some of the other Microsoft programs.
- The library has audio books. They are available on CD's or you can download them on to your digital device for a limited time. The time limit is usually three weeks like a regular book. Listening to an audio book helps broaden your mind and your vocabulary. Depending on the book, you might feel like you're on vacation! **I'm listening to a series of books now. I've been doing it for over 10 years! When I listen to a new book, I feel like I'm going on vacation.**
- I always enjoy listening to an audiobook then watching the movie that it's based on. Nine times out of ten the book is always better!
- Most libraries have music CD's. The borrow time is 2 weeks. They also have DVD movies and TV programs. The usual borrow time is 3 weeks.





THE SELF-ADVOCACY TREE

Original design by Erica-Rachael Fiel

Branches
Topics the group is interested in

Trunk
Principles and mission of the group

Fruit
Actions taken to achieve goals

Roots
People who participate as self-advocates

Erica imagined this tree to help people see how everyone can work together.

Produced by The Riot at HSRI based on work at the Virginia SALT Forum in April 2010. Visit The Riot at www.theriotrocks.org

Upcoming Events:

AL-APSE Conference

July 10-12, 2019

Renaissance Hotel & Spa
Montgomery, AL

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