

TIPS FOR YOUTH TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE SELF-ADVOCACY MOVEMENT



Self-advocacy is: a civil rights movement for people with disabilities, being a part of your community, speaking up for what you think is important, making your case for what you want, knowing your strengths, being proud & feeling strong, saying what is on your mind, taking risks & trying new things, making mistakes & learning from them, going after your dreams, learning how to use your voice speak up for yourself and others. Self advocacy is about making your own decisions, about your own life. It is knowing your rights and responsibilities. Here are some tips to get involved.

- ✚ Find a local group that you can check out to see if you like it. In the United States, there are more than 1,200 local self-advocacy groups. To find a group you can use online tools like www.selfadvocacyinfo.org, www.sabeusa.org, or www.selfadvocacyonline.org
- ✚ Find friend or peer mentor that can help you become more involved.
- ✚ Learn about the disability civil rights movement. This will help you learn what kinds of things are important to you and what you want to use your voice for.
- ✚ Go to community activities and events you are interested in. You can ask if there are grants or scholarships to help you pay to go to these events.
- ✚ Create a self development growth plan. These are sometimes called PATH plans. Work with your mentor or group advisor if you need help to do this.
- ✚ If there is not a group in your area already you can start one. Use toolkits and guides to help you. Some good resources for starting groups are: www.selfadvocacyinfo.org, www.selfadvocacyonline.org, and www.sabeusa.org/.

This publication is supported in part by a cooperative agreement from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities policy.

The Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) seeks to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self advocacy organizations to grow in diversity and leadership. The resource center is a project of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), the oldest national self-advocacy organization in the country. SARTAC is a Developmental Disabilities Project of National Significance, funded by the Administration For Community Living – Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). The information in this product was written to provide guidance for self advocates and their allies to assist in understanding policy issues affecting their lives. It is not to be used to determine a person's legal rights or an organization's legal responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, as amended or any other federal, state or local laws written to protect the rights of people with disabilities.