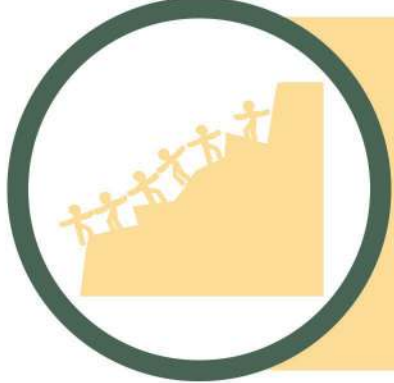




# WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?



**SELF-ADVOCACY** means that you are **EMPOWERED** to communicate **WITHOUT FEAR OR SHAME** about things that are important to your **PROGRESS ON YOUR PATH**.



A **SELF-ADVOCATE** knows that **EACH PERSON** has the right and also the responsibility to participate fully in the family, community and society: **TO ACCEPT** and **BE ACCEPTED** for who they are and the gifts that they have, to give **SUPPORT TO OTHERS** when it is possible and to **ACCEPT THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS** when it is needed.

## WHY IS SELF-ADVOCACY IMPORTANT IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY?



**Self-advocacy** fosters **empowerment** over one's life and everyday choices. It is especially important in the disability community because people with disability are often considered **unable to participate**. However, when a person with disability is aware of their own **needs** or the **obstacles** that are in their way and feels **comfortable voicing this**, it provides them with the **access** they need to take their place in **participating fully** in the **family, community and society**.

## WHAT DOES A SELF-ADVOCATE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEMSELVES?



### KNOW YOURSELF:

Who are you? What are your gifts? What interests you? What brings you joy? What challenges you? Where do you struggle? What is your place in the family? Community? Society?

### KNOW YOUR NEEDS:

What do you need to thrive? Physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually? What are you missing? What is blocking you? What do you need to consider and plan for?

### KNOWING HOW TO GET WHAT YOU NEED:

Who, what, when, where, how? Whether it's at home, school, work or through the various support organizations, a self-advocate has figured out how to get what they need. They will also be a part of the solution, and guide the process.



**Importance of SELF-ADVOCACY:** Self-advocacy fosters empowerment and motivation. By having the power to speak up for one's needs, voicing their concerns and understanding their responsibilities, this ensures that the help they're seeking and or receiving is tailored specifically for them and their lifestyles. This allows people to move forward on their path, motivated and empowered.



## HOW DO WE BECOME ALLIES TO SELF-ADVOCACY?

### 1. LISTEN & LEARN

Listening and learning how a person with a disability feels in any given situation and understanding their preferred methods for doing things, will give you insight into the best way to approach various situations with them.

### 2. BE ADAPTABLE

If a method or situation needs to be changed to better fit a person's needs, be open to the change. An inclusive environment is flexible and adaptable, embracing diversity.

### 3. WORK TOGETHER TO FIND ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS:

Disability is not one solution fits all. If another solution needs to be found to accommodate a person's needs or address their barriers, be open and willing to find another solution and work with the person to figure out the best one.