


Self-Advocacy Handbook




Canadian
Paraplegic
Association
Association
canadienne des
paraplégiques

No limits

Module 1 – The Power Within



What is self-advocacy?

Self-advocacy is standing up for yourself so as to improve your personal conditions or situation. It is knowing what you need and speaking up for it.

What is necessary for self-advocacy success?

- good self-esteem,
- assertiveness,
- knowing how to communicate so people will listen,
- understanding and researching the situation, and
- understanding yourself and what triggers you.

Power

There are different types of power that can affect how successful you will be in getting what you want.

Power over: You are exercising control over another or you are experiencing loss of control in a situation.

Power with: Indicates trust and may be described as win/win.

Power within: You have control of yourself; you do not need validation from others.

Successful self-advocacy is being aware when someone is trying to have power over you and responding assertively.

Sample situation: See worksheets for four scenarios at the end of this module.

Successful advocacy through communication

Language is key in successful advocacy. It is important to know how to make it work for you.

1. Choose your language carefully. Be objective and use concrete examples whenever possible.
2. Avoid accusing others or getting defensive.
3. Express your needs, wants, feelings and thoughts effectively.
4. Be aware of your body language and how others might react to it. Your body may give messages your words do not.



5. Practice active listening.
6. Convey confidence.

Assertive communication

You are in line at a store trying to get pricing on an item you want to buy. Three people have ignored you and you are getting impatient. What do you do?

1. Get very angry and yell out: "What is the matter with you? Can't you see that I need some help here? I am going to launch a suit against you for discrimination!"
2. Wait until someone nice notices you.
3. Go up to a clerk and say: "I need your help. I cannot see the price on these items because they are not low enough for me to read. Please give me your assistance."

The answer is number 3. Why? Because it is an example of assertiveness which allows you to clearly state what you want.

What is aggressiveness?

Aggressiveness means that you express your rights at the expense of others' rights. It results in a win/lose solution – a kind of "my way or the highway" approach.

How is this different from passiveness?

Passiveness permits others to violate your rights and shows a lack of respect for your needs. It is a lose/win solution where you put your needs behind everyone else's – you become a victim.

What is assertiveness?

With assertiveness, you strive to find a win/win solution and you respect yourself as well as another person.

How can I be assertive?

- ✓ Be specific and clear. Use "I" statements. "I need ..., I feel..., I thought..., I want...."
- ✓ Be direct.
- ✓ Identify that what you want/need is from your frame of reference.
- ✓ Ask for feedback. Are you being clear? Do they understand?
- ✓ Make sure that your body language conveys the same message as your words.



Good listening skills

Listening is just as important as speaking when you are trying to advocate for what you need or want.

What does good listening entail?

- making eye contact;
- leaning forward when the other person speaks – it shows you are interested;
- being relaxed and open to what the other person is saying;
- asking questions as they arise; and
- clarifying what you or others are saying.

“I” statements

“I” statements clearly express your wants, needs or feelings. They are important in self-advocacy because they determine how you will be heard and understood.

Here are some examples:

1. When you make jokes about my weight, I feel hurt. I would appreciate it if you would stop making such comments.
2. I feel that I deserve more respect from you than I am getting. When you tell me what I do wrong, I feel that you do not value me. I feel that I do many things right.
3. I need to have my apartment shower fixed today because I am unable to get in and out of the tub without assistance.
4. Although I understand your need to meet with me immediately, I am unable to meet now. I will meet you in an hour’s time if you are available.
5. When you discipline me in front of my peers, I feel devalued and embarrassed. I need you to address any concerns you have about my work in private.



Resources

Print

Getting to Yes, Roger Fisher, ISBN 039531756, Houghton Mufflin Press.

3 steps to Yes, Gene Bedll, ISBN 0609807196, Three Rivers Press.

People Skills, Robert Bolton, ISBN 0671622484, Touchstone Press.

Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement without Giving In, William L. Ury and Roger Fisher, ISBN 0395631266, Houghton Mifflin Press.

Self-Advocacy Tool, Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada.

I Can Speak for Myself! Understanding the Value of Assertive Communication, ACT Tools for Change.

Reach for the Power Switch – How Ordinary People Can Use Power to Make Change, ACT Tools for Change.

Taking Charge of the Air Travel Experience: Guide for Persons with Disabilities, Canadian Transport Agency.

Online

Change is Inevitable, But Growth is Optional: A Self-Advocacy Manual, The North Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre, www.nald.ca/fulltest/change/cover.htm

Freedom Self-Advocacy Curriculum, National Mental Health Consumer's Self-Help Clearinghouse, www.mhselfhelp.org/freedom.materials.htm

Self-Advocacy Through Negotiation, The ARC Michigan, www.arcmi.org/self-advocacy_through_negotiation.htm

Publications Self-Advocacy, Protection and Advocacy Inc. www.pai-ca.org/pubs/400201.htm

Effective Personal Communication, BizHelp24, www.bizhelp24.com/personal_development/effective_personal_development/effective_personalcommunication.shtml



Module 1 – Worksheet

Situation 1, scene 1

Don's landlord is putting pressure on Don to pay the rent he owes. He is threatening to evict him. Don knows that he paid half of the money owed and he had an agreement that he would not be evicted if he paid the rest of the rent by the end of the month, when his pension cheque is due.

The discussion begins:

Don: "I told you I'd pay you and you told me it was okay. Now you are telling me that you want to evict me!"

Landlord: "I said I could wait one week. It's now been two and I need your rent."

Don: "Well, I haven't got my cheque yet. I will pay you when I get it."

Landlord: "But you said I'd have it in a week. When will I get it?"

Don: "Like I told you; when I do."

Landlord: "I want you to sign this letter that explains when you are going to pay me and get your worker to co-sign it."

Don: "What! I know what's going on! You don't trust me. You just want people with disabilities to leave the building so you can get tenants in with more money. You think we're all too much trouble for you."

Landlord: "That's not the case. There are six other persons with disabilities who live here and I have no problem getting the rent from them. I am asking you again to get this letter signed."

Don: "No way! I know my rights!"

Consider the questions:

- How did Don handle himself here?
- What did he show in his meeting with the landlord?

Possible answers:

- aggressiveness
- poor communication skills
- adopted a win/lose attitude
- "I" statements were lost in his passive not assertive stance
- blaming
- tried to have power over the landlord



Module 1 – Worksheet

Situation 1, scene 2

Don's landlord is putting pressure on Don to pay the rent he owes. He is threatening to evict him. Don knows that he paid half of the money owed and he had an agreement that he would not be evicted if he paid the rest of the rent by the end of the month, when his pension cheque is due. The issue is now in mediation with the Tenancy Board.

Arbitrator: "Your landlord wants to evict you because you did not pay your rent. Is it true that you did not pay the rent?"

Don: "No. I did pay my rent. My landlord agreed that because my pension cheque was late, I could pay half and then pay the rest when the cheque came in. He did not mention that he was going to evict me since I have not paid the full amount."

Arbitrator: "Do you know when you paid the rent and how much you paid?"

Don: "Yes, I do. I paid \$200.00 on June 15. On June 30 I paid the additional \$200.00 which is the full amount of the rent. This is what the landlord and I agreed to."

Arbitrator: "Do you have proof of this?"

Don: "Yes. I kept the receipts with the landlord's signature on them. I also have my bank statements that prove when the monies were removed from my bank account."

Arbitrator: "Do you have any proof that the landlord agreed to this payment arrangement?"

Don: "Here is the signed letter where we both agreed to the arrangement."

Arbitrator: "You have proof of payment, receipts and a signed letter. You have proven your case!"

Consider the questions:

- How did Don handle himself here?
- What did he show in his meeting with the arbitrator?

Possible answers:

- good self-control
- kept repeating his statement
- provided proof
- avoided blaming
- used "I" statements
- showed confidence/self-esteem



- modeled win/win
- showed power within
- expressed his views

Consider the question:

What does this scene show you about advocating for yourself in this situation?

Possible answers:

- show respect for the other people/person involved
- be positive and confident
- provide proof/examples for your side of the issue
- keep cool
- use "I" statements and repeat ideas if necessary
- show power within yourself
- words you choose can affect the outcome



Module 1 – Worksheet

Situation 2, scene 1

Mary Jane is a 25-year-old-woman with a spinal cord injury who has been struggling to make ends meet. She has been getting additional support money to pay for 24-hour nursing care because she has been very ill lately and has been unable to work. She has just gotten a letter saying that her funding is coming to an end, but she is still sick and needs the funds to continue her care. She calls her worker to find out what is going on.

Mary Jane: "Ms. Jones, this is Mary Jane. I have been very ill and have needed 24-hour nursing care that you have been paying for me. I just got a letter saying that you are no longer going to pay me. What am I supposed to do?"

Jones: "Mary Jane who? Could I have your ID number?"

MJ: "Look, I don't have it in front of me. I am one of your clients – you should know who I am. I've talked to you before."

Jones: "Okay! Just hold on a minute! Let me see if I can find it. Oh, are you the Mary Jane on Bliss Boulevard?"

MJ: "Yes."

Jones: "Next time, make sure you have your ID number when you call. I see so many clients; I cannot possibly keep them all straight."

MJ: "Okay."

Jones: "Your file states that you were cut off because the time of the allotted payment is up."

MJ: "But I am still sick and cannot go back to work. I still need the care and I cannot pay for this."

Jones: "Do you have a letter from your doctor saying that you are still in need of assistance?"

MJ: "I need a doctor's note?! How can I get to the doctor when I am still sick?"

Jones: "Well, it is your responsibility to get the information from the doctor. If you had done this earlier instead of waiting until now, you could have saved yourself a lot of trouble. Now there is nothing I can do until I get a signed letter from your doctor and it will be much harder to have your care continued."

MJ: "Oh! I will get a letter and call you."



Consider the questions:

- What do you think Mary Jane did right in this scene?
- What did she not do well?
- Do you think she got what she needed? Explain.
- If you were Ms. Jones, would you have done anything differently? Explain.
- Is this an example of a win/win, win/lose or lose/win situation? Why?
- Was Mary Jane assertive, aggressive or passive? How did you decide that?

Possible answers:

- She did call to find out; she did try to get what she needed; she did not play victim until she recognized that she was wrong.
- She got angry, perhaps was impatient and desperate.
- Maybe, but it doesn't look like it. At least she now knows what she did wrong. Perhaps next time she will change her tone.
- Have MJ get at the ideas of assertiveness and preparedness etc.
- MJ really did not get what she wanted.
- Win/lose
- MJ was aggressive at first and then seemed to be passive at the end when she felt she was not going to get what she wanted.



Module 1 – Worksheet

Situation 2, scene 2

Mary Jane is a 25-year-old-woman with a spinal cord injury who has been struggling to make ends meet. She has been getting additional support money to pay for 24-hour nursing care because she has been very ill lately and has been unable to work. She has just gotten a letter saying that her funding is coming to an end, but she is still sick and needs the funds to continue her care. She calls her worker to find out what is going on.

MJ: "Ms. Jones. My name is Mary Jane Fritz, one of your clients. My client number is XXX1100."

Jones: "Oh yes! How are you?"

MJ: "Well, actually not very well. You may remember that I have been getting additional income support to provide 24-hour nursing care for me because I am a quadriplegic and have been very ill."

Jones: "Oh yes, here it is in your file."

MJ: "I just got a letter stating that I will not be able to get any more funding for this nursing care. I am, however, still sick, am not able to return to work yet and cannot pay for this care on my own."

Jones: "Yes, you are correct. The payments are ceasing at the end of this month."

MJ: "Well that is a problem for me. My doctor says that I need ongoing care for the next 3 months."

Jones: "I see. Has he put that in writing?"

MJ: "Yes, I have a letter from him stating that."

Jones: "That's just what I need to extend your funding. How soon can you get that to me?"

MJ: "My attendant could drop it into your office when she leaves today. Would it work for you if you got it by the end of the day today?"

Jones: "Yes that would be fine. I will look at it tomorrow and, if all is in order, you should have a cheque next Tuesday as usual."

MJ: "Thanks so much. I was getting worried and did not know how I was going to get by. This news has certainly relieved my mind."

Jones: "No problem! You did exactly the right thing."



Consider the questions:

- When did Mary Jane show her confidence?
- Did she ever become passive during the conversation?
- If you had been in Mary Jane's situation, what would you have done?
- Do you think that Mary Jane was assertive enough in the situation?
- What did Mary Jane do/say to make this a win/win situation?

Possible answers:

- Mary Jane seemed confident and in control right from the beginning; she had everything ready that she thought she might need.
- Mary Jane wasn't passive in this scene.
- What would you do? (Listen for lack of understanding or confusion.)
- The general consensus should be yes, she was assertive enough in this scene.
- She showed respect for Ms. Jones. She tried to give Ms. Jones what she needed so that she could help her get what she needed.



Module 2 – Choose to Win

Be prepared!



The most important step towards “winning” or solving a problem is having an understanding of your problem. Some problems or goals (ways to solve a problem) are more straightforward than others.

Step 1: Clearly define the problem.

Step 2: Work out how to accomplish the goal. **Goals** are accomplished by setting objectives. You may have several objectives for reaching one goal. Two people may have the same goal but very different objectives.

For example:

Objectives for the goal of “getting a full-time job” are:

- read the careers section in the newspaper
- call employment agencies
- send out résumés

Goals are broad whereas objectives are narrow. Objectives are instructions about what to do to achieve the goal. An **objective** always infers taking action; it prompts behaviour.

In developing good objectives, it is important to include **conditions** such as how and where you will carry out the activity; as well as criteria such as when you will complete the activity.

Conditions for the goal of “getting a full-time job” are:

- read the careers section in the newspaper **every week**
- call **three (3)** employment agencies
- send out **five (5)** résumés

Developing a game plan and formulating solutions begins with having clear goals and objectives. Furthermore, determining objectives, conditions and **criteria** makes us aware of any barriers or problems we might face in meeting the goal.

Criteria for the goal of “getting a full-time job” are:

- read the careers section in the newspaper every week **for four (4) weeks**
- call three (3) employment agencies **by Monday**
- send out five (5) resumes **by mail by 3 pm**



Performing research: knowledge is power

Sample situation: Cindy has a goal of joining the workforce. She thinks she would like to work as a medical office assistant but she is unsure whether she would enjoy the work and whether there is work available in this field.

- How can Cindy find out if she would like to work as a medical office assistant?
- How can Cindy find out if work is available?

To find out whether she would like the work, Cindy could:

- Create a list of employment priorities (i.e., salary expectations, geographic location).
- Make a list of her likes/dislikes as well as preferences for a working environment (i.e., likes to work at a desk or not; likes interacting with people or not).
- Seek professional guidance from a vocational counsellor about skill and personality matches (a vocational assessment).
- Talk to people who work in the field (allies) and conduct information interviews to discuss what they do, asking what they like/don't like about their work and working environment.
- Job shadow in clerical office(s). Note: Cindy happens to enjoy being around children. She could try to job shadow in offices of different types of doctors, to find the best match (i.e., a pediatrician's office).

To find out whether work is available, Cindy could:

- Ask people in the field their perceptions about job availability and job security.
- Access the media to find out whether the industry is growing or declining.
- Conduct labour market research to access facts and figures about the work, including salary expectations and location of the industry (i.e., geographically dispersed or only in remote areas).

Identifying the barrier or problem

Sample situation: Cindy decides she would like to pursue a career as a medical office assistant. However, due to her disability, Cindy is unable to sit at a desk for more than four hours in a row.

What arrangements can you come up with for Cindy to continue to pursue this field?

- She could find out about adaptive equipment and workplace modifications.



- She could look to work for a doctor who works part-time.
- She could find out about the possibility of job sharing or job rotation (having more than one job in the office), i.e., being an office receptionist for the first half of the day and a filing clerk for the latter half.

Identify allies and opponents

In some situations it is important for you to have an ally – someone who is on your side. An ally is someone who supports your goal.

Make a list of your allies.

Can someone you don't know be an ally? Allies can be anyone who is willing to offer support, even people we don't know. Often we don't know who could be our strongest allies. Identifying allies requires having an open mind as to who might be an ally.

Opponents, on the contrary, are people/groups who do not support your goal. In order to hamper your success, they may use tactics such as delaying help, denying there is a problem, deflecting responsibility, or dividing (trying to get some people to oppose others). The position or power of an opponent can be very intimidating. Remember opponents are sometimes created solely by the policies and procedures they have to implement or administer.

If you run into an opponent, here are some ways to overcome their resistance:

- ✓ **Understand your opponent** and their perspective/goal.
- ✓ **Identify the issue** and focus on their behaviour, not attacking them personally.
- ✓ **Reframe** the issue (i.e., the problem is lack of office space, not that my wheelchair is too big).
- ✓ Be willing to **collaborate**, looking for mutually acceptable solutions.

Formulate solutions

There are often more solutions to a problem than first may become apparent. Remember to identify allies and use resources around you. When prioritizing solutions, it is important to be realistic about how successfully they will help you meet your goal, considering your personal limits.

Sample situation: In order to get a job as a call-centre representative, Imaan must update his typing skills. He must be able to demonstrate typing a minimum of fifty-five (55) words per minute. Imaan has recently been given a home computer which he enjoys using. His neighbour, Rita, is a typing teacher who works at home. Imaan and Rita live about thirty (30) minutes away from the local technical college.



What are some viable and desired solutions for Imaan to update his typing skills?

Possible answers:

- Purchase a typing tutor CD for his home computer.
- Practice typing on his home computer.
- Take a 'Updating Your Typing Skills' course at the college thirty (30) minutes from his home.
- Ask his neighbour Rita, a typing teacher, for help.

Imaan has a spinal-cord injury that makes travelling difficult. Furthermore, his best time of the day for learning is in the morning.

Given these personal limits, what must Imaan consider when prioritizing his solutions?

Possible answers:

- How much money does Imaan have for this? Can Imaan afford the typing tutor CD?
- Will practicing on his own improve Imaan's skills enough to get the job?
- What time(s) of day does the college offer typing courses?
- Is travelling to the college a reasonable option given Imaan's travel difficulties?
- When is Rita available to help?
- Does Imaan require some sort of official certification for his employment?

The best approach: methods of self-advocacy

There are different methods of self-advocacy: emails, letters, phone, in-person meetings. Actions speak louder than words. Arranging to meet someone in person and going the extra mile to express interest – for example, setting up an information interview or arranging to have an agency tour, will differentiate you from the average person. The same rule applies to making a phone call instead of sending an email; the phone is more personal than email and communicates genuine intent or interest.

Letters and email are nevertheless important and effective self-advocacy tools. The greatest advantage of these is that they are a concrete record (but be sure to keep a copy!).

It is important to know whom to approach first and when. For example, if applying for a job where no contact person is given, it is a good idea to call the organization and find out the name of the person who is hiring (this is often the Human Resources Manager).



When inquiring about an information interview, and when you don't know who specifically to speak to, make sure to be clear with the receptionist what information you hope to get out of the interview so the receptionist can ensure you speak with the most suitable person.

Knowing one's rights

Sample situation: Sandra has recently enrolled in graduate studies at a local university. Sandra has a disability as a result of which she requires voice activation software to participate in class. Sandra does not believe she should have to tell the university that she is disabled and thus does not. After her first class and in front of other students, the teacher angrily comments to Sandra that she should have told him in advance that she uses adaptive software. He exclaims that her equipment is disruptive to the class and he asks her not to return. Sandra is embarrassed and upset.

What are Sandra's rights in this situation?
Which ones were violated?

Possible suggestions:

- Sandra has the right not to tell the university that she has a disability.
- She has the right to participate in class.
- Her right to remain in the class was violated by the teacher asking her not to return.

What are her obligations?

Possible suggestions:

- Sandra has the obligation to tell the professor that she will be using adaptive equipment in class.
- Doing so in advance would have allowed her to make a mutually satisfactory arrangement with the teacher so that this situation could have been avoided.
- The teacher had the obligation to address the situation with Sandra in private.

What or who are Sandra's supports (allies) in this situation?

Possible suggestions:

- Sandra's informal supports include peers (both disabled and able bodied), family and friends.
- Formal supports include university administration, the disability resource centre at the university, university disability policy, human rights legislation and community disability advocacy offices, among many others.

Do you know what your rights are?



Record-keeping and follow-up

Record-keeping and documentation are important because we forget things! Recording activities reminds you of what you have done, what you still have to do, and what activities others have to do on your behalf.

1. What is missing from the records below?
2. What problems do you find with the information?

Record #1

TONY
Interview on Wednesday.
To call.

Record #2

June 2, 2005
Charlie's Fine Chocolates
6677 Bellview Street (Vancouver)
604-555-7373

Record #3

Problem with stairs at apartment on Hastings. Called landlord twice, still not fixed. Call her again tomorrow.

Answers or missing information

Record #1

- ✓ method of self-advocacy. Was it a phone call? Taken from an email?
- ✓ the date and time of the message
- ✓ last name of person and company/affiliation and/or job information
- ✓ phone number/contact information
- ✓ time and location of interview

Problem:

Does "to call" mean for me to call the contact or for them to call me?

Record #2

- ✓ method of self-advocacy. Was it a phone call? Taken from an email?
- ✓ name of contact person
- ✓ is it a job? What is the significance of this record?

Problem:

No action plan included (i.e. what are the next steps?)

Record #3

- ✓ address
- ✓ date and time of phone calls
- ✓ name and phone number of landlord
- ✓ did they leave a message and what did it say?



Problem:

Missing explanation about why stairs are not fixed.

Good notes include:

- A brief outline of the issue and the outcome you hope to achieve.
- Details of all the actions you have taken, including date and time.
- The names and contact information of all the people you have spoken to, and brief details of these conversations (i.e., what you asked for, the answers you were given, what agreements were made, what action was taken).
- If you are using computer or other electronic devices to store your information, it is imperative that you have a proper and timely back-up system.

Setting up a recording system

Effective self-advocacy takes organization. Not everyone organizes the same way, and there are a multitude of methods, however, every good self-advocate has a method that works for them. Effective notes or log entries, regardless of method, must be legible to the person; the information in the record must make sense; and the records must be complete. (See the sample recording system template at the end of this module).

Given the various methods of self-advocating, there are many forms of records including phone logs, notebooks, calendars, emails, letters, day-timers (written and electronic) and even tapes. Thus in addition to having a system for recording notes, it is important to have a system for managing your records. Some systems include:

- By files or envelopes: keeping all records of information from a particular person or organization in a folder.
- By self-advocacy method: keeping all phone correspondence in a phone log and all emails in a separate email folder.

Can you think of others?

Filing your notes and letters in the order in which they were written or received will save you a lot of time when you need them. Furthermore, keeping a paper-based or computerized to-do list that you reference regularly will save you from forgetting what you need to do, when you need to do it, and what you have already done!



Why documentation is important

Sample situation: Sam requires adaptations to the classroom in order to attend a training program at a local community college. Sam has been talking with Joan, the coordinator of the disability resource centre, for months with respect to the various accommodations that will be made and by whom. He has kept no record of their conversations. It is two weeks before the start of school and Sam receives a call from Mike, the new coordinator of the disability resource centre, saying that he is not eligible for accommodations because the office has no paperwork on him. Sam has not taken this training module and is stunned.

How would keeping records and documentation have helped Sam?

Possible suggestions:

- He could have provided the missing paperwork.
- He could have educated the new person about the process he had gone through with the former coordinator, and informed him of their correspondence, including what Joan said she would do.
- If he continued to have problems with Mike, documentation would help him involve other people to make his case stronger.

Detailed, accurate records are very important when you are advocating for yourself. As evidence of what you have been told, what you have said, and the actions that have been taken, your records and notes will play a vital role in helping you present your case.

Resolving problems in writing

Make sure all your letters include the following basic information:

- your name and any position or title you hold in an organization or agency
- your full address and telephone number (or other details of how you can be contacted)
- the date

You should keep the letter brief and to the point. Use plain language and state the purpose of the letter in the first sentence or two. Give precise details and be clear about what you want to happen. Be courteous but firm, and ask for a reply within a given time period. (See the sample letter at the end of this module).



Follow-up techniques

Persistence coupled with a clear follow-up plan pays off. Following-up in a timely manner indicates to the service provider that you are committed to solving your problem, organized with respect to solving it, and efficient as far as finding a solution. As a result you will be taken seriously, which will encourage action on their part.

The three most common methods of follow-up are phone, email and letter. As a rule, the best medium is that which the person has offered you. If they have only given you their email, you should follow-up in this manner and not call the company to find out their phone number. However, if the person requests that you call him or her, then definitely do so. If they have given you email and phone, fall back on the “more effort is better” rule and phone instead of emailing. Depending on the urgency of the situation, writing can also be an effective method of follow-up. And, if the opportunity is available, a face-to-face meeting is the best possibility.

Wrap up

Be prepared

- The first step to solving a problem or accomplishing a **goal** is to have it clearly defined.
- The second step to fulfilling a goal is to work out how to accomplish the goal.
- Goals are accomplished by setting **objectives**. In developing good objectives, it is important to include **conditions** such as how and where you will carry out the activity, as well as **criteria** such as by when it will be completed.
- Research is important for determining what options are available to solve the problem.
- An **ally** is someone who supports our goal and an opponent is someone who opposes the goal. Remind the group of ways to confront an opponent.

Formulating solutions

- There are often more solutions to a problem than first may become apparent. When prioritizing solutions, it is important to be realistic about how successfully they will help you meet your goal.

The best approach: methods of self-advocacy

- There are many methods of self-advocacy, the most common of which are emails, letters, phone and in-person meetings.
- It is important to know one’s rights and obligations in a situation, as well as who and what are forms of support.



Record-keeping and follow-up

- Recording-keeping is important because we forget things! Recording activities reminds you of what you have done, what you still have to do, and what activities others have to do on your behalf.
- Forms of records include phone logs, notebooks, calendars, emails, letters, day-timers and tapes. In addition to having a system for recording notes, it is important to have a system for managing records.
- Following-up is important because it indicates to a service provider that you are committed to solving your problem, organized with respect to solving it, and efficient as far as finding a solution. As a result you will be taken seriously which will encourage action on their part.

Resources

Identifying Allies and/or Opponents, section adapted from the Community Tool box Advocate for Change, <http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/advocateforchange/outline.jsp>

Follow-Up Techniques, section was taken from the Job Interview Follow-Up Do's and Don'ts for Job Seekers, www.quintcareers.com/interview_follow-up-dos-donts.html

Speaking up For Yourself: How to Self-Advocate, Advocacy Resource Packs, Royal National Institute of the Blind.



Module 2 – Sample template for a recording system

*Sample telephone call record
June 22, 2005*

Time	Contact Name	Contact Info (phone/email/address)	Notes	Follow-up



Module 2 – Participant worksheet

Sample letter to an adaptive equipment service provider

[date]

[name and address of recipient]

[your name and address]

Dear [...name of addressee]

I am writing to you because I have not yet been assessed by anyone from your office even though I have made six (*make sure you can document these – hence the importance of keeping good records!*) separate requests in writing (*method of self-advocacy*) for an adaptive equipment assessment in the last four months (*timeframe is important*).

I wrote to you on the following occasions:

- 7 October 2003 (copy of letter enclosed)
- 29 October 2003 (copy of letter enclosed)
- [etc]

I also telephoned you on October 20th and November 15th, and visited your offices in person on November 20th.

As you will be aware, I am enrolled in a training program which commences on the 5th of September, 2005. I would be extremely grateful if you would arrange for my assessment to be carried out as a matter of urgency, and preferably within the next 14 days. I refer you to page 3 of your organization's *Commitment to Service Users Policy*, which clearly states that an assessment will be carried out "within three months of referral."

Thank you for your time and attention and I look forward to hearing from you within the next seven days.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Courtesy of the Royal National Institute for the Blind.



Module 3 – Getting What You Want



Negotiation

“Without communication there is no negotiation”
(*Getting to Yes*, p. 32)

Negotiation is a tool for getting what you want from others. It is a situation (it can be verbal, in writing, and/or communicated through body language) focused on coming to an agreement. You and the other side may have some interests that are the same and some that are different.

The art of negotiation lies in knowing and being able to clearly define your goals and intentions, as well as knowing the other person or party’s goals and intentions. Being prepared is another key condition of being able to negotiate well and to produce outcomes in your favour.

Think back to situations you have been in and different tactics you have used to get what you wanted. You may have used things like this:

- competition (unfriendly)
- collaboration (friendly)
- walking away
- emotional outburst
- convincing
- positional bargaining (hard or soft)
- stalling
- appealing to a higher authority (law, supervisor, parent, etc.)
- giving an ultimatum (making a ‘final offer’)

These commonly used tactics may not help negotiate a solution because they are all based on one persons’ position or ideas, whereas, successful negotiating should focus on interests.

Sample situation: Mike is negotiating to buy Paul’s car. Paul has priced the car at \$12,000. Mike offers only the \$5,000 he has in the bank today. Using positional bargaining, Paul offers to reduce the selling price of the car to \$8,000. Mike says he can borrow \$1,000 from his parents and offers to pay \$6,000 today. If Mike can only offer \$6,000, and Paul will not sell the car for less than \$8,000, do Mike and Paul have to walk away from the negotiation? (a position called deadlock).

If, instead of focusing on their own positions, Mike and Paul focused on each other’s interests, they might have realized the following:

- Paul wants to sell the car for \$9,000 to \$10,000, but doesn’t mind getting the money in multiple installments.
- Mike agrees with Paul that the car is worth \$9,000 to \$10,000, but he just can’t pay that much today.
- Mike will be getting an additional \$4,000 next month when he sells his motorcycle.



If Mike and Paul began talking about interests (Paul's real selling price, Mike's agreement on the value of the car, and Mike's interest in paying over time), they would be able to move past their deadlock and complete the negotiation for Paul's car.

Creating a win-win situation

Sample situation: Alex and Sam are recipients of a scholarship to a local community college. They both have disabilities and are enrolled in the same program at the school. Their department has offered resources to accommodate them but they are insufficient to meet all of the needs of both Alex and Sam. The school administration has told both of them what is available and has left it up to them to divide the resources.

The main lesson to be learned from this exercise is that, as humans, we typically assume that other people want the same things we do and, therefore, attaining them for ourselves involves a battle, or alternatively, give and take. We rarely see that our needs or goals are often complementary, if not in whole then at least in part, with the other person. When we realize this, it becomes easier to see a negotiation as an opportunity for a win-win situation. Furthermore, this demonstrates why clearly knowing what one's goals, needs and objectives are (what one is seeking to get out of the negotiation), and being able to clearly communicate these is vital to being a successful negotiator.

Choosing and using statistics, facts and arguments

Statistics, facts and arguments are used to support and often validate your interests.

Sample situation: Jane is negotiating with her employer for a larger workspace to accommodate her wheelchair. The open space in her office is three (3) square feet (a fact). There is an empty office down that hall where the open space is six (6) square feet (a fact). Jane recently read in a disability advocacy report that seventy-five percent (75%) of workers who were given bigger workspaces became more effective at their job (a statistic).

To support her interests, Jane might explain to her boss why she would like more office space (to give her more room to maneuver her wheelchair); remind her boss that there is a larger empty office down the hall; cite the statistic about workers who are given bigger workspaces; and give the argument that the cost to move her into the new office will be offset by an increase in her productivity.



Controlling emotions

People often feel nervous or threatened entering a negotiation, especially if there is a lot to be gained. When one person can sense that the other party is emotional, the negotiations could become more tense and stressful. Controlling emotions is a very important aspect of presenting yourself in a negotiation. As with any good poker player, you must know what emotions are appropriate. It is important to control your emotions when negotiating despite how frustrated, angry, or tired you may feel. The first step to controlling emotions is to recognize and understand them – both yours and the other party. Other indicators you should be aware of, in yourself and your counterpart, are facial reactions and voice inflections or changes.

Accept emotions as valid and consider (if the other party agrees) discussing them so that you are then both free to focus on the problem. Focusing on the issue and not the person is another important factor in working on the problem and not getting entangled in personal attitudes. Behaving with dignity is a strong sign of leadership – a critical quality for an effective negotiator.

Body language and actions can speak louder than words. These are key aspects when it comes to negotiating. If your body is communicating something totally different from your words, you are unlikely to be successful, or at least the process of the negotiation will take longer as the other party tries to learn your genuine feeling and intent.

Recognizing deadlock

Sometimes a negotiation may reach an impasse or deadlock. This may be because one party is taking an extreme position or is unwilling to share information. Or it may be because the two parties do not have enough interests in common.

If you feel your negotiation has reached a deadlock, you may want to consider asking the other party if they feel the same and whether they have any ideas to move the negotiation forward, such as choosing and using stakeholders. At this point, you have two choices:

- Choosing a mediator, who is a person who has no vested interest in the outcome and only wants to help the parties move towards an agreement.
- Walking away from negotiations – this is normally done to force the other party to make concessions, however, you should only walk away if there are *no* options to keep negotiating. If you walk away, the other party may do the same and then you will not reach an agreement.

Negotiation is a delicate art and a skill. It takes lots of practice to do well!



Using and being used

Identifying and involving stakeholders

Stakeholders are other people affected by the outcome of the negotiation. They can be allies or opponents. It can be helpful to identify stakeholder allies, especially in a deadlock situation, as they may be able to contribute to the negotiation or offer a different perspective on the situation and thereby “jumpstart” the process.

Spotting agendas

Thorough research about the person you are negotiating with (such as their role with the organization as well as personal interests) is the first step to spotting agendas. In addition, knowing the funding source of a body or organization can be important information for deciphering agendas and priorities. Having in writing the terms of the agreement is very important, in case the other party had a hidden agenda and you should need to dissolve the agreement.

Publicity and the media

Publicity and the media can help or hurt a case. Review the following scenarios with the group.

Sample situation 1 (help): Inuk, who uses a wheelchair, has seen an ad at his local bus stop for a new square pizza at a local Italian restaurant. Dying to try this new pizza, he and some friends go to the restaurant on Friday night only to find that it is only accessible, both front and back, by four (4) stairs. Inuk speaks to the manager who apologizes, but says that the cost to make it accessible is just too much and tells him to go to another Italian restaurant down the street. Inuk went through the standard procedures of rectifying this problem (talking with city officials, referring to building codes, referencing other similar court cases) but without any success. Fed up with the complete lack of action by anyone, he calls a friend who works at the local TV station. The station often runs stories on local businesses. Appalled at the restaurant’s response, his friend agrees to write a story that is aired the following day.

One month after the television program, Inuk gets a phone call from the restaurant manager who informs him that they have just installed a ramp at the front entrance and asks him if he would dine as a guest this Friday evening. Inuk agrees to visit the restaurant. The manager apologizes for his former complacency and explains that due to the story aired on TV, he received multiple phone calls from other people with mobility impairments who said they had also been turned away at his restaurant due to their disability, and who were angry and upset.



Consider the questions:

- Did the media help Inuk's case?
- How might this have helped the restaurant also?
- How was Inuk's use of television more effective than word of mouth?

Possible suggestions:

- His story reached many more people than by word of mouth, and because it was an ally who communicated the message, it showed this was a community concern, not just a concern of people with disabilities.
- Inuk should point out that other people will make use of the ramp – people with walkers, mothers with strollers, workmen with trolley carts, etc.

Sample situation 2 (hurt): In a newspaper interview with a community based disability advocacy organization, the spokesperson is misquoted as saying "the success of this program is in question." Whereas, the spokesperson actually said, "the success of this program is unquestionable." Many of the newspaper's readers supported the organization as it grew. This error, however, caused many of these readers to withdraw their financial support of the organization.

Consider the questions:

- How did the media hurt the cause of the advocacy organization?
- How could the organization's spokesperson respond to the article?

There is always a risk when using the media because the information reaches a lot of people very quickly. In addition, if the information is not correct, then use of the media can backfire on the organization.

Call the reporter to clarify remarks and request that the newspaper print a correction as well as another article to restore readers' confidence in the organization. Perhaps in this article, they can talk about what the program is and the benefits of financially supporting the organization.

Evaluating success

It is important to evaluate your progress at regular intervals as you work towards your goal. This helps you make sure that you are "sticking with your plan" and that you haven't strayed from what you set out to accomplish. Evaluation also allows you to adjust your initial goal (revise the plan) if, perhaps, you have strayed and have found a new direction that is more suitable. It allows you to do this before having done too much work.



Evaluation also requires that you look at whether you have achieved your goals and whether you did so in the time and with the resources you expected (or did you use more or less of the anticipated time and resources). It is important to look at whether your use of time and resources was reasonable given what the objectives were. In anticipation of tackling a future goal, it is also useful to ask yourself the question: "Is there a better way to have done this?"

Ongoing evaluation also helps you to demonstrate your successes. Evaluation is a form of validating your plan and particularly important if you report to someone on your progress. Another important benefit of tracking mini successes is that these maintain motivation in achieving a goal – propelling the process forward.

Different methods of evaluation include:

- Evaluating success against your objectives (i.e., whether you did complete three in-person interviews by the end of the month or not).
- Asking a peer or ally for feedback (written or verbal – they may be more comfortable with one or the other) about your style or your work.
- Find a small group of people tackling similar goals and compare progress and steps to meeting their goals.
- Join a professional organization or subscribe to a newsletter that has a mandate in what you are trying to accomplish. For example, you might want to subscribe to a careers magazine if your goal is to find a new career.
- If you have been working with an ally; have them do a critical evaluation of your work.

Resources

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, W. Ury and R. Fisher, Penguin Books, 1991.

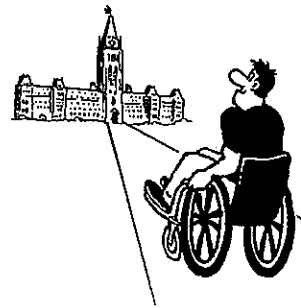
You're Speaking but are you Connecting? M. Hope, Lion's Gate Training Ltd., 1998.

The win-win situation exercise, adapted from *The Car Deal: An exercise to teach about "first gambits" in negotiation*, <http://gbr.pepperdine.edu/034/carexercise.html>

Best practices: step five evaluate success, <http://nwco.net/055-StepFiveEvaluateSuccess/5-1-StepFiveEvaluateSuccess.asp>



Module 4 – Making Change!



Policy and standards development

Policy is:

- A **written principle** or rule to guide decision making.
- The **set of guidelines** that govern the interaction between a subject and an object.
- An established **course of action** that must be followed.
- The **contract or agreement** between two parties.
- The **principles, plan or procedures** established by an agency, institution, organization, etc.
- A **living document** that can be changed.
- A **plan of action** adopted by an individual or social group.

Policy can mean various things and can be both simple and complex. Policies are not laws, but are instruments for enacting the law. For example, with respect to the law of littering being illegal, a policy to address this is, if someone is caught littering, they will be fined \$1,000.00.

There is a difference between laws and policies:

- All newly developed buildings must be wheelchair accessible (law)
- Increased access to rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injuries (policy)
- Transparent and honest communication by government (policy)
- No discrimination on the basis of ability (law)

Self-advocacy is a powerful tool for making change; however, it does have limits. These limits are sometimes set through policy. Policy can sometimes be applied on a case by case basis which will result in different outcomes.

Policy is a tool to describe what resources can be expected, and how the process of obtaining and implementing these will be carried out, under what parameters (terms and conditions). Policy can be micro (affecting one or a few people) or macro (affecting large numbers of people). The policy around use of a local swimming pool is an example of micro policy (it only affects community centre users) whereas, government policy is an example of macro policy (it affects large populations of citizens). Macro policy can affect the form and structure of micro policy and the reverse can also happen, but to a much smaller extent.

Government policy can be broken down into a variety of types such as economic, health care, education, and social policy, among others. It is social policy that disability rights and advocacy groups are most often trying to affect.



Social policy addresses questions such as:

- What is the role of government?
- Who do we want to help?
- How will we prioritize people's needs?
- How much help should be provided?
- How should it be delivered?
- How will it be paid for?

Policy often seems like something that is imposed on us; however, it is possible to influence policy.

Having a voice

The most important thing that is necessary in order to influence the change process is **having a voice!** It is critical to speak up and speak out in order to affect change to an established process. It is also vital to be clear about the problem or issue and it is very important to know or identify who can make the change (where to target your advocacy).

A second part to this is understanding how invested the person you are targeting is in making change; do they have a personal commitment or stake in the change? If they do not, your approach in order to "get them on board" may be different.

There are certain prerequisites or conditions necessary for change to occur. These include such things as: vision, strategy (a plan), commitment, communication, motivation, capability and flexibility.

This is an example from BC. Translink and Handy Dart are activities to support people with disabilities in BC. You are welcome to develop your own example based on local activities.

Policy: Improved access to transit for people with disabilities
Type of policy: Plan of action (which will encompass principles, plans and procedures)

Methods of implementation:

Alternative 1: Create a regionally based system for Handy Dart (eliminating the city/municipality based system)

Resources needed:

- regional route planners
- increased staffing at Handy Dart office
- drivers
- Handy Dart vehicles

Alternative 2: Increase the number of accessible buses throughout the lower Mainland

Resources needed:

- accessible buses
- drivers



Who one might talk to:

- the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (and other advocacy access groups)
- ministry responsible for Translink
- transit staff

There are often many different options for implementing a policy and one option is often chosen over the others based on cost or benefit (the ratio between the cost of implementing a policy and the number of people who will benefit). For the previous example, the least costly option is likely increasing the number of accessible buses, because fewer resources are required than for developing a new Handy Dart system. Change to a policy of this nature may have a better chance of success around the time of an election or, if the decision maker has a disability themselves or within their direct family group.

In order to make a strong case for policy change, it is important to know what all the alternatives are and the rough resource requirements for each. Policy change does not happen all at once, but in incremental steps, so “shoot for the moon and you may land amongst the stars.”

The option that might be chosen over another depends on things like political weight (which option has better public perception of good), or timeliness to put into action, etc.

Understanding government

There are basically three levels of government: municipal, provincial and federal. Local government is government that serves a city or municipality. It makes policy that impacts the citizens living in the city or municipality. Local government is run by a city council which is led by a mayor out of a city hall. Local government varies greatly from city to city; however, it is very important for people with disabilities to be aware of their local government’s operating structure and members, because bylaws (laws at the municipal level), policies and decisions, that impact their lives most directly (for example, city accessibility issues such as curb cuts, accessible transportation, etc.) are made at the municipal government level.

The federal government, the highest level of government, is made up of representatives called members of Parliament (abbreviated as MPs). Depending on the province in which you reside, provincial representatives, in British Columbia for example, would be called MLAs and are members of the Legislative Assembly. Every part of the province has both a federal MP and a provincial MLA (they are who we vote for when there is an election) that represent its citizens (you and me). They are responsible for deciding the laws that will govern a province’s citizens. They also decide what programs will be offered. An important tool for being able to make your voice heard is to know who your MLA and MP are, and how to contact them.



Do you know who your MLA and MP are?**How can you find out?**

- Parliament of Canada
www.parl.gc.ca/common/index.asp?Language=E
- There is an MLA finder on the British Columbia Government website located at www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm. You can search for your MLA by name, constituency, community or postal code. Another way to find out who your MLA is to call his or her constituency or legislative office. You can look up the number in the phone book, or in British Columbia, you can make a toll-free call to Enquiry B.C. (refer to the resources section for the phone number).
- In your province, check out your provincial website for your MLA:
 - Nova Scotia
www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/MEMBERS/index.html
 - New Brunswick
<http://app.infoaa.7700.gnb.ca/gnb/Pub/Search1.asp>
 - Prince Edward Island
www.assembly.pe.ca/members/index.php
 - Newfoundland
www.hoa.gov.nl.ca/hoa/members
 - Quebec
www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Membres/deputes_1st.html
 - Ontario
www.electionsontario.on.ca/fyed/en/form_page_en.jsp
<http://olaap.ontla.on.ca/mpp/dalIndex.do?locale=en>
 - Manitoba
www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/members/constituency.html
 - Saskatchewan
www.legassembly.sk.ca/members
 - Alberta
www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=mla_home

Who does what?

Government, however, is made up of more than members. There are bureaucrats, public servants and government ministers. To help you better understand the roles that these individuals have, here are some definitions:

Bureaucracy/bureaucrat: An organization with a large, complex administrative structure. This structure contains formal processes, standardization, and hierarchic procedures. The government is thus a bureaucracy, and a bureaucrat then, is anyone who is a government employee.

Public servants: Government employees who create and put into action services based on the policy of government.



Minister: Is a member of the governing party chosen by the Premier (provincial) or Prime Minister (federal) to look after an aspect of government and society (their ministry or portfolio could be fisheries, education, community services, etc.). They make the policy for their aspect of society.

Deputy minister: Is the senior bureaucrat responsible for directing policy development and implementation, and for providing sound policy advice to the minister.

As a rule of thumb, always send communication to the appropriate government representative (your MLA or MP, depending on the policy you are addressing); do not jump over “rungs of the ladder” until you have already addressed the issue with the most direct person. However, it is a good idea to copy (cc:) the appropriate minister, be that provincial or federal.

Finally, remember that government is made up of people: politicians, bureaucrats and other government employees who could be your neighbours, friends and parents. All too often “government” seems impossible to influence because it is so large and abstract. If you start with the people, it is easier to believe in and to influence the process.

Making an appeal

When someone is unhappy with a decision made (based on policy) by a public servant and they have not been able to develop a mutually satisfactory decision they may “make an appeal.” This means that they will take the situation to an independent body or group (for example the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal) asking them to reconsider the decision. Appeal bodies generally have the power to keep or reverse the Ministry decision, but not the power to come up with a replacement decision. The importance of having an appeal structure in government is that it allows for a “second opinion” and keeps public servants accountable to citizens. For more information on an appeal tribunal, visit the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal, www.gov.bc.ca/eaat.

Beyond self-advocacy

Systemic advocacy is working towards change within systems or structures. There are thousands of types of systems including government, organizations, and even family units. Have you ever thought of your family as a system before? Things like routines, rules, patterns and procedures make families a system.

Working with allies and stakeholders towards a goal (in the former case of a family making the house or family function), combining energies and skills, is an effective way to perform systemic advocacy. Pooling knowledge and resources is part of this process.



A common phrase is “There is strength in numbers.” A group of dedicated people working together, combining their energy and skills, and pooling knowledge and resources, can create real and lasting change. Participating in a formal committee or group is a great way to use your skills of self advocacy towards a larger goal or cause.

There are numerous types of groups that perform advocacy functions. Definitions of some of the different types are as follows:

- **Agency:** A relationship between two or more persons whereby *one is authorized to act for another*.
- **Association:** A group of individuals who *voluntarily* enter into an agreement to form a body to accomplish a purpose.
- **Society:** A group of people who share a *common set of values and norms*. A society is a number of persons united together by mutual consent, in order to deliberate, determine, and act jointly for some common purpose.
- **Coalition:** A union of people and organizations working for a common cause. What makes it unique is that it is a *temporary* alliance of *distinct* parties for a *limited* purpose.
- **Committee:** A *select group* of members with a *defined scope* of responsibility; a group of persons, *usually appointed* by a larger group to define and/or *carry out a purpose* or respond to an issue.
- **Task force:** A *temporary* grouping of individuals or representatives of groups, usually with a *specific deadline*, which is established for the purpose of accomplishing a *specific objective* and which *reports its findings* to a larger group.

Read the sample success story at the end of this module.

Sample resources for BC

- **Persons with Disabilities Online:** gives information for all regions of Canada on such things as government services and disability-related programs in Canada www.pwd-online.ca/pwdhome.jsp?lang=en
- **Disability WebLinks:** gives links to programs, services and contacts across Canada undertaken by the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Government Searches can be completed by province or territory www.disabilityweblinks.ca/pls/dwl/dl.home
- **The Provincial Paraplegic Association website:** as well as your provincial newsletter or magazine
- **Enquiry B.C.:** A call center that provides the following services to all British Columbia residents, on behalf of provincial government ministries, Crown corporations and public agencies:
 - basic provincial government information;
 - assistance in identifying the program or person that the caller needs to speak to;
 - government program or government employee phone/facsimile numbers or addresses;



- assistance in identifying the level of government responsible for a program or services;
- toll-free transfer for callers who would otherwise incur a cost for obtaining information from or conducting business with the provincial government.
- For more information, contact in Vancouver, call 604-660-2421; elsewhere in BC, call 1-800-663-7867 www.mser.gov.bc.ca/prgs/enquiry_bc.html
- **The Red Book:** A guide to community, social and government agencies and services across the lower Mainland at www2.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/DBs/Redbook/htmlPggs/home.html
- **The Government of Canada** website at www.canada.gc.ca/
- **The BC Government** website, www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/home.do
- **The BC Coalition for People with Disabilities:** A provincial, cross-disability advocacy organization, whose mandate is to raise public and political awareness of issues. www.bccpd.bc.ca/s/Home.asp

Resources

An Overview of Canadian Social Policy, M. Hess, Canadian Council on Social Development, 1993, p.1-6.

Leading Change, Overcoming Chaos – A Seven Stage Process for Making Change Succeed in Your Organization, Michael L. Heifetz, Threshold Institute/Ten Speed Press, 1993 at <http://home.earthlink.net/~denmartin/lea.html>

BC Government, Understanding How Government Operates www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/channel.do?action=bcGov&channelID=-8350&navId=NAV_ID_province&crumb=B.C.+Home&crumburl=%2Fhome.do

The definitions for **policy** were taken from: Definitions for Policy www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define:policy

Definition of **bureaucracy**
www.google.ca/search?hl=en&q=define%3ABureaucracy&meta

Definition of **task force**
www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define:taskforce

Definition of **agency**
www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define:agency

Definition of **coalition**
www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define:coalition

Definition of **committee**
www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define:committee

Definition of **association**
www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define:association

Definition of **society**
www.google.ca/search?hl=en&lr=&oi=defmore&q=define:society



Module 4 – Participant handout

Success story

The following example, of a systemic advocacy success story, was related by an advocate at the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities.

A woman with a disability, who is receiving provincial government Person With a Disability (PWD) benefits, was recently told by her employment assistance worker that as of August 1, 2005 people, who are on PWD benefits and have a student loan, would no longer be eligible for automatic student loan remission.

The woman called the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities and their advocates took up her case. They spoke with a decision maker at the Ministry of Advanced Education as well as the assistant deputy minister in the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

Using advocacy tools such as clear communication, research, education and imparting of information, the advocates managed to have the policy change halted. They clarified with the policy makers the challenges that people who qualify for PWD face in obtaining employment. They clarified the meaning of disability status, providing criteria that the decision makers evidently had not understood. As a result of their efforts, the advocates at the Coalition were successful in not only influencing the policy creation process but doing so in a very timely manner (this complete process took less than two weeks).

The moral of this story, according to renowned anthropologist, intellect and scientist, Margaret Mead, is "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."



Notes



Self-Advocacy Training Program

EVALUATION FORM

1. What parts of the program did you like the best and why?

2. What is your experience with the program? Are you a person with a disability, a trainer, or other? If other, please explain.

3. What would you add to the program?

4. What would you remove from the program?

5. Have you used the skills in a real situation? How successful were you? Please provide a brief description of the situation, how you handled it and the outcome.

6. Other comments.

Please return form to:
The Canadian Paraplegic Association
1101 Prince of Wales Drive, Suite 230
Ottawa, ON K2C 3W7
Email: info@canparaplegic.org

Mission statement: to assist persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation.

**The Canadian Paraplegic Association
1101 Prince of Wales Drive, Suite 230
Ottawa, ON K2C 3W7
Tel: (613) 723-1033
Email: info@canparaplegic.org**