

Ten Self-Advocacy Tips

Self-advocacy means knowing your rights, speaking up for yourself, and making your own decisions. Self-advocacy can be more difficult if you have a brain injury so it is important to practice these skills. This document provides 10 tips you can use in everyday life situations including doctor's appointments, receiving services, or social encounters.

1. Write important things down or capture information on your device. For example, what are your goals, concerns, requests?
2. Know your rights – do research or ask someone to help you find this information.
3. Prepare in advance – document and role play.
4. Keep records – medical records, leases, bills, etc.
5. Ask for what you need – do you need extra time for an appointment? Paper copy of a document? Extra reminders? Ask.
6. Confirm your understanding – repeat your notes back to make sure both parties are on the same page. If you don't understand something, ask for clarification.
7. Find a peer group to practice with – no one understands what you are going through quite like someone with the same lived experience.
8. Get comfortable being uncomfortable – sometimes standing up for yourself means saying “no” or disagreeing with someone. The other person may not like what you have to say and that is ok as long as both of you are respectful and listen to each other.
9. Problem solve – work with the other person to come up with solutions or compromises.
10. Value your worth – your opinions, desires, and needs are just as important as anyone else's. Keep a positive mindset and remind yourself of this.

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