

People First Language A simple guide to basic respect

Say:	Instead of:
People with disabilities (or disability labels).	The handicapped or disabled.
He has a cognitive disability (label).	He's mentally retarded.
She has autism (or an autism label).	She's autistic.
He has a diagnosis of Down Syndrome.	He's Down's.
She has a learning disability (label).	She's learning disabled.
He has a physical disability (label).	He's a quadriplegic/crippled.
She's of short stature/she's a little person.	She's a dwarf/midget.
He has a mental health diagnosis (or label).	He's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.
She uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.	She's wheelchair bound/in a or confined to a wheelchair.
He receives special education services.	He's in special education services.
She has a developmental delay.	She's developmentally delayed.
Typical kids or kids without disability labels.	Normal or healthy kids.
Communicates with her eyes/device/etc.	Is non-verbal.
Customer.	Client, consumer, recipient, etc.
Congenital disability label.	Birth defect.
Brain injury.	Brain damaged.
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.	Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.
She needs. . . or she uses. . .	She has a problem with. . . / She has special needs.

Keep thinking - there are many descriptors we need to change.

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About the ACT Self-Advocacy Resource Network

What is it?

Advocating Change Together (ACT) is a Self-Advocacy disability rights organization, started in 1979, whose goal is the advancement of Self-Advocacy as a civil rights movement for persons with developmental and other disabilities. The ACT Self-Advocacy Resource Network is facilitator of a national dialogue among self-advocates and supporters and a clearinghouse for materials and training that support Self-Advocacy.

Who is involved?

A growing group of self-advocates, service providers, policy makers, family members, and teachers who want to work together for individual empowerment and systems change.

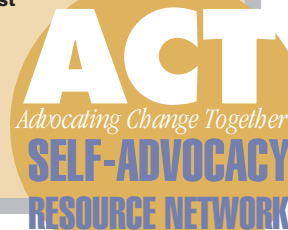
How will the Resource Network help you?

- 1) By reviewing and recommending materials, training methods, and organizing techniques that are:
 - accessible to individuals with developmental and other disabilities
 - sensitive to cultural differences in goals for Self-Advocacy
- 2) By fostering, through the network:
 - an exchange of stories, solutions, experiences and resources for organizing among self-advocates
 - effective outreach strategies to racial and cultural minorities
 - cross disability coalitions and multi-community alliances that have similar system change goals
- 3) By taking direct action:
 - use training and materials that have been screened for their Self-Advocacy value
 - use content in the weekly e-mail Self-Advocacy Resource memo to inform your constituents about Self-Advocacy
 - use support materials such as the free Self-Advocacy Quick Guide
 - consider the ACT Common Vision Self-Advocacy training for self-advocates and allies
 - identify other Self-Advocacy organizing tactics from others in the network

What does it cost to become part of the ACT Self-Advocacy Resource Network? Nothing.

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Self-Advocacy QUICK GUIDE

Prepared by the
ACT Self-Advocacy

Self-Advocacy is the civil rights movement of individuals and organizations to empower people with developmental and other disabilities to speak for ourselves, make our own decisions and stand up for our rights



At home

Developing the skills to take control of our life and make daily decisions that lead toward independence and higher self-esteem.



In the workplace

Collaborating with others to create better working conditions and a stronger voice for people with disabilities.



In the community

Participating in your community and having your voice heard.



Between people

Developing meaningful relationships with friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family.

Self-Advocacy asserts:

As people with disabilities, we have the right to make choices about our lives

Self-Advocacy asserts:

As people with disabilities, we have the same civil and human rights as everyone else and should have access to and control of resources

Self-Advocacy asserts:

People with disabilities don't need to be fixed; we are not broken

Self-Advocacy asserts:

Everyone wins when people with disabilities are part of the community

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions answered by self-advocates

How do self-advocates describe Self-Advocacy?

Self-Advocacy is a powerful term. It tells people that we have equal rights, that we deserve dignity and respect, and that we can make decisions about our lives. Self-Advocacy is a civil rights movement by people with developmental and other disabilities around the world.

What are the greatest challenges to Self-Advocacy?

People without disabilities – parents, professionals, teachers, employers – often want to make decisions for us. Self-advocates need to show people that we belong in the community, just like everyone else, and that we must make decisions about our lives.

What can I do to strengthen Self-Advocacy?

Speak out and tell people about yourself. Let others know what self-advocates' hopes and concerns are, and try to work with others who have a common vision. By speaking up and telling stories, we will build the

confidence and skills we'll need to become stronger self-advocates.

What can people without disabilities do to support the Self-Advocacy movement?

Believe in people with developmental and other disabilities. Support us in taking control of our lives by providing opportunities for leadership. Help educate policymakers about what people with disabilities can do.

Critical issues for Self-Advocates

RESPECT

CHANGING ATTITUDES

SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC POLICY

AFFIRMING COMMUNITY SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

WIDELY AVAILABLE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

HELPING FAMILIES NURTURE SELF-ADVOCACY

Who's in the Self-Advocacy picture?

Leaders "Tanya visits me at the Capital every session, educating legislators about disability issues. She's a true leader. I've learned much from her."

Self-Advocates "I speak for myself. Sometimes my support staff and family help me, but I'm learning to be the one in control of my life."

Providers "We listen carefully to what people want and then work very hard to provide those services. Everyone's different, everyone's an individual."

Community members "My neighbor Maria is a strong self-advocate. We went to school together and she is a great friend to me and my family."

Allies "I was active in the Women's Movement in the 1970s, and I see so many parallels with the Self-Advocacy Movement today. I'm proud to offer my help in this struggle for equal rights."

Families "I want what's best for my sister. Learning about Self-Advocacy has helped her self-esteem and given her the confidence to speak up."

Employers "I hired Richard ten years ago. He started a Self-Advocacy group with other employees and now we meet once a month to talk about working conditions. We communicate much better because of it."



As a state senator, I connect with Self-Advocates who are becoming more clear and assertive about what they need to thrive. They are my learning source.

I make my own decisions about almost everything every day, and I make sure other people know that is how I live my life; I am a Self-Advocate.

When I hire and train staff, the most important thing is to make sure they understand Self-Advocacy and their supporting role for Self-Advocates.

We practice self-advocacy skills as a priority to staying certified and to helping Self-Advocates direct the services we provide in our facilities.

As an advisor, I listen to self-advocates and help them develop skills. Knowledge and confidence are needed for individual or group action.

My daughter has become a strong self-advocate and I work with her to see that all the systems that support her also support her self-advocacy