

Speak Up! Becoming a Self Advocate

Self advocacy is about speaking up for yourself about your choices, goals and decisions.

It is about telling other people what you think, and about how you feel. Self advocacy is about you doing things for yourself, and having your own identity.



Self advocacy is about listening and being heard.

Self advocacy is about asking questions respectfully to help you and the other person to understand and learn.

Self Advocacy is knowing your rights and responsibilities as a citizen of Canada.

All citizens in Canada have rights and responsibilities. A citizen is a person who is born in or who has come to live legally in a country, like Canada.

A right is an activity that is given to a citizen. For example, if you are over 18 years old, you have the right to vote in an election. You have many rights as a Canadian Citizen that are protected by the laws of Canada.



You also have responsibilities as a citizen of Canada. A responsibility is a duty—something you must follow or do. For example, you have the right to choose where you would like to live. You choose to live in a rented apartment. That is your right.

Your duty or responsibility is to pay your rent to the owner of the apartment on time, every month.



Knowing your rights and duties will help you to make choices and decisions that are important to you.

Making your own choices and living with your decisions helps you



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to become independent.

Self advocacy is asking for help when you need it from another person. This support person can be a friend, a family member, a support worker or another member of the community.

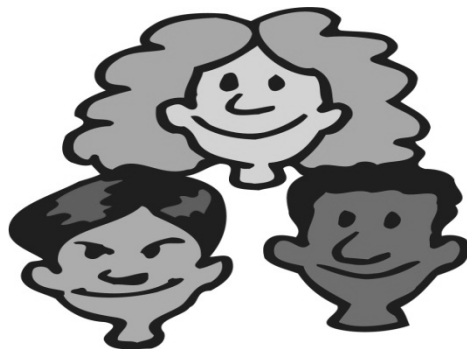
A support person may be able to help you to achieve your goals or solve your problems.

A support person needs to know about your interests, your abilities and difficulties and how they can help you the best.

At times you may not want the help of someone else and you may need to respectfully tell a support person that you do not need their help.

You may want to get a group of your friends together to talk about how you can work together to make things better. Sometimes a group of people working to solve to problem can make better decisions and make changes faster than a one person working alone.

A group of your friends coming together this way is called a **self advocacy group**.



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You may want to learn more about how to be a self advocate.

There are many ways that you can learn more about this.

You can:

- Talk to your family or friends about where you can go for more help or to learn more;
- Talk to a support person who may be able to help to find agencies or groups who can answer your questions;
- Find out who your town or regional politicians are and ask them for help.
- Talk to someone in your church, at the library, or where you work or volunteer.



If you have a computer and know how to use the Internet, visit the following websites for more information about self advocacy.

www.selfadvocacyonline.org

www.peoplefirstontario.com

www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

If you live in the **Quinte Region** there are people who work in agencies that may be able to help you find more information.

If you live in the **Ottawa Region** there are people who work in agencies who may be able to help you find more information.

Volunteer and Information Quinte	613.969.8862
Pathways to Independence	613.962.2541
Plainfield Community Homes	613.969.7407
Community Living Prince Edward	613.476.6038
Community Living Quinte West	613.394.2222
Brain Injury Association of the Ottawa Valley	613.233.8303
Pathways to Independence	613.233.3322
Vista Centre	613.234.4747
Live Work Play Ottawa	613.235.9550
Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley	613.735.0659



Pathways to Independence acknowledges and thanks the authors of Partners for Better Policies: A Manual for Mainstreaming for some of the material in this flyer.

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