

SELF-ADVOCACY WORKSHOP #6

HOW TO BE A STRONG SELF-ADVOCATE

Green Mountain Self-Advocates adapted this workshop from the Speak Up! Guide developed in October 2002 by Shifting the Power, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7255, (919) 966-5171. A complete list of the self-advocacy resources used in developing the Speak Up! Guide is at the end of this workshop. This workshop is to be taught by people with developmental disabilities for people with developmental disabilities.

Set up: This workshop is for 20 people or less. It works best if you sit at tables. Arrange tables to allow for an open space to perform role-plays. Consider having snacks and drinks.

Time: 2 to 4 hours (it depends on what activities you include)

Materials: *Freedom, Equality, Justice for All* video. Television and VCR, flip chart and easel, markers, workbooks.

Teaches Participants:

1. What it means to advocate for yourself and others.
2. To say what you like even if your friends don't agree.
3. To make decisions which affect you and to help you think about why you are making decisions.
4. To consider a variety of decisions and develop a better understanding of the difference between small and big decisions.
5. To become more comfortable with telling someone you have a disability and requesting individual accommodations.

Trainers: Before the training, the trainers need to write an introduction for themselves. They also need to practice this workshop and decide who will be teaching each section. Write the name of the trainer on the blank line before each part in the script. The instructions for what to do are in black and **suggestions for what to say are in red**. We strongly recommend that you use your own words and try not to read from the script. It is better to speak from your heart. Reading from a script can sometimes sound boring. Trainers need to wear a name tag.

Getting started: As people arrive all the trainers should say hello and introduce themselves. Make people feel welcome.

_____ Give out nametags. Let folks pick a marker to use to write their name. Offer to write their name for them if they ask for help.

_____ Give each person a workbook.

Introductions:



_____ Introduces herself/himself and talk about the six Real Choices Workshops.



_____ All over Vermont self-advocates and their supporters are teaching workshops on how to be a self-advocate. This sixth workshop is about the history of self-advocacy. You will get a chance to see a great video that tells the story of self-advocacy.



_____ We are going to go around the room taking turns saying our names. After you say your name say, "I speak for myself" Like this. Hi, I'm _____ and I speak for myself. Now it's your turn.



Group Agreements: (Use the list of group agreements provided. Feel free to add additional rules if the group wants to.)

_____ We will begin by going over some ground rules. I will call on a person to read each one.

Who wants to come up and read number 1?

Pick a volunteer to come up to say, "1. Raise your hand."

Who wants to come up and read number 2?

Pick a volunteer to come up to say, "2. One person speaks at a time."

Who wants to come up and read number 3?

Pick a volunteer to come up to say, "3. No put downs."

Who wants to come up and read number 4?

Pick a volunteer to come up to say, "4. No question is a silly question."

Who wants to come up and read number 5?

Pick a volunteer to come up to say, "5. It is okay to pass."

Who wants to come up and read number 6?

Pick a volunteer to come up to say, "6. Confidentiality."

(You should ask the group what this means.)

Who wants to come up and read number 7?

Pick a volunteer to come up to say, "7. Give everyone a chance to speak."

Does anyone have another ground rule they would like to use?

(Call on people and write down their suggestions)

_____ Question of the day? Go to page 3

If a politician were to ask you this question, what would you say?

"Why should I give more money for services for people with disabilities?"

Write your answer on page 3.

(Give people one minute to write their answers then ask if anyone wants to share what they wrote.)

ACTIVITY: Watch Part One of the Video: *Self-Advocacy: Freedom, Equality, And Justice For All*. It tells the story of self-advocacy. It shows how it is like other social change movements like:

1. The Women's Movement
2. The Civil Rights Movement
3. Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement

Questions to ask after Part One of the video:

_____ How would you explain self-advocacy in your own words, from what you know right now?

Possible answers: Get the group to say these aloud together.

- Speak up for yourself
- Ask questions
- Make your own decisions
- Try new things.

- Take a risk
- Ask or tell somebody what you need
- When you run into problems or get stuck -- you keep trying to make a deal. You keep talking and working on getting what you want. That is called negotiating for yourself.
- Know your rights. Use agencies to help you get what you need.

ACTIVITY: Values Clarification - Saying what you like!

Goal: To say what you like even if your friends don't agree.

Set-Up: Have everyone "stand" in a circle. Use a room where you can move the furniture back. You need a room with space to move around.

Directions: Everybody gets up and stands together in the open space. One presenter holds up a picture of chocolate ice cream on one side of the room and another presenter holds up a picture of vanilla ice cream. All go and stand by the picture they like the best. Continue with other picture choices. Go back to your seats when finished.

_____ We are going to do a warm up exercise. Everyone get up and "stand" in a circle. One trainer holds up a picture of chocolate ice cream. Another trainer holds up a picture of vanilla ice cream. All go and stand by the picture they like the best.

_____ We are going to do a role-play. Here is the situation.

"Jessica" and "Tom" are going to the movies. Jessica has been saving her money for 2 weeks so she could go to see the new "Harry Potter" movie on the day it opens. She calls up Tom and asks him to go to the movies with her. When she meets Tom at the movie theater, he is all excited about seeing "Without A Paddle". Jessica is disappointed because she really wants to see Harry Potter and really wants Tom to come with her because she heard it's scary.

Scene 1: Role-play Jessica trying to convince Tom to go to see Harry Potter.

Scene 2: Tom is not willing to change his mind. Role-play Jessica deciding to stay with her first choice and choosing to wait and see Harry Potter with another friend.

ACTIVITY: Small to Big

Time: 15 minutes

Goal: to introduce a variety of decisions and to develop a better understanding of the difference between small and big decisions.

Materials: flip chart paper, markers.

Directions:

_____ You and I make small and big decisions throughout our lives. Sometimes we make small decisions, sometimes we make big decisions. Making small decisions is done everyday. They are easy to make and are not that stressful.

Big decisions usually take more time to think about and they can be stressful. Big decisions usually change your life in a big way. Big decisions usually have big consequences.

Discuss with the group the definition of consequences. A consequence is what happens after you do it. What is the result of your action? For example, the consequence of deciding not to wear a coat on a winter day may be that you get very cold.

Using the list below, the leader will read each decision and the group will say whether it is a big or small decision. One of the leaders will write each decision on the flip chart, under the words "Big" or "Small."

Possible small decisions: Read just one at a time.

1. What to eat for breakfast
2. What kind of soda to buy at the store
3. Whether to take a bath or a shower
4. What show to watch on television on Wednesday night?

5. What gift to give your friend for his or her birthday
6. What restaurant to go to
7. What time to get up on your day off?
8. Which movie to go to?

Possible big decisions:

1. Where to live, to live on your own
2. What job to apply for
3. Who to vote for
4. What staff to hire
5. Should I buy shoes for \$15 at Payless or \$75 at the sports store?
6. Whether to buy a new television
7. Whether to have a girlfriend or boyfriend
8. Whether or not to get married?
9. Whether or not to take a class

Encourage the group to examine each decision and discuss the differences between big and small decisions. Ask the group:

_____ Does it take more time to make a big decision or a small decision? What are the consequences of a small decision versus a big decision? Is there more to lose if the wrong decision is made?

ACTIVITY: Watch Part Two of Video: *Self-Advocacy: Freedom, Equality, And Justice For All*.

_____ Now we will watch part 2 of the video.

After the video:

_____ What stood out for you?

If people do not talk about Martin Luther King say:

_____ It showed Martin Luther King Jr. How he stood up and said, "I'm equal. I speak for myself" and when women stood up and said, "I'm equal. I speak for myself."

Self-Advocacy is speaking up for yourself. Being a leader means speaking up for other people too.

_____ How can you be a strong self-advocate? Tell me in your own words. (call on people and write down their suggestions).
Trainer writes answers on flip chart.

_____ Can you think of anyone you would call a self-advocate either someone you know personally or a public figure?

ACTIVITY: TELLING OTHERS ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY

Objective: To become more comfortable with identifying yourself as a person with a disability and requesting individual accommodations.

Here are some guidelines for dealing with the police. Review them in your small group. Ask for 3 volunteers to do a role play. Two people will be self-advocates. One person will be a police officer. The two self-advocates are walking down the street. All of a sudden a police officer stops them and asks them where they have been? Act out the role play practicing telling the officer that you have a disability.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM STOPPED BY THE POLICE?



Sometimes you may be stopped by police even if you did NOTHING wrong. Police often just want to know who you are, where you are going or where you have been.

- Don't be afraid.
- Stay calm.
- DON'T RUN -- If you run, the police could think you broke the law. They could arrest you even if you did not do anything wrong. If they think you

did something real bad, they could even shoot you to keep you from getting away.

- Tell police your name. Show your identification card.
- Tell the police you have a disability. You should not try to hide your disability from the police. Ask for your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Give police a phone number of someone to call if you need help.
- Remember that the police's main job is to put the bad guys in jail. If he thinks you have done something wrong, he will ask you questions you should not answer. So, don't say anything else to the police without someone you trust with you.
- Do not sign anything – Say, "I need a lawyer."

ACTIVITY: THINKING ABOUT MOVING

Objective: Get people brainstorming ways to overcome some "obstacles" to moving/living on their own (also helps promote teamwork!)

What to do:

1. Number 8 ½ x 11" pieces of paper 1-30.
2. Tape/place paper on floor – connecting pieces in a "trail" to make a large "game board"
3. Divide class into 2 teams – one person from each team is the game marker for their team
4. Decide who goes first and give that team an "obstacle card"
5. Teams will work together to brainstorm a solution. Then they share the solution and spin to move ahead. The game marker moves ahead that many spaces.
6. Each team gets one turn – brainstorms until they come up with a solution – if they "give up" they don't move. (Don't EVER give up!)

Nope, there isn't much "strategy" to this game – just a roll of the dice!
But ... the life size game board and interactive players as game pieces – plus each team brainstorming solutions makes it FUN!

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These are some Obstacle Cards – You can make others. Ask the class members what types of obstacles they have faced or think about facing in regards to moving.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO READ THE APARTMENT ADS IN THE NEWSPAPER	YOU ONLY HAVE A BEDROOM SET. YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER FURNITURE FOR YOUR NEW HOME
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY KITCHEN UTENSILS.	YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE MONEY
YOUR RELATIVES TELL YOUR PARENTS YOU AREN'T "READY" TO MOVE BECAUSE YOU CAN'T COOK	YOU WANT TO MOVE, BUT YOU ARE AFRAID TO LIVE ALONE
YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN AFFORD AN APARTMENT ON YOUR OWN	YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO YOUR LAUNDRY
YOU COULDN'T GET IN THE DOOR OF THE APARTMENT YOU WERE GOING TO LOOK AT BECAUSE THERE WASN'T A RAMP.	YOUR PARENTS TELL YOU THEY ARE AFRAID YOU MIGHT GET HURT IF YOU MOVE INTO YOUR OWN APARTMENT
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW YOU WILL GET TO THE GROCERY STORE	YOU DON'T HAVE MONEY TO PAY THE DEPOSIT ON YOUR APARTMENT
YOU CAN'T GET SECTION-8	YOU CAN'T FIND AN APARTMENT ON THE BUS LINE

<p>YOU WANT TO MOVE IN WITH YOUR BOYFRIEND / GIRL FRIEND BUT YOUR PARENTS DON'T LIKE THAT IDEA</p>	<p>YOU JUST MADE A NEW FRIEND LAST WEEK AND THEY ASK YOU TO MOVE IN WITH YOU</p>
<p>YOUR PARENTS WANT YOU TO LIVE IN THE SAME SMALL TOWN THEY LIVE IN BUT YOU WANT TO MOVE TO BURLINGTON</p>	<p>THE ONLY PLACE YOU CAN AFFORD IS IN A BAD NEIGHBORHOOD</p>

EXTRA ACTIVITY: Present the following problem and idea to students.

Problem: If you need a lot of help because of your disability, how can you still be independent?

Idea: Think of yourself as one of those big executives who runs a large company.

The executive makes decisions and others make it happen by doing what he says. He is independent; he is making the decisions and deciding they will be carried out. He is thoughtful and considerate of those who work for him.

You are the executive of your life! It doesn't matter if you actually do the driving or comb your hair. *You* make the decisions regarding when and how those things are done in your life!

Learning when to be dependent and when to be independent

- and that each is OK -

Is learning to be interdependent.

What Self-advocacy IS	What self-advocacy IS NOT
People speaking-up for what is important to them	People sitting around and complaining
Speaking up at meetings	Being on a committee but never saying anything
For all people with disabilities	Only for people who can talk
Here to stay	A fad
Change	Always stays the same
People taking control over their own lives...for their decisions and also for the consequences	Only making a few choices about things that are not very important
A way of life	A program once a month
An inclusive, ALL encompassing, on-going learning experience for everyone involved	A skills training class to meet an ISA goal
Creating a new "System" (we won't do it the same anymore... the "old way" stunk!)	Getting even (i.e.: "we'll do to them what they've always done to us!")
Realizing you are angry and working through it	Staying angry
Learning to trust	Living in fear
Taking risks	Never trying something new
Going after your dreams	Sleeping through your dreams
Making mistakes..... and learning from them	Not taking any chances
Asking questions	Being questioned

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