

Bringing On Board New Self-Advocates

How to Grow Your Group and Welcome New People



Who Is Missing?

- Look at who is in your group now. Think about people who are not included.
- Does your group include people that are different ages, backgrounds, or ways to communicate?
- Make a list of people who left your group (try to find out why they left?)

Ways to Reach More People

- Contact provider and case management agencies. Offer to present to staff to explain the value of having a group.
- Work with groups like Special Olympics.
- Invite people who used to come but stopped.
- Visit schools and talk to students.
- Go to community events like health fairs.
- Talk to parent organizations and other disability rights group.

How Can Service Agencies Help?

- Other strong groups can meet with you to share ideas.
- Are there events at your agency where people already gather?
- Ask to speak at those events and share about the group.
- Make a flyer that says what the group is, when it meets, and how to join.
- Ask the agency to give the flyer to everyone who gets services.
- Post flyers around the building where people will see them

Use the Internet and Word of Mouth

- Make sure your website has a section for new members. Use social media to recruit.
- Share videos that explain self-advocacy.
- Ask friends to tell others about your group.
- Talk to staff from local service agencies.

Have a clear answer to the question

What Is a Self-Advocacy Group?

- People with disabilities who meet and talk about our lives.
- The group is run by us. This is awesome because most of what we do is run by people without disabilities.
- We learn to be leaders by running our group.
- We have fun together. And Practice speaking up
- We decide what the group will do.
- We go to events and speak up about what matters.

Why It Helps

- I learned to speak up by watching others.
- I know I'm not alone in tough times.
- The group makes me feel proud and included.

What else?

Tips for Talking with Young People

- Ask what self-advocacy means to them.
- Talk about life after high school.
- Make it safe to ask questions and share ideas.

Tips to Make Everyone Feel Welcome

- Let everyone make their own choices.
- Listen and don't judge their ideas.
- Play games or do hands-on activities. Don't always be so focused on doing business.
- Ask long-time members to give others time to talk.

Helping New People Join

- Ask if they need any help or support or accommodations
- Explain how the group works and what we do.
- Send the meeting agenda ahead of time
- **Check-in** - Starting meetings with a check-in is a good way to find out what issues are on people's minds to discuss at meetings.
- **Group agreements:** Having group agreements helps groups with the flow and structure of meetings.

Run a Meeting Everyone Understands

- Check if people understand before moving on.
- Say what acronyms mean.
- Do fun stuff too—not just business.

After the Meeting

- Ask what people liked or didn't like.
- Ask what could be better next time.
- Check if anyone needs different kinds of support to speak up more in the meeting. To understand what is going on.

What's Else?

- Share good videos about self-advocacy.
- Give info about local groups.
- Invite people to come back again!