SARTAC Zoom Meetings

A National Connection for Self-Advocates

SARTAC

Self Advocacy and Beyond



https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/

SARTAC
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Teaching Self-Advocacy in High Schools



What we will talk about today

1. What do you wish someone had taught you about self-advocacy when you were in high school?
2. Connecting schools to a local self-advocacy group.
3. Hold a youth summit



“What do you wish someone had taught you about self-advocacy when you were in high school?”

Go to the chat and click on this link https://www.menti.com/algas2opmgi2



Don’t judge people by their age, consider their experience.

Don’t talk to youth in a way that it sounds like you are talking to a child.

Avoid assuming young people won’t be able to understand something. Instead take the time to explain information to them.



Green Mountain Self-Advocates www.gmsavt.org

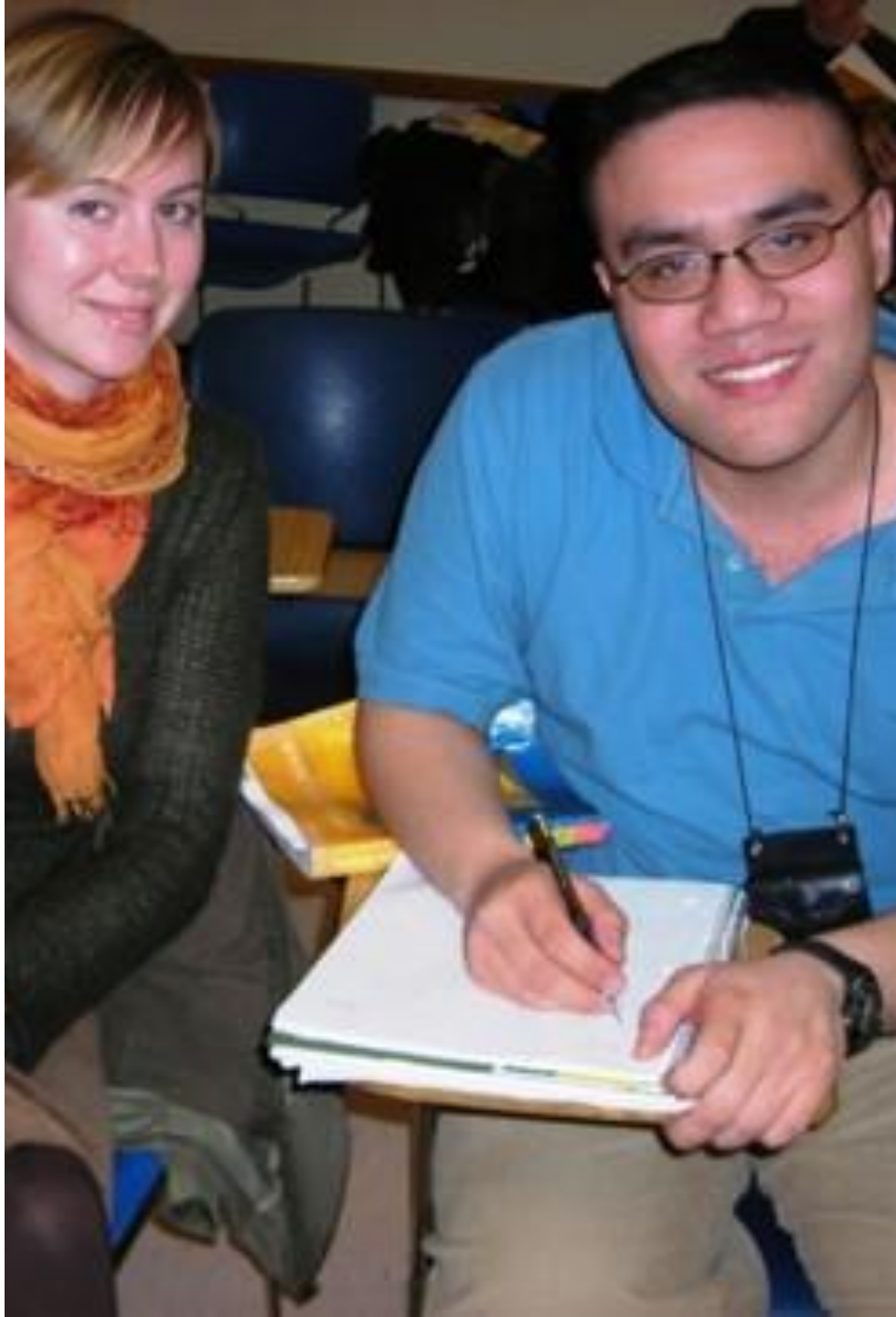
In your group, don’t just ask young people to handle only small or not so important jobs.

Try not to be surprised when young people say something intelligent, when they are dressed nicely, or when they are well organized.



SOME TIPS…

1. **When you meet with students, begin by asking them what they think self-advocacy is.**
2. **Ask them what they think when they hear the words “independent living”.**
3. **Ask students where they see themselves beyond high school. Keep in mind this maybe a hard question to be asked. Students may not be able to answer this question the first time.**



Sample activity - I Want To Live Like This



Spread out lots of pictures on a table. Pictures that show different ways people live, work, have fun, and spend time with others.

Step 1: Pick 3 Pictures that show something you want in your life.

Step 2: Take turns showing your pictures and say why you picked it.

Step 3: Go around one more time. Think about someone you could share your pictures with. Who could you talk to about your dreams and goals? Who could help you take the next step?

SOME TIPS…

4. **Self-advocacy helps you find your voice and feel confident speaking up. It can be easier to share your thoughts and feelings with other people with disabilities.**
5. **5. Give young people the chance to make their own choices. Support them to make decisions about their lives. Let them take the lead instead of making decisions for them.**
6.



SOME TIPS…

6	7	8
Do not judge students. Tell them their opinions are important. Keep your own opinions to yourself.	Find meaningful ways for youth to get involved.	Remember we are all individuals. When a teen expresses their opinion, they are not speaking for everyone under the age of 20.



SOME TIPS…

9. Make meetings fun! Include lots of activities where students can join in and learn by doing.
10. Give students space to speak up. Some students may feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts when teachers, support staff, or parents are not in the room.





THE LAST TIPS…



11. Respect students' time and choices. Young people have busy lives. Let them decide how much they want to be involved.

12. Make group agreements together. Remind experienced leaders to step back, listen more, and give young people plenty of time to speak and share their ideas.

13. Take your time! Learning about disability rights may be new to students. Go slowly and give everyone time to understand, ask questions, and share their ideas.

THE LAST TIPS…



14. Don't interrupt. Give young people plenty of time to think, speak, and share their ideas.
15. Make it okay to make mistakes. We all learn by trying new things. Young people have the right to take chances, make mistakes, and learn from their experiences. This is called the dignity of risk.
16. Relax and listen. Don't rush to give answers or solve problems. Give young people time to come up with their own ideas and solutions.

We are going into breakout sessions

Share you ideas and experiences involving youth in self-advocacy?

What works?

What does not work?




How have you tried to get young people involved?

Local Connections & Youth Summits

Include peer leaders from local self-advocacy groups when working with high schools. This helps students meet self-advocates in their own communities and build connections.



GMSA holds Youth Summits every year. These 6-hour events bring students together to learn from adult peer leaders. Students learn about self-advocacy and the opportunities they can have after high school. They practice speaking up through fun activities and role-plays. One activity, called "Making Your Case," helps students practice asking someone in their life for a chance to try something new. See sample Youth Summit agendas

Including ALL Youth

GMSA created a youth leadership training geared for self-advocates from immigrant, refugee, and BIPOC communities. We worked with Open Doors for Multicultural Families near Seattle, Washington.

We have some resources for LGBTQ+ youth with a disability who want to "come out" or explore their sexuality.