

# My Advocacy Interests

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## Instruction in Self-Advocacy Benchmark:

Identify personal self-advocacy interests and activities to build independence and self-advocacy skills including any network activities locally such as the name of peer mentoring groups or community networks. (Partial)

## Note to those providing service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on your learner's strengths and needs.



## Extended Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or postsecondary education, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and postsecondary education are identified as extended activities and pathways.

## Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Know the student's knowledge or awareness regarding personal advocacy (this helps with knowing how much time you may need to spend on an activity).
- Prepare needed assistive technologies and/or accommodations (ex: communication supports (visual, objects, pictures, voice output devices, etc.), physical supports/space access needs, vision supports, hearing supports, sensory needs/supports).
- Computer to access videos. Print materials in advance if necessary.
- This lesson includes additional Click and Explore resources. If you plan to use any of these additional resources, be sure to add them to your Print List.



## Print

- [My Voice, My Choice - Script](#)
- [Self-Evaluation Tool - Self Awareness Section and Goal Setting Section](#)
- [SMART Goals \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [SMART Goal Planner](#)
- [Charting the LifeCourse Trajectory Tool](#)
- [Goal Action Plan](#)



## Activities to Meet Benchmark:

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### Activity 1: My Voice, My Choice! Introduction on Self-Advocacy

This activity aims to help students explore their choices and how to share those choices with others.



**Discuss:** In previous lessons, we have talked about your rights and responsibilities and how leadership skills can help you in your journey to becoming a contributing member of your community, school and work. We are going to start exploring the meaning of self-advocacy and identify personal interests and activities that will help build your independence.

In the 1990s disability advocates started using the slogan “Nothing About Us Without Us” to help propel change for the disability community. This slogan is still used by self-advocates to make sure that people with disabilities have a say in policies that affect them. We are going to start learning about how you can use your voice to advocate for the things you want, need and desire as you make progress on your goals and move into the adult world.



**Group Discussion:** *[Note to Instructors: Instructors can choose which questions to review with students. Model group discussion by asking the question and answering it. This provides an example for the student to follow, then ask them the same question. If a student needs a script to help them answer the question, you can use something like this, [My Voice, My Choice - Script](#).]*

- What are some decisions or choices you get to make that affect your routine, activities, meals, and more in your daily life? How does it make you feel when you get to make these choices about your day and what you get to control?
- How do you feel when someone makes a decision for you without asking? What could you say or do in that situation?
- Who are the people in your life that support you? How can you let them know what you need?
- How do you make choice in your daily life? Are there areas where you’d like to make more independent choices?



**Resource:** [My Voice, My Choice - Script](#)

## Activity 2: Passions to Purpose

This activity aims to explore how student activities and interests help guide their choices.



**Discuss:** Did you know that your personal interests and activities can teach you a lot about who you are, what you like to do, and how you handle situations? It's important to participate in activities, explore hobbies, and seek out new experiences. Why is this important? Your interests, activities, and hobbies can guide you in deciding what kind of job you might want in the future, how you solve problems, and what values and morals are important to you. Knowing this information about yourself is called self-awareness and can help shape your identity, decisions, and interactions with others.



**Review:** Let's start by making a list of your personal interests, hobbies, and activities. This can include sports, music, art, technology, community events, cooking, etc. [Note to Instructors: Provide an example by modeling it. Start by asking the question and then answering it yourself. Write lists on board for all to see and add visual aids when necessary.]



**Reflect:** Using the [Self-Evaluation Tool](#), fill out the Self-Awareness Section. It is important to know what qualities you have and which qualities you want to work on. Being aware of our interests and skills can help build confidence and with setting goals. Students can work individually to discuss and share.

- What do you like about these activities? Who do you do them with?
- What has participating in this interest / hobby / activity taught you?
- What words would someone use to describe you? What do you like about yourself?
- What has someone said about you that was nice?
- How do you feel when you do these interests / hobbies / activities?
- How do your interest / hobbies / activities help you become more independent?
- What does it mean to have "self-awareness"?



**Resource:** [Self-Evaluation - Self-Awareness Section](#)



**Click and Explore:** Students may need to explore their interests and any activities they may be interested in. Here are some examples of recreational or leisure surveys. Students can choose activities they already participated in or have participated before, and activities they are interested in knowing more about.

- [Leisure Interest Survey](#) – multiple pages of activities for students to categorize into areas to help determine their interests.
- [Hobbies Flashcards \(printable\)](#) – images of hobbies, students can pick the ones they like the most.
- [Sports Flashcards \(printable\)](#) – images of sports, students can pick the ones they like the most

## Activity 3: Crafting Your Future: Creating Goals

This activity aims to help students set goals.



**Discuss:** Now that we have identified some of your hobbies, let's see how our personal interests may impact our goals. Let's review the [Self-Evaluation Tool's](#) Goal Setting section together. How might your personal interests and activities lead you to goals that improve your skills or community?

- What is something you want to change in your life? How would exploring that improve your life?
- What is something you would like to take responsibility for at home or school?
- What makes you feel proud of yourself?
- How would setting better personal goals help you advocate for yourself?
- How might your self-advocacy goals change from different settings (like home, school, work, etc.)
- How can others support you with your goals (like family, friends, teachers, etc.)?



**Resource:** [Self-Evaluation - Goal Setting Section](#)



**Review:** This is a starting point to make a goal. To reach a goal, you must plan. We have several worksheet options to help you plan to reach your goal.

**Option 1:** [Charting the LifeCourse - Life Trajectory Tool](#) – This is a simple tool to identify what you do and don't want for your future self or community. What is your vision of how things will be when you've reached your goal? Use this tool to build a plan towards that future vision!

**Option 2:** [Goal Action Plan](#) – This tool will allow you to document more detail. You can identify the action steps needed to reach your goal and potential obstacles along your way.



**Resource:**

- [Charting the LifeCourse Trajectory Tool](#)
- [Goal Action Plan](#)



## Extending the Conversation

What are SMART Goals? [SMART Goals \(PowerPoint\)](#)

An additional option to our goal setting worksheets is using the [SMART Goal Planner](#). Many college students use SMART goals in their classes or planning. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. These criteria ensure that your goals are clear and reachable, with a defined timeline. Now that we have learned more about SMART Goals and have broken it down, let's take some time to create a SMART Goal for you.



### Resource:

- [SMART Goals \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [SMART Goal Planner](#)



## Extended Pathways

### Exploring Advocacy: Choice Board

This activity aims for students to explore personal advocacy interests.



**Discuss:** Use the knowledge you have gained in this lesson to dive deeper into advocacy. Here are examples of ways you can do this activity

- **Interest Exploration Interview** – Interview a peer about their interests and how they practice self-advocacy.
- **Advocacy Action Plan** – Create a detailed action plan for a personal advocacy issue you care about.
- **Community Involvement** – Research a local organization or club based on an advocacy issue you care about. Is there an opportunity to volunteer? Would you be interested in learning more?
- **Self-Advocacy Role Model Research** – Research a self-advocate who inspires you. Share their story with the group.
- **Community Resource Mapping** – Are there local groups that support and promote self-advocacy and independence? Examples could include disability advocacy organizations, peer mentoring groups, community centers, etc.



**Reflect:** Use the information you gather. Share this information with others. If you are interested in more opportunities, share this information with your guardian(s), academic advisors, guidance counselors, IEP team, etc.



### Wrap-Up:

Everyone has unique interests that make them special. If everyone liked or participated in the same activities, you would not have different skills, ideas, or jobs. It is important to have different interests and try out different activities—these interests and activities can help you develop critical skills and boost your confidence.

When you have an important interest, setting goals is a powerful way to clarify your ideas, focus your efforts, and use your time in a meaningful way. By setting goals, you can turn your knowledge and passions into actionable steps that can make a real difference in your life and community.