

# Advocacy for Myself in My Communities

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## Instruction in Self-Advocacy Benchmark:

Increase awareness of opportunities in the community to build leadership skill, expand community networks, and increase advocacy skills. (Partial)

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 community advocacy and networking (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 and websites. Print materials in advance, if necessary, and assemble writing materials (paper, markers, pens/pencils).



## Print

- [Advocacy and Decision-Making \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Self-Evaluation Tool](#)
- [Advocacy and Decision Making Scenarios](#)
- [Advocacy Resource and Groups Guide](#)
- [Advocacy and Decision Making Scenarios Worksheet](#)
- [Volunteer Scenario Cards](#)

# Activities to Meet Benchmark

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## Activity 1: Vocabulary Review

This activity aims to help students recognize and understand language with advocacy and decision-making.



**Review:** [Advocacy and Decision-Making Vocabulary \(PowerPoint\)](#). [Note to Instructors: The vocabulary list is important to review in its entirety to help students fully participate in the subsequent activities.]



- **Scenarios** - Examples of situations or problems you may find yourself in or have already experienced.
- **Advocacy** - Speaking up for something needed to make a positive change. When you do this for yourself and your needs, it is called self-advocacy.
- **Decision-Making** - Making a choice or action when there are several options. This involves thinking about your options and picking the one that seems best.
- **Advocacy + Decision-Making** - When you think of options to fix a situation, you want to practice advocacy for ourselves and for others.
- **Solutions** - When you have a problem or a situation and you are not sure what to do, what are the ways to fix it or possible solutions or actions you can take. You want to make sure your possible solutions include advocacy or self-advocacy.

## Activity 2: Building Independence Through Advocacy

This activity aims to build independence and advocacy skills.



**Watch:** [Self-Advocacy - A State of Mind \(5:31\)](#) – Student, Abby Edwards, shares her personal experience with advocacy and how to challenge you.



**Discuss:** You may currently be your own self-advocate, but you may also have others like guardian(s), teachers, counselors, or others who help you make decisions. To make sure decisions are made WITH you, not FOR you, you have to communicate what you want for yourself. In the lesson you will learn ways to help you advocate for yourself. It is important to build these skills since you will need and use them the rest of your life! By learning to advocate for yourself, you'll gain the confidence to handle problems and decide on your goals.



**Review:** One way to develop these skills is by practicing how you would handle a situation. In this activity, you will review different problems and ways to find solutions to those problems. This helps us with deciding how we will handle problems or when we need to speak up.

**Option 1:** Use the [Advocacy and Decision Making Scenarios](#) to identify a few different scenarios for the students to practice together as a group.

**Option 2:** Assign the same scenarios to pairs of students. Ask them to work together to find solutions. Once everyone is finished, ask the pairs to share their solutions and see if anyone find different solutions to the same scenario.

**Option 3:** Ask students to review several scenarios of their choice. They can write down their solutions on the [Advocacy and Decision Making Scenarios Worksheet](#) and then share with the group or instructor for feedback.

**Option 4:** Have students role-play their solutions to each scenario, practicing how they would handle challenges and communicate their needs. Encourage them to use clear and respectful language when speaking up or asking for help. Through role-playing, students build confidence in self-advocacy and problem-solving skills.



### Resource:

- [Advocacy and Decision Making Scenarios](#).
- [Advocacy and Decision Making Scenarios Worksheet](#)



**Reflect:** Now that you have thought through some scenarios of how you would handle situations, let's review ways to advocate by doing the [Self-Evaluation Tool's Speak Up! Section](#) together.



**Resource:** [Self-Evaluation - Speak Up! Section](#)

## Activity 3: Growing My Community Network

This activity aims to explore resources to build advocacy skills and ways to connect with them.



**Discuss:** How can you build your advocacy skills? Sure, you can practice what you know and what you've learned. But what if you need help getting started? What if you want to practice with others? What if you want to learn from other students like you?

We're going to learn about advocacy resources that can help you speak up for yourself and others. These resources provide information about support services, independent living, making your own choices, and more. By knowing how to advocate, you can build confidence, make better choices, and be more involved in your education and community. This knowledge helps you to become more independent and makes sure your voices are heard. Some of these resources may have ways you can get involved, so think about how you may want to share your advocacy voice with others.



**Review:** Let's explore an advocacy resource we want to know more about. Review the [Advocacy Resource and Groups Guide](#). This is a list of advocacy groups and resources for individuals with disabilities. This is a starting point of resources, feel free to add more or share local resources in your community.



**Reflect:** After reviewing the different advocacy resources and groups, students will complete the Advocacy Resource section in the [Self-Evaluation Tool](#). How students complete this section may vary based on available technology, time, and skills. Here are some options to help students complete their Advocacy Resource section:

- 1. Instructor Assisted:** Instructors can look up a local resource and show or print relevant information to help students.
- 2. Guided Activity:** Instructors can guide students through the process of looking up one of the resources listed.
- 3. Independent Activity:** Students can independently research an advocacy resource.



### Resource:

- [Advocacy Resource and Groups Guide](#)
- [Self-Evaluation - Advocacy Resource Section](#)

## Activity 4: Advocacy in Action

This activity aims to explore how to bring advocacy skills to the community through advocacy and leadership.



**Discuss:** Advocacy can be for making positive change for yourself. It can also be to make positive change for others or your community. A way to do this can be to give time, effort, or resources to help others. This is known as philanthropy. You do not have to be rich or have special skills to be a philanthropist. It's about caring and helping others.



**Reflect:** When you advocate, you use your voice to influence or get people to action. Think of something you care about in your school or community. How can you help? How can you get involved? Consider these questions for planning an activity. If student's need support, these [Volunteer Scenario Cards](#) can help provide some examples for the group.

- What is the issue?
- Who do you need to talk to?
- How are you going to raise awareness or communicate?
- How to share updates or progress?



**Interactive Opportunities:** Here are some options to help students complete this activity. Students can make posters for the cause they are trying to support. If students have access to technology, they can make a PowerPoint or flyer. Students can also use paper, pencils, markers, etc. to draw their own posters.

- 1. Instructor Assisted:** Instructors can use the scenario cards to pick an option. Share the scenario with the students and begin discussion.
- 2. Guided Activity:** Instructors can share different scenarios with students and have them pick a scenario they want to discuss. Students can work together in small groups.
- 3. Independent Activity:** Students can select a scenario or pick something important to them. They can share how they would plan their advocacy using one of the interactive options.



**Resource:** [Volunteer Scenario Cards](#)



## Extended Pathways

### Advocacy Practice

This activity aims to practice self-advocacy skills.



**Discuss:** Advocacy is an important skill throughout life, whether it is for you or others. Here are some activities to practice and use these skills.

- **Community Service Project** - Plan and participate in a community service project related to your interests.
- **Mock Interview** – practice self-advocacy in a mock job interview scenario.
- **Peer Support Group** - Form a peer support group to discuss self-advocacy strategies and share experiences.
- **Creative Expression** - Use art or music to express your personal interests and what self-advocacy means to you.
- **Reflection Journal** - Keep a journal reflecting on your self-advocacy journey and personal growth.



**Reflect:** Use the information you gather and consider sharing with your guardian(s), academic advisors, guidance counselors, IEP team, etc.



### Wrap-Up:

You have explored the importance of self-advocacy and how to effectively communicate your needs and rights. By understanding your strengths and being confident in expressing yourself, you can empower both yourself and others. Remember, advocating for yourself is a key step in achieving your goals and making your voice heard!