

What makes a good advocate?

Prepare

Ask for help

Know your
rights

Research

Write
stuff down

Practice

Believe in
yourself

Self care

Self Advocacy Tip Sheet



What is self advocacy?

- Speaking up for what you need
- Asking questions
- Asking for help

We would like to help you feel empowered to self-advocate for yourself when you need to. There is no voice that can better explain how you feel, what you think, or express your views, than your own.

We appreciate that sometimes speaking up for yourself can be difficult and it takes real courage to ask for help. Here are some tips and ideas you might want to use to help yourself to feel more confident to self-advocate.

Visit our website for information about mental health, how to get help & much more....

www.mindcharity.co.uk • t: 01273 66 69 50

e: info@mindcharity.co.uk • appointments available

Please let your advocate know if you need a large print/accessible version of this leaflet

Preparation (preparation = confidence!)

- **Believe** in yourself
- Try to **focus on one thing** at a time
- **Write down as clearly** as you can **what you most need**, this might mean writing what the problem is and how you would like this to change.
- **Write down what steps** you think should happen to make the change/get the help.
- Have **clear goals** and write down a **statement**
- Consider if you **might be prepared to compromise** on anything
- **Prepare some questions** you can ask to help understand your options
- **Practice what you want to say** in the mirror, or with someone you trust
- **Get advice**, do some **research** and **find out your rights**

If you are attending a meeting you can prepare by:

- **Find out where it is** and plan how you will get there – do a test run if it's somewhere unfamiliar
- **Find out who will be** at the meeting beforehand
- Let people know if you have any **accessibility needs**
- **Bring notes!**
- If you know you might find it hard to speak on the day, **prepare written notes** that you can hand out to other participants that summarise your views
- Do what you need to do to **look after yourself and remain calm** before the meeting. This might be getting good quality sleep, eating well, meditating or going for a walk before the meeting.

During the meeting

- Bring a **pen and paper** or phone to take notes
- Ask for/take some **water**
- Ask for all participants to **introduce themselves**
- Ask when you'll have time to **express your views**
- Ask for a **break** if you need it
- Ask people to **repeat things or explain things** differently if needed
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions** or jot them down as you go
- Ask for a **written summary** of outcomes/plan
- Take **notes**
- Start by aiming for the **best case scenario**
- Make sure you have **contact details** if you have questions after the meeting
- If there is likely to be a follow up, or decision made after the meeting **ask when you will hear** about this.



After the meeting

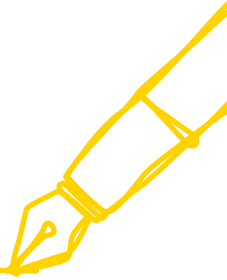
- Have a **rest**
- **Talk it over** with someone
- **Send any questions** to your contact you may have forgotten
- Keep any **notes/paperwork** somewhere safe

You can always refer to our **advocacy service** if you feel you need a free, independent and professional mental health advocate to support you.

Other notes



Self Advocacy Prep sheet



Fill in the boxes on this sheet to help you prepare to self-advocate. You can ask for more copies from our advocacy service if you need them.

What do I most need?



This might be what the problem is and how you would like this to change.

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What steps should happen to make the change/get the help?



Questions I need to ask....



I am prepared to compromise on...



Research I want to do

