



10 STEPS TO BEING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

1. Believe in Yourself.

You are important and worth the effort to protect your rights and interests.

2. Decide What You Need.

Think about what you need, such as money, services, or equipment.

3. Know Your Rights.

Get information from advocacy organizations and community groups regarding your rights. Ask about relevant policies, procedures, and laws.

4. Be Prepared.

Develop a plan about what you want to say. Prepare notes listing each of your concerns. Ask a friend or advocate for help if you need it.

5. Use Good Communication Skills.

Stay calm and express yourself clearly. Be a good listener. What you hear may be as important as what you say.

6. Keep a Log.

Make notes, including the name, title, and telephone number of each person you speak to and a summary of the conversation.

7. Use the Chain of Command

Be sure to speak to the person who has the authority to resolve your problem.

8. Protect Your Rights.

Do not accept an oral (in person or over the telephone) denial of your request. Submit a written application and ask for a written decision.

9. Know Your Appeal Rights.

Request clear information about your appeal rights in case you disagree with the written decision you receive.

10. Ask for Help.

Don't give up. If you need assistance, contact an advocacy organization.

Remember to thank those who provide assistance!