

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES **CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS** **WITH ADVOCACY**

Do you need a service that isn't available in your area?

Do you have trouble meeting eligibility requirements?

Is your community accessible?

Have you experienced discrimination or prejudice?

Do you need assistive technology that you don't have?

Is transportation a problem for you?

Do you know what services and supports are available to you?

Do you need more information about your rights and can't find anyone to help?

Is getting funding for a particular service impossible for you?

Can you get the health care you need (including mental health)?

Do you find yourself stuck in "red tape"? Do you have paperwork that doesn't make sense?

Is the whole "system" confusing to you? Is it like a big maze??



(Graphic of a man who is lost inside a maze is not available in Braille.)



BREAK THROUGH PROBLEMS **WITH ADVOCACY**

There are two main types of advocacy that work to solve problems:

“SELF-ADVOCACY” – letting our needs and wants be known to others – making our own decisions and speaking for ourselves.

“SYSTEMS ADVOCACY” – working with others to make changes in the way that laws and rules are written so that all people with disabilities benefit – with systems advocacy, you (and your group) work with other members of the Disability Community to make change happen.

Most times, systems advocacy and self-advocacy are intertwined.

(Graphic of three people standing in front of a brick wall that blocks the road is not available in Braille. A second graphic on this page showing four hands in a cool design by each hand holding the wrist to the left then; thereby, making a perfect square – that depicts the concept of “intertwined.”



BENEFITS OF SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

- ➔ There is power in numbers. People who work together in a group have more immediate credibility than an individual working alone.
- ➔ Being better connected to the Disability Community gets you better access to better information.
- ➔ You can solve real problems for yourself and others with disabilities.
- ➔ You don't feel so alone. You feel more empowered when you are part of a group working towards the same goals.
- ➔ You can form a self-advocacy group around any issue.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY IS HARD WORK!!

It can take many tries and many years to be successful with systemic advocacy. **DON'T GIVE UP!!!!** Here are some techniques of advocacy:

1. Get connected to, and involved in, the Disability Community.
2. Don't get intimidated or be afraid to speak your mind!!
3. Get active in a peer support group – you don't have to do systems change advocacy or self-advocacy alone.
4. Find a mentor – find someone who has done similar advocacy work.
5. Don't get discouraged if change doesn't happen fast – try a new strategy.
6. Share information with others in the Disability Community.
7. Celebrate your accomplishments ➔ ➔

(Graphic of a bunch of colorful balloons tied together on long strings not available in Braille. This reminds us to celebrate our accomplishments.)

