



Leadership Lessons

Personal and Professional Development



Topic 5 of 5: **Advocacy**

Level 1

Discovering Yourself

Level 2

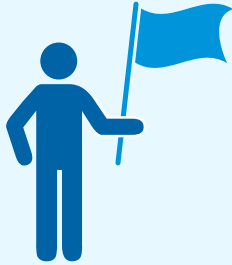
Strengths and Weaknesses

Level 3

Self-advocacy



Welcome!



If this is your first time going through any of the Personal and Professional Development lessons, before you begin please make sure you download and read through the “Getting Started” Overview on the website: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/ppd>.

If you have already read through the “Getting Started” Overview or completed one of the other Personal and Professional Development lessons, proceed with the lessons in this workbook that you would like to complete.

Remember that this topic and the other 4 topics in this suite of resources can be downloaded on the website:

<https://resources.specialolympics.org/ppd>.

Keep in mind that you can complete any of the 5 topics in the Personal and Professional Development suite of resources in any order.

If you have any questions, contact your local Program or Regional staff.

Topic descriptions and what you should expect

In total, there are **5 different handbooks** covering **5 different topics**. Each topic will have **3 different lessons** in it.

The 5 topics and the 3 lessons within those 5 topics are listed below.



Topic 5: Advocacy (THIS HANDBOOK)



Level 1

Discovering Yourself

Page 4

It is important to know more about yourself because that helps you to better advocate for yourself and the things you care about.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What it means to “advocate”
- ➔ Ways to learn more about yourself
- ➔ Why knowing yourself helps you advocate better



Level 2

Strengths and Weaknesses

Page 19

Being able to name your strengths and weaknesses can help you know how to advocate for yourself and for others.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ How to identify your strengths and weaknesses
- ➔ Ways to use your strengths to help others
- ➔ Ways to ask others to help you improve your weaknesses



Level 3

Self-advocacy

Page 32

It is important to know how to advocate for yourself. Through “self-advocacy” you can make choices that shape your life.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What “self-advocacy” is and why it is important
- ➔ Examples of self-advocacy in real-life situations
- ➔ Steps to practice self-advocacy

Leadership Lessons
Advocacy



Level 1:
Discovering Yourself



Level 1

Advocacy**Discovering Yourself**

Think about these questions:

1. What does it mean to advocate?
2. How can I learn more about myself so I can advocate?

If you do not know yet, do not worry! This lesson will teach you all about what it means to advocate and why is it important!



Think about the questions below and write or draw your answers.



What do you like and dislike?

Possible answers:

(Likes) reading, music, ice cream...

(Dislikes) loud sounds, surprises, when people don't listen...



What makes you happy?

Possible answers: my family, my pets, playing sports, my birthday...



What makes you upset?

Possible answers: mean people, losing games, unfairness...



What are you good at?

Possible answers: Riding my bike, putting together PowerPoint presentations...



What do you wish you were better at?

Possible answers: Talking about my feelings, gardening, taking notes during meetings...



What is something that you think is important?

Possible answers: Being kind, following the rules, being healthy, including others, helping people...



Now, ask a friend or mentor the same questions! Do any of their answers match up with yours?

**LEARN**

To **advocate** means to stand up for what is right. In order to advocate for ourselves, we have to learn about ourselves and know what is **important** to us!



Here are some ways you can stand up for what is right or advocate for yourself!



Speaking up when something is unfair.



Asking others for help.



Saying "No" if you are uncomfortable.



Asking to have a turn or share with others.

Learning about what we **like** and **dislike**, what we are **good at**, and what is **important** to us helps us to be able to advocate!

Part 1: Likes and Dislikes

Story 1



This is Li.

Li knows he likes to help kids.



Li knows he is good at helping kids.



Li even helps coach a kid's community baseball team.



Li knows that helping kids is important to him.

Li wanted to get a job with kids but was told he could not. Li thought this was unfair.



Li decided to advocate for himself!



Li said that he could do a great job and knew what to do because he has years of experience working with kids.



He said he should get a fair chance too.

Li was able to advocate for himself because he knew it was important to him and he could prove that he was a good fit for the role.

Story 2



This is Jordan

Jordan is not sure what activity to pick at school.



Track



Yoga

Jordan thinks about what she likes and dislikes.



Jordan dislikes running and jumping.



Jordan likes dancing and stretching.
















Jordan knows she does not like to run or jump and track has both running and jumping.

Jordan knows she likes stretching, so Jordan picks yoga!

Learning what you like and do not like is important to become a self-advocate.

People have different likes and dislikes. It is okay if you do not like the same things as your family and friends.

 Look at the icons and words below. Think about your personal feelings about each topic. Circle **like** or **dislike**. Then, have a friend do the same!

		Me		My Friend	
	Books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Soup	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dancing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Broccoli	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Swimming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Public speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Hugging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Waking up early	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Lesson Checkpoint

Check-in with yourself to see what you might need next.

- ➔ Any of these choices are okay! It is healthy to make a choice that is best for YOU!
- ➔ Circle what you are going to do next!



Take a break



Ask for help



Come back to this another day



Try another level



Keep going

You made the right choice! You are AWESOME!

Part 2: What is important?

Kate does not know what is important to her or what she cares about most.

We will help her figure out what she cares about the most.

This is what Kate did this week:



Helped her grandma



Carried groceries for her neighbor



Gave old books to a charity

Based on the graphics above, what do you think Kate cares about?

It seems like Kate cares about helping other people!



What are things you care about? Write or draw them below.

It is okay if you are not sure. The next activity will help you figure it out!

Learning what you care about is important!



Check the box under the one that fits you most. When you are finished, each row of boxes should only have one check mark.



Family



Fancy clothes



Friends













Music



Sports

	NOT important to me	A LITTLE important to me	VERY important to me
Family			
Fancy clothes			
Friends			
Music			
Sports			

-  Winning
-  Helping others
-  Being a leader
-  Making decisions
-  Doing things on my own
-  Following a plan
-  Listening to other people
-  Following the rules
-  Doing chores
-  Cooking

**If you do not know what is important to you,
you will not know when to advocate for yourself!**



Talk to a mentor or friend about things they think are important.
Write or draw them below.

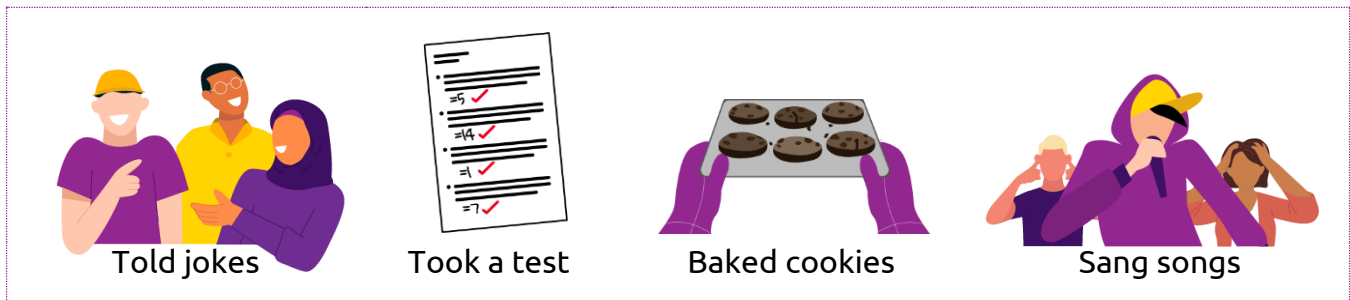


Can you think of any other things that are important to you that are not on the list above?
Write or draw them below.

Part 3: What are you good at?

Travis does not know what he is good at or not good at.

We can help him figure it out, right? This is what Travis did this week:



Based on the pictures above, what do you think Travis is good at? How can you tell he is good at it?



Write or draw your answer below.

Based on the pictures above, what do you think Travis is **not** good at yet? How can you tell he is **not** good at it?



Write or draw your answer below.

Answers:

- He made others laugh. He is good at telling jokes!

- He got all correct answers on his test. He is good at math!

- His cookies were burnt so he is not good at baking yet

- His singing hurt people's ears, so he is not good at singing yet

 **Your Turn!**

 Fill in 1 star if you are not good yet.

 Fill in 2 stars if you are a little good.

 Fill in 3 stars if you are good at it!

 Listening			
 Being a leader			
 Being kind			
 Being patient			
 Following the rules			
 Controlling my emotions			
 Being on time			
 Sharing with others			



REFLECT



Write or draw what you have learned about in this lesson.

**When you are ready for Level 2,
you will learn about your strengths and weaknesses!**

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, we learned:

- More about yourself.
- How knowing more about yourself helps you advocate for yourself.

Leadership Lessons
Advocacy



Level 2:

What are your strengths
and weaknesses?





Check-in

Welcome to Level 2! Before you begin this lesson, see if you can answer a few of the questions below. If these questions are challenging, go to Level 1 and complete that level before starting this level. If you already completed Level 1 and still do not know the answers below, it may be a good idea to go back and review it again before continuing with Level 2.

What are two things you like?

1

2

What are two things you dislike?

1

2

What is something that you care about? Why do you care about that thing?

If you could answer these three questions, continue with Level 2. If you did not know how to answer them, go to Level 1 to learn who you are and what is important to you!

Answers will change based on the person. If you are able to list things you like and dislike, you have a good understanding of who you are and can continue with this lesson. Talk with a family member or mentor or coach about things they care about if you need some ideas. They may even help you identify things that you care about!

Level 2**Advocacy****What are your strengths and weaknesses?**

Being able to identify, or name, your strengths and weaknesses can help you know how to help yourself and others. During these lessons, you will learn about:

- ➔ How to identify your strengths and weaknesses
- ➔ Ways to use your strengths to help others
- ➔ Accepting and embracing your disability

Work through these lessons to learn more about who you are.

Knowing yourself

Knowing yourself is an important first step for being able to ask for what you need help with or to advocate for yourself.



Draw a picture or write some words in each box to share a little bit more about you.

My self portrait

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a self-portrait or writing a description of oneself.

I like to...

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing or writing about things the person likes to do.

I am...

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing or writing about personal characteristics or traits.

I am good at...

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing or writing about skills or talents.

Part 1: Strengths

Things you are good at are called “**strengths.**”


Everyone has different things they are good at! Some strengths are things that you are good at without having to practice a lot or try hard and other strengths are things you have spent a lot of time practicing to be good at.




How is knowing your strengths helpful?

Answer: Knowing your strengths can help you know what kind of role or job you might like or let you help others in a very specific way. It also can give you a focus on what activities you might enjoy or hobbies you would like to participate in!

There are different things that you could be good at. Work through the next page and sort items into strengths, weaknesses, and things that are between the two.

 Think about your strengths and weaknesses. Draw a line from each picture to sort each of these into a category. You can draw or write more things if you want to!

 Reading	 Running	 Being a friend	 Singing	 Building or creating
 Swimming	 Drawing	 Helping others	 Listening to others	 Dancing

Strength	In the middle	Weakness

Now that you have sorted your strengths and weaknesses, we can look at the specific things you are good at and see what they say about you. Check out these examples:

- ➔ A strength you might have is being **good at math**. Another way to say that is that you like **working with numbers** or **solving problems**.
- ➔ Another strength you might have is being a **fast runner**. In other words, you can say that you are **athletic!**
- ➔ If you can tell **awesome jokes**, you are **funny!**
- ➔ The strength of **listening** can mean you are a **good friend!**

The next words are broad words or categories that can help you talk about your strengths to others.



Read through these words and put a check mark in the box next to the word if it is something that you think you are good at. If you do not know the word, ask a friend or look up the definition in a dictionary.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> Curious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kind | <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humble | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brave | <input type="checkbox"/> A leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honest | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathetic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focused | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Funny |



Out of the words that you put a checkmark next to, what are the 3 things that you think you are the best at? Why are you good at them?

1	
2	
3	



Then, you will ask someone else (a friend, a mentor, a family member) to share what they think your strengths are and you will write them below as well.

1	
2	
3	



Connection time

As mentioned above, now find a family member or trusted friend or mentor and ask them what strengths they see in you. See if they match up with what you said and ask them why they said the strengths that they did. Write what they said in the table on the previous page.

Think about what strengths you have. What are ways you can use your strengths to help others?

Example:

- ➔ I am **artistic** and like to paint pictures. I could paint pictures and send them to my grandma to cheer her up!
- ➔ My strength is that I am good at **problem solving**. I can listen to a friend with a problem and help them come up with a solution!



Now you try!

If your strength is being funny, what is one way that you could help others by being funny?

Answers:

- › You could tell jokes if someone is having a bad day to make them feel better.
- › You could send them a video that is funny to cheer them up.

If your strength is being thoughtful, how could you use that to help someone?

Answers:

- › You could send a friend or family member a card that says you are thinking about them.
- › If you have extra food, you could share it with a neighbor.
- › Remembering people's birthdays is a way to show that you are thoughtful.

What is one of your strengths?

How can you use this strength to help others?



Lesson Checkpoint

Check-in with yourself to see what you might need next.

- ➔ Any of these choices are okay! It is healthy to make a choice that is best for YOU!
- ➔ Circle what you are going to do next!



Take a break



Ask for help



Come back to
this another day



Try another level




Keep going


You made the right choice! You are AWESOME!

Part 2: Weakness

Just like we all have unique strengths, we all have unique weaknesses or something we are not good at. “Weakness” is not a bad word. Everyone has weaknesses, so if you do not think you do, keep thinking to see what areas you could get better at. Or maybe ask a family member or coach if they can share some things they think you need to get better at.

 Go through the list again and this time, circle the word if it is something you would like to get better at. You may not be terrible at it, you just may have a desire to get better!

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> Curious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kind | <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humble | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brave | <input type="checkbox"/> A leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honest | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathetic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focused | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Funny |

 Now that you have circled some words that you think are weaknesses, look over them again and decide on 2 that are most important to you to get better at and put a reason why as well.

1	
2	
3	



Then, you will ask someone else (a friend, a mentor, a family member) to share what they think your weaknesses are and you will write them below as well.

1	
2	
3	

Knowing your weaknesses can be very empowering because you will know how to advocate for yourself! Remember, advocating means knowing how to ask for help and what you need to be successful. Check out the next page for examples on how to work on your weaknesses.



Connection time

As mentioned above, now find a family member or trusted friend or mentor and ask them what weaknesses they see in you. See if they match up with what you said and ask them why they said the weaknesses that they did. Write what they said in the table on the previous page. Remember, it's not always fun to hear someone share what you are not good at. We are using this as an opportunity to get better!

Thank the person for being honest with you!

Part 3: Identify your strengths and weaknesses

Great job identifying your strengths and weaknesses and learning how they can help you advocate for yourself better.

Remember that you can ask family and friends to help you get better at the things you said are your weaknesses. Maybe your strength is something that is a strength for your coach and you can ask them to help you get better at it! And maybe one of your strengths is something that your best friend has identified as their weakness, so you can help them get better at it!



Use this page to summarize what you have learned.

My strengths

My weaknesses

How I can use my strengths to help others

How I will work on my weaknesses

Share this page with a friend or family member and see if they can help you add more to each box!

Lesson Summary

Being able to identify, or name, your strengths and weaknesses can help you know how to help yourself and others.

In this lesson, we learned:

- How to identify your strengths and weaknesses
- Ways to use your strengths to help others
- Ways to ask others to help you in your weaknesses

Leadership Lessons
Advocacy



Level 3:
Self-advocacy





Check-in

Welcome to Level 3! Before you begin this lesson, see if you can answer a few of the questions below. If these questions are challenging, go to Level 1 or Level 2 and complete those lessons before starting this level. If you already completed Level 1 and Level 2 and still do not know the answers below, it may be a good idea to go back and review them before continuing with Level 3.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

How can you use your strengths to help others?

What is a weakness of yours and how can you ask for help?

Check in

Check your answers**What are your strengths and weaknesses?****Answers will vary, but here are some examples.****Strengths:** good at dribbling the ball, always on time for practice, able to teach other people**Weakness:** Remembering the practice schedule, not interrupting others when they are talking, asking questions**You should be able to identify at least one strength and one weakness or you should go back to Level 2 and review****How can you use your strengths to help others?****Answers will vary, but here is an example.**

Because I am good at teaching other people, I am able to patiently explain practice drills to new athletes on our team.

You should be able to list a strength of yours and be able to share how it helps others.**What is a weakness of yours and how can you ask for help?****Answers will vary, but here is an example:**

Because I have a difficult time remembering the practice schedule, I could ask my coach or teammates for tips and ideas they use to remember the schedule.

You should be able to list a weakness of yours and how you can ask for help in that area

If you were able to answer these 3 questions, continue with Level 3. If you did not know how to answer them, go to Level 2 to learn all about your strengths and weaknesses!

Level 3**Advocacy**
Self-advocacy

Workbook Activity Time

20 minutes

On Your Own Practice Time

10 minutes

It is important to know how to advocate for yourself, which is also called **self-advocacy**. Through self-advocacy you can make choices that shape your life. This lesson will help you understand self-advocacy and how to effectively practice it.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ The concept of self-advocacy and why it is important.
- ➔ Examples of self-advocacy in real-life situations.
- ➔ Steps to effectively practice self-advocacy.

Part 1: Self-advocacy explored

Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself.

Self-advocacy gives you the ability to make choices and decisions that affect your life.

We will start by looking at a few everyday examples of self-advocacy:

“At practice, the coach wanted to go to the next drill, but I was struggling so I asked the coach and the team to please wait while I perfected the first drill.”

“My teacher was not going to pick me to give a speech to the class, but I told the teacher I could do it because I have the skills and have something worth sharing with the class.”

Question

Even though self-advocacy can be challenging, **why do you think it is important for you to speak up for yourself?**



Think of a time you advocated for yourself. What did you say or do that made you feel you were standing up for yourself?

Once you have thought of a time you advocated for yourself, answer these questions about that experience.

Where were you and who was there?

How did you know you needed to speak up for yourself?

What did you say or do that felt like advocating for yourself?

After you advocated for yourself, what happened next?

What did you learn from speaking up for yourself?

Self-advocacy might sound easy, but it can be hard.

Here are some reasons other athletes have shared how self-advocacy can be difficult for them.

- ➔ I do not think others will understand me or care about what I have to say.
- ➔ I get too emotional and cannot remember what to say.
- ➔ I do not want to hurt other people's feelings, but my feelings matter too!
- ➔ It takes me a long time to express myself and others will just stop listening to me.

Part 2: Self-advocacy in real life

Read this situation and answer the question.

Situation 1

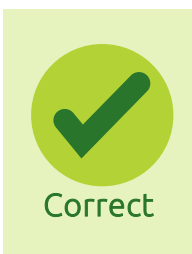


You arrive at a medical center for your doctor's appointment, but it is your first time visiting this location and you are not sure where your doctor's office is located. You look around and see an information desk.

What will you do next to find your doctor's office?

- Walk up to the first person you see and say, "Help, I can't find my doctor."
- Sit down and wait for someone to ask you if you need help.
- Continue to walk around the medical center until you find your doctor's office.
- Walk up to the information desk and explain to the person there that you have an appointment, state your doctor's name, and ask for directions to their office.
- Call a family member for help.
- Go home and reschedule your appointment.

Check:



Correct

- ➔ Walk up to the information desk and explain to the person there that you have an appointment, state your doctor's name, and ask for directions to their office.

This option includes clear communication, independence, and self-advocacy.



Not quite,
but close

- ➔ Walk up to the first person you see and say, “Help, I can’t find my doctor”.
- ➔ Call a family member for help.

Self-advocacy can be difficult, so sometimes you must take small steps before you can take a giant step. These answers are small steps. Great job, keep going.



Incorrect

- ➔ Sit down and wait for someone to ask you if you need help.
- ➔ Continue to walk around the medical center until you find your doctor’s office.
- ➔ Go home and reschedule your appointment.

While the following options might eventually get you help, it does not include clear communication, independence, or confident self-advocacy.

Remember, self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself. Self-advocacy gives you the ability to make choices and decisions that affect your life.

To self-advocate, you have **to know what you want**. In this situation, you knew what you wanted (directions to your doctor's office) and there was someone there to help (the person at the information desk). So in this example, you needed to take a deep breath, remember why you are there, what you want, and ask for help.

Remember, self-advocacy does not mean you have to do everything yourself. Asking for help does not mean you are not a self-advocate or independent. People will only know that you need help if you speak up and admit that you need assistance. **Asking for help is not a weakness; it is a strength!**



Lesson Checkpoint

Check-in with yourself to see what you might need next.

- ➔ Any of these choices are okay! It is healthy to make a choice that is best for YOU!
- ➔ Circle what you are going to do next!



Take a break



Ask for help



Come back to
this another day



Try another level



Keep going

You made the right choice! You are AWESOME!

Situation 2



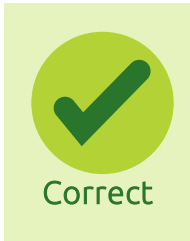
This time you are at the doctor with a family member. You are there for your yearly medical exam. Before beginning your exam, the doctor turns to your family member and asks them questions about how you are feeling, what you have been doing for exercise, what you are eating, etc. They do not talk to you at all. It is like you are invisible to them.

What should you do?

- Ask the doctor to speak to you and include you in the conversation.
- Explain that you can speak for yourself.
- Allow the doctor to continue talking to your family member.
- Focus on listening to what the doctor is saying.
- Ignore the conversation.
- Let your family member take care of everything.

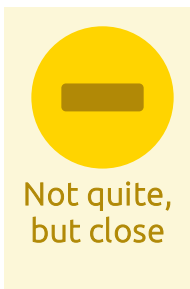
- On the way home, tell your family member that next time you would like to speak for yourself.

Check:



- ➔ Ask the doctor to speak to you and include you in the conversation.
- ➔ Explain that you can speak for yourself.

These options include clear communication, independence, and self-advocacy.



- ➔ On the way home, tell your family member that next time you'd like to speak for yourself

Self-advocacy can be difficult, so sometimes you have to take small steps before you can take a giant step. This answer is a small step. Great job, keep going.



- ➔ Allow the doctor to continue talking to your family member.
- ➔ Focus on listening to what the doctor is saying.
- ➔ Ignore the conversation.
- ➔ Let your family member take care of everything.

These options do not show clear communication, independence, or confident self-advocacy.

Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself and making your wants and needs known to other people.

It is easier to self-advocate if the other person you are asking for help is doing these things:

1. Communicating so that you can understand what they are saying;
2. Adjusting or modifying the environment or how they are communicating so that you can fully understand and communicate; or
3. Giving you time to communicate and an opportunity for you to ask questions when you are ready.

So, be prepared to ask for time and accommodations, to express your wants, needs, and ideas fully. It is okay to ask for these things, they will help you advocate for yourself.

In this doctor example we just provided, you may need to self-advocate by:

- ➔ Asking the doctor to give you information in a way you understand, like giving examples or using photos or social stories.
- ➔ Asking the provider to slow down or repeat what they said .
- ➔ Asking the provider to explain or inform using different words.
- ➔ Inviting a person you trust to come with you.
- ➔ Asking for other accommodations to help you communicate your thoughts and ask questions.

These are example of self-advocacy because it helps you get what you need, which is information about your health.

When you tell your doctor, teacher, employer, or anyone how you like to be treated or what you need, that is self-advocacy!

Part 3: How to do self-advocacy

Self-advocacy can be easier if you follow a short checklist. We will take a look at the graphic below and follow it in clockwise form – from left to right, top to bottom:





Ask:
What is the current situation?

Identify the situation. Look at the situation and determine if you need to advocate for yourself.

- ➔ For example, you are competing in a football match, it is halftime, and your coach did not play you at all in the first half.



Ask:
Is this situation okay or not okay with me?

Once you identify the situation, ask yourself if you are okay with what is going on. Does something seem unfair?

- ➔ For example, not being called to play the first half is “not okay with you.” You attended all the practices and were on time for the game, so you do not think there is a good reason for you not to play.



Ask:
What do I want?

Know what you would like to happen that is different from the current situation. Tell someone, **clearly and kindly**, how you see the current situation and what changes you want to see. Speak about the facts, not rumors. Explain what is happening and then what you want to happen.

- ➔ For example, you can say: “Coach, I did not play the first half. I attended all the practices and was on time today. I want to play more in the second half. ”



Say:
Speak up and say something – self-advocate



Ask:
What happened after I advocated for myself?

Think about the outcome of your self-advocacy. What happened after you advocated? Are you happy with what happened as a result? If not, go back to the beginning step, “What is the current situation?” and repeat the steps again.

- ➔ It is okay to continue to advocate for yourself until you get an outcome that is acceptable to you.
- ➔ Use good communication skills to ask your coach why they did not play you. Be willing to listen to what your coach has to say. Your coach may have a good reason that you did not play, such as, they may have wanted to give another group of less-

experienced athletes a chance to play for a change. If that reason makes sense to you then great! You stood up for yourself and you also learned that your coach had a good reason for not playing you.



Do you remember what you learned in the Active Listening lesson?

Those same communication skills will help you self-advocate.

Did you learn about being calm and breathing in the Accepting Me lesson?

Those skills will help you stay focused and calm when advocating for yourself.

If you haven't been through the Active Listening or Accepting Me Lessons, visit those next.

Part 4: You try

Activity 1

It is time for you to watch others in action.

Over the next week watch people advocating for themselves. These acts of self-advocacy likely happen every day, such as, people advocating for a specific restaurant choice, staying at practice longer, or having their opinion heard in a meeting.

If you do not see any examples happen in your life, ask a friend or a family member to give you some examples of times where they advocating for themselves then answer the questions below based on their examples.

In what you observed, answer the following questions:

Why do you think the person felt they needed to self-advocate?

What did they want? Did they know what they wanted?

What words did they use to self-advocate? Did they use words like “I want” or “I need” or “This is important to me”?

What happened after they advocated?

What did you learn from these examples that you can do when you self-advocate?

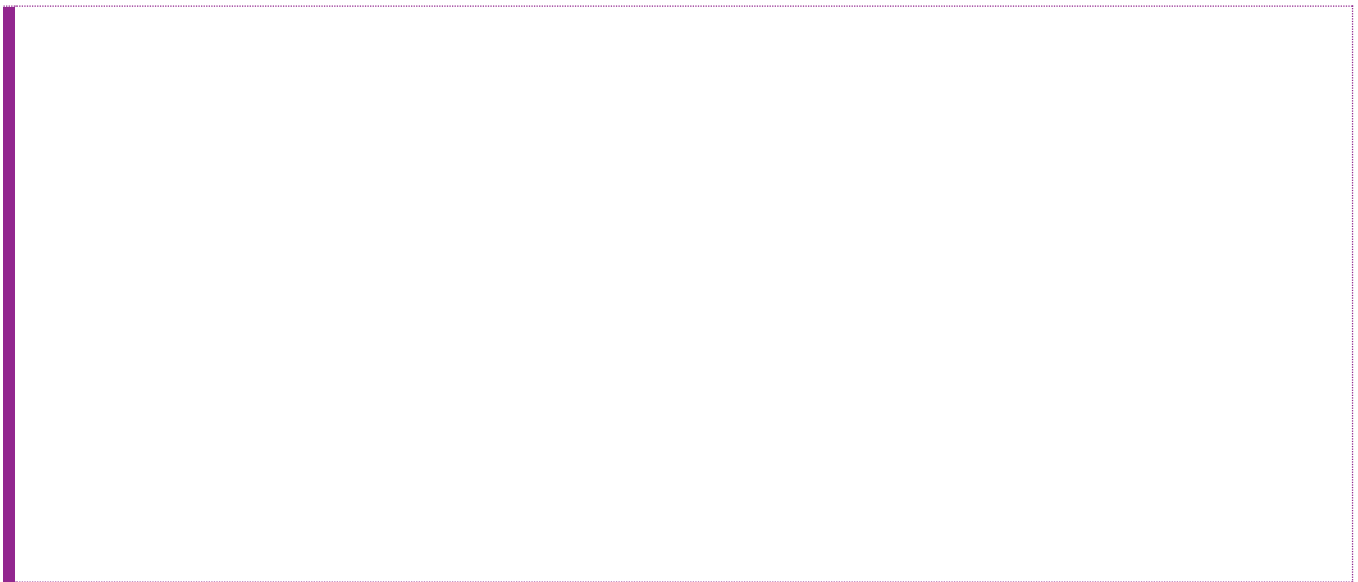
Activity 2

It's time for you to practice.

We cannot always make an opportunity to self-advocate happen. But, over the next few weeks, you will likely have an opportunity to self-advocate.

Do it and write about it:

- ➔ What was the situation? What was happening?
- ➔ How did you know what you wanted?
- ➔ What did you want? How did you know this is what you wanted?
- ➔ What words did you use to self-advocate?
- ➔ What happened after you advocated?
- ➔ What did you learn that you can do in the future?



Keep practicing. Like anything else, self-advocacy takes practice.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, we learned:

- ❑ The significance of self-advocacy and how it empowers us to make decisions.
- ❑ Strategies to recognize situations where self-advocacy is needed.
- ❑ Steps we can take to effectively self-advocate, including finding solutions.



Congratulations on completing a lesson on Personal and Professional Development!

If you completed all 3 Levels on this topic, please take a 5-minute survey using this link or this QR code. Your feedback will help us improve lessons for the future and help us decide what topic or subject we should create next!

Click or scan



Or type in your browser

<https://bit.ly/3H5v1NU>

Do not forget that we have **4 other subjects** on **Personal and Professional Development** that you can complete. If you do not know where to find them, email your Special Olympics Program staff member and they can help you.

Again, congratulations for completing this lesson. We hope that you learned a lot and will use it to become a better leader within your community and within the Special Olympics movement.