

Types of Self-Advocacy

Often, when we hear the phrase “self-advocacy,” we think of political or legal advocacy. But self-advocacy encompasses many more areas and skills. This wheel presents many kinds of self-advocacy, with a description and examples of each.

Leadership

Taking on leadership roles in your community, whether that is the autism community or a different community.

- Joining a committee
- Publicly speaking about autism
- Being a mentor
- Organizing others

Instructed Advocacy

Stating your wishes to someone else who may represent or speak for you in difficult situations.

- Having an advocate set up a medical appointment
- Writing testimonial that someone else reads

Services

Interacting with counties and government offices to get disability services and ensure they are appropriate.

- Making an appointment with a case worker
- Applying for waiver funding
- Managing your PCAs

Teaching

Educating others about autism, whether it is your own needs or general information about autism.

- Giving trainings or presentations
- Sending someone resources
- Sharing strategies with another autistic

Housing

Finding and acquiring housing that meets your needs.

- Interacting with a landlord or other professionals to ensure accommodations
- Finding a roommate
- Speaking with a landlord for permission to have a service or support animal

Employment

Activities that make your workplace safe and give you the ability to work.

- Asking HR for specific or formal accommodations
- Adjusting work hours to fit your times of productivity
- Requesting to wear headphones at work

Personal

Getting your needs/wants met and setting boundaries in relationships (romantic, friendships, family).

- Saying no
- Asking for a hug
- Asking someone to adjust plans to meet your sensory needs.

Community

Meeting others in your community, pursuing goals together, and mutually supporting each other.

- Forming a support or interest group
- Going to an event

Medical

Working with medical providers to ensure you are respected and your needs are met.

- Researching to find an appropriate provider
- Asking not to be weighed at a medical visit
- Requesting an appointment during an appointment

Policy and Legal

Interacting with elected officials and policymakers to change laws and government to improve lives of those with disabilities.

- Signing a petition
- Testifying for a bill
- Meeting with a legislator

Accessibility

Advocating for businesses, organizations, and spaces to be accessible.

- Contacting a business about inclusive options
- Writing a letter to the editor about accessible playgrounds
- Contacting customer service when there is a problem

Educational

Formal and informal work to make places of learning comfortable and accessible so that you can learn effectively.

- IEP or 504 plan
- Executive function supports
- Bringing fidgets to class