

Module 1

Being A Self-Advocate



In this module, you can find information about:

1. Being a self-advocate
2. When and where to be a self-advocate
3. Oregon Health Plan: Rights and responsibilities
4. What did I learn?

1. Being a Self-Advocate

- Being a self-advocate involves speaking up for yourself to other people, to make sure your rights are recognized and respected.
- Being a self-advocate means knowing your rights so you can have information to make decisions and get the things you need.
- Being a self-advocate helps you improve your life.
- Being a self-advocate means you stand up for and protect your civil and human rights.
- Being a self-advocate helps you achieve your goals so you can live independently.
- Being a self-advocate is important for everyone, but especially for people with disabilities who have had to fight for their rights throughout history.
- Being a self-advocate means having the ability to choose your support person.



Who can be a self-advocate?

EVERYONE!



2. When and Where to Be a Self-Advocate

Education:

- Go to the school of your choice
- Receive the same education as everyone else
- Participate in full inclusion classrooms

Civil Rights:

- Communicate with your political representatives
- Vote
- Be involved in your community
- Stand up for your rights
- Ask questions
- Help change policies and laws
- Run for office or support an ally who is running for office



Housing:

- Live where you want to live
- Live with who you want to live with

Transportation:

- Find the transportation that works best for you
- Have the items you need such as bus pass, money, app on phone, or identification



Social and community activities:

- Do activities with your friends, family, or people who are important to you



When and Where to Be a Self-Advocate cont.

Technology:

- Learn how to use equipment, programs, or products you need
- Know if you need them for home, work, or in your community

Employment:

- Explore and find the job you want
- Advocate for the accommodations you need at work



Health care:

- Make your own health and health care decisions
- Find a doctor you like and that meets your health care needs



Note: If you live in a rural community there may be additional ways that you need to advocate since there may not be as many health care choices available near you. You may find that the choices of doctors are limited or the doctors may not know enough about your specific disability or chronic condition.



Things to consider are the distance you are from where you receive services, transportation may not be accessible or affordable. If you need to travel long distance to your appointment, you may want to consider locating bathrooms along the way that are accessible. If you are not able to travel for long hours you may need to find a hotel that is accessible. Be sure to call the provider ahead of time and make sure that their office is accessible for you. You do not want to travel all that way and then realize that their office is physically inaccessible to you.

3. Oregon Health Plan: Rights and Responsibilities

As an Oregon Health Plan member, there are certain rules you and your provider must follow. As a patient, you also need to follow the instructions from your health care providers. These rules and actions are called your Rights and Responsibilities.

As an Oregon Health Plan member you have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration for member privacy
- Choose or change doctors
- Have a friend, family member, or support person present during office visits
- Be involved and informed in creating treatment plans, including refusing care
- Have written materials explained in a way that you can understand
- Have access to urgent and emergency services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

As an Oregon Health Plan member you have the responsibility to:

- Choose a provider or clinic once enrolled
- Treat all providers and their staff with respect
- Be on time for appointments
- Call in advance to cancel or if you will be late
- Set up your own appointments for doctor visits
- Use urgent care and emergency services appropriately
- Give accurate information to your doctor
- Follow your doctor's directions and seek help if you don't understand the directions



4. What Did I Learn?

I can take charge of my health care when I:

- Self-advocate by speaking up for myself to make sure my rights are recognized and respected.
- Understand that **EVERYONE** can be a self-advocate.
- Self-advocate about decisions that are being made about my life.
- Self-advocate in all areas of my life.
- Understand that being a self-advocate helps my quality of life.
- Realize that I know my body the best and have the right to make decisions when it comes to my health care.

Notes:

This module was adapted from NSW Council for Intellectual Disabilities (2009), Australia.

The toolkit and its components are supported in part by Grant/ Cooperative Agreement #5 U27 DD000014 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Disability and Health Branch. The contents of the toolkit are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official reviews of the CDC.

