

The ABCs of Advocacy: Moving from Me to We

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will:

1. Understand the three levels of advocacy: self-advocacy, individual advocacy, and system-change advocacy.
2. Recognize the importance of transitioning from a "Me" mindset to a "We" mindset in advocacy.
3. Identify practical examples and tips for effective advocacy at all levels.
4. Identify strategies to build capacity for advocacy.

Understanding Advocacy

- **Definition of Advocacy:** Taking action to support, represent, or defend a cause or individual's rights.
- **Why Advocacy Matters:**
 - Empowers individuals
 - Drives change
 - Builds community

Level 1 – Self-Advocacy

- **Definition:** Individuals advocating for their own needs and rights.
 - **Examples:**
 - A person with a disability requesting reasonable accommodations at work.
 - Using available resources to learn about personal rights and services.
 - **Key Skills:** Assertiveness, self-awareness, knowledge of rights.

Level 2 – Individual Advocacy

- **Definition:** Advocating for others on a personal basis.
 - **Examples:**
 - A peer supporter helping someone navigate Vocational Rehabilitation.
 - A family member advocating for a loved one's healthcare needs.
 - **Key Skills:** Communication, empathy, negotiation.

Level 3 – System-Change Advocacy

- **Definition:** Working to change policies, systems, or practices that affect groups.
 - **Examples:**
 - Campaigning for disability-friendly public transportation.
 - Collaborating with organizations to change local laws impacting accessibility.
 - **Key Skills:** Strategic planning, coalition-building, public speaking

From "Me" to "We"

- Understanding the Shift
- Awareness that the world does not revolve around you.
- Recognize barriers:
 - Recognize that individual struggles can reflect larger systemic issues.
 - Collaborate with others to amplify voices and strengthen advocacy efforts.
- Benefits of a "We" Mindset:
 - Greater impact through collective action.
 - Shared resources and knowledge.

Tips for Moving to a "We" Mindset

1. Build Relationships:

- Connect with peers, local organizations, and community leaders.

2. Share experiences:

- Organize group discussions to share challenges and solutions.

3. Collaborate on Goals:

- Identify common issues and work together to address them.

4. Participate in Advocacy Groups:

- Join or form advocacy networks focused on collective goals.

5. Empower Others:

- Mentor individuals in self-advocacy to create a strong community base.

Practical Strategies for Advocacy

- **Self-Advocacy Strategies:**

- Use clear communication; practice role-playing.

- **Individual Advocacy Strategies:**

- Create a network of support; gather evidence for cases.

- **System-Change Strategies:**

- Research best practices; mobilize community support.

Conclusion

- **Key Takeaways:**

- Advocacy exists at multiple levels; each plays a critical role.
- Transitioning from "Me" to "We" enhances the effectiveness of advocacy.
- Together, we can create lasting change in our communities.

Questions and Discussion

Thank You!

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