Person-Centered Planning: Helping Others Self-Advocate

HELP THE INDIVIDUAL UNDERSTAND THEIR ACCOMMODATIONS

Help the individual identify the accommodations or changes they use, or have used in the past, to be successful at home, school, work, and in social situations. Help the individual come up with simple phrases that explain what they need. Help them to practice saying these phrases with others.

START WITH WHAT FEELS COMFORTABLE

Begin by asking the individual how they would prefer to advocate for themselves. Even though talking with someone in person may be the most effective in some situations, some people may feel more comfortable starting with an email or written request. Starting with written communication can help the individual build confidence before handling similar situations in person.



OFFER CHOICES AND HELP SOLVE PROBLEMS

Some people have difficulty advocating for themselves because they may not know what other options are available or what they are allowed to request. Give the individual choices and help them think through different solutions.

LET THE INDIVIDUAL SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Give the individual the opportunity to speak for themselves. This is especially important to practice during the teenage years and young adulthood. Role-playing can be helpful. The individual can also write down what they want to say ahead of time. When possible, let the individual keep trying instead of stepping in and taking over if their first attempt does not go perfectly.



ENCOURAGE PERSISTENCE

Self-advocacy does not always mean getting exactly what someone requests. If the request was not granted, it does not mean that asking was wrong or that self-advocacy does not work. Encourage the individual to keep trying and not be afraid of making mistakes. Some people and situations may be more willing to provide accommodations than others. However, making the request and starting the conversation can help the individual become more confident. It can also help others better understand their needs.

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