CAC Corner: Becoming an Effective Advocate

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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CAC CORNER: BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

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By Tom Brownlee, Chair of the CPD Consumer Advisory Council

Here are some helpful ways on being an effective self advocate:

- Know your rights
- Know the issues and views
- Share your views and ideas
- Respect others’ views and opinions
- Suggest ideas that are effective
- Contact/write your local legislators on the importance of funding
- Share your story with legislators
- Get involved and be active
- Learn to be a leader to help those who can’t advocate for themselves
- Develop a good circle of support that can help you
- Set reasonable goals for your self
- Serve on boards and committees
- Advocate for People First language

These points can help you become the effective self advocate you can be in your communities. To make a difference is what it’s all about for us self advocates.

For myself, I been a strong self advocate and leader for 14 years now, and in that time I have seen many things, experienced many opportunities, as well as been involved on many boards and committees, and still am to this day. It’s been a rewarding experience for me, making a difference.

Tom Brownlee

NOTE: To help you get started, there are many helpful online resources, such as the Utah Developmental Disabilities Council, Disability Law Center, and the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities.