

# Rethink

Advocacy



# Self Advocacy

**This leaflet is about learning to speak up for yourself**

**This is called self advocacy**



## Self advocacy



Self advocacy is speaking up for yourself.



It can be hard to speak up for yourself. You might not be used to doing it.



Learning to self advocate makes you feel good about yourself. It helps you to be in charge of your life.



This leaflet will give you some tips about what to do.



We also run workshops about self advocacy.



Look on our website for a service near you.

**Website:**

**<https://www.rethink.org/>**

# Speaking up for yourself means you will be able to:



- say what you think and feel



- speak up for your rights



- make choices and decisions



- make sure people listen to you



- ask the questions you want to ask



## Times when speaking up for yourself is really important:



- when you have an assessment



- if you feel the person you are talking to is not listening to you



- if you want to make a complaint



- if you are not happy about the medication or care you have been given

## To speak up yourself you need to:



- know what you want



- be confident to say what you want



- believe you can make your own decisions



- know what you can do on your own and what you may need help with

## Things that might stop you speaking up:



- if you find it difficult to speak to people like social workers about what you want



- if you worry about what might happen if you do speak up



- if you don't know enough about something. Or you don't have any information

# Tips on how to self advocate



## Write a plan

Having a plan is useful. It helps you think through the situation you are dealing with.

A plan should say :

- what you want to happen or speak up about



- who you need to speak to

This is likely to be the person who will make the decision about the problem you are having.





- what you need to do. Things like:
  - making phone calls
  - going to meetings
  - making a complaint



- what support you need to help you speak up



You may need some help to write a plan. You can ask your local Rethink advocacy service for help.

## Tips for talking to people so they listen to you



You may have to speak to someone about problems you are trying to sort out.



It is good idea to plan what you want to say.



If you have to go to a meeting you could take a friend with you.



Take notes when you speak to people



# Tips for talking to people



## Do:

- think before you speak



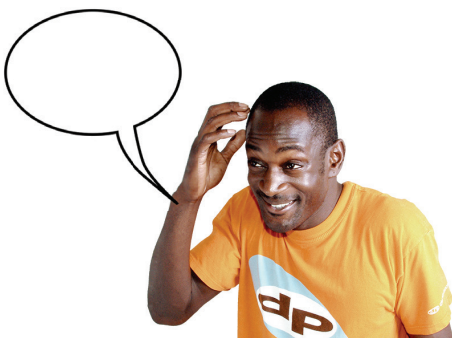
- stick to the point when you are talking



- try to listen to what people are saying to you



- try to be confident about what you are saying



- say if you don't understand what is said to you

## Don't:



- interrupt people



- be rude

## Making a complaint

This is a way of speaking up about something you think is wrong.



You might feel a service:

- has not treated you with respect



- has given you the wrong care or treatment



- not done enough or were too slow in helping you





**Complain**

You can make a complaint to the service you were not happy with.



You will need to find about their **Complaints Procedure**.

A **Complaints Procedure** explains how to make a complaint.



**Complain**

## **Complaints to the NHS**

If the problem is with the NHS you might be able to get support from your local **NHS Complaints Advocacy Service**.

## Other things that can help you speak up



### Having enough information

If you have a problem you need to find out who to speak to about it.

### Know your rights

#### Your rights and the law

The issue you have may mean the law has been broken .



For example:

You may not have been treated fairly because you have a disability.



Speak to a local organisation like Citizens Advice to help you.

## Rights an organisation may give you



The issue you have may be to do with where you live. Or could be to do with another service you use.



Often this can be sorted out by speaking to the right person.



**Complain**

If the person cannot sort it out you might want to make a complaint.



## Sometimes what you want is not a right

For example

You may want a different support worker.

It is something you would like, but it is not a right.



The service should try to help but they may not be able to.

# Organisations that give advice and information



**Citizens Advice** gives advice on benefits, work, money, housing, law and health

**Website**  
[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)



**Age UK** gives information and advice to older people

**Website**  
[ageuk.org.uk](https://ageuk.org.uk)



**Carers UK** gives information and advice to anyone who is a carer.

**Website**  
[carersuk.org](https://carersuk.org)



**Mencap** is a Learning Disability charity that gives information and advice.

**Website**  
[mencap.org.uk](https://mencap.org.uk)

## Other help from Rethink



Rethink Mental Illness has lots of services for people living with mental illness.



We also have different advocacy services across England.



An advocate will try to help you to sort out the problems that you need support with.



They will speak up to other people for you.

# Rethink

Advocacy

## How to contact us

### Rethink Mental Illness



**Phone:**



**Email:**



**Website:**



**Facebook:**



**Twitter:**