



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





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

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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.





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



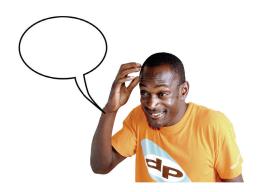
stick to the point when you are talking



 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



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.



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



Age UK gives information and advice to older people

Website ageuk.org.uk



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

Website carersuk.org



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

Website 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.



How to contact us

Rethink Mental Illness



Phone:



Email:



Website:



Facebook:



Twitter: