



Community Living Skills

Snapshots

Self-Advocacy

“Self-advocacy begins by understanding that rights are never granted from above. They are grasped from below by those with the courage and determination to seize that to which they are entitled.”

— **Tony Coelho, former U.S. Representative and sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

Introduction

The Self-Advocacy session is part of the Community Living Skills workshop.

The session guides participants through several types of advocacy, and prompts them to consider situations in their lives when self-advocacy could be valuable. A core part of independence is being able to decide which situations are worth advocating for, and how to effectively choose to do that.

Content Summary

Introduction: Definitions for self-advocacy and self-advocate

Self-Expert: Knowing one's self, both physical needs as well as personal values, and understanding rights and responsibilities

Being a Self-Advocate: Identifying a need or want, and thinking about ways to communicate it as an advocacy issue

Advocacy Goals: Deciding on desired advocacy outcomes, understanding possible barriers and practicing advocacy

Advocacy Tips: Additional tips on deciding when to advocate, a brief introduction to systems advocacy, and practicing self-care when advocating





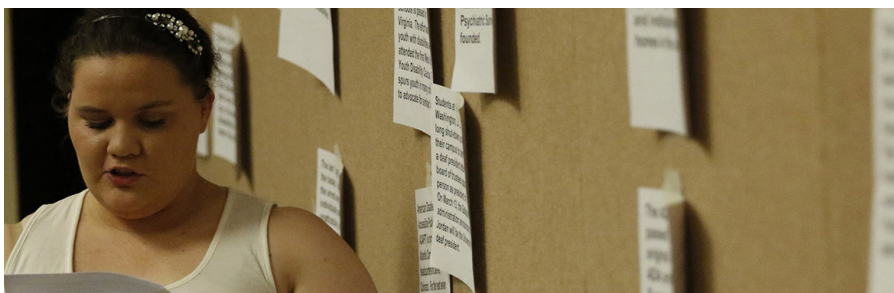
Healthy Community Living is a program to support opportunities for people with disabilities to live well and participate fully in their communities.

It includes two peer-led independent living skills workshops, **Community Living Skills** and **Living Well in the Community**, which are each divided into ten specific content sessions.

RTC:Rural used an iterative participatory curriculum development (IPCD) process to involve key stakeholder engagement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of each workshop.

Each workshop has been developed through partnerships with people with disabilities with the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) and Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

The HCL Snapshots series explores how partner participation through the IPCD process was fundamental in shaping the HCL program to improve people's wellbeing by providing support, health promotion, education, and opportunities for people with disabilities to succeed in reaching personal goals.



Learning Objectives

Workshop participants can learn how to identify personally important issues to advocate for on behalf of one's self or others, based on the rights and responsibilities as a person with a disability. They learn strategies for setting and completing a self-advocacy goal, and ways to work through barriers and challenges as they arise.

Disability Community Partnership Shaped Content

The Self-Advocacy session was shaped by HCL project partners through an iterative participatory curriculum development (IPCD) process. As a core service provided through independent living, advocacy was something with which partners were familiar. Partners supplied information and videos of people with disabilities sharing their own self-advocacy feelings and stories that resonate with class participants.

In the pilot phase, workshop participants shared that having discussions on health, recruiting support for medical appointments, learning the difference between being assertive versus aggressive, and doing activities on self-discovery helped them connect with workshop content and learn how to apply self-advocacy to their lives.

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Rural Institute

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