

Follow Up

Now that you have identified (chosen) your issue, done your research, made your contacts and have tracked what happened, you may feel like you have done all you can do. NOT YET!

Following up is critical. Many times, the people you are trying to reach are very busy. They need to be reminded to act upon your request and to be reminded about how much you care about this subject.

Some ways you can follow up:

Phone call - leaving a quick message or having a brief conversation on the phone can remind the person of your passion and commitment about the issue. It usually won't be a long conversation - just long enough to make a positive impression.

Email or note - A note of thanks following your meeting, with another reminder of your desired action, is a great way to follow up with your advocacy efforts.

Thank you - If the person (s) have already done what you asked of them, a personal, handwritten (if possible) note of thanks will keep the road open for future requests.



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Speaking Up for Yourself



Self Advocacy Tips for Youth with Special Health Care Needs

Self Advocacy Tips

Self advocacy is speaking out on an issue that concerns you. This can mean talking to your teachers about your further education, your doctor about your health care needs or talking with your parents about something you want to do. Here are some tips to help you advocate for your needs.

How to Talk To Someone

Have a very good idea of what you want and why you want it.

- ♦ Rehearse what you will say...maybe with a friend.
- ♦ Speak clearly.
- ♦ Maintain eye contact (as much as possible).
- ♦ Take your time when talking, and ask for time to think if you need it.
- ♦ Rephrase (repeat) what you hear to be sure you really understand.
- ♦ Be respectful.
- ♦ Be careful of your body language (do you look or act angry, impatient, etc.?).
- ♦ Be flexible and ready to compromise.
- ♦ Make it very clear what will happen in return for getting what you need. For example, if in a class you need an accommodation, the accommodation will help you get assignments done on time, pay more attention in class, improve effort, etc.

Supporting Your Issue

In order to advocate for yourself (being a self advocate) , you will need information (facts, research) to show why your ideas are good and how they have worked for others. Some places to find good information are:

- **Other people** - Friends, teachers or family members might have experience with what you are trying to find out. Ask them questions. Ask them for ideas about where to find more information. Sometimes stories from other youth who share your experience or concern can be really powerful in helping others understand.
- **Phone Book** - This is a good place to find the government programs and agencies that might have good information or people to help answer questions.
- **Library** - You can ask a librarian to help you find local or national organizations that might have information or people to help answer questions. You can find helpful books and magazines for facts you might need. Libraries also have computers that have access to the internet.
- **Internet** - This can be a good way to find organizations and information by typing in keywords in a search engine (try www.google.com).

- **Schools** - School counselors, staff and teachers can help you find information .

Keep Track of Information

It's important as an advocate to keep track of what steps you take (Step 1: talk to person. Step 2: do research and talk to those with knowledge, find out facts and ideas for what you want. Step 3: write a letter explaining the issue and what you need).

Some things to track:

- Dates you talk to people
- The names of people you talk to.
- What you both decided or what could not be agreed upon.
- What you say you will do and what they say they will do.

