



Department of  
**Intellectual &  
Developmental Disabilities**

# STATE OF TENNESSEE

Self-Advocate Mentors

05/26/2016

# What are Self Advocate Mentors and Why Your Agency Needs Them



# Who Developed this Training

## CQL

- **CQL** – which stands for The Council on Quality and Leadership – has been around for more than 40 years, advocating with and for people with disabilities. The words in our name describe what we stand for:
- **Council** – a group of people that come together to share, learn and make a difference – at CQL, advocates and people with disabilities are always at the table.
- **Quality** – being the best and helping others be the best – for CQL quality always starts with the PERSON – we work to make things better in organizations, communities and most of all in the lives of people with disabilities.
- **Leadership** – looking ahead and not being satisfied with what was or what is – CQL looks for new ideas and new ways of supporting people to live the lives they choose.
- Our Vision – A world of dignity, opportunity and community for all people

# BECOMING AN ADVOCATE MENTOR

- To become an advocate mentor, you first must become a self-advocate. Being a self-advocate will give you the skills and the confidence to speak up and overcome barriers and challenges. When you learn how to help yourself, you develop the ability to help others.
- Other people may notice that you are good at speaking up for yourself. Or you may be a member of a group and someone notices you are good at solving problems. You might be asked to work with others as part of a group to advocate for something important to that group.
- Becoming an advocate means becoming aware of the world around you and moving outside of your own box.
- **Self-advocacy is all about you and speaking up for yourself.**
- **Advocacy is all about others and speaking up for others.**





# WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?

- Self-advocacy is the ability to speak up for yourself and let people know what is important to **YOU**.
- It is the ability to say what you need and express your feelings.
- Self-advocates are people who know their rights and responsibilities and can speak up for their rights.
- **YOU** are able to make choices and decisions that affect your life.
- It also means **YOU** are the person who is responsible for the choices and decisions you make.
- **YOU** decide what you want and **YOU** develop a plan to help you get it.
- This does not mean you can't have help if you need it or want it.

## YOU are in control!



# WHY BEING A SELF-ADVOCATE IS IMPORTANT

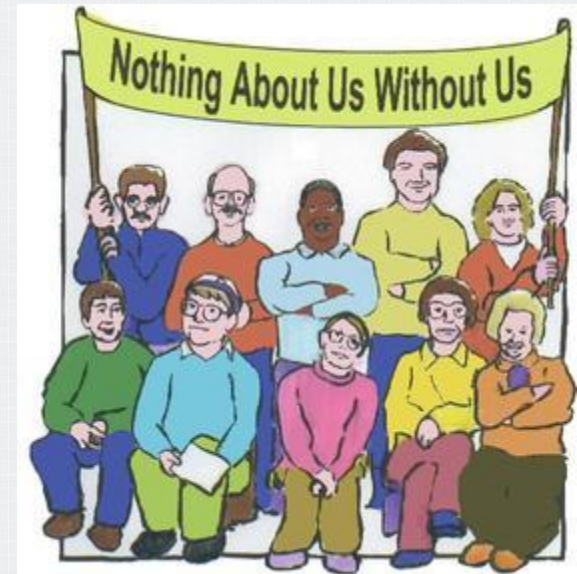
Self-advocacy helps you to gain the skills and power to speak up for yourself and make your own decisions.

People who are not self-advocates may feel ignored.

Sometimes they are afraid and sometimes they are very angry.

They allow others to control their lives.

They don't know their rights or how to exercise them.





# WHY BEING A SELF-ADVOCATE IS IMPORTANT

- Self-advocates are different.
- People who are self-advocates are confident.
- They are more independent.
- They know their rights and exercise them.
- They feel respected and strong.
- They know how to identify a problem and how to fix the problem.





“Because of  
self-advocacy training,  
I am a **LEADER** now.”

- Nancy  
*TN Advocate*



# HOW TO BE A GOOD ADVOCATE:

- be kind and polite to others
- listen and respect other peoples' opinion
- encourage others to speak up for themselves
- be responsible & do what you say you will
- help people understand the problem
- get information
- give everyone a chance to contribute
- develop a plan to get things done



**Self-Advocacy training is important.  
It has helped me to be the person  
I am **TODAY**  
and the one want to become  
in the **FUTURE.****

**- Ernie**  
*TN Advocate*



Advocates  
**support,**  
**encourage**  
and  
**promote.**





# WHAT IS AN ADVOCACY MENTOR?

An Advocacy Mentor helps support self-advocacy activities in their agency, or they may be asked to help with Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

These activities may include:

DIDD Focus Groups, Community Forums, Conferences, Workshops and personal interactions with individuals who receive supports from your agency or DIDD.

These positions are filled by the people just like you who are supported by an agency like yours in the DIDD Service system.



# Self-Advocate Mentor Mission Statement

To improve the lives of people, enhance quality and opportunity by being a champion for people's rights.



“When my staff leave, **IT HURTS.**  
It hurts me, and affects **MY LIFE.**

We need to work together  
to find a way,  
to **HELP THE GOOD STAFF STAY.”**

- Ashley  
*TN Advocate*



## ***WHAT SKILLS DOES AN ADVOCATE MENTOR NEED TO HAVE?***

The Advocate Mentor needs to have strong skills and knowledge including the ability to:

- Work well with others
- Effectively lead small groups, teach concepts and direct the work of others
- Support local self-advocates to share their stories
- Speak up and clearly state ideas and thoughts
- Listen to others and encourage them to speak up



## ***WHAT SKILLS DOES AN ADVOCATE MENTOR NEED TO HAVE?***

The Advocate Mentor needs to have strong skills and knowledge including the ability to:

- Explain things to others and help them understand
- Get information from people without giving advice or trying to “fix” the problem
- Ask thoughtful questions and listen without judgment
- Be a contributing team member
- Collect and share information with others (some support can be provided in this area by the organization, if needed)
- Be PROFESSIONAL

# SOME PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR DOS AND DON'TS

Do



treat the group as adults with respect

encourage team work

encourage all ideas and involvement

be positive about the work and  
the organization

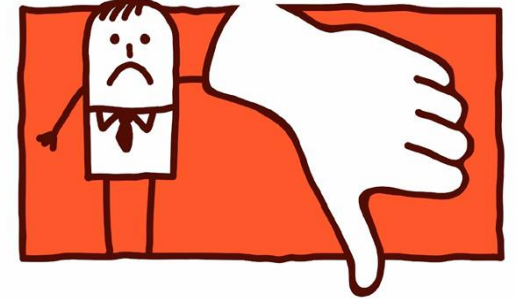
use people first language

be on time



be willing to negotiate

Don't



boss people around

be a referee

Judge or put people down

complain about your job, DIDD,  
your provider, ISC

refer to people by their disability

show up late

argue with other team members and  
get upset if you don't get your way

# So, we have a question for you?

- **Do you want to be a Self-Advocate Mentor???**



# Where do I go from here...

- Call a representative of your agency.
- Ask them about a Self- Advocacy Program
- Have them contact the Accreditation Unit in your Region.
- Help set-up a meeting.
- Start training and having focus groups.
- Mentor to other people in your agency.



# DIDD Accreditation Team Contacts

## West Tennessee:

Kimerly Brown or Tina Taylor  
(901) 568-3843      (901) 745-7787

## Middle Tennessee:

Derrell Langford, Tony Pena or DeSherri Braden  
(615) 884-1929      (615) 884-1935      (615) 231-5239

## East Tennessee:

Sandy Huneycutt or Kelly Bradley-Owens  
(865) 594-9289      (423) 414-1525





**THANK YOU**