



Domestic Violence Advocacy for People with Disabilities

Lesson 4

**Creating relationships with
disability advocates
in your community**



Finding disability advocates in your community

No matter how large or small your community, there are advocates for people with disabilities. Many disability advocates are volunteers, and started their work by advocating for themselves. You may hear the term “self-advocate” when searching.

If you don't know them, you may need to do some research to find them. The next few slides will give you some ideas on how to locate these advocates.



Finding disability advocates in your community

You are looking for people who have a similar perspective as you – advocates who respect the decisions of people with disabilities and realize that autonomy is an important factor in survivor safety.

Look for community-based advocates – not government workers or social service providers. Some state workers or social workers describe themselves as advocates and provide important services. However, they work for entities that limit their ability to advocate for a survivor's decisions.

Finding disability advocates in your community

There are many advocacy organizations whose missions value self-determination for people with disabilities. Some of them are:

- Independent Living Centers
- Clubhouses (for people with mental illness)
- Local Arcs (for people with developmental disabilities)
- Service Centers for Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Organizations for people who are blind
- Organizations for people with specific disabilities (MS Society, Autism Society, etc.)

Finding disability advocates in your community

Independent Living Centers (ILC) are resources for people with disabilities who want to live as independently as possible. If there is an ILC near you, they would be an excellent place to start looking for allies!

You can follow the link below to find a directory of Washington ILCs.

<http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/washington.html>

TIP: Right-click on the link and choose 'Open in new window'

Finding disability advocates in your community

Clubhouses are places where people recovering from mental illness meet for support in accessing friendship, housing, education and employment. They might be tricky to find! If you have a local NAMI (National Advocates for Mental Illness) chapter, they would know if you have a clubhouse. You could also check out the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD) website at www.iccd.org/

TIP: Right-click on the link and choose 'Open in new window'



Finding disability advocates in your community

Having trouble finding disability advocates? Ask your colleagues if they know anybody in your community. Ask your friends, family or community members if they are aware of disability advocacy organizations. If there is a college in your area, contact their disability services office and ask them about local advocates. Call the local Community Service Office of DSHS and ask them about disability resources in the community.

Remember to look for advocates – not government workers or social service providers. You are looking for people with an advocacy perspective!