

U and Universal

Part of what we do at Universal is to assist the people we serve and their families to become self-advocates. Here are some tips to help people self-advocate:

1. Take personal responsibility:

Be clear about what you need and want

Be familiar with hotlines and other resources that you may need

Attend any meetings that involve your services

2. Knowledge of Laws:

Realize that most services are provided because of state or federal law

Does a person need specialized training to work with you (CPR, NCI, etc.)

Laws also include definitions for eligibility and services

3. Fact finding and documentation:

Keep notes about who you talk to about services

Keep copies of evaluations and physical exams

If you are not happy with services, know who to call

Get facts in writing

Use good communication skills when talking to caregivers or agencies

Be willing to listen

If someone can't help you, find out who can

4. Negotiate:

Ask for what you want or need and say why you need it

Be aware of negative body language

Suggest a compromise

5. Believe in yourself:

You are worth the effort to protect your rights!

Did you know?

Reasonable accommodation is defined by OPM.gov as “any change to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that allows an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform job functions, or enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the workplace”. These are things that do not cause undue hardship on the employer or that do not cause a direct threat to the safety of others. This is not only for the people we serve but also for those we employ. Some examples of reasonable accommodations that could be sent to an employer for review would be things such as having a test read out loud during training or aids for reading small print.

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