

Creating Access



What is Advocacy?



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The term 'Advocacy' means standing up for your rights, standing up for someone else, or an issue you see within the broader community. Advocacy could be speaking up about issues that are impacting you in your life or speaking out on a larger scale to help create positive changes in society for many people. It is sharing your views and opinions with others to create change.

This factsheet will give you more information about your rights, things to consider when you are advocating, ways you can get involved and who you can go to for support.

Rights and the Social Model of Disability

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. People with disability have the same rights as everyone else. Rights are universal; each person should be treated equally regardless of who they are, where they are from, what they believe or how they choose to live their life.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) expresses the equal rights of all people with disability. The social model of disability underpins the UNCRPD.

The social model of disability is a shift away from the medical model which focuses on disability as something that needs to be fixed or cured. Instead, it recognises that people with disability are not limited by their impairments, but by the **physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers** within our communities. It is these barriers that prevent people with disability from fully participating in society on an equal basis with others. For example:

'It is not the inability to walk that keeps a person from entering a building by themselves but the stairs that are inaccessible that keeps a wheelchair-user from entering that building'.

To learn more about your rights as a young person with disability, click on the links below:

- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Auslan translation videos: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

To learn more about the social model of disability, click on the links below:

- [Social Model of Disability - PWDA](#)
- [Two models of disability - Youth Affairs Council Victoria](#)

Things to consider when advocating

It is important for all young people to feel comfortable, confident and have the right skills to advocate about issues that are either affecting you, other people or the community. Think about the points below to help you decide how you would like to speak up, and what your next steps may be:

1. **Identify** the problem or issue you are having, and consider what the change is that you want to see. Be specific in what you want to achieve.
2. **Learn** and speak with other people and organisations to find out if this is an issue that is only affecting you, or if this is a larger issue that may affect many people.
3. **Decide** how you want to advocate and consider what skills you have. Do you have a great way with words, or would you prefer to raise awareness to an issue in a more creative way? Express your feelings and ideas in whatever way makes sense to you.
4. **Remember** to look after yourself through the process. Creating change through advocacy can take time, so taking the time to do things for yourself is very important. For more information on self-care and staying stress free [click here](#).

There are specific skills you may need depending on if you are advocating about something that's just impacting you, or if you are wanting to advocate for larger social change. More information about these specific skills can be found in the additional factsheets provided.

Ways to get involved

There are many ways to get involved, advocate and create change in within your local community. Some of these are:

- Participate in youth consultations about topics that are important to you
- If you're at school, get involved in your local leadership group
- Contact your local youth centre or council, who might have a youth advisory group
- Follow advocacy groups on social media, become members and sign up for newsletters to hear about things that are happening
- Volunteer for organisations who are advocating for the issues you are passionate about

Where to go for support

It's important to remember that you are not in this alone. When advocating, you might want to reach out for support. If you would like to speak with someone for advice or support, some people or places you can reach out to are:

- Friends
- Family members
- Teachers or university professors
- A trusted worker, volunteer or manager at a service or organisation
- Individual and systemic advocacy organisations
- [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#)
- [NSW Ombudsman](#)
- [The Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Advocate for Children and Young People](#)
- Peak bodies such as [Youth Action](#) who represent young people and youth services, [PWDA](#) who represent people with disability, or other peak bodies relating to the issue you are advocating for.

For more information

For more information about advocacy and speaking up, please see our other factsheets:

- What is advocacy
- Speaking up for social change

These factsheets and other resources are available on the Creating Access website at:

<http://www.creatingaccess.org.au>

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The information in this document was prepared as part of the Creating Access project, as part of a collaboration between People with Disability Australia (PWDA) and Youth Action.

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