



Domestic Violence Advocacy for People with Disabilities

Lesson 4

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

Overview of this Activity

In this lesson, you will be asked to:

- Contact a disability advocate, set up a meeting.
- Tell each other about your work.
- Identify areas where expertise could be shared.
- Identify other ways that collaboration between agencies could take place.
- Discuss possible cross-training opportunities.
- Report on your activities.



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

Independent Living Centers in Washington:

- CORD (Spokane)
- Central Washington Disability Resources (Ellensburg)
- disAbility Resources of SW Washington (Vancouver and Longview)
- Center for Independence (Pierce County)
- Alliance of People with disAbilities (Seattle and Redmond)
- disAbility Resource Connection (Everett)

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!



Meeting with a disability advocate

Once you find an advocate who is interested in talking with you about domestic violence and disability, set up a brief meeting – either in person or over the phone.

On the following slides are some questions you should ask the disability advocate when you meet.

Meeting with a disability advocate

Ask the following questions of the disability advocate:

- Who do you serve?
- What services do you provide? When should individuals be referred to your organization?
- Are your services free, or do people have to pay?
- What is your experience with people with disabilities who have disclosed abuse?
- Would your organization be interested in training about domestic violence?
- How can our two organizations cooperate to support the decisions made by people with disabilities who have experienced abuse?

(continued on next slide)

Meeting with a disability advocate

Tell the disability advocate about your program. Include the following:

- Who we serve.
- What services we provide and when individuals should be referred to your organization.
- What individuals who use your services might expect when they come to you.
- What your experiences are with people with disabilities.
- Ask if their organization provides any training that might benefit your program.
- How can our two organizations cooperate to support the decisions made by people with disabilities who have experienced abuse?



Meeting with a disability advocate

[Click here to download the assignment.](#)

Or check the Advocacy for People with Disabilities online training page at wscadv.org

Print it out and take it with you to your meeting.
Return here when your meeting is finished.

After your meeting, talk to your supervisor about your discussion. Talk about the ideas you and the disability advocate came up with.

Meeting with your supervisor

During your meeting with your supervisor, discuss the following:

- The services the disability advocate provides, and when you might refer survivors to them.
- When you do refer to them, how do their services support autonomy for survivors?
- Would cross-training between your two organizations be beneficial? If so, try to schedule some training meetings.
- What other ways could your two organizations collaborate for the benefit of survivors with disabilities?



Report on your activities

When you've completed the assignment, please report back here. To complete this lesson, you will be asked to briefly describe:

- The organization of the disability advocate and who they serve.
- When you would refer survivors with disabilities to this organization.
- How can your two organizations support the decisions made by people with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence.
- If you have scheduled any cross training between your two organizations.
- Any next steps your two organizations are taking as a result of your work on this lesson.



Report on your activities

[Click here to report back.](#)

Or check the Advocacy for People with Disabilities online training page at wscadv.org



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THE END!

THANK YOU!