

Steps for Starting a Self-Advocacy Group

What are the steps for starting a successful self-advocacy group?

1

Commit to self-advocacy

- Look at the [Listen Include Respect principles](#) that explain what makes an inclusive organisation.
- Think about what barriers exist that might make it difficult for self-advocates or a self-advocacy group to be fully engaged in the organisation.
- Think about accessibility - what needs to change if you commit to engaging self-advocates?

2

Bring people together

- Find people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Look within your members, people in the community, in local organisations, and check with partners.
- Make sure you have clear and easy-to-understand information about why you are bringing people together. This will help people understand how a self-advocacy group is different from a social group.

3

Learn about rights and get basic training

- Help the group learn about the CRPD, self-advocacy, and how to speak up.
- Help supporters learn about how to support without taking control.

4

Organise meetings and find resources

- Plan a meeting schedule - the group should decide if they want to meet weekly, monthly, or on a different schedule.
- Find a meeting place, materials, and think about any funding needed. Organisations that are supporting self-advocacy groups to start usually help fund this.

5

Choose leaders and plan activities

- Self-advocacy groups should choose their own leaders. This can be one leader for the group, two co-leaders, or a team of people with different roles. Many self-advocacy groups decide they want to vote on leaders.
- It is up to the group how they choose their leaders!

6

Plan Activities

- Self-advocacy groups decide their own activities. A good place to start is for the group to choose two or three topics that matter to them.
- Agree on what the big messages are - what does the group want to say about the topics that are important to them?

7

Accessibility check

- Do a check to make sure you're still following your commitment to inclusion now that the group has started working. Look back at the [Listen Include Respect principles](#) and see if they match up with how the self-advocacy group is being supported.
- Check the accessibility of how the group works - make sure you are still using easy-to-understand language, visuals, and clear agendas. Get feedback from the group to make sure everyone can understand.

8

Get support

- Look for local networks or organisations that want to work with the self-advocacy group.
- They can help with coordination, information, or relationships - but it is important that partners understand that the self-advocacy group makes their own decisions about what work they do.

9

Stay active and grow

- Grow membership - find new people with intellectual disabilities who want to join the group and become self-advocates.
- Support the current members of the group to grow - think about what leadership roles people can take on and how they can keep growing their skills.