

## Lesson 1 Block 1: Teacher Sheet

### Lesson Synopsis

Students begin thinking about core self-advocacy concepts. By engaging in discussions, students learn what constitutes self-advocacy and why self-advocacy is so important.

### Lesson Objectives

1. Broadly define self-advocacy as a process of coping with challenges.
2. Demonstrate understanding of self-advocacy as a natural part of life.
3. Demonstrate understanding that self-advocacy skills are useful and valuable.
4. Describe and practice self-advocacy action steps.

### Lesson Activities

- (1) Introduce basic lesson concepts.

The teacher leads and guides the students on their initial exploration of self-advocacy. The teacher should define self-advocacy and give some examples. The teacher can foster discussions about times that students advocated for themselves in the past, how well their advocacy efforts worked, and how important it was to try. A Teacher PowerPoint with supportive points and ideas for teaching self-advocacy concepts is included.

- (2) Student Centerpiece

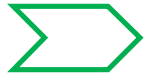
Use the Lesson One Student Centerpiece to continue fostering student exploration of lesson concepts and to review lesson terms. The Lesson One Student Centerpiece also introduces advocacy action steps, a framework for doing self-advocacy. Teachers may want to discuss using “I statements” in the action steps.

- (3) Enrichment Activities

- Students can play the Self-Advocacy Game Show
- Students with special interests or talents can draw, dramatize, or digitally animate their understanding of self-advocacy.
- The class could undertake an advocacy project together around some problem at the school or in the community.

These are just a few suggestions for Enrichment Activities. Please see the *Lesson 1 Block 3: Enrichment Activities Sheet* for additional suggestions and details.

## Lesson One: Student Centerpiece



Hidden Social Rule:  
No one knows what you need unless you say something.

So what is self-advocacy?

- Knowing who you are
- Explaining and asking
- Participating in life
- Responding to others

### *Knowing Who You Are*

In order to advocate for yourself, you have to know who you are first! All people, whether they have disabilities or not, have strengths and challenges. Self-advocacy skills can help you request accommodations or supports so that you can do all the things you want to do in life. Having a challenge does not have to slow you down.

### *Explaining and Asking*

Self-advocacy involves explaining and asking. In the adult world, you have to ask for help if you need it.

### *Participating*

Let's say some friends invite you to Starbucks. The music is really loud, and the blender is driving you crazy. Do you have to go back home? Self-advocacy skills can help you deal with these types of situations so you can keep on participating in your life.

### *Responding to Others*

Self-advocacy also helps you respond to other people. If someone a few desks away is flicking his pen and the noise is distracting you, what is the best way to tell him to stop the clicks? Self-advocacy skills can keep you calm and figure out a plan.

Definitions:

**Strength** – A strength is a talent or skill, an ability to do something that is special or unique, or some way that a person contributes to his or her community.

**Challenge** – A challenge is an area of life that is difficult. Challenges are often stressful. Certain challenges may require an accommodation

**Accommodation** – An accommodation is a type of support that helps you participate at school, at work, and in the community. For example, if you can't see the blackboard well, you may have an accommodation to sit in the front row.

## Self-Advocacy Action Steps

- 1. State the problem.**
- 2. State how you feel.**
- 3. State what needs to happen to fix the problem.**

Example One: The cafeteria is too loud for Maria.

- 1. Maria states the problem.*

She tells her advisor, “The noise level in the cafeteria is really loud.”

- 2. Maria states how she feels.*

She tells her advisor, “I can’t concentrate. I can’t even eat it’s so loud!”

- 3. Maria states what she needs to fix the problem.*

She asks her advisor, “Is there a quiet space where I can eat?”

Example Two: Kim is wondering if his medication is making him edgy.

- 1. Kim states the problem.*

He tells the doctor, “Every time I take my medication, I get edgy and anxious.”

- 2. Kim states how he feels.*

He tells the doctor, “I’m very uncomfortable. The feeling is really strange.”

- 3. Kim states what he needs to fix the problem.*

He asks the doctor, “Can you check my medication to see what is going on?”

## Lesson 1 Block 3: Enrichment Activities

### Self-Advocacy Game Show

Deployment of the *Game Show* activity is flexible. Some students may want to break into two teams and play competitively with a buzzer. Students for whom competitive play would be too stressful could work as a whole class to answer the questions, either within a certain amount of time or with no time pressure. Other ideas include a “treasure hunt” to search for printed cards with the correct answers or decorating the classroom like a TV game show studio. Eight Game Show questions are included here, but teachers could eliminate some questions or add others.

1. Self-advocacy means:

- (a) asking for help
- (b) describing what you need
- (c) giving up
- (d) answers (a) and (b) both

2. True or false:

Everyone does self-advocacy.

3. True or false:

Self-advocacy can help you solve problems.

4. True or false:

Knowing about yourself isn't part of self-advocacy.

5. Let's say you need the lights at school dimmed because they are hurting your eyes.

- (a) Most people can read your mind and will turn down the lights automatically.
- (b) You should just go home.
- (c) You could ask the teacher if the lights can be dimmed or if you can move seats.
- (d) You could unplug the light – who cares if the whole class goes suddenly dark?

6. True or false:

Everyone has some strengths and skills.

7. Self-advocacy involves

- (a) planning
- (b) ignoring other people
- (c) communicating
- (d) answers (a) and (c) both

8. Self-advocacy happens

- (a) only at home
- (b) only at school
- (c) at home, at school, at work, and in the community
- (d) just at work

### **Self-Advocacy Action Steps Drama**

Students write a play that demonstrates the three self-advocacy action steps and then they produce the play for their classmates.

### **Self-Advocacy Action Steps Video**

Students, especially those with special interests in computers and digital media, could make videos depicting the three self-advocacy action steps. Peers could take roles as actors in the video or as technical assistants with video editing and production.

### **Self-Advocacy Mock Debates**

Students can hold mock debates on the merits of self-advocacy statements such as, “Everyone does self-advocacy.” One group could try to prove a statement is true while the other group tries to prove it is not true.

### **Self-Advocacy Demonstration Projects**

Students draw, write, or reenact self-advocacy scenarios from their lives. If a student has a special interest, this can be incorporated into the project. Students could work on this project during one class period or over several weeks. Additionally students could work independently or in teams.

### **Self-Advocacy Posters**

Students could work individually or as a group making posters that explain the three self-advocacy action steps, why self-advocacy is important, or examples of self-advocacy scenarios.

### **Self-Advocacy Real World Practice**

As a class, the students could advocate around some issue at school or in the community. They would plan the advocacy using the self-advocacy action steps and then regroup after to discuss what happened and what was effective (or not).

### **Self-Advocacy Sleuthing**

If a teacher has a popular book, movie, or show with a good example of self-advocacy embedded in the story, ask the students to watch or read and see if they can point out the self-advocacy scenario. Does the character do each of the self-advocacy steps? How effective is the character at advocating for himself or herself?