



Self-advocacy is what you do to achieve a certain goal or outcome for yourself. It is about speaking and negotiating for yourself. It is about how you would like a problem to be resolved and making informed decisions. To advocate for yourself, you are standing up for your rights.



## How to Advocate for Yourself

Self-advocacy helps solve your issues the way that you would like them resolved. It can help you to learn and improve new skills. It is about working with others to improve a situation.

By making a complaint it gives others the opportunity to review practices, policies, and procedures. It will ensure rights and entitlements are respected. Self-advocacy can lead to positive change.

### What are the steps to advocating for yourself?

Advocating for yourself involves planning, preparation, research, and knowing when to reach out for support. It involves knowing how your rights/entitlements were violated and what you would like to achieve in resolving your issue.

Attitude plays a big part in self-advocacy. If you are polite, respectful, reasonable, and show that you want to work together to resolve an issue, you are more likely to be successful. Stay positive and treat others like you would like to be treated.

### Basic Steps to Self-Advocacy

- Define or explain the problem - be clear, to the point, and have all the facts
- Develop an action plan - know where to begin, be prepared, and know who is involved
- Carry out the action plan - record, copy, reassess/ modify the plan, consult
- Evaluate the results - what worked and didn't work - this will help you the next time you self-advocate

### Helpful Tips

- State the issue clearly
- Know what you want
- Keep records and document the process
- Educate yourself and others about the issue
- Research your topic and know your rights
- Know the options for resolution
- Have a back-up plan
- Treat others like you would like to be treated
- Provide feedback to those who worked with you to resolve the issues
- Don't be afraid to say "thank you"

Visit the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office website at [www.ppao.gov.on.ca](http://www.ppao.gov.on.ca) for complete info guides, "Self Advocacy" and "Four Steps to Successful Self-Advocacy".



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Self-advocacy is a learning process and not everything will go as planned. Don't let that stop you from moving forward. Learn as you go and celebrate your successes. See the smallest changes as positive. You will be empowered by standing up for your rights and may find it is an important contribution to your well-being.

### Where to Find Help

**For mental health rights and entitlement issues, contact** (Thunder Bay Office) **343-4309**  
(Head Office) **1-800-578-2343**  
**Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office**  
*580 North Algoma St., Rm. Ka111 Thunder Bay*

**Ombudsman Ontario** **1-800-263-1830** (En.)  
**Thunder Bay District Office**

**Ontario Human Rights Commission** **1-800-387-9080**  
*180 Dundas Street W. 8th Floor. Toronto M7A 2R9*  
*Open: Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm*  
[www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)