PART 3:

ADVOCACY!
TAKING ACTION FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS
OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

PART 3 CONTENTS:
• Advocacy and Action..................................................230
• Action Plans.................................................................232
• Steps Toward Advocacy.................................................232
PART 3: ADVOCACY!
TAKING ACTION FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS
OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

CONTINUING YOUR START: ADVOCACY AND ACTION

Advocacy is action to create positive change. It usually involves many people and/or organizations working together toward a shared vision for change.

The best advocates for disability rights are self-advocates, people with disabilities themselves. It takes the active and collaborative efforts of persons with disabilities and their allies to ensure that their human rights are respected and to effectively create social change.

ESSENTIALS OF ADVOCACY

Awareness of Rights
Awareness of Self
Action

AWARENESS OF RIGHTS

All people should be aware of their rights and liberties! The first two parts of this manual are intended to make you aware of the human rights that persons with disabilities are entitled to under international law, as affirmed by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Persons with disabilities and their allies need to be able to analyze and navigate the social and political environment within which they live from this human rights perspective. Such awareness increases consciousness and mobilizes people to take action, to advocate against discrimination, and to fight for the rights to which they are entitled.

Using a Human Rights Approach for Advocacy

A rights-based approach to disability regards the limitations placed on people with disabilities by their social and physical environments as a violation of their fundamental human rights. A right-based approach can transform the needs of people with disabilities into rights they can claim and advocate.
REFERENCES:


• **Working to implement disability rights law:** For example: Taking action to highlight non-compliance with accessibility standards in new building construction, or training employers on how to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities.

Advocacy benefits from the collective action of individuals and groups working together to achieve a shared goal. Wise advocates recognize that creating lasting change takes time, especially when old attitudes and habits must be overcome. They plan and commit themselves to a sustainable, long-term effort, but they also set short-term goals and benchmarks.

Celebrate your achievements together and take care to nurture your shared vision and working relationships.

**ACTION PLANS**

Working collaboratively, people can create action plans that take advantage of the skills and resources each partner, whether it be another individual or an organization, has to contribute. Partners also regularly evaluate their plan in light of successes and failures, as well as unfolding events and opportunities.

Action planning can be simple, just remember the “WH questions”:

- **What?** For example: *What type of issue is the group addressing? What type of actions are necessary?*
- **Who?** For example: *Who will take action?*
- **When?** For example: *When will the action be complete?*
- **Where?**
- **Why** and/or **how?** For example: *How will you obtain the financial, material, and/or human resources that may be needed to take action?*

Asking these questions will make sure that everybody understands what is going to happen next. The next step in action planning is making sure that the plan is **feasible** and **reasonable**. Once you complete the action, it is important to follow-up with additional questions:

- When was the action taken?
- What happened as a result of the action?
- What are your next steps?

**STEPS TOWARD ADVOCACY**

**STEP 1: DEFINE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO MAKE (30 minutes)**

1. **Discuss/List:**
   - What are the main issues or barriers to the human rights of people with disabilities in your community? Brainstorm a list and record it on chart paper.
   - If you could create change on any one of these issues or barriers, which would make the most difference in the lives of people with disabilities? Mark these with a star.
2. Analyze:
Ask participants to break into small groups according to the starred items that they would most like to work on. If many people want to work on the same issue or barrier, encourage several small groups rather than a single large one.

Give each group a question sheet to guide their discussions.

Handout 1

Defining the Change You Want to Make

1. What is the specific change you wish to bring about? Write this in a few sentences on chart paper.

2. Does this change involve having the right –
   • Respected (that is, having the right recognized, stopping people and institutions from denying or limiting the right)?
   • Protected (that is, having law and measures to ensure the right is not violated and prevent its violation)?
   • Fulfilled (that is, given sufficient recognition, funding, and other positive acts that enable and assist enjoyment of that right)?

3. Analyze possible underlying causes of the situation you wish to change. Look at each from as many perspectives as you can imagine. For example:
   • Attitudes
   • Laws
   • Society
   • Religion and culture
   • Government
   • Health care system
   • Individuals and families
   • Other perspectives?

4. Of the underlying causes identified for each challenge, which seem to be the most significant?

3. Report:
Ask each group to post and briefly explain their analysis of the change they wish to make. Ask for comments and suggestions from the whole group.
STEP 2: ARTICULATING THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO MAKE  (2 hours)

1. Plan:
Once you have a clear vision of the change you want to make, you need to develop the skills to communicate your vision articulately and convincingly to others, both potential supporters and opponents.

Ask each group to prepare a five-minute presentation to a “panel of community leaders” on their chosen problem. Each presentation should try to include most of the following points

Note to Facilitator: Allow plenty of time for planning and practice. Emphasize that although some members of the group may naturally be better public speakers, everyone should participate in the planning and be able to explain their vision for change.

Handout 2

Articulating the Change You Want to Make

1. Describe the problem. If possible mention –
   • how this problem may intersect with other kinds of human rights violations many people with disabilities experience;
   • the group(s) of people with disabilities it principally affects;
   • the possible cause(s) of the problem.

2. Relate the problem to the human rights of people with disabilities, referring to specific articles of the CRPD and if possible to other human rights documents.

3. Clarify how the problem affects the lives of people with disabilities (and their families where relevant).

4. Show how addressing the problem can improve the lives of people with disabilities and the community in general.

5. Propose specific actions that should be taken to address the problem.

6. Show how members of the community can get involved in addressing the problem.

Ask each group to choose one or two spokespersons to make the presentation and two or three to serve as the “panel of community leaders.” While the groups practice their presentations, the “panel of leaders” meets to decide on their roles, representing probable attitudes within the community leadership (for example, a hostile mayor, a supportive community leader, a religious authority). Alternatively, ask one or two people from each group to come together to form the panel for all presentations.
2. Role Play:
The spokesperson(s) from each group makes a presentation and members of the panel listen and respond, asking questions and offering comments, objections or suggestions in keeping with their chosen roles.

Note to Facilitator: Time the presentations carefully: most presenters have difficulty filling the full five minutes. Also limit the panel’s responses in order for all groups to have sufficient time.

3. Discuss:
After the presentations and role play, discuss:
• How did the spokespersons feel when presenting the problem?
• How did the “community leaders” respond to the presentation? What attitudes in the community were they representing?
• How did the audience, composed of the rest of the group, respond to the presentations?
• Did any spokesperson discuss the problem as a human rights violation? Did putting the problem in this context strengthen the argument?
• Are these ideas for improving this specific right feasible in your community? Why or why not?

4. Conclude:
Challenge the participants to evaluate their knowledge of the problem and inclusiveness of perspective:
• How would you change your presentation in a real-life situation?
• How did you obtain your information on the barriers to participation and their impact? Was it accurate and complete? If not, what additional information do you need and how can you obtain it?
• Did you consult the people with disabilities involved about the problem and how it affects them? About the actions that could improve the problem?
• Why is it important in real-life human rights advocacy to include the active participation of those directly involved and affected?
• How can you apply the lessons learned from this exercise to planning and implementing advocacy for people with disabilities in your own community?

Emphasize that while articulating your vision for change is a critical skill for effective advocacy, it is also one that develops through practice. The more you do it, the better you get. Encourage participants to make and take opportunities to speak out about the change they want to make.

Note to Facilitator: If the technology is available, arrange to video the presentations and let the speakers privately critique their performances.

STEP 3: PREPARING FOR ACTION

A. Conducting a SWOT Analysis (45 minutes)

Now that you have articulated the change you want to make, analyze it in terms of your and your organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Write down answers to the following questions. Where appropriate feel free to modify questions:
**Strengths:**
- What are your advantages?
- What do you do well?
- What do other people see as your strengths?
- What unique resources do you have?

Consider strengths from your organization’s and/or your personal point of view and from the point of view of the people you deal with. Do not be modest: be realistic!

**Weaknesses:**
- What could you improve?
- What do you do badly?
- What should you avoid?
- Where do you have fewer resources than others?
- What are others likely to see as your weaknesses?

Again, consider this from an internal and external basis: do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you do not see? It is best to be realistic now and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

**Opportunities:**
- What are the good opportunities facing you?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?
- Who are your potential allies?

**Threats:**
- What obstacles do you face?
- Does your group have all the required skills for the job?
- Do competitors or opponents already exist?

**B. Surveying the Field**

1. Consider these questions about your present and future work:
   - On which of these challenges are you or others already working to change? How?
   - Does your work address the underlying causes of the situation? How?
   - Which of the identified challenges might be easily added to existing work being done by or on behalf of people with disabilities? Why?
   - Would some of these challenges for people with disabilities be especially difficult, disadvantageous, or even dangerous to address? Why?

2. Consider these questions about allies and potential allies:
   - Who are the most likely allies to support your action? Why?
   - Do you share the same goals?
   - How can your work and theirs complement and support each other?
   - What do you and/or your organization have to offer the collaboration?
   - What do you and/or your organization have to gain from the collaboration?
   - Are there potential problems with collaboration with any group?
   - How can you establish this collaboration?

---

1 Source: Mind Tools: http://www.mindtools.com/swot.html
C. Gathering Information

1. What statistics are available about people with disabilities in your community, your country, and in the world (for example, their numbers, ages, income levels, etc.)?
   • What additional statistics do you need to take action?

2. What laws and official policies does your country have that directly affect people with disabilities?
   • Do you consider these laws and policies to be adequate and effective?
   • Do they adequately protect the rights of people with disabilities?
   • Are these laws and policies consistently enforced and implemented? If not, why not?
   • Are further laws needed? If so, what new laws would you recommend?

3. Has your country ratified and is thus legally bound to uphold any of the international human rights treaties affecting people with disabilities? For more information on ratification, see the Disabled Peoples’ International Ratification Toolkit: http://www.icrpd.net/ratification/en/index.htm.

4. Has your country ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)?
   • If no, why not? What can you do to change this decision?
   • If yes, what steps has your government already taken in that direction?
   • Are any groups in your country already advocating ratification of the CRPD? What are they doing? How can you help?

5. Does your country have a national human rights commission and/or a national disability commission? For more information on implementation, see the Disabled Peoples’ International Implementation Toolkit: http://www.icrpd.net/implementation/en/index.htm

6. Are these institutions part of the government or independent of it, that is, part of “civil society”?
   • What, if anything, are these institutions doing to improve human rights and/or the lives of people with disabilities?
   • How can you work with these institutions to see that human rights standards are enforced for people with disabilities?
   • Find out what government ministries and agencies are working on the rights and needs of people with disabilities. Do they have disability policies and/or disability focal points?
   • Are any of these governmental bodies especially encouraging or discouraging of advocacy on the rights of people with disabilities?

---

2 CRPD, Article 33, obligates States Parties to “designate one or more focal points within government,” and “maintain, strengthen, designate or establish” one or more independent mechanisms to “promote, protect and monitor implementation” of the Convention. Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations must be “involved and participate fully in the monitoring process.”
STEP 4: MAKING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Now that you have gone through Steps 1-3, choose and complete an action planning form (pages 240-242). Choose or create one most suitable to your group and specific action. You may wish to have one action plan for actions aimed at long term goals and several others for individual, short-term actions. Remember to include a section on follow-up and evaluation.

Congratulations! You have now completed the following steps:

STEP 1: DEFINING THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO MAKE
STEP 2: ARTICULATING THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO MAKE
STEP 3: PREPARING FOR ACTION
STEP 4: MAKING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Now it is time for:

STEP 5: TAKING ACTION

Follow your action plan and use the skills you’ve gained to clearly address social change no matter how small the step. Give yourself a reasonable amount of time to accomplish your goal and set a date to follow-up.

STEP 6: FOLLOWING-UP

Once you have begun to take action, reconnect with your group regularly. Communicate the successes or challenges you faced when taking action. Review the following questions:

1. Did you follow the action plan? What successes did you have? What challenges did you encounter?

2. If you met your goal:
   • What factors contributed to your success?
   • How can you build on this success?
   • Should you repeat this strategy?

3. If your goal was not met:
   • What revisions need to be made to the action plan?
   • Does additional research need to be completed?
   • Are additional resources needed?

4. What are your next steps for action?
   • Do you have another action to take?
It is important to monitor and keep track of your actions. Record your progress on the action planning forms and celebrate your successes!

Working and advocating in concert with one another as individuals or organized groups is the most effective way to create social change. Collaborative work can be challenging. It requires working through conflict to achieve a consensus or agreement, but it is vital to enabling the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all.

Remember:

“A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date taken</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date will take action</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Actions needed</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
<th>By when</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
<th>Date action taken</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
<th>Human resources needed</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date will take action</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Actions needed</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
<th>By when</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date: 
Action Group: 
We recommend completing one Action Plan per meeting per group.

**Advocacy Action Plan**
Advocacy Action Plan Template

We recommend completing one Action Plan per meeting per group

Action Group: ___________________________   Date: ____________

Change to Make: _____________________________________________
Specific Actions: _____________________________________________
By Whom: _______________   By When: _______________
Resources Needed: _____________________________________________
Date Action Taken: _______________   Follow-up: _______________

Instructions

Change – What type of change do you want to make?
Actions – What types of actions are necessary?
By Whom – Who will take action?
By When – By what date will the action be done?
Resources Needed – What financial, material, and human resources are needed to take action?
Date Action Taken – When was the action taken?
Follow-up – What happened as a result of the action? Next steps?

Goals should always be:
S – Specific   M – Measurable   A – Achievable   R – Realistic   T – Time Bound

1. Goal/Objective. Briefly describe each goal/objective and when the goal/objective should be met or accomplished.
2. Measurement. How will the goal/objective be evaluated? Did you complete the action?
3. Importance. Rank the goal as Essential, Important, or Desirable as follows:

   Essential – required to access human rights
   Important – helpful for accessing human rights
   Desirable – asset for accessing human rights
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Goal/Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd Goal/Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Goal/Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>