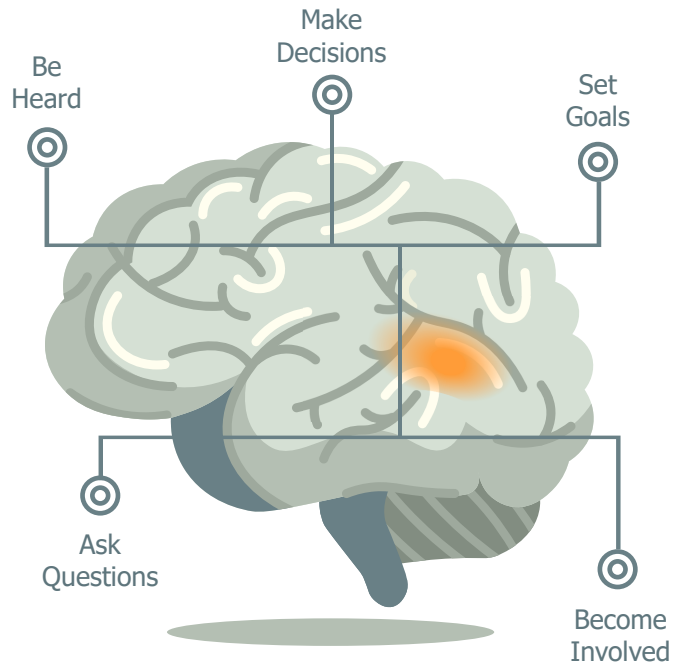


TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SELF-ADVOCACY

What is Self-Advocacy?

- Self-Advocacy (noun) the action of representing yourself or your views or interests.
- It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.
- Making sure others understand, recognize and respect your decisions.
- Decision-making is a learned skill. Some people with disabilities need opportunity, experience, and support to learn to make well informed decisions.



Advocating for Your Rights

Goals of Self-Advocacy

- Having your rights respected and your voice heard.
- Making choices about your life.
- Speaking up for yourself.
- Working towards your goals and dreams.
- Receiving support when you need it.
- Having things explained to you in a way you understand.

(continued on next page)



What Self-Advocates Do

- **Speak up** for yourself and others.
- **Ask for** support/help when needed.
- **Be involved** in the decisions that affect your life.
- **Ask** questions.
- **Learn** new skills.
- **Get involved** in your community.



Advocating For Your Rights

- **Know what you need and want.**
No one knows you better than you.
Know the rules/regulations.
If you don't know, ask.
Learn about "dignity of risk".
- **Be able to explain why you need it.**
What could you do if you had it?
How does not having it hold you back?
- **What if you are not sure what you need?**
Make a list of what is difficult for you.
Ask your friends, family and service providers for their thoughts.
- **Get approval or denial in writing.**

"It is important to be a self-advocate because you are the only person who lives within your body. You are the only person who knows what you go through. You are the best advocate for yourself because you know what you want and need to find your goals. You are the only one to advocate for yourself to reach those goals."

- Becky Spaulding, person with TBI

What is Dignity of Risk?

Person-centered thinking and practice that acknowledges the basic human need to take risks as part of everyday living and one's self esteem (or self worth).

Ways to Advocate

- Create change in the systems that affect you
 - Voting
 - Participating in Advocacy Activities
 - Contacting your representatives



Resources

- WVUCED's TBI Services Program
877-724-8244;
<http://tbi.cedwvu.org/>.
- Disability Rights of WV
800-950-5250;
<https://www.drofww.org/>
- TBI Waiver Program
304-558-1700; 866-385-8920
- Legal Aid of WV
866-255-4370;
<https://www.lawv.net/>
- To report abuse, neglect or exploitation call:
West Virginia Centralized Intake
1-800-352-6513
- This product was based off of the NJ Self
Advocacy project
<http://www.njselfadvocacyproject.org/>