

Including self-advocates in training is critical to insure that not just one voice, but that the perspective of the person receiving services is heard. Most often, self-advocates have years of experience, both good and bad, and can direct us to what is most important to them.

In order to do this in a meaningful way, self-advocates, just as we do, need time to prepare for presentations. Here are some suggestions, in the form of a checklist, based on suggestions made by self-advocates. These are general considerations, and each person should be consulted about what assistance or help they want.

In Advance:



- Consider having more than one self-advocate present at the training. This will help get a clear message across and may help increase each person's comfort level.

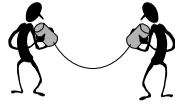
Then consider the following:

- Have I given the person enough information about the training and their proposed role so that they can make a good decision about participating or not? Have I adequately explained what the training is about, including what will happen at the meeting, what the issues are and who will be there? 
- Have I given the person enough notice about the training so that they can arrange their schedule? 
- Does the person need assistance with scheduling? Is there someone who assists the person by keeping a calendar or date book? Would the person like me to contact the schedule keeper?

- Does the person want me to discuss the training with their guardian or service coordinator?
-  Did I give the person the information they need about how and when they will get paid, the amount they will get paid, and how to get reimbursed for transportation?
- Did I send information about the training and what we talked about to the person, and to whomever else the person wanted the information to be sent to? (e.g. service coordinator, guardian, support person, etc.)

Before the training

- Have we made time to talk about what information the person may be willing to share, based on their experiences? 
[Suggestions include asking the person about whether something like this has happened to them, how they felt about it, what they did about it, what helped.]
-  Have we talked about whether the person wants or needs help to remember what will be presented? [Some people may want help writing re-collections down. Other people may want an audio or videotape of the conversation to listen to and to practice with, slides or pictures to help them remember through their presentation, or any other method that works for the person.]
- What assistance does the person want at the meeting? Suggestions have included: 
 - “Hold the paper for me.”
 - “Stand there with me.”
 - “Have slides to help me with my presentation.”

- “Ask me questions about the topic, or to get me to talk more about what I said.”
- “Only help clarify what I am saying by repeating what I said if I asked you to do so.”
-  Have we discussed transportation needs and how the person will get there? Do they need directions?
- Does the person want their support person to be in the room? If so, what's the support person's role? Is it to help with understanding? [Share this role with others so there is no confusion about what the support person is doing.] 
-  Have we talked about how to communicate with each other during the meeting? How to slow things down, if needed? [Suggestion: Use “stop signs.”] What else works for the person? [This will vary from person to person.] 
- Did we work out a tactful and respectful way of reminding each other what comes next should one of us forget? (Example: “And now (person) will tell us about.....[provide some detail here as a cue].”)
- Did I remember to include the person(s) by name as the presenter(s) in information sent out prior to the training, or in material available at the training? Do I know how the person wants to be listed?
-  Did I ask the person about accommodations that they may need, including dietary needs, if food is served at the training?

- Has the person seen the evaluation that is being used for the training, so that they know how the training and they are being evaluated?

- Did I send the person copies of handouts or other materials that will be used in the training? Did we go over these?



The day before the training:

- Have I called the person to confirm the training? Have we gone over:

- Type of audience that will be there?
- Information about how people will be dressed, what to do, other norms?
- Appearance reminders?
- “Are you okay doing this?”
- “Do you want or need a wake up call in the morning?”



At the training:

- Did I introduce the person or did the person introduce him or herself to the group and to people individually before and after the training?
- Did I speak to the group about using people-first language and adequately describe what people-first language is and why it matters?
- Am I doing what I agreed to do in our discussions?

- Am I explaining to the person what is going on in the training?

- Am I doing everything I can to help the person overcome shyness or other issues?



- Is there another person to write down what people are saying or to record on an overhead what people are saying?

- Have I checked in with the person if, for any reason, I need to leave the person alone?



After the Training

- If a support person was not at the training with the person, are they available after the training to ask the person how it went?

This pamphlet is jointly developed and provided by the Vermont Division of Developmental Services and Green Mountain Self-Advocates.

For copies or further information, please call
802-241-2614.

This information is available in alternative formats upon request.

Creating New Partnerships:



*Including Self-Advocates
In Training*