

Protection and Advocacy

7 Advocacy and Disability Organizations



Introduction

These slides contain content adapted from the Administration for Community Living's Person Centered Counseling Training Program. The content includes text and narration from online courses. To view original content or for more information, please visit nwd.acl.gov or contact NoWrongDoor@acl.hhs.gov.

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Welcome! (1/2)

This lesson will go over some information on individual and systems advocacy, including what they are and why they're important. In this lesson you will also learn about some advocacy and disability organizations that might be useful to Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals who work in the No Wrong Door (NWD) system. Keep in mind that there are many more national and state agencies and organizations. The ones covered in this lesson are just a small selection. Feel free to do some research on your own and find some other organizations that might be useful in your role in the NWD system.

Welcome! (2/2)

Learning Objective

After completing this lesson: You will be able to describe individual and systems advocacy, including examples and at least three advocacy or disability organizations. You will also be able explain why it is important for PCC professionals in the NWD system to understand advocacy.

Why is Advocacy Important? (1/3)

Most of us rely on our own personal experiences to effectively advocate for our own rights and needs in life. We can also use what we have learned and experienced in our lives to try to change the way people think or things about the current systems around us. Advocacy is important because it can create change that improves people's lives or the communities they live in. Advocacy also raises awareness by informing leaders and decision makers about issues that are important to community members and other groups of people who may not have a voice. Through advocacy, these groups organize themselves and work together for change. They also develop leaders with the skills to make change happen.

Why is Advocacy Important? (2/3)

Advocacy may take a long time to affect change, but it is important because when successful it can help people create a just society with equal opportunity for all. Advocacy can help to make programs and services more accessible, effective, appropriate, flexible, comprehensive, adequate, and efficient. Advocacy protects and establishes new individual rights and entitlements as needed. It also eliminates the negative and unethical impact that social institutions, organizations, programs, and individuals may have on people. Lastly, advocacy helps to assure that a community's needs and goals are being met.

Why is Advocacy Important? (3/3)

On the following screens you will learn more about advocacy and some selected advocacy and disability organizations. You might already be familiar with some of them or know of others that you have worked with before. Also, depending on where you work, there are probably other local or regional organizations or agencies that would be useful for you to be aware of as a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional.

— Advocacy and Vulnerable Populations (1/3)

As you learned in the lesson on Defining and Identifying Abuse, people with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. This could include people with dementia, intellectual or developmental disabilities, cognitive impairments, or mental health conditions. Additional help might include working with the person to understand and effectively communicate their problems, issues, and concerns and discussing how advocacy can help. Discuss options and develop any action plans together, as needed.

— Advocacy and Vulnerable Populations (2/3)

The process of person-centered counseling is a type of advocacy for the person you're working with. There might be times when you take on the role of an advocate at either the individual or systems level. When doing so, always remember that any advocacy you perform on behalf of someone should be at their request. Keep in mind that an effective advocate is able to use critical thinking skills to understand problems and issues and to listen to a person's concerns. An effective advocate is also informed about a topic and can communicate about the issues with or for a person to raise awareness.

— Advocacy and Vulnerable Populations (3/3)

On the following screens you will learn about some advocacy groups. Just remember that when advocacy groups also provide services, you might need to work with the person to identify and discuss any conflicts of interest in what the group advocates for and the services they provide.

Advocacy Organizations for Abused Children and Adults (1/3)

There are many advocacy and disability organizations that Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals might work with in the No Wrong Door (NWD) system. Keep in mind that the agencies and organizations on the following screens are just a few of them. There are many more advocacy and disability organizations. Some will be local in scope; others will be national. Some might be for-profit, while others might be nonprofit. Some might be federally mandated agencies.

Advocacy Organizations for Abused Children and Adults (2/3)

Many of the advocacy organizations for children focus on how parents and adults can advocate for the protection of children against child abuse and neglect. Two of these organizations serving children who have experienced abuse or neglect are the National Children's Alliance and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). The National Children's Alliance works to protect children from child abuse and respond to victims of it. Court Appointed Special Advocates serve children who have been abused until they can be placed in permanent and safe homes.

Advocacy Organizations for Abused Children and Adults (3/3)

In the lesson on Disability-Related Laws and Policies, you learned about the Older Americans Act and that it established the Administration on Aging (AoA). Among other programs from the AoA that you have already learned about, such as the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), additional programs help prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Disability Organizations: Centers for Independent Living, National Council on Independent Living, and ADAPT

There are many disability organizations that provide both advocacy and resources for people with various disabilities. Three of them are the Centers for Independent Living (CIL), the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), and ADAPT. Each state has at least one CIL, and NCIL is a national organization that represents nearly all CILs. ADAPT started as 'American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation,' but now it is known simply as ADAPT and is focused on systems advocacy.

Deaf and Blind Advocacy Organizations: National Association of the Deaf, American Council of the Blind, and the National Federation of the Blind

As with other types of disabilities, there are advocacy organizations for people who are blind or deaf. Three of them are the National Association of the Deaf, the American Council of the Blind, and the National Federation of the Blind. Also, keep in mind that there might be local or state resources or organizations that might be useful when working with people who are blind or deaf and seeking services in the No Wrong Door (NWD) system.

Mental Health Advocacy Organizations: Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Empowerment Center, and MindFreedom

As someone who works in the No Wrong Door (NWD) system, you may work with people with mental health conditions or other psychiatric disabilities. There are many mental health advocacy and empowerment organizations throughout the country that can serve as good resources. Four such organizations include Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Empowerment Center, and MindFreedom. There are also other, condition-specific organizations, so as needed, you should search for other resources that are available in your own community.

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Advocacy Organizations: The Arc, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, and the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (1/4)

There are also many organizations that advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. One of them is The Arc. They are a national organization with nearly 700 local and state chapters. The Arc advocates for policies affecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It also provides supports and services so they can be fully participating members of the community. The Arc encompasses all ages and a wide spectrum of disabilities, including autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X, and various other developmental disabilities.

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Advocacy Organizations: The Arc, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, and the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (2/4)

Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) is a self-advocacy organization that promotes the full inclusion of people with developmental disabilities throughout the country. Among their goals are non-institutionalization, accessible housing and transportation, and equal employment opportunities and pay.

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Advocacy Organizations: The Arc, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, and the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (3/4)

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) supports and promotes increased access, rights, and opportunities for people with autism. As an advocacy organization, they work to empower people with autism to take control of their lives and ensure that their voices are heard while advocating for systems change. As stated on their website, ASAN “activities include public policy advocacy, the development of Autistic cultural activities, and leadership trainings for Autistic self-advocates. We provide information about autism, disability rights, and systems change to the public through a number of different educational, cultural, and advocacy related projects.” [source: <http://autisticadvocacy.org/>]

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Advocacy Organizations: The Arc, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, and the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (4/4)

For more on The Arc, go to: <http://www.thearc.org>

To learn more about Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, go to:
<http://www.sabeusa.org/>

To learn more about the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, go to:
<http://autisticadvocacy.org/>

Legal Advocacy Organizations: National Veterans Legal Services Program, Justice in Aging, and Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

As a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional in the No Wrong Door (NWD) system, you might encounter people seeking services who need help with various legal issues. There are many legal advocacy groups that can help, depending on the needs of the person seeking services. For example, you might be working with veterans so it's important to know about some veterans' advocacy groups. There are also organizations that help older adults with legal issues, as well as those that help people with disabilities.

Self-Advocacy

Think about what you have just learned about advocacy in this lesson and what you do in your daily work in the No Wrong Door (NWD) system.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (1/2)

- Advocacy can create change and raise awareness to improve people's lives or the communities they live in.
- Advocacy may be an important part of your role as a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional, either at the individual or systems level.
- There are many advocacy organizations and agencies that can help you and the people seeking services in the No Wrong Door (NWD) system.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (2/2)

Learning Objective

After completing this lesson: You will be able to describe individual and systems advocacy, including examples and at least three advocacy or disability organizations. You will also be able explain why it is important for PCC professionals in the NWD system to understand advocacy.

Reflection on Learning Objective

Directions: Review the objective(s) on this page. Write down your answers to the following questions.

1. What did you learn in this lesson that you felt was important?
2. What will you do differently because of the content in this lesson?