

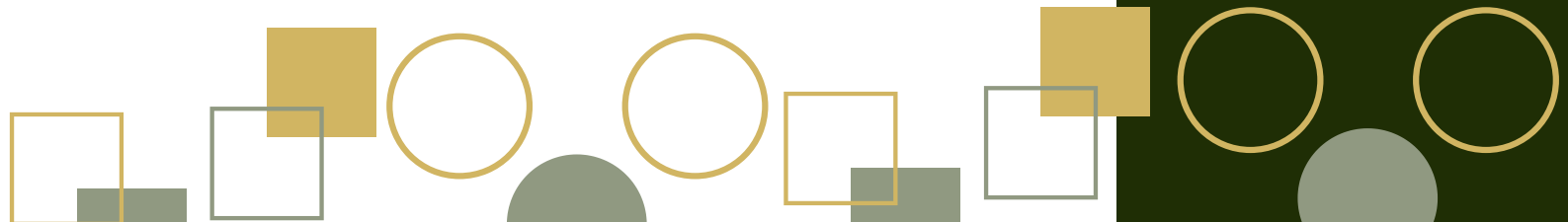


DON'T LET OTHERS DEFINE YOUR GOALS,
WE ARE ONE VOICE

HOW TO ADVOCATE BOOKLET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03 What are the three types of advocacy?
- 05 What are the five principles of advocacy?
- 06 Self-advocacy Skills You May Already Possess
 - What does it mean to advocate for yourself?
 - When and Where should you advocate for yourself?
- 07 Why should you advocate for yourself?
 - Who should advocate for you?
- 08 How to advocate for yourself
- 09 Self-determination & Self-Advocacy
- 10 Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset
- 11 Dignity of Risk
 - Opportunities to Advocate
- 12 Examples of How To Prepare to Advocate for Yourself



WHAT ARE THE THREE TYPES OF ADVOCACY?

1. Self-Advocacy:

Action of representing oneself or one's interest

- a. Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights (VanReusen et al., 1994).
- b. Self-advocacy means understanding your strengths and needs, identifying your personal goals, knowing your legal rights and responsibilities, and communicating these to others.
- c. Self-advocacy is speaking up for oneself!

2. System Advocacy:

Working towards board practice and policy changes that will alter an organization presently and in the future.

- a. Altering policies, laws, regulations, amendments, or rules that involve other people's lives.
- b. Applies for all levels, whether that be agency wide, provincially, or federally.
- c. Focusing on policies that are already written or those that are done as a habit.
- d. Deciding which to focus on is determined by knowing what the problem is and who has the ability to change or regulate them.

“Denying people the chance to achieve because you’re afraid they will fail is just another way of holding them back.” (Lewis, 2014, p. 169).



3. Peer-Advocacy:

The advocate and the advocacy partner share similar experiences or environments i.e. children's homes, learning disabilities, group homes, etc.

- a. Two plus people who share lived experiences standing up for change when they believe something is unfair or they are being treated unfairly.
- b. Can be shown in forms of standing up for a classmate, sibling, family member, friend, or for a collective group of people.
- c. Helping aid in attaining power in decision and actions in everyone's own lives.



"Don't limit me, there is only ONE success; to be able to spend your life in your own way."

- Christopher Morley, 1890-1957





WHAT ARE THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCACY?

Advocacy promotes equality, social justice, social inclusion and human rights. To meet the principles behind Advocacy, any project should meet the needs of diverse local populations, ensuring that all have a voice, basically making sure that people are put first. To do this the principles of independence, clarity of purpose, confidentiality, safeguarding and empowerment must be adhered to.

Independence: it is your job to advocate for yourself because no one understands your concerns better than yourself

Clarity of Purpose: to clarify why your advocating for yourself or to clarify the purpose of your concern

Confidentiality: between you and the person you're talking to about your concern- all affected parties- ombudsman reference

Safe-guarding (Protection): learning how to protect yourself and getting your point across without hurting others

Empowerment: practices that enable yourself to overcome barriers and contribute to practice a focus on equal opportunity

“Principles are only the starting point. If you want to make a difference in the world, you need to act on what you believe.” (Lewis, 2014, p. 50).

“Drive out fear. It stands in the way of greatness.”
Lewis, 2014, p. 113

SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS YOU MAY ALREADY POSSESS

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Listening
- Empathy
- Understanding
- Self-awareness
- Problem-Solving



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF?

When you start speaking up about what you need and want, it's like laying the groundwork for looking out for yourself and having more say in what goes on in your life. Advocating for yourself makes sure that others get where you're coming from and know what you need.

WHEN & WHERE SHOULD YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF?

ALWAYS!

Advocating for yourself is crucial to ensure that your needs and desires are not only acknowledged but also actively addressed. It involves consistently expressing them at every available opportunity to make certain that your voice is heard.

Examples:

- In your living situation (Foster Parent, Caregivers, Bio Family, etc.)
- Phone calls with workers, family, etc.
- School
- Doctors appointments
- Family and Criminal Court
- Any opportunity which arises that you want to express your needs and wants.
- Plan of Care meetings and privacy meetings with your worker(s)



WHY SHOULD YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF?



Advocating for yourself involves expressing your needs and wants to others, ensuring your well-being and influencing the outcomes that affect you. It ensures that your needs and desires are effectively communicated. This practice is vital for personal well-being, contributing to success in school, work, and daily life. By advocating for yourself, you build confidence, foster independence, and empower yourself to proactively solve problems.

WHO SHOULD ADVOCATE FOR YOU?



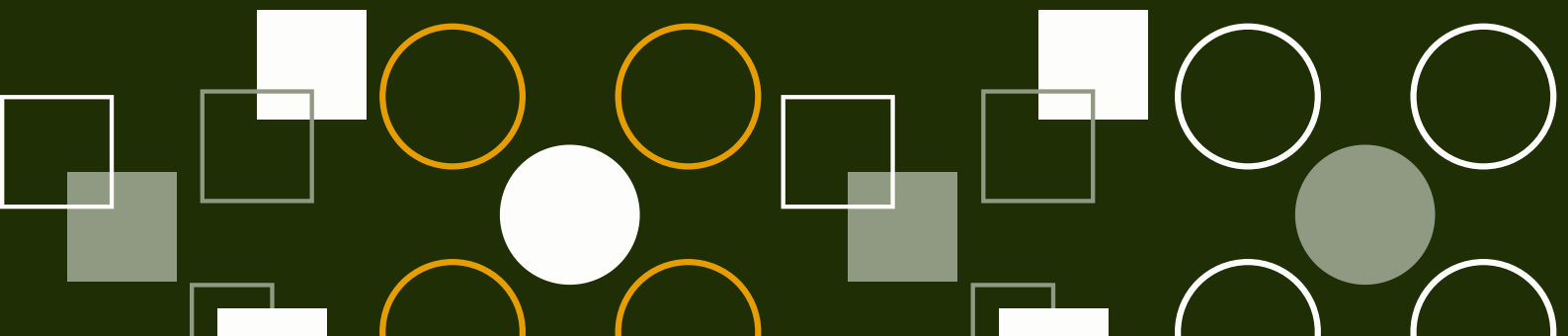
You are the primary advocate for yourself. However, you have a support network available to assist you, including your worker(s), family/parents, teachers/guidance counselor/principal, Ontario Ombudsman's Office (Children and Youth Unit), counselors, doctors, and anyone else you trust to help express your needs and wants effectively.

- Your worker(s)
- Family/Parents
- OCL/Lawyer
- Teachers/Guidance Counselor/Principal
- Ontario Ombudsman's Office, Children and Youth Unit
- Counselor, Doctor, etc.

Anyone else you trust and can help you express your needs and wants but people should not be speaking for you, they should be sharing your wishes and not their own opinions.

I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side, be an advocate for myself and others like me.”

— **Maya Angelou**



HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF



1. **Identify the problem and what you would like to have changed**, prepare as many details and examples as possible.

2. **Develop a plan on how to communicate your wishes, you could use a SMART goal format** - write a script and practice with someone you trust or by yourself to help you feel more confident!

★ *Don't forget - you have people who can help you organize yourself!*

3. **Express yourself clearly and in a calm manner** - this could be in writing or verbally, whatever makes you most comfortable


★ *Don't forget - remaining calm helps everyone take you serious and hear what you are saying*

4. **Be patient** - sometimes answers or responses can take time. Check in on the progress, don't be afraid to ask questions - just don't be annoying

5. **Be prepared** - the answer you may receive may not be the answer you were hoping for. Think about alternatives, be prepared to negotiate, have a 'plan B' in case your exact wishes cannot be met.

6. **If you feel your voice is not being heard**, review your rights and follow the complaints process, speak to the Ombudsman or your lawyer (OCL).





SELF-DETERMINATION & SELF-ADVOCACY

**“Don’t let fear stop you from going after the big one. Its pursuit can inspire you to do the miraculous.”
(Lewis, 2014, p. 137).**

- 1.** “The authority to exert control in your lives or to direct services and to act on your own behalf”- Stephanie Swayne, 2023
 - 2.** “The process by which a person controls their own lives”- The Self-Determination Group, 2017
 - 3.** “Means being in control of your own decisions without outside influence — in other words, that you are in charge of yourself. It is considered an essential development step toward maturity. We all make decisions about how to live our lives, although sometimes we have less choice than we might like (Autonomy)”- Carolyn. A Bernstein, 2018
 - 4.** In order to advocate for yourself productively, effectively, and professionally you need to be self-determined and be provided the opportunity to make those decisions yourself (The Self-Determination Group, 2017).
 - 5.** Will and can increase and decrease depending on your mental, emotional, financial, and physical wellbeing at the time.
 - 6.** When people make multiple vulnerable populations feel as though they’re only statistics and remove their ability for self-determination and self-advocacy you ultimately limit their capabilities and potential for a greater quality of life.
 - 7.** Fight through problems with assistance from others when needed to push through anxiety ridden or fearful situations
 - 8.** Self-determination= Natural. You deserve a voice and so do others!
 - 9.** How can you advocate for yourself effectively if you’re not self-determined?
- 

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GROWTH MINDSET VS. CONSEQUENCES OF A FIXED MINDSET

- Individuals who believe their talents can be developed through hard work and dedication.
- Such as seeking help from others, trying new strategies, learning from mistakes, and moving forward.

CONSEQUENCES OF A FIXED MINDSET

- Individuals who believe their talents are inherited gifts. They believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them.
- Believe that talent alone creates success—without effort.

HOW TO MAINTAIN A GROWTH ZONE

- Identify and work with triggers. Learning to recognize when your fixed-mindset shows up and what it says to make you feel threatened or defensive.
- Learn to help your fixed & growth mindset personas to work together with yourself as you pursue challenging goals.
- This is hard work but you can gain a lot by deepening your understanding of a growth-mindset concept and how to put them into practice. It gives you a richer sense of who you are, what you stand for, and how you want to move forward.
- The environment created around you can either help or hinder growth, which will affect your ability to self-advocate.
- Develop a growth mindset while also learning to advocate for yourself. This way you can always obtain the support you need to continue growing throughout your lifetime.



DIGNITY OF RISK

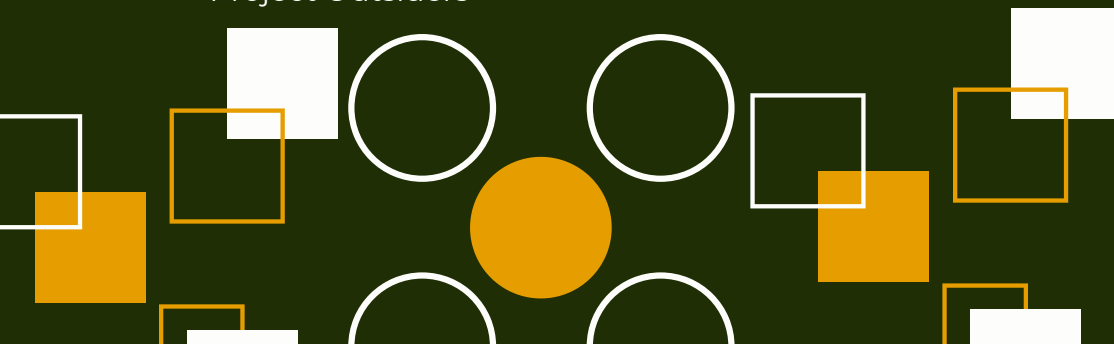
“Dignity of Risk” is a system that gives those in it control of their lives and a mind to make their own decisions so that when you age out of care, you can be productive and prepared members of society (The Self-Determination Group, 2017). It is centered on the idea that everyone has the right to make their own decisions and participate in activities that may have risks, all in order to expose individuals to learning opportunities and the potential consequences of their decisions. The mindset here is that personal growth can be fostered by encouraging age-appropriate risk taking - how is anyone supposed to learn if they aren't given the opportunity to make mistakes, try again, and then succeed?

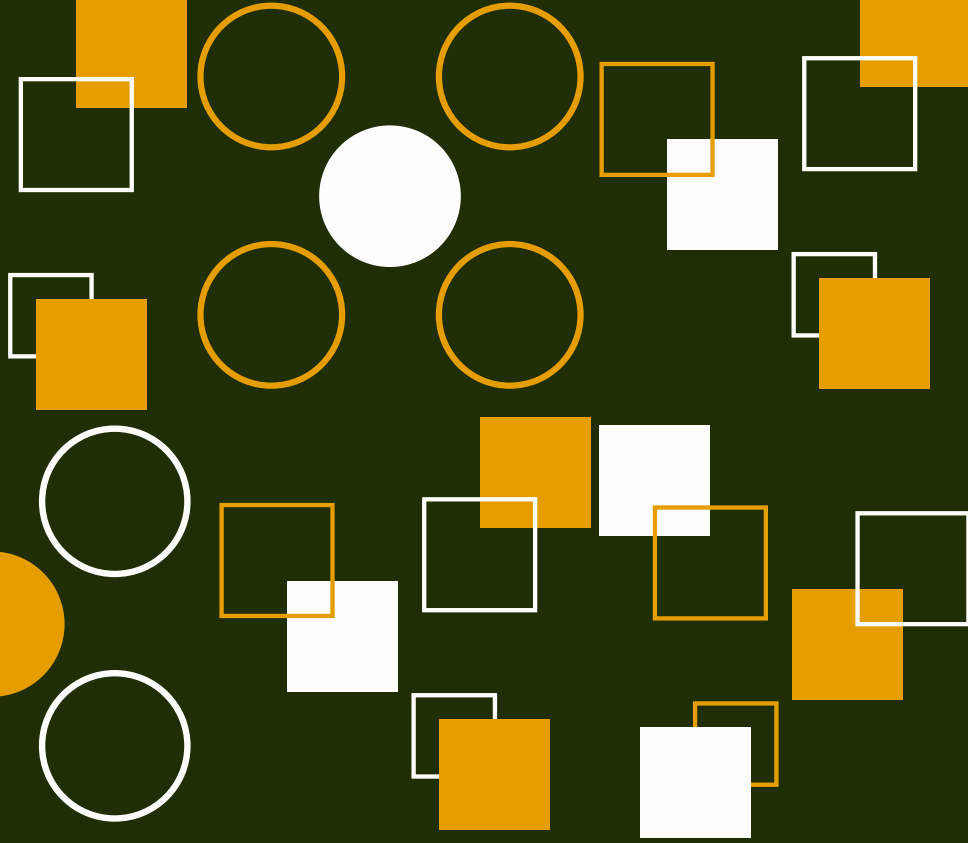
Dignity of risk is vital for giving you an opportunity to have control of your own lives, choices, and voices despite the fears or “what ifs” of the world. Help others understand their own potential, self-worth, and ability to accomplish tasks in life. In turn, you may just be acknowledging to them that they are able to complete or achieve the goals they have in life despite roadblocks or barriers that are in the way.

EVERY MISTAKE
is a progress

OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVOCATE

- OACAS
- YRCAS YAC
- YRCAS external and internal committees
- Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre
- Child Advocacy Centres/Child & Youth Advocacy Centres (CACs/CYACs)
- The Hospital for Sick Children, Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Program
- Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto
- Children's Aid Society of Toronto
- Jewish Family and Child
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Ministry of the Attorney General, Victim/Witness Assistance Program
- Radius Child & Youth Services
- Project Outsiders





**DON'T LET OTHERS DEFINE YOUR GOALS,
WE ARE ONE VOICE**

EXAMPLES OF HOW TO PREPARE TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF

TO HELP ORGANIZE YOUR WISHES AND THOUGHTS YOU COULD USE THE EXAMPLE BELOW.....



PROBLEM

I don't like my placement



RESOLUTION/WISH

I would like to move from my placement



REASON

I don't get along with my foster parents and others in my foster home



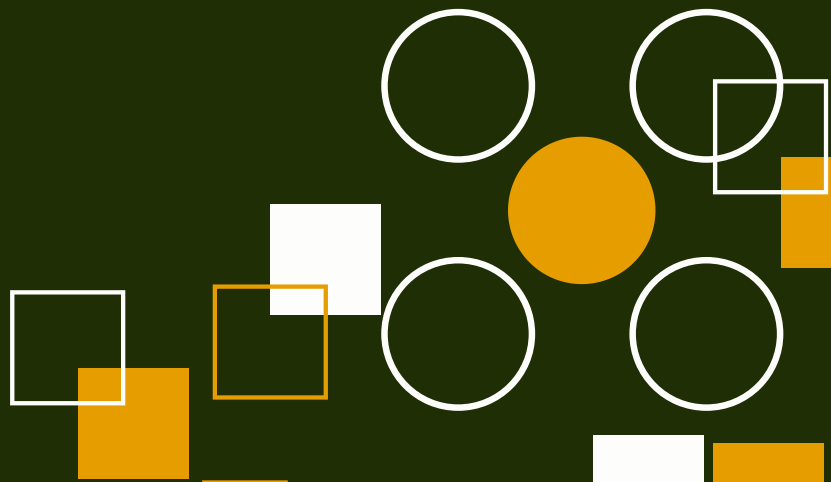
PLAN

I am going to phone my workers and speak with them about my wishes and the reason for my concern.



EXAMPLES OF HOW TO BEGIN A CONVERSATION:

- I have something I'd like to discuss with you that I think will help us work together more effectively.
- I'd like to talk about _____ with you, but first I'd like to get your point of view.
- I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?
- I need your help with something. Can we talk about it (soon)? If the person says, "Sure, let me get back to you," follow up with them.
- I think we have different views about _____. I'd like to hear your thoughts on this.
- I'd like to talk about _____. I think we may have different ideas about how to _____.
- I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about _____. I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective as well.



HOW TO WRITE A FORMAL LETTER OR AN EMAIL?

(Date) xx, xx, xxxx

Dear [Recipient's Name or To Whom It May Concern],

I trust this message finds you well. I am writing to address [briefly explain the purpose of your letter] and provide some specific examples for clarity.

[In the body of the letter, share your main points with clear examples or details.]

If necessary, in a third paragraph, suggest actions for resolution. Your support in [specify the action needed] would be invaluable.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to a positive outcome.

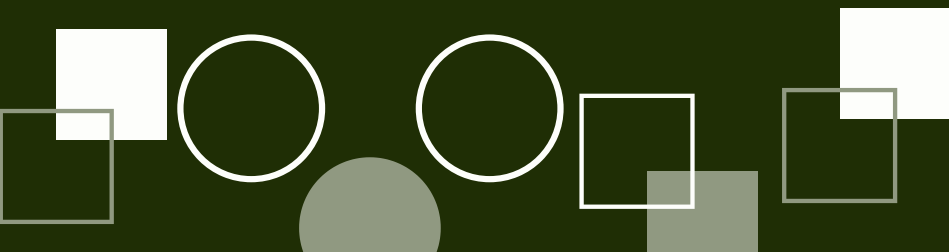
Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Contact Information]



"Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you react to it." - Rabindranath Tagore



SMART GOALS



SPECIFIC

Your goal should be well defined, detailed and clear.



MEASUREABLE

You should be able to tell when you reach your goal.



ACHIEVABLE

Can you reach the goal, taking into account your available time, skills, and financial status?



REALISTIC

Is your goal realistically achievable within the given time frame and with the available resources?



TIMELY

Set a start and finish date for your goal.

SMART GOALS TEMPLATE

S
M
A
R
T

Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is involved? What do I want to achieve? When do I need to achieve this? Why is the goal important? 	
Measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will I measure my progress? How will I know if my goal is achieved? 	
Achievable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it be clear when the goal is complete? Is it reasonable to complete the goal in the time allotted? 	
Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this goal related to my overall success (or the success of my business/organization) 	
Time-Bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long should it take to accomplish this goal? When will I check in on whether or not the goal has been completed? Am I ready to start work on the goal? 	

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A 'NO' ANSWER

- Evaluate the situation
- Create a distinction.
- Explain your behavior.
- Provide an example.



Example 1

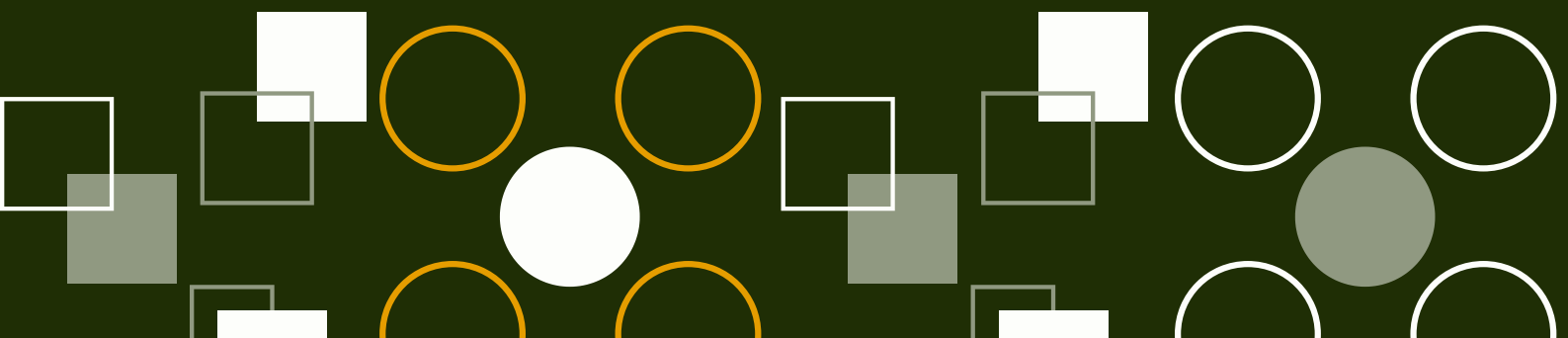
Here's an example of answering this question if a manager said no to your proposal: "There are several situations when someone might tell me no in the workplace. I'd like to preface my answer by saying I'd respond differently based on the situation. For example, I might act differently when a supervisor tells me no versus when a coworker tells me no. If a manager tells me no to something, I would respect their decision. Depending on what the scenario was, I might ask them respectfully why they said no to understand their answer.

Once, a manager said no to my business proposal. Although I was upset that they rejected my proposal, I understood that they were making decisions to best improve the company. I thanked them for their consideration and went back to work."

Example 2



Here's an example of answering this question if a coworker said no to your idea: *"I might respond differently depending on who is telling me no and why. Regardless of the situation, I'd respond respectfully. I make it a top priority to respect my work authority. If a lead told me no to something, I would tell them "thanks," and I wouldn't bother them after that. If a coworker told me no, I would still be very respectful. However, I might ask them why and be more assertive when asking for an explanation. Just last week, I had an idea for a group presentation that my coworker and I were leading. They said no to my idea, even though I thought it was an innovative way to present our information. So, I respectfully asked them why they said no. They told me why they were reluctant about my idea and we worked on finding a solution."*



WORRIED ABOUT HOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS? WORRIED ABOUT WHAT QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT BE ASKED?

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A SCRIPT TO PRACTICE:

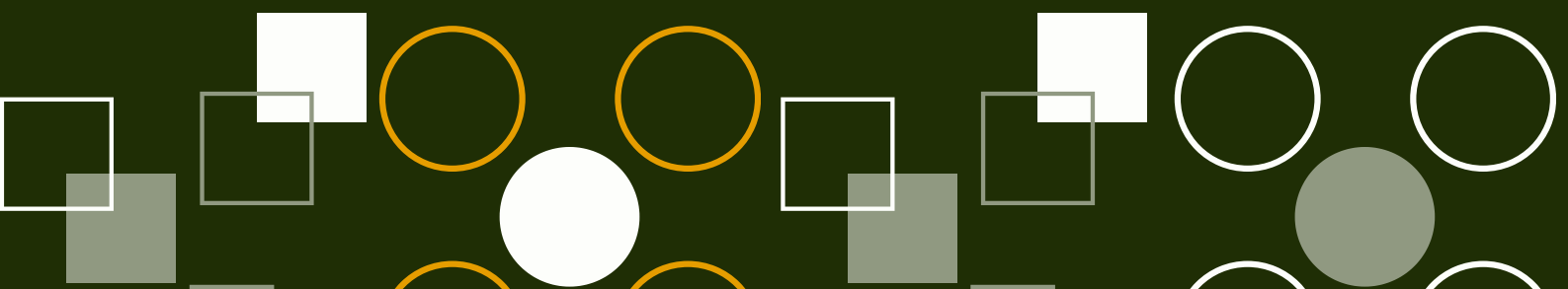
Scene:

You are ready to enjoy a performance at your local concert hall. You usually use an audio loop to assist you during performances because it is a difficult hearing environment. However, you do not see any signs about accommodations or assistive listening devices at the hall, as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act. You decide to talk to the manager of the concert hall about your concerns.

Characters:

The concert hall manager can be portrayed by a narrator, if practicing alone, or a friend/family member.

Manager: Hello, how can I help you?	You: Hello. My name is [NAME], and I have a cochlear implant. A cochlear implant is a device that provides a person who is deaf or has hearing loss with access to sound. The cochlear implant does this by bypassing the damaged or nonfunctioning parts of my ear to create a representation of sound. However, this representation of sound is much different than the sound individuals without hearing loss hear. I'm having trouble hearing in your concert hall, and would like to request accommodations.
Manager: I understand, but how does this affect my concert hall specifically?	You: While my cochlear implant is great for one-on-one conversations like this, I struggle hearing in environments where the speaker is at a distance, there is background noise, and there are poor acoustics. Unfortunately, your concert hall has all of these features.
Manager: Oh, okay. Well, what solutions do you propose?	You: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires managers of public facilities, such as concert halls, must remove any barriers for people with disabilities by providing accommodations. These accommodations for people with cochlear implants are installing assistive listening devices, such as an audio loop, in their facilities. Areas with assistive listening devices are also required to provide signs indicating that their facilities have an assistive listening device.
Manager: I'm going have to look into this. Is there anything I can do to help you before this concert?	You: Yes, please. If you could move my seats to the center of the concert hall, I think it would help reduce background noise and problems with the poor acoustics.
Manager: I'll take care of that for you right away.	You: Great, thank you. Next time I come, I will look for any signs about an assistive listening device.



REFERENCE LIST

Dweck, C. (2016, January). Managing Yourself: What Having a “Growth Mindset” Actually Means. *Harvard Business Review*.

<https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-having-a-growth-mindset-actually-means>

Human Rights Careers. (n.d.). Advocacy 101: Types, Examples, and Principles.

<https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/advocacy-types-examples-principles/>

Lachapelle, Y., Wehmeyer, M.L., Haelewyck, M.C., Courbois, Y., Keith, K.D., Schalock, R., Verdugo, M.A., & Walsh, P.N. (2005). The relationship between quality of life and self-determination: an international study. *The Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 49(10), p. 740-744.

Lewis, J. R., (2014). No Greatness Without Goodness: How a Father’s Love Changed a Company and Sparked a Movement (4th ed.). Tyndale Publishing House.

Martin, G. & Pear, J. (2019). Behavior Modification: What It is and How to Do it (11th ed.). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Moe, Kristine. (2021, August 26). Self-Advocacy: Improve your life by speaking up.

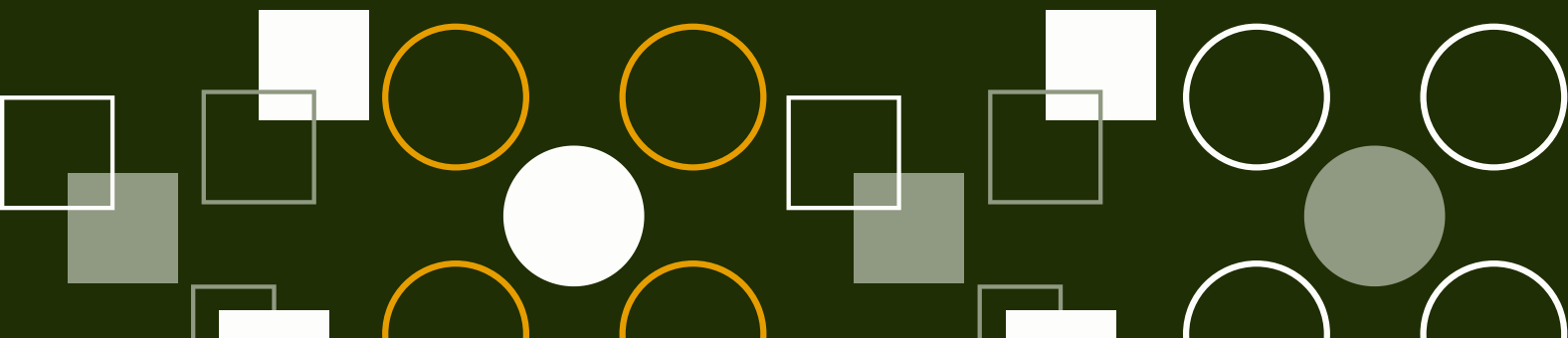
<https://www.betterup.com/blog/self-advocacy>

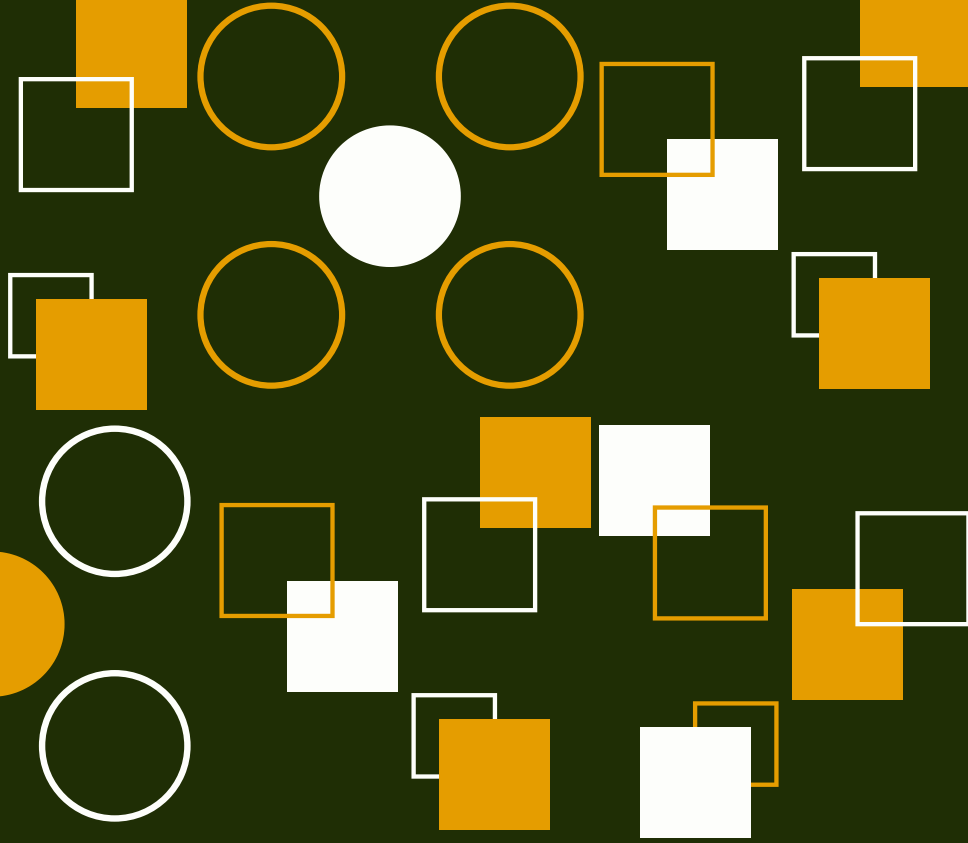
The Self-Determination Group. (2017, December 14). Self-Determination makes a difference [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAckowXVqcc&t=3s>

West Virginia University. (n.d.). Types of Advocacy.

<https://cedwvu.org/resources/types-of-advocacy/#:~:text=Advocacy%20is%20also%20about%20helping,individual%20advocacy%20and%20systems%20advocacy>





**DON'T LET OTHERS DEFINE YOUR GOALS,
WE ARE ONE VOICE**

THANK YOU!

