

What is Advocacy?

Disability Advocacy ensures the human and legal rights of people with disabilities are promoted and protected so that people with disabilities can fully participate in the community.

An advocate in the disability sector works to ensure the rights of people with disabilities are upheld and supports people with disabilities to make decisions affecting their lives.

A self-advocate is someone with a disability who is able to speak up and represent themselves. There are a number of community based groups providing support and training to enable and empower people with disabilities to speak up for themselves.

Individual Advocacy is when a person with a disability is assisted by an advocate who takes action on their behalf and in their best interests. This can be:

- providing information and advice so that the person with a disability can advocate for themselves
- supporting the person with a disability to take action on any matter related to discrimination, and

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- individual advocacy can be undertaken by a relative, friend or professional advocacy service. Currently, there are no formal training requirements involved in being an individual advocate.

Group Advocacy is similar to individual advocacy but involves representing a group of people with disabilities.

Citizen Advocacy is when a community member voluntarily enters a relationship with a person with an intellectual disability to represent the interests of that person and develops a long term relationship that offers new experiences and opportunities. Citizen Advocates are recruited, trained and supported through a community based Citizen Advocacy agency and then matched up to a person with a disability.

Systemic Advocacy is about social change. It addresses discrimination affecting a number of people with disabilities by advocating for change to legislation, policies and practices. Systemic advocacy includes lobbying politicians, campaigning and public awareness raising in order to build an inclusive community.



The Disability Advocacy Resource Unit

DARU is a statewide service for people with disabilities