Session 4: Civil Rights Groups Use The Courts To Get Things Changed

Our Common History: Fighting for the Rights of People

https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/civil-rights/
African American Civil Rights Movement

LGBTQ+ Civil Rights Movement

Self-Advocacy Civil Rights Movement

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TACTICS

Tactics are activities that groups use to get things changed.

- Some tactics use the courts.
- Some tactics focus on laws and politics.
- Some tactics use things like protests and demonstrations. That is called direct action.

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Using the Courts to Make Change

Legal activism uses the court system to get things changed. All three movements have used the court system to get things changed.

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Using the Courts to Make Change

The African-American Civil Rights Movement used the legal system to fight discrimination. The NAACP launched a campaign in 1930 to change policies and practices. During the 1930s and 1940s they filed lawsuits to get more rights.

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In one case, Loving v. Virginia (1967) was about Richard and Mildred Loving. They were an interracial couple who lived in Virginia. Virginia had a law that said black people could not marry white people. They sued and won the right to get married.

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One of the most famous cases is Brown v. Board of Education (1954). In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that black children could go to the same schools as white children.
The LGBTQ+ Movement has used the court system to fight discrimination, too. In 1962, the California Supreme Court overturned two convictions for same-sex encounters that happened in a bathroom.

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In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act included people who have AIDS. In 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that LGBTQ+ people had the right to get married.

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Self-Advocacy Movement groups have filed lawsuits, too. People First of Tennessee filed three lawsuits to close institutions in 1991 and 1994.

People First of California and Washington joined lawsuits against institutions, as well.

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Two self-advocates named Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson filed a lawsuit to get out of a Georgia institution. The Supreme Court ruled in 1999 that they had the right to live in the community.

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This ruling was called the Olmstead decision. This decision has been used by other advocates to stop segregation.

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