Connecting With Youth
What Messages Did You Hear About Young People When You Were Growing Up?
Beware We Hear A Lot Of Negative Messages About Young People.

Sometimes Those Old Disrespectful Messages About Youth Bouncing Around In Our Heads.
Don’t judge people by their age, consider their experience.

Don’t talk to youth in a way that it sounds like you are talking to a child.

Avoid assuming young people won’t be able to understand something. Instead take the time to explain information to them.
In your group, don’t just ask young people to handle only small or not so important jobs. Try not to be surprised when young people say something intelligent, when they are dressed nicely, or when they are well organized.
What Attracted You To Get Involved In Self-Advocacy?
SOME TIPS...

1. When you meet with students, begin by asking them what they think self-advocacy is.

2. Ask them what they think when they hear the words “independent living”.

3. Ask students where they see themselves beyond high school. Keep in mind this maybe a hard question to be asked. Students may not be able to answer this question the first time.
SOME TIPS…

4. Self-advocacy can give you the courage to listen to your voice. A peer atmosphere helps you to say what is on your mind. Talking to a peer is different from talking to a teacher.

5. Always support youth to make their own decisions. Give them a chance to take control.
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<td>Do not judge students. Tell them their opinions are important. Keep your own opinions to yourself.</td>
<td>Find meaningful ways for youth to get involved.</td>
<td>Remember we are all individuals. When a teen expresses their opinion, they are not speaking for everyone under the age of thirty.</td>
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SOME TIPS...

9. Make the meeting fun with lots of hands-on activities.

10. Sometimes youth are reluctant to speak up when teachers, support staff or parents are in the room.
THE LAST TIPS…

11. Remember students have busy lives. Respect their choices.

12. Set up group agreements. They should include reminding seasoned leaders to talk as little as possible.

13. A disability rights meeting may be new to youth, so remember to take your time and not go too fast.
THE LAST TIPS...

14. Be careful not to interrupt a young person. Give them time to share their ideas.

15. Create an atmosphere that says it is okay to make mistakes. This can be an opportunity to introduce what we call “dignity of risk.

How have you tried to get young people involved?
Tell us a short story from when you were younger. An example of you speaking up, taking control, making a big decision that was not popular with the people around you?