



ONWARD Huddle

by Jen Polley

Huddle Topic:

Advocacy is about speaking out and making a case for something important. It can be important to someone on a personal level or important to society as a whole. The size or scale of the issue doesn't matter. If it's important to the person using our services, then it is important to address. In your work, you most likely advocate for a person on a daily basis – you double check that the grocery list has their favourite snacks, you help someone find a community program that fits their interests, or continue to speak to community leaders on the importance of affordable housing. But what does it mean for a person to be able to advocate for themselves? What does self-advocacy look like? People's voices matter and it is important that we hear them loud and clear in our everyday supports. In our Onward Portfolio, *Engaging Stakeholders*, we're looking at ways to support people to advocate for their rights, choices, and desires.

Conversation:

1. Let's talk about someone in our services that does not use words to communicate or uses alternative ways to communicate. How does this person self advocate for themselves? Have we done all that we can to help them self advocate?
2. What about someone who does use words to communicate?
3. What things can I start doing or stop doing, to encourage self advocacy for someone using our services?

Linking our Onward Deck of Cards:

'People Self Directing their Services' Card: Share a time when you saw one of your teammates encourage someone who uses our services to make their own decisions about something.

Team Challenge:

At your team meeting, discuss what Our Voices Matter is and find out if your community has a chapter that people at your location could join. Talk about each person using services at your location and discuss how this self advocacy group could be meaningful to them.

This month, have your team get creative and make communication/self advocacy tools for a person at your support location. What new tools could this person benefit from so that their voice is loud and clear? The team could be crafty or use technology, the ideas and possibilities could be endless!

Going Deeper:

Hear from Our Voices Matter self-advocates on why their voice matters: https://youtu.be/MRT_UK5lcU8