

Living Well Safe and Free WORKSHOP #2

Problem Solving and Knowing Your Rights

People First Wisconsin adapted these materials from the Green Mountain Self-Advocates Basic Self-Advocacy workshop series.

Materials Needed:

- Sign in sheet
- Markers and pens
- Nametags
- One workbook for each person
- Flip Chart Paper
- Glue sticks, magazines and scissors
- Group Agreements Written on Flip Chart Paper (to post in class)
- Laptop, projector and speakers and internet access
- Open Future Learning Side By Side Learning Module “My Rights”
- Copies of the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition Fact Sheet:
<http://disabilityvote.org/sites/disabilityvote.org/files/attachments/Voting%20in%20WI%20Fact%20Sheet%20acc.pdf>

This class teaches people:

- How to relax as they approach a problem and begin to work out solutions.
- 5 problem solving steps
- How to identify their feelings
- How to think of and choose effective solutions, about choices and consequences
- To practice solving problems and gain skills to be used in the future.
- Our everyday rights
- Information about the rules and responsibilities that go with our rights
- Specific laws that protect our rights
- Where to get up-to-date information on laws that protect our rights
- Wisconsin resources to advocate for themselves or others

Activity 1: Learning How to Relax

Step 1: Talk about the ways people calm themselves down if they are upset or stressed. Ask the group to share what they do to calm down when they feel upset. They can write their answer in the workbook.

Step 2: Ask people: What do you need to know so you can solve problems in your life? Get their ideas. Then, on flip chart paper write down and explain these three things you need to know:

1. How you feel.
2. How to relax.
3. Problem solving steps.

Step 3: Explain that in order to make a good decision you should be calm, have a cool head, and have complete control over your behavior. Remember, when you are ready to relax, choose a place where you can concentrate and not be interrupted by other people or activities. Choose a quiet place and choose a chair with a straight back so you can sit up straight in a relaxed position with your feet flat on the floor. Sometimes, it's hard to pay attention and do everything that is necessary to relax, so you might want to have someone sit and relax with you and help you remember the things that we talk about today.

Step 4: Lead the group through a relaxation exercise. Give the group the following instructions (read slowly and calmly):

Now that you are ready to relax, sit in the relaxed position, with your hands resting comfortably on your legs, close your eyes, and take a deep breath. Through your mouth. Let it out slowly. Feel the way that your whole body begins to relax when you let out a breath. You're starting to feel better and you're starting to feel more relaxed already.

Now relax your shoulders. Let them droop down.

Move your shoulders slowly so all of the tension goes away. Your shoulders are drooping down, and you feel so calm and quiet and relaxed.

Now this comfortable, relaxed feeling spreads down your arms all the way to your hands.

Your arms and hands are resting on your legs and they feel heavy and calm.

Your whole body is feeling relaxed.

This warm, calm, comfortable feeling spreads down to your legs all the way to your feet.

Your feet are resting flat on the floor and they feel heavy. Your whole body feels calm and relaxed.

Now take another deep breath and let it out slowly. Think about how good you feel.

You are quiet and calm and rested. You feel so peaceful.

It feels so nice and you can remember this feeling so that anytime that you have a problem or start to feel upset, you can just take a deep breath and relax.

You've done a good job.

Step 5: Ask people to share how it felt to relax that way.

Activity 2: How do you feel today?

Step 1: Ask the group to look in the faces in their workbook. Tell them you are going to read some situations to them and you want them to pick out the face that describes how they would feel in this situation. They can draw their own face or write down a word if they want.



Sad



Happy



Scared



Angry



Grossed Out

Step 2: Read the situations one by one to the group:

- You were just nominated to be the Vice-President of your Self-Advocacy group. How would you feel?
- You plan a big speech to say in front of your friends, but everyone decides to go to someone else's speech. How would you feel?
- You are speaking to some people in your self-advocacy group and you forget what you want to say. How would you feel?
- The person beside you has something yucky sticking out of their nose. How would you feel?

Step 3: Ask if anyone would like to share how they are feeling today.

Activity 3 – Problem Solving Steps

Step 1: Explain and act out these problem-solving steps. You can write them on flip chart paper.

1. Relax. Take a deep breath and let the air out.
2. Say something positive. Saying something positive gives you confidence and makes you feel good about yourself because it helps you remain in control. Say, "It is ok, I can figure this out."
3. Identify the problem. Ask yourself, "What is the problem?" Ask yourself, "Is this really a problem or a potential problem?" Ask yourself, "How do I feel?"
4. Think of solutions. What can you do to solve the problem?
5. Pick a solution and just do it!

Step 2: Share some examples of problems. Ask people to share examples they've had. (e.g. problems with a roommate, problems with your boss or at work, problems with your parents, legal problems, problems with drinking or drugs, money problems, problems with a partner, a boyfriend or girlfriend, etc).

Step 3: Instructors act out some of the following role plays for the group. Ask the group to help go through the problem-solving steps for each.

Role Play 1: A friend always calls too late at night. Trainer is the friend calling too late. The person being called is in bed.

Role Play 2: Mary has planned to go out for lunch today since she has just received her paycheck. She asks Susan to join her but they have to decide where to go eat. Mary likes Mexican food but Susan wants to go to a fast food restaurant. Mary knows she might not be able to afford going out for a while and she feels she should go eat what she really wants. On the other hand she does not want to upset Susan who said she would not consider her a friend anymore if she does not go with her to McDonalds.

Role Play 3: Somebody at work borrows \$10. It's pay-day. I just got back from the bank. This guy at work says he doesn't have time to go to the bank and asks to borrow \$10. He says he will pay me back tomorrow. The next day I asked for the money, but he didn't have it.

Role Play 4: Dealing with a pushy boyfriend. My boyfriend wants to come over to my apartment all the time. He used to like to go out to the movies and do all kinds of stuff but now he just wants to stay at my apartment. And when he is there he is being too pushy in the sex department.

Role Play 5: I want to go out on a date but my parents keep saying no. They do not approve of the person I want to date.

Step 4: Facilitate a group discussion about who people can go to for advice when they have a problem. People can write down their go-to person in their workbook. Who can you go to when you have a problem?

Activity – Knowing your Rights

Step 1: Watch the Open Future Learning Side By Side Learning Module “My Rights” and use the discussion questions in the module with the group. This will take about 30 minutes.

Step 2: Talk about The Three R’s with the group: Rules, Rights and Responsibilities. People can follow along in their workbook.

Ask people “What do Rules mean?”

Explain: Rules help us understand what we need to do to keep our rights. We all must follow rules.

Ask people “What do Rights mean?”

Explain: Rights apply to everyone! Rights are the rules that help make people equal.

Ask people “What does Responsibility mean?”

Explain: To have our own rights respected, we must respect the rights of others. We must act in a responsible way.

Step 3: Explain that a lots of times self-advocates are afraid to speak up when people discriminate against them because they have a disability. BUT sometimes people go overboard the other way and are afraid to try new things or take responsibility for what they do because they have a disability. Others may give up without even trying. For example – a person may think or say they cannot get a job because they have a disability.

Step 4: Review and talk about the following steps people can take if they think their rights have been violated or someone is discriminating against them.

1. Ask questions about why you are being told you cannot do something (your rights are being limited). Keep asking questions until you understand what is happening.
2. Write down the answers you are given, or get the answers on tape. Get as much information as you can. Make sure it is correct.
3. Get a friend to help you if you want to. Some towns have services that can help you get a friend who knows about advocacy.
4. Call Disability Rights Wisconsin at 800-928-8778
5. Find out what all the choices are. Pick out the ones that are best for you.
6. Decide what you think about what is happening. Decide what steps you need

- to take to reach your goal.
7. Know who to talk to and who is in charge. Go to the person who makes the decisions.
 8. Know and use your rights. The main ones to remember when your rights are being limited are: the right to know all the information; the right to appeal and ask for a change in decision before you agree; the right to know what is happening all the time and why it is happening.

Activity – What is voting?

Step 1: Explain to the group what voting means (e.g. Voting means making choices. Our government makes laws in Madison and Washington DC. Obviously, we cannot all go to Washington to run our own government. We cannot all go to city hall to make decisions for ourselves. For that reason, we vote. We choose people to decide for us. This is a big, important job. We must choose well. We want to be happy with our choices. We make choices that will affect the whole United States. Voting is a serious responsibility.)

Explain how voting requires some studying for example: Sometimes you will vote on new laws for your community. Other elections are about choosing the right people as leaders. You may need some help making your decisions. There are many places to get help. Do not forget that every citizen must make his/her own choices. Another person cannot make you vote for something or someone you do not like. Here are some ways you can learn about who and what you want to vote for.

- Talk to teachers, parents, friends and neighbors about their choices.
- Listen to television and radio news.
- Look at the people running for office (called candidates).
- Listen to what they say.
- Keep a notebook about voting and candidates.

Step 2: Break people into three small groups. Ask each group to go to one of six stations. Post flip chart paper with one of the following questions listed at each station. Each station has an excuse people use for not voting.

Step 3: Ask each group to come up with ideas on what to say to a person who uses this excuse for not voting. What can they suggest to this person to do so they will vote.

1. I do not know how to vote.
2. I cannot vote because I cannot read.
3. I do not know who to vote for.
4. I never voted before.
5. My vote will not make a difference.
6. I cannot get to the polls.

Give each group a few minutes to write answers to the question on the flip chart paper.

After a few minutes, have the groups rotate to the other set of stations and repeat.

Ask for a volunteer to read people's answers. Ask if the group has any other ideas.

Step 4: Explain who can vote in Wisconsin.

- You are a 18 years of age or older the day of the election.
- A citizen of the United States.
- You meet the 28-day residency requirement:
 - You must have resided at your current address for at least 28 days prior to the election. (You may register to vote as long as you will meet the 28-day requirement by the day of the election.)
 - If you have moved to a new address within Wisconsin within 28 days of an election, you may be qualified to vote from your former address until you meet the 28-day requirement at your new address.
 - If you have moved to Wisconsin from another state less than 28 days before an election, you are only eligible to vote for President and Vice-President in Wisconsin until you achieve the 28 days.

Step 5: As a group, talk about people's experience voting, who has helped the person vote and how they have helped.

Step 6: Hand out and talk about the Fact Sheet from the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition.