My Voice, My Choice

A Self-Advocacy Script Kit | Your communication counts, however you communicate

This kit belongs to the person receiving support. Use the pages you need; skip the rest.

I can speak, type, sign, point, draw, use a communication device, or ask someone I trust to help me express MY choices.

My kit, my way

- ☐ I want to do this on my own.
- ☐ I want someone to help me read or write.
- ☐ I want pictures, large print, or another format.
- ☐ I want to practice first, or take a break.

My name (optional):

I like to be called:

Four simple steps

1. Say what matters: "I want..." or "I need..."
2. Explain if I want to: "This matters because..."
3. Make a request: "Can we...?" or "Please..."
4. Check next steps: "Who will help and when?"

Example: "I want to choose my clothes. I like deciding what I wear. Please let me choose. Can we start tomorrow?"

My preferences and rights matter even when someone disagrees. A safety or legal issue may need further discussion, but I can still ask questions and be heard.

How I Communicate

A detachable quick card for new staff, doctors, and other supporters

The best way to communicate with me is:

- [ ] Talk to me directly, not only to the person with me.
- [ ] Give me extra time to answer.
- [ ] Offer words in writing or show pictures.
- [ ] Let me point, sign, type, or use my AAC device.
- [ ] Ask before touching me or my mobility equipment.
- [ ] Tell me what will happen before it happens.

When I look confused, try:

When I am upset, please:

Please avoid:

Supporters: ask permission before sharing this card. Never assume someone cannot understand because they use few words or a communication device.

My Choices & Boundaries

What I want people to respect in everyday life

- ☐ What I eat and drink, including asking for another option
- ☐ My clothing, hair, and personal style
- ☐ Privacy in my room, bathroom, and personal conversations
- ☐ Who touches me, hugs me, or moves my wheelchair or walker
- ☐ My visitors, photos, phone, and online privacy
- ☐ My activities, schedule, and community choices
- ☐ My personal money and questions about how it is used

A choice that matters a lot to me:

My boundary: "Please do not..."

If a rule or safety plan limits a choice, I want someone to explain:

Words I can use: "Please knock first." "I do not want a hug." "Do not post my photo." "I want to decide with support."

Words for Everyday Situations

Circle, point to, or copy a phrase that feels right

At home / with staff

"I would like to choose my meal."

"I am still hungry."

"I need privacy."

"Please ask before moving my walker or wheelchair."

At my ISP / team meeting

"Please talk to me, not just about me."

"I want to share my idea first."

"I want to change this goal."

At the doctor

"Please explain that in simpler words."

"Can you write down my choices?"

"I want to ask a question before I agree."

At work / day program / in the community

"Show me one step at a time."

"I need help setting up a ride."

"I would like to try a different activity."

About my money

"Can I see my balance and receipts?"

"I want help understanding this charge."

When Things Feel Hard

Pause, ask again, or get support without giving up your voice

If I do not understand

"Please say that again, slowly."
"Can you show me instead?"

If I need to stop

"I am overwhelmed. I need a break."
"I want to talk about this later."

If I want to say no

"No, thank you."
"I need time to decide."
"Please stop touching me."

If someone talks over me

"Please let me finish."
"I want you to hear my answer."

If nothing changes

"We talked about this. What is the next step?"
"Who can help me follow up?"

If I feel unsafe

"I do not feel safe. I need help now."
"I want to speak to someone I trust privately."

If there is immediate danger, call 911 or ask someone to call. You do not have to wait for your next meeting to report abuse or danger.

My Speak-Up Planner

Prepare a conversation before it happens

Who do I want to talk to?

I want or need:

This matters to me because:

The words, pictures, or device message I want to use:

If they say no or I do not understand, I will ask:

Someone I want with me (optional):

Practice is optional. I can read, point, show this page, use AAC, or have a trusted person help communicate exactly what I want.

My Decisions & My Support Circle

Help with a decision does not automatically mean someone else chooses for me

My decisions

Choices I make on my own:

Choices I want help thinking through:

Decisions that have legal or safety rules I want explained:

People I want involved

Person / their role / phone (only if I want to record it):

Another person / role / phone:

Who should be contacted only with my permission?

Supporters: do not assume a guardian controls every decision. Confirm the actual legal authority and the person's wishes. Give explanations in an accessible way.

My Rights & My Voice

Know where to ask questions if your choices or rights are ignored

In the United States, disability rights and complaint procedures depend on your setting, services, state laws, and federal protections. Ask your team for the official rights notice that applies to you.

Where to find help

Your state Protection & Advocacy agency: ndrn.org/about/ndrn-member-agencies/

Disability Information and Access Locator: dial.acl.gov

State developmental disabilities agency / county service coordinator

For immediate danger: call 911.

What I can ask

- ☐ How do I ask for my plan to be reviewed?
- ☐ Who can explain my privacy and communication rights?
- ☐ How do I make a complaint or report neglect or abuse?
- ☐ How can I get an advocate or communication accommodation?

Not every state uses the same words or complaint process. The Protection & Advocacy agency can help you identify the appropriate state-specific resource.

My local rights contact / phone:

For the People Who Support Me

DSP, case manager, guardian, family, communication partner

Helpful prompts

- [ ] "What do YOU want?"
- [ ] "Do you want choices, more time, or a break?"
- [ ] "Do you want to tell them yourself or show your card?"
- [ ] "Is that what you want me to write down?"
- [ ] "What should we try next?"

Avoid these habits

- [ ] Finishing sentences or talking over someone
- [ ] Requiring eye contact to prove attention
- [ ] Debating whether a reported feeling is real
- [ ] Speaking for someone without asking permission
- [ ] Treating refusal or disagreement as automatic noncompliance
- [ ] Recording staff interpretations as if they were the person's own words

My words / the written record

Person: "I do not like when people enter my room without knocking."

Accurate note: Person said they want staff to knock and wait before entering.

Check with the person: "Did I write your concern correctly?"

Offer genuine choices. If the person reports harm, follow applicable reporting requirements; do not delay a required report for practice or discussion.

My Speak-Up Tracker

Print this page again whenever I need it

Conversation 1

Date / who I spoke with:

What I asked for:

What they said / what we agreed to:

Next step, person responsible, and date:

Conversation 2

Date / who I spoke with:

What I asked for:

What they said / what we agreed to:

Next step, person responsible, and date:

I can choose how to communicate. I can ask for support. My wishes belong in the conversation.

Privacy: Keep completed pages in a safe place. Avoid listing Social Security numbers, insurance IDs, diagnoses, or other sensitive details on shared copies.