

# YOUTH POWER!

---

## Intro to Advocacy

### What is an Advocate?

- ~ Someone who speaks out or writes in support of someone or something.
- ~ Someone who acts on behalf of someone else.
- ~ Someone who represents the interests of another

### System Advocacy Do's and Don'ts.

- ~ Don't advocate against something, advocate for something.
- ~ Do what the youth wants, not what you want.
- ~ Don't lie. (If you don't know the answer, just say I don't know)
- ~ Do arrive early for a meeting (You can set the mood or at least know the mood of others in the room).
- ~ Do get the facts- talk to both sides and gather information. Often people misunderstand what is being told to them and appear to have a problem when there really is no problem.
- ~ Do record patterns of behavior. Always record dates, persons involved, compliments, complaints, etc. so that you can prove patterns of an agency or individual.
- ~ Do use resources available to you. Other advocates, recipient affairs, and family based organizations - are they seeing the same problems?
- ~ Do meet with other advocates on a regular basis.
- ~ Don't use the "I" word, always use "We" (we want this, we understand this) when representing a view that is shared.
- ~ When representing a consumer it is never your opinion that matters, it's the consumer's opinion and facts that matters. Present the consumer point of view, not yours.
- ~ Do volunteer to help solve the problem. (It does no good to complain or advocate and then not be part of the solution) But don't do the other parties job for them.
- ~ When advocating, do have your youth's solutions prepared before the meeting, so that when discussions surrounds the solution of the problem you'll be prepared to resolve the conflict.