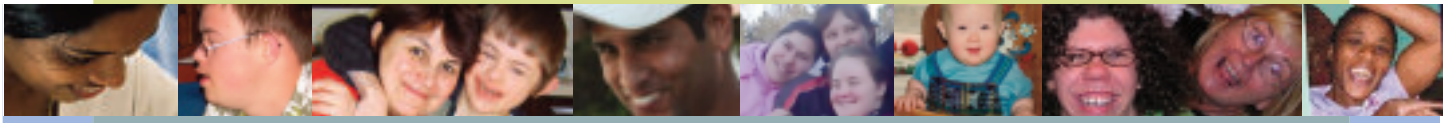

We Have Human Rights

A human rights handbook for people with developmental disabilities

Harvard Project on Disability (www.hpod.org)

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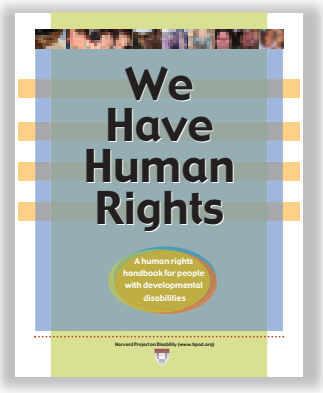


A book for self-advocates

Welcome to the power of human rights. This book is for people with developmental disabilities. You can use it to learn about your rights. You can also use it to talk with others about your rights.

When you speak up for yourself, you are a self-advocate. When you work together with others, you can make change happen. Welcome to the power of human rights!

Hungary. Photo: Hungarian Society of People with Golden Heart.

Because we are human, we have human rights.

In the past, people with disabilities have not been treated as equals. But that is changing.

In 2007, the United Nations passed a new law. It says people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. It says all people with disabilities are equal before the law. It says this applies to women and girls, and children with disabilities, too.

New York.
Photo: UN photo/ Paulo Filgueiras

This law is called the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Voices

"We must forever keep to our own ideal and pursuit and continue making fresh efforts for the advancement of people with disabilities."
Deng Pufang, China

If my country signs on, what will change?
Your government promises to take action to end discrimination based on disability! They will:

- change laws and make new ones
- protect people's rights
- enforce the laws
- educate the public

This book is about your human rights.
It tells about some of the key rights you have because of this law. It also gives you ideas for how to work with others to get your rights.

Up next: Chapter 1: Four key rights about respect for the individual

Chapter 1. Respect for the individual

We have many rights that protect our basic human dignity, our bodies, and what we do at home.

Here are four of those rights:

Equality
We have the right to be treated as equal citizens.

Safety
We have the right to be safe from violence and abuse.

Home and family
We have the right to be part of a family—and to start one.

Privacy
We have the right to privacy, no matter where we live.

Voices

"My body's nobody's body but mine. You run your own body, let me run mine."
Peter Alsop, USA

Romania. Photo: R. Antonovici

George-Daniel is from Romania. He lives at home with his mom and dad and sister. His family has taken vacations at the beach since he was young. Today he is ten years old and his family makes every effort to give him a life like any other child.

Up next: More about these rights of respect

Equality

We have the right to be treated as equal citizens.

Sound familiar?

What does equal mean? I can't vote and I don't have a job.

My country's law says I cannot make my own decisions.

It feels like there is a wall between me and others. It's a wall I can't see but can feel.

Our school didn't have the money to teach me.

My family often ignores what I want.

Voices

"The problem is not how to wipe out the differences, but how to unite with the differences intact."
Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali poet and musician

What does the new law say about equality?

We need laws that protect our equal rights.
Society must break down the walls that keep us from having the same rights as everyone else.
Discrimination is one wall.
So is poverty. So is poor education.
Once the walls are down, we still need support.
Because of discrimination in the past, we need extra help to make things right.
We have the legal right to make decisions about our lives.

Group work

Laws come from dreams
Pass out paper. Ask each person (with support) to draw a picture or write down one law they would like to have to protect their equal rights. Later, ask a local leader to come to your meeting. Each person can show and tell about their idea. Then discuss what laws you do have. Also talk about how to get new ones.

Nepal. Photo: CIL Kathmandu

Safety

We have the right to be safe from violence and abuse.

Key fact

People with disabilities are more likely to be sexually abused in their lives.

Sound familiar?

We are abused in secret, in places where we live.

I was given heavy drugs to control and punish me.

I was deprived of food and water.

They did experiments on me. I was not asked.

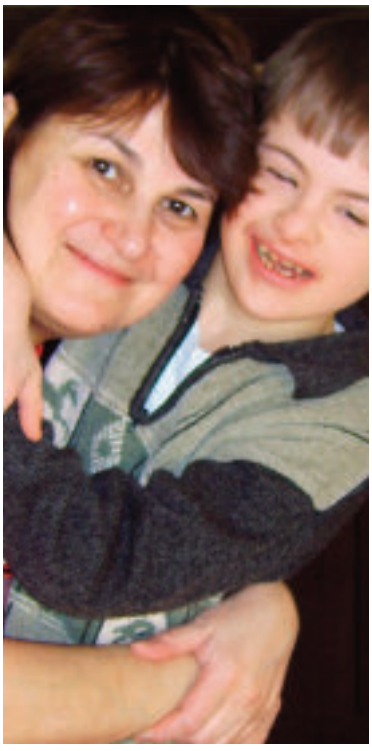
I am forced to work hard for no pay.

I think people harm us because they are afraid of us.

What does the new law say about safety?

We have a right to be safe—at home, at school, at the doctor.
It is not our disability that puts us at risk; rather it is the attitude of the abusers.
The state should seek out and punish abusers.
Police should be trained about disability.
Even in prison, we have the right to be safe from harm.
We have the right to decide what happens to our bodies.

Romania. Photo: R. Antonovici



Group work

I know who to tell

Find out how people with disabilities can report abuse. Tell it to your group. Have each person make a poster with this information on it. Talk about why it might be wise to let family and caretakers know that you will report abuse. Many people will need support to report. Decide who each person could ask to help them. Role-play telling someone you trust about abuse and asking for support and help.

Note: This may bring out painful stories. Some in your group might need one-to-one support. Plan to have extra people to help with this. Also, know the laws in your area. Some stories may be told that you must report.

Home and family

We have the right to be a part of a family—and to start one.

Sound familiar?

I was taken away from my family when I was six years old.

I was sterilized against my will so I can't be a parent.

I want to get married, but my guardian keeps saying no.

I could raise children if I had a little help.

They said the only way for me to get help was to move away from home.

What does the new law say about family?

Everyone deserves to be part of a family.
Growing up in a safe home, with a family, is the right place for all kids to be.
We have the right to form loving relationships.
We can love whoever we want.
We have the right to get married if we choose.
Our bodies and our sexuality are good things.
We should not be stopped from having kids just because of our disability.

Group work

Family portrait
Ask each person to draw a picture. Say, *"Show the family you'd like to be a part of someday. It could be what you have now or be very different."* Later, take turns telling about your picture. Then ask, *"What's one thing you need to reach this goal?"*

Alert

If your country signed the UN treaty, it will help you get these rights.

Key fact

In many countries, it is common for people with disabilities to be taken away from family to live in institutions.

Sri Lanka. Photo: Handicap International

Privacy

We have the right to privacy, no matter where we live.

Voices

"My privacy is just like anyone else's... it's private."
Rosemary Kayess, Australia

Sound familiar?

Someone is always hovering around when I'm with my boyfriend.

My caregiver stole money from me.

The doctor told my health story to a bunch of strangers in the room.

My helper tells other people all sorts of stuff about me.

What does the new law say about privacy?

What we do in our room is our business.
We decide what others can know about our lives.
No one can read our letters unless we say it's OK.
No one can listen to our phone calls unless we say it's OK.
We have the right to private space to be with our sweetheart.
Helpers have no right to tell others what they know about us.

Group work

Role reversal

Make teams of two: one person with a disability (the watcher), one without (the doer). The doer does two private things. They may pretend to call their sweethearts. Or write a short letter. The watcher stays close by and watches the doer very carefully. After 10 minutes, gather as a large group. Take turns telling how it felt to role play. Next tell how it feels when people watch you do private things in real life.

Australia. Photo: Tutti Ensemble Inc.

Chapter 2. Inclusion in the community

Voices

"Living independently is about being able to make our own decisions as to where and with whom we live... It is about helping each other and working together."
Robert Martin, New Zealand

We have many rights that help make sure we play an equal role in our community. Here are four of these rights.

Independent living

We have an equal right to live on our own in the community.

Work

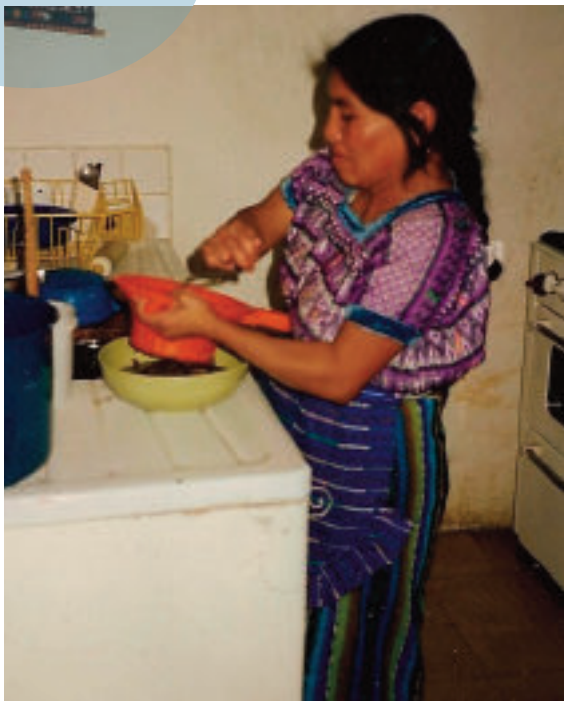
We have an equal right to work, in a job we choose, and to earn a decent living.

Education

We have the right to an equal education, side by side with everyone else.

Health

We have the right to the best possible health care.



Guatemala.
Photo: Regi Marroquin

Independent living

We have an equal right to live on our own in the community (with support!).

Alert

If your country signs the treaty, it will pass laws and help you get these rights.

Voices

"These nurses were… doing things for me around the clock. I didn't have to make any decisions for myself.… When they all finally left, that's when I realized that I could have a life, despite what everyone was saying. I could make choices, and that is freedom."

Ed Roberts, USA

Sound familiar?

I want to get out of this big institution.

I live a long way from shops, and have no way to get there.

They told me I have to live with someone I don't know.

I don't have enough money for food and clothes.

What does the new law say about independent living?

We decide where we live.
We decide who we live with.
We decide how we live.
We need key information so we can decide what is best for us.
Independent does NOT mean that no one helps us.
We have the right to support to be as independent as we can be.
Our choices should be respected, not ignored.
We have the right to a decent life. Enough food. Enough clothing. A place to live. Clean water.

Australia.
Photo: Tutti Ensemble Inc.

Group work

I want to live like this. *(Go to page 19.)*

Work

We have the equal right to work, in a job we choose, and to earn a decent living.

Sound familiar?

The job was open, but I had no way to get there.

"Hiring someone like you will cost me more than it's worth."

I want a real job; one that makes a difference.

When they saw me at the interview, I knew they would not hire me.

They will not hire me because they think I am not healthy.

What does the new law say about work?

Our work is more than something to keep us busy.
We are a labor force waiting to be tapped.
We should get equal pay for equal work.
Wages help us enjoy our other rights.
We have an equal right to get a job.
We need to be able to ride the bus to hold a job.
We need good health care to be able to keep a job.
We need laws to protect our right to work.
We have a lot to give.

Group work

What does *that* mean?

Work as a group to read what the new UN law says about work (below) and figure out what it means. Here's how: Read it out loud. Pause every few words and ask what that part means. Include every person in the process.

Rewrite with simple words, starting with "We have the right to..." When you're done, rewrite on poster paper and decorate. Send copies to local leaders with a letter. Ask them how your country is making laws to protect this right.

"State Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal bases with others: this includes the right to the opportunities to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in the labor market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities."

The right to work does not mean we will all get a job. But it means we have an equal chance to get a job.

Voices

"Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve."
Martin Luther King, Jr., USA

Ethiopia.
Photo: ILO/M. Crozet 2003

Education

We have the right to an equal education, side by side with everyone else.

Alert

If your country signed the treaty, it will help you get these rights.

We cannot be excluded from any school activity because we have a disability.

Key fact

More than 90% of all children with disabilities in Africa do NOT attend school.
J. Balescut, 2005

Sound familiar?

I was taught in a separate classroom. My only classmates were kids with disabilities.

We got babyish material to work on.

I wanted art but our class never got it.

There was no bus, so I didn't go to school.

I never was taught to read.

What does the new law say about education?

Just because we have a disability doesn't mean we can't learn.
Our education should be just as good as that for any child.
We belong in the regular classroom as much as possible.
We want to learn, not just to be put in the classroom.
The school must change so it works for us, too.
We should be taught in a way we can understand.
If we need support to take part in an equal way, we should get it.
Teachers must be taught about their own prejudices.
Teachers must learn how best to teach us.
The government must hire trained teachers.

Cambodia. Photo: Heng Sorin

Group work

School days
Each person find a partner. Give these instructions. "*Think about school. Talk with your partner about:*

- *the best parts of your school experience. What made it so good?*
- *the worst parts of your school experience. What made it so bad?*"

Gather as a large group. Have each pair share two or three thoughts. Ask everyone: Did any "worst experiences" violate the right to education? How?

Health

We have the right to the best possible health care.

Sound familiar?

I can't afford health insurance.

The doctor talks to my mom but not to me.

No one told me about HIV.

I don't have the money to get my teeth fixed.

My medications are wrong, but the doctor can't fix it.

What does the new law say about health?

We should have the same health care as others.
Our care should be as good as others' and not cost more.
We should not have to travel farther than others to get care.
Insurance companies must treat us equally.
Medical workers must treat us equally.
Health is more than health care.
These make us less healthy: being poor, poor schooling, poor housing.
These help us be well: enough money, enough education, enough for a good life.
Society must reach for the top—the best well-being for each person.

Alert

If your country signs the treaty, it will help you get these rights.

Key fact

In California, USA, almost 2/3 of people with developmental disabilities said their health worker talks to someone else in the room but not them.

Kosovo.
Photo: Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI)

Group work

Teach the doctors

Pretend you've been asked to teach a group of doctors and nurses. Teach them how to work with people who have a disability. In groups of three, make a list of the "dos and don'ts." Then read your lists to the whole group. Make a combined list and consider who to share it with.

You don't have a right to be healthy. But you do have the right to the same quality of care as everyone else.

Disability is not a sickness.

Up next: Chapter 3: Four key rights about how society must change

Chapter 3. Change in the society

Society has to change so that we have equal rights. Here are four of these rights:

Access

We have an equal right to be able to get to and use public spaces and public services.

Political life

We have an equal right to vote and have a say in laws and policies that affect us.

New attitudes

We are regular people and have the right to be treated as any other person.

Culture and sports

We have the right to take equal part in arts, sports and leisure.

Voices

"People in Qatar are finally starting to behave right. The family attitude is changing. Now they take the handicapped child to public malls and parks. This was not happening six or seven years ago. We must be patient and continue to educate society."

Saif al-Hajri, Qatar

"I work in food services at the college in my town. I love my job. My co-workers respect me and I respect them. We all learn from each other. My husband and I own our own home. We just paid off the loan. We take the bus a lot of places. We also get support from staff to drive us places." **- Brenda, USA**

USA. Photo: Advocating Change Together

Access

We have an equal right to be able to use public spaces and public services.

Sound familiar?

The courthouse was way up on a hill. I couldn't get there.

The explanation was to hard to understand. So I had no idea what to do.

I couldn't join the team. They said it wasn't the place for me.

There was no bus, so I couldn't go to the doctor.

What does the new law say about access?

Buildings must have a way for us to get in.

We have the right to information in a way we can understand: Sign language. Simple language. Someone explaining it to us.

If we need rides to be included, we have the right to get them.

If we need an assistant to be included, we have the right to get the help we need.

When there is a vote, someone must tell us.

Indonesia. Photo: Handicap International

Group work

Practice seeing access

Ask: *"Was today's meeting accessible?"* Make four teams, one each for "meeting space," "meeting notice," "transportation," and "meeting process." Ask each group: *"When you look at who showed up for this meeting, what does it tell you about our own access?"* Share results. Then ask, *"How can we do better?"* AND *"How can our community do better?"*

Alert

If your country signed the treaty, it will help you get these rights.

Voices

"We cannot afford to let the issue of disabilities be simply an afterthought… Accessibility... has got to be a design feature, not an add-on."

William Kennard, USA

Political life

We have an equal right to vote and have a say in laws and policies that affect us.

Voices

"South Africans with disabilities astounded the nation in April 1994. They braved the bombs and threats that preceded South Africa's first-ever democratic elections. Images of disabled people—queuing at the polls, arriving in wheelbarrows, being led by family members, some crawling for kilometers to cast their first vote—filled our television screens during those historic three days."

Maria Rantho, South Africa

Sound familiar?

I have a disability so I can't vote.

Politicians and leaders often ignore us.

We're not seen as important, so we weren't invited to the meeting.

I could not understand what was happening, so I was not involved.

How could I vote? I wasn't told when and where the election was.

What does the new law say about political life?

We have an equal right to vote.

We have a right to have someone help us vote.

We have a right to a secret vote.

We must have access to the polling place.

When public meetings happen, we should be told about them.

And we should have the support we need to be there.

We should be included.

We should have a say in policies and laws that affect our lives.

Group work

No vote, no voice

Make a list of barriers to voting for people with developmental disabilities. Ask everyone: *"Why is it hard to vote?"* Divide into groups of three. Have each group create a very short skit showing one problem. Perform each for the group. After each, ask *"What could we do to solve this problem?"*

USA. Photo: Human Policy Press, Syracuse University

New attitudes

We are regular people and have the right to be treated as any other person.

Sound familiar?

Have you ever heard these bad ideas?

Disability is a medical "problem," to be fixed by experts. bad idea

We are helpless. bad idea

We are innocent children. bad idea

People label us as "special." bad idea

We are objects of fear. bad idea

Stories and movies are full of villains who have a disability. bad idea

What does the new law say about attitudes?

Our country must work to spread the word:
We are regular people.
We are not a problem. Society has a problem.
The problem is we are treated badly and denied rights.
We don't need to be fixed. Society needs to be fixed.
We are not broken. Society is broken.
We must be included in decisions about our lives.
We are in charge of our lives. Not some experts.

Group work

At the movies

In your group, talk about how books and movies show disability. *"Do you see people with disabilities in movies?" "Are they regular people?" "Heroes?" "Bad guys?"* Ask, *"What do books and movies teach people about disability?"* and *"What can we do about it?"*

Cambodia. Photo: Handicap International

Key fact

In India, about half of all households that have a member with a disability view the cause of disability as a "curse of God."
World Bank survey, 2007

Voices

"We are tired of being labeled 'mentally retarded.' We are people first before our disability."
Mia Farah, Lebanon

Culture and sports

We have the right to take equal part in arts, sports and leisure.

Alert

If your country signs the treaty, it will help you get these rights.

Voices

"Whatever the speed of our feet or the power of our arms, each of us is capable of the highest virtues. Intelligence does not limit love, nor wealth produce friendship."
Eunice Kennedy Shriver, USA

Sound familiar?

I was never encouraged to make music.

If there's no bus, we can't go to the movies.

We can't read the menu, so can't eat at the restaurant.

The school soccer team does not allow me to play.

What does the new law say about culture and sports?

We are artists, musicians, actors, poets and athletes, just like everyone else.
We have talents to give to the world.
Arts give meaning to life.
Arts and sports are a key part of belonging to society.
In many cases, we are blocked from being a part of cultural events.
Schools need to work to include children with disabilities in arts and sports.
We have the right to play sports with others who have disabilities.
We also have the right to play sports that are open to everyone.

Iraq. Photo: Special Olympics

Group work

The guessing game
Give time for each person to make a list (with help, if needed) of things they like to do (basketball, reading, concerts, etc). Collect and read lists aloud one at a time. Everyone guesses who made that list. Afterwards, ask, *"How did you guess? What do these lists tell us about a person?"* and *"How do these things make us who we are?"*

Up next: An exercise about where you want to live

Exercise 1:

I want to live like this!

Living independently in the community

We have the right to decide where we live. We have the right to decide how we live. We have the right to decide who we live with. But sometimes we have not been able to do so. In fact, when life is hard, it's hard to even imagine what you want.

This exercise gives you practice at deciding. It helps you imagine how you want to live. It gives you practice at telling others your dream.

Argentina. UN Photo/ L. Solmssem • **Korea.** Photo: International Labor Organization • **Romania.** Photo: R. Antonovici

Turn the page for step-by-step instructions

Exercise 1: I want to live like this!

Goal: People learn about the right to live where they choose and how they choose. They notice what support they need and name what stands in their way.

Description: People silently look over a number of photos. They choose one that shows something they want. Then they talk about the support they need to get it, and what, if anything, stands in the way.

Materials needed: Lots of magazines, scissors, adhesive tape.

In advance: Gather magazines with a big variety of pictures from your culture. Get pictures showing where and how people live—houses, apartments, institutions, tents, families, roommates, etc. Get as many as you can. Get a big variety. It's OK to have several of each image. Spread the pictures out widely—maybe you'll need more space than one table. On the wall, put "I choose where I live."

Leader only leads

Do not try to take part if you are leading this exercise. Your job is to help others. You explain, you watch the time.

1. **Tell about this right** (see page 10).
2. **Explain the pictures**. *"On the table here we have lots of pictures showing different ways people live."*
3. **Tell the plan.** Look, don't take. *"You'll have time to look at all the pictures and think about one or two that fit for you, that show where and how you want to live. Don't pick up the pictures, just look."*
4. **Prepare for silence**. *"While you're looking, we'd like to have no talking."*
5. **Invite everyone to go look**. *"Ready? OK, with no talking, we'll take about five minutes for everyone to look at the pictures."*
6. **Take one.** After five minutes, invite everyone (again silently) to go take one or two pictures that show how they want to live. Then all sit down.
7. **Show and tell.** One at a time, ask each person to post their picture on the wall and tell the group about why they chose it—about where and how they want to live.

This exercise adapted from *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers*, by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, Mambo Press, 1984

8. **Discussion:** After everyone has gone, notice similarities and differences among people's choices. Also call attention to the images not picked. *"Do any people with disabilities live like this?" "Why did no one pick these?"*

9. **Option: Worksheet.** Have people work in pairs to think more deeply about their picture choices. Give each person a copy of the worksheet (page 22). Have people work in pairs to answer the questions, *"What support do you need to live this way?"* and *"What stands in the way?"*

A DECENT LIFE (Follow-up Option A)

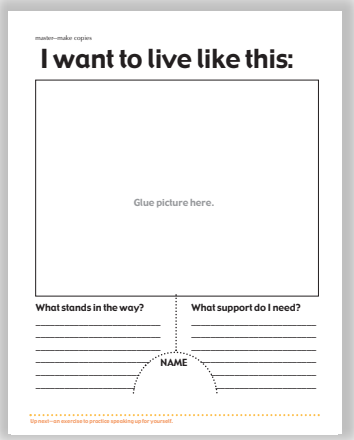
Do the same exercise for the right to have enough for a decent life. Gather pictures showing things necessary for a decent life (food, clothes, etc). Repeat steps 1-9 for the right to live a decent life.

CULTURE AND SPORTS (Follow-up Option B)

Do the same exercise for the right to enjoy sports, leisure and art. Gather pictures showing how people enjoy life with culture, sports, leisure, art. Repeat steps 1-9 for the right to choose how you live (cultural life).

Time's up

As workshop leader, make sure everyone has a chance to talk. You have to be willing to gently cut people off if they are going too long, so that it's fair to everyone.


I want to live like this:

Glue picture here.

What stands in the way?

What support do I need?

NAME

Worksheet: p. 22

USA. Photo: Partnership Resources Inc.

Bangladesh. Photo: Handicap International

worksheet—make copies

I want to live like this:

Glue picture here.

What stands in the way?

What support do I need?

NAME

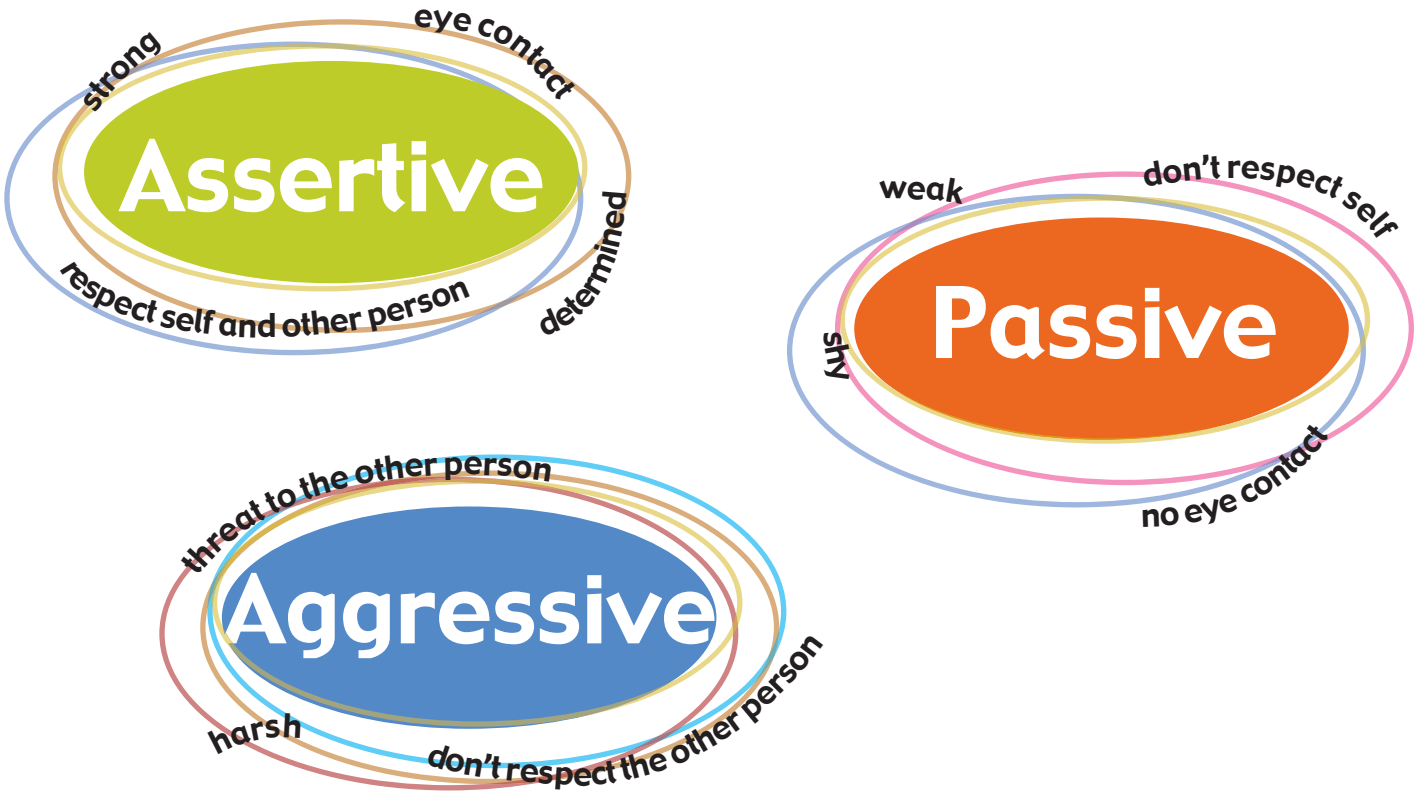
Exercise 2:

Speak up with power

How to be assertive

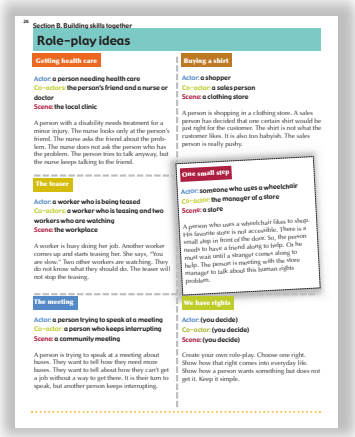
Three choices. When we talk, what we say is only half of the message. The other half is how we say it. There are three choices. One way is to be passive, or shy (you give up easily). A second way is to be aggressive, or threatening. The best way is to be assertive. Assertive means you respect others and stand up for yourself.

This exercise helps you practice that skill.



Turn the page to get started with this exercise

Exercise 2: Speak up with power



Role-play cards, p.26.

Goal: To learn how to be assertive. To see why it's the best way to get your rights.

Description: People take turns role-playing simple skits three times: once being passive, once aggressive, and once assertive. Talk about the difference afterward.

1. Introduce the topic.

Ask people to gather in a circle. Explain the topic. (Use "Three choices," page 23.) Ask, *"Has anyone heard of any of these three?"* Let people respond. Then ask, *"Which do you think is the best way to get your human rights?"*

2. Explain what a role-play is.

Say, *"We're going to learn about these three ways using role-play. Role-playing is acting. We make up a simple story. You get a part to play. Then you're told how to act."*

Then say, *"We will do each role-play three times. Each time you can try a different way of acting."*

3. Choose a story idea.

Pick a simple situation where something is not right. You can use a suggestion from the group, or pick an idea from page 26. Ask for volunteers to act it out. Have one person be the main role. Help the actors think of a few simple lines of what to say. Run the role-play three times. First have the main character be passive. Next time, aggressive. Last time, assertive.

4. Let the skits be very short.

Stop each role-play once the point is seen. Then say, *"Now let's talk about what we just saw."* Use some of the questions on page 23.

5. Repeat many times.

Give every person a chance. Try other role-plays. Follow the same process (Steps 3 and 4 above).

6. Close by talking about the power to decide.

"Today we practiced new skills. Just because you have a habit of being passive doesn't mean that's the way you have to be. We can choose how we act in our lives. We're most likely to get what we want if we are assertive."

Not a Performance

Some people get nervous about acting. Try to get everyone involved in a way that is comfortable for them. The key is to have fun!

USA.
Photo: Advocating Change Together

Discussion questions for after each role-play

1. What did you see and hear that tells you a person is being *assertive*?
(or passive, or aggressive)

How did the person's body look? (answers may include the following)

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Passive: low energy, head down, eyes down	Aggressive: standing too close, tense body posture, scowl on face	Assertive: good eye contact, calm, reasonable, direct

How did the person sound?

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Passive: low voice, not excited, not confident	Aggressive: loud voice, excited, angry, pushy, not respectful	Assertive: normal voice, confident, open, calm

2. How do you think the person feels about herself (or himself)?

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Passive: no control, depressed, easily swayed, down, sad	Aggressive: out of control, mean, not liked, angry	Assertive: in control, happy, proud, self-respect, calm

3. How do you think others see her (or him)?

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Passive: no respect, pushover, unsure	Aggressive: scared, want to stay away, want to fight back, think the person is out of control and unreasonable	Assertive: respectful, not a pushover

4. What do you think would happen to a person who was passive (or aggressive or assertive) all the time?

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Passive: get depressed, get taken advantage of, low opinion of self	Aggressive: lose friends, not respected, staff would put on "behavior program", not happy, anger would eat them up	Assertive: has a better chance of getting more of what they want out of life, happy life, self-directed

5. Did the person get what they wanted by being passive (or aggressive or assertive)? Did they say what they wanted?

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Passive: No?	Aggressive: No?	Assertive: will not always get what you want, but you have a better chance

Be aware that what is respectful behavior differs between countries.

Be a coach

Once someone agrees to be in the role-play, help them prepare. Take them aside and briefly tell them what the role play is trying to show. Tell them to over-do it to make the point. The more they exaggerate the better!

USA.
Photo: Advocating Change Together

Role-play ideas

Getting health care

Actor: a person needing health care
Co-actors: the person's friend and a nurse or doctor
Scene: the local clinic

A person with a disability needs treatment for a minor injury. The nurse looks only at the person's friend. The nurse asks the friend about the problem. The nurse does not ask the person who has the problem. The person tries to talk anyway, but the nurse keeps talking to the friend.

The teaser

Actor: a worker who is being teased
Co-actors: a worker who is teasing and two workers who are watching
Scene: the workplace

A worker is busy doing her job. Another worker comes up and starts teasing her. She says, "You are slow." Two other workers are watching. They do not know what they should do. The teaser will not stop the teasing.

The meeting

Actor: a person trying to speak at a meeting
Co-actor: a person who keeps interrupting
Scene: a community meeting

A person is trying to speak at a meeting about buses. They want to tell how they need more buses. They want to tell about how they can't get a job without a way to get there. It is their turn to speak, but another person keeps interrupting.

Buying a shirt

Actor: a shopper
Co-actor: a sales person
Scene: a clothing store

A person is shopping in a clothing store. A sales person has decided that one certain shirt would be just right for the customer. The shirt is not what the customer likes. It is also too babyish. The sales person is really pushy.

One small step

Actor: someone who uses a wheelchair
Co-actor: the manager of a store
Scene: a store

A person who uses a wheelchair likes to shop. His favorite store is not accessible. There is a small step in front of the door. So, the person needs to have a friend along to help. Or he must wait until a stranger comes along to help. The person is meeting with the store manager to talk about this human rights problem.

We have rights

Actor: (you decide)
Co-actor: (you decide)
Scene: (you decide)

Create your own role-play. Choose one right. Show how that right comes into everyday life. Show how a person wants something but does not get it. Keep it simple.

GET TOGETHER•MAKE A PLAN•TAKE ACTION

Making Change Step by Step

As we learn about our rights, we will see changes we want to make. People with disabilities can work together—step by step—to make those changes. Others can help, too. Here's a true story about a group in the United States.

1.

One person's dream

The city buses were not running. There was a bus strike. I could not get to my job. I could not get to the store. I should be able to get around. This is my right.

2.

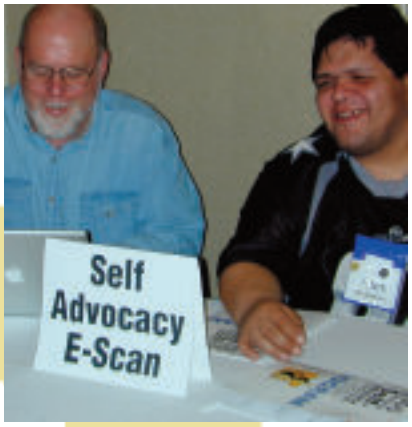
Is it a good issue?

Others in my group felt the same way. It seemed like a problem we could work on and have success. We decided to work together to make change.

3.

Get the facts

We found allies who could help us. We gathered new information. Who has the power to settle the strike. Is transportation a right or a privilege? Who is most affected?



4.

Plan action

We planned a meeting with state leaders. We planned a rally afterward. Our message: Settle the strike! We set a date. We practiced what we would say. Everyone in our group would say something.

5.

Take action

We met as planned. We explained the problem. We told them how we felt. We told them what we wanted.

6.

Result

They listened. The TV news covered our big rally. The strike was settled a few weeks later. Our action made a difference. Now the buses are running. We are able to get to work.

7.

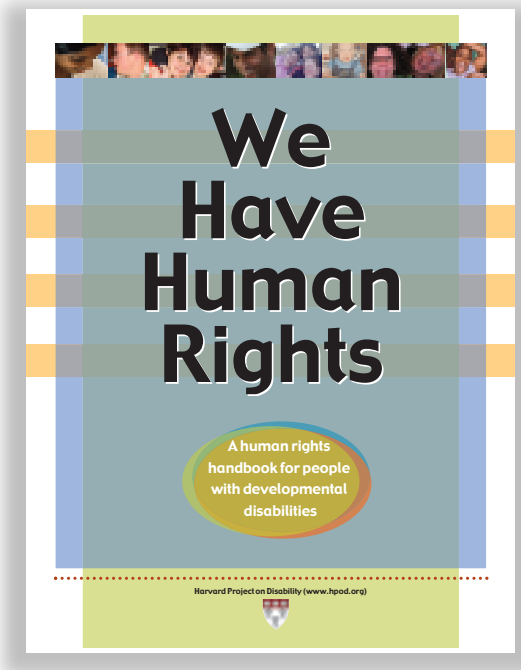
Follow up

We keep talking to officials. We tell them: If we can't get there, we're not included.

This action took place in 2006 in Minnesota, USA.

• Dignity • Ability to choose • Independence • Non-discrimination • Participation

• Participation • Full inclusion • Respect for difference • Disability is part of everyday life • Equal opportunity • Accessibility • Equality of men and women • Respect for children • Dignity • Ability to choose • Independence • Non-discrimination • Participation



We Have Human Rights

A human rights handbook for people with developmental disabilities

In 2007, the United Nations passed a new law: people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else.

We Have Human Rights is produced by the Harvard Project on Disability, which is generously supported by a grant from Foundation Open Society (Zug).

To learn more about disability rights, get this companion book:

Human Rights. Yes! is a human rights curriculum on the rights of persons with disabilities. It was written by people with a wide range of experience in human rights and disability. It will be valuable to human rights workers, advocacy groups, and people working on human rights education.

www.humanrightsyes.org

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