

Basics of Self Advocacy

Self advocacy means taking charge and speaking up for yourself. It is a powerful way to have a sense of control and achieve the best possible health outcomes. Every person needs the courage to speak up with healthcare providers and insurance companies, because only you know your personal experiences.

Here are some suggestions for becoming and remaining a strong, confident advocate for yourself:

Build strong, comfortable relationships with your providers.

Trust and honesty are important. At times, you will need to talk about emotional experiences and sensitive topics such as hygiene and the circumstances of your amputation. Share honestly about what's going on with you. Your care team can help you best if they truly know what you want and need.



Be clear and assertive. Communicate clearly with your care team to help them provide you with better care. Speak up for yourself and your needs, talk about your feelings, ask for what you want, request explanations, and ensure you have a mutual understanding.

Keep detailed records.

Communicating with doctors, health insurance providers, hospitals, employers, and community resources can be complicated. It's a good idea to save emails and copies of health records, send certified mail, and file documents in an organized system.



Record the names of the people you talk to and take written notes. Develop a routine that works best for you and is easy to access.

Engage your support system. Enlist one or more loved ones that you trust with whom you can discuss sensitive topics and depend on to support you. Keep them in the loop, so they can understand your needs and advocate for you. For example, if a friend or family member accompanies you to appointments, they can help take notes and remind you of questions you wanted to ask.

Seek out community resources. It may take some research to find the right services and programs available in your community. Search online for your state's vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency website. These agencies exist specifically to help people with disabilities return to work, enter a new line of work, or enter the workforce for the first time.

To find a list of suggested community resources, scan the code or visit

hclclinic.info/HelpfulOrgs.



For more resources on adjusting to life with limb loss, scan the code or visit HangerClinic.com/LimbLoss.

Hanger Clinic EmpoweredCare

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