

Nothing About Us Without Us

Centering the Movement Around Self-Advocates

Cindy Bentley in conversation with Leah Green



History

People with disabilities have historically had people around them making decisions that impact their lives.

Other people have decided what they can do, what they need, and what they can have.



Self-Advocacy Movement

- In the 1960's the self-advocacy movement began in Sweden.
- The idea began to spread to Great Britain, Canada, and the United States in 1972.
- In Oregon, a group called "People First" was formed because they felt their disabilities were secondary to their being a person first and foremost. From there, the idea of self-advocacy spread about North America.



What do we mean by “Self-Advocate”?

A self-advocate is someone who has learned to speak-up for themselves and the things that are important to them.

They can ask for what they need and want.



Rights

Self-advocates are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

They make the choices and decisions that affect their lives.



Authentic Collaboration

Authentic collaboration of self-advocates requires that you include them in meaningful ways. You need to set an environment where they:

- Are allowed to make decisions
- Have the opportunity to learn leadership skills
- Can see change and progress as a result of their contributions
- Have ownership and control in decision-making processes
- Are respected, trusted, and their voices are heard and valued



Cindy Bentley