



Supporting Students on their Self-Advocacy Journey

Podcast Listener's Guide

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Why talk about self-advocacy?

Have you ever observed:

- Students who do not understand why they use accommodations?
- Students who do not ask for help?
- Students who do not use their accommodations in certain classes?
- Students who contribute little to the development of their Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

Outline of the Podcast

Part I. Interview with a resource teacher

- A definition of self-advocacy
- The importance of self-advocacy
- Ways to support the development of this skill
- How self-advocacy positively impacts students

Part II. Roundtable with students with learning disabilities (LDs)

- The definitions of self-advocacy
- Examples of school situations experienced
- Development of self-advocacy skills
- Key messages for educators to support self-advocacy in students with LDs





Pre-listening Activity:

Activating Prior-knowledge

Before listening to the podcast, answer the questions below to activate your prior knowledge about self-advocacy.

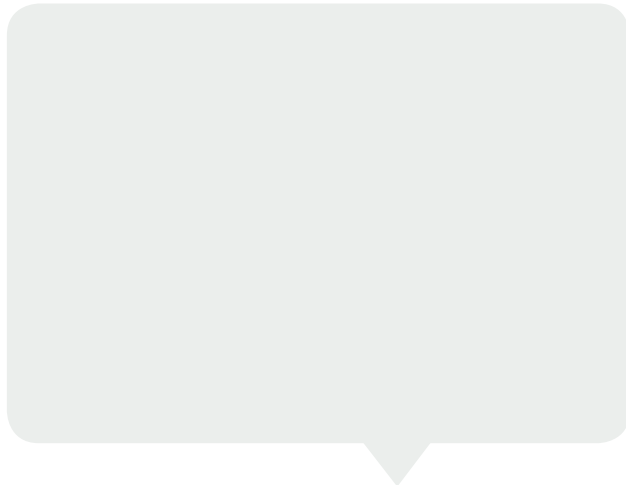
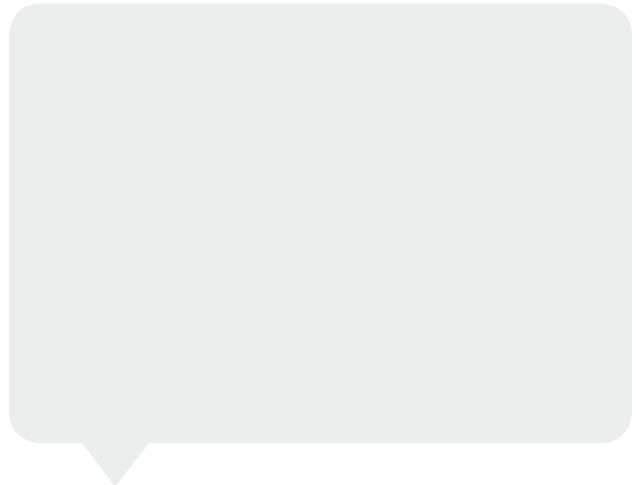
1. What is self-advocacy?

2. How might self-advocacy impact a student with learning disabilities in the classroom?

3. As an educator, how could you help students develop this skill?

Listening Activity

Use this graphic organizer below to record your thoughts, comments, questions and what you learned when listening to the podcast.

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Self-Advocacy

A large, light gray speech bubble with rounded corners and a small upward-pointing triangle at the top center, intended for recording thoughts or comments.A large, light gray speech bubble with rounded corners and a small upward-pointing triangle at the top center, intended for recording thoughts or comments.



Post-listening Activity:
Reflecting on My Teaching Practice

After listening to the podcast, reflect on how your teaching practice may be positively impacted through your new knowledge and understanding of self-advocacy, and complete the following table:

What actions can I take to support students' development of self-advocacy skills?	After listening to the podcast, I am considering the following:

Application Activity: *Role-Playing*

Over the course of this activity, participants will have the opportunity to empathize with how students with learning disabilities (LDs) may be feeling when they need to ask for help from their classroom teachers. In partners, participants will create three character profiles: one for a student with LDs, one for an educator who is supportive and understands the student's learning challenges, and one for an educator who is struggling with supporting the student's learning in their classroom. Participants can and should adapt this activity based on their needs and their learning goals.

Part 1: Participants should work as partners to create three character profiles.

The first character profile should be of a student with LDs. Participants should decide on the student's areas of strengths and needs and decide on what two subjects the student will be asking both subject-area teachers for assistance in (e.g., math, science, history, etc.). It may be helpful to think of a student they are currently working with or one with whom they are familiar as inspiration. Participants may also choose to create their student profile based on their own profile of strengths and needs, allowing them to better relate to the student's emotions in the second part of the activity.

The second character profile should be for a supportive subject-area teacher. This character should have a solid understanding of LDs and should be prepared to suggest ways in which they can help the student succeed in their classroom.

The third character profile should be for a subject-area teacher who is less knowledgeable about LDs and has who has less understanding of the student's need for adaptations, accommodations and/or modifications.

Part 2: Participants will now act out a scene that would typically take place at the beginning of the year, when the student first takes the initiative to introduce themselves and present their areas of strengths and needs to the subject-area teacher. The 'student' should be focused on ensuring that they are able to access all accommodations that they need and the 'supportive educator' should be focused on finding practical ways to help the student succeed. The 'less supportive educator' should be focused on reasons why they may not wish to implement some of the student's suggestions and should suggest 'easy' fixes that may not address the student's LDs.

Each participant should try to fully embrace their chosen roles and try to feel what the character might be feeling in each of the situations. This activity should be performed at least two times, once to enact the student's experience with the supportive educator, and once to enact the student's experience with the less supportive educator.

Part 3: As a group, participants should reflect on and discuss the following questions:

1. How did you as the student feel prior to beginning the discussion with the supportive educator? With the less supportive educator?
2. What emotions would you expect your students to be feeling prior to the start of this discussion and why?
3. How might their LDs impact their ability to express themselves and effectively communicate their classroom needs?
4. How did you as the supportive educator feel when you were able to work with the student to find successful solutions to their needs?
5. How did you as the less supportive educator feel over the course of the conversation?
6. As an educator, how might you help students to feel comfortable in coming and speaking with you to begin with?
7. As an educator, what might you do during an actual conversation with a student to help put them at ease?
8. How might you work with special educators within your school to ensure that all students with learning challenges are able to access the curriculum in your classroom?
9. What challenges might you encounter in trying to help ensure accessibility to the curriculum in your classroom? How might you overcome these challenges?



LD@school Resources to Deepen Your Understanding of Self-Advocacy

Click here to read the article “Strategies to Teach Self-Advocacy Skills”, by Mary Land and Cheryll Duquette on the LD@school website.

Click here to read the article “A Teacher’s Journey with Student Self-Advocacy”, by Julia Osborne on the LD@school website.

Click here to read the article “Fostering Self-Advocacy – Tip Sheet”, submitted by Lynn Ziraldo and Dr. Sue Ball on the LD@school website.

Click here to view the video “Our Self-Advocacy Pamphlet Journey”, created by Mike Di Donato and his Grade Eight Students on the LD@school website.

Thank you for listening to part I *Supporting Students on their Self-Advocacy Journey* and part II *The Journey to Becoming a Self-Advocate: Three Students’ Perspectives* of this podcast, as well as for using this listener’s guide.

At this time, we invite you to share your thoughts and comments relating to these podcasts; the feedback we receive will assist in the development of future podcasts and future content for the LD@school website. Please share your thoughts and comments by completing our short survey through this link:

➔ https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/podcast_self-advocacy

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