

# Why support self-advocacy?

- Self-advocacy is an essential part of a system of person-centered supports & services!
- Empowering self-advocates helps people live their best lives.
- Empowered self-advocates are a vital resource to provide feedback and ideas regarding best practices/policies to organizations, systems, and communities.
- Strong, educated self-advocates are safer and more capable of reporting problems with services and/or staff.
- Supporting self-advocacy helps create a collaborative relationship between those served and professionals/organizations.
- Self-advocacy can be a vehicle through which people can contribute to the local community (community inclusion).
- Self-advocacy is a vital tool in the development of self-advocate leaders who can speak publicly and serve on boards & committees.
- When organizations create meaningful opportunities to be heard, satisfaction increases.
- It's the right thing to do!

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## SELF-ADVOCACY IN YOUR ORGANIZATION



[sanys.org](http://sanys.org)

# Self-advocacy groups are important!

- Groups foster non-paid relationships!
- While individual support is important, more people can be reached through groups.
- Groups allow self-advocates to develop powerful relationships with each other and support the skills of other self-advocates through the sharing of common experiences and challenges.

"A rising tide lifts all boats"
- Members of groups learn how to advocate effectively.
- Groups create unique opportunities for self-advocate leadership and peer support in a way that other meetings/committees do not.
- They create opportunities for a socially respected role.
- Self-governed groups create unique opportunities for leadership.
- Experiencing independence in groups leads to increased pride and self confidence.

# SANYS MEMBERSHIP

## Member Groups\*

**SANYS Member Group:** A group eligible to be a SANYS Member Group is one that meets the following criteria:

- The group must elect its leaders (president, vice-president etc.).
- The group chooses its own advisor(s).
- The group develops its own agenda and activities.
- The group delegates an officer to represent the group at SANYS regional Meetings.
- The group's main purpose is self-advocacy activity.
- The group maintains membership records and shares updated lists of current members and officers with SANYS as needed or, at least, annually.
- If affiliated with an agency, the group remains independent of that agency and the way that agency functions.

**\*Belonging to a SANYS Member Group is one of the eligibility requirements to becoming a SANYS Board Member.**

## Supported Groups

**SANYS Supported Groups:** A group is eligible to be a SANYS Supported Group if it is an active self-advocacy group that does not meet the criteria of a Member Group\* and has an interest in gaining support and information from SANYS.



## Voting Members and Allies

**Voting Members:** Persons with a developmental disability who are members of a self-advocacy group are eligible to become voting members. Voting members are eligible to vote in SANYS Board elections. Only voting members can vote for the members of the Board at their annual regional board elections.

**Allies:** Friends, family members, professionals and other persons or organizations with an interest in SANYS are not considered members but are considered Allies of the organization.