



This *How To* sheet explains how to speak up to make change happen.



1. Why Speak Up?

All over the world self advocates are speaking up for their rights and working to make change happen for people with disabilities.

You have the right to speak up and have your voice heard about the things that are important to you! *You are the expert!*

It is important to speak up because you can:

- Raise the issues faced by people with a disability.
- Make change happen.
- Let the government know about the things that are working and the things that are not working.
- Share your knowledge and lived experience of disability.
- Make life better for yourself and for others.





2. What do you want to Change?

When you speak up you can make change happen!

But how do you decide what you want to change?

STEP 1 Brainstorm

Meet with your group to *brainstorm* the issues faced by people with disabilities and the *changes that need to happen* to make life better for people with disabilities.

Make sure you write down all of your ideas.

STEP 2 Pick your Issues

Pick the top two issues you would like to change.

STEP 3 Plan

Write an action plan about:

- The important issues
- The changes you want to see happen
- Ideas about how to fix the issues and make change happen
- People or groups who can help
- Jobs you will need to do



**TELL
YOUR
STORY**

3. Getting your voice heard!

The next step is to get your message out there and to have your voice heard. To do this you can:

- Meet with politicians.
- Talk to people who work for the government and who make the decisions.
- Sit on committees and advisory groups.
- Go on the radio.
- Write letters to the newspaper.
- Speak at conferences and forums.
- Join with other groups to have a louder voice.
- Hold your own forum.
- Make a video.

★ HOT TIPS

- Whenever you get the chance you should tell your story. **Your story has power!**
- When you tell your story, people listen.
- Telling your story is a good way to **teach people** about the issues that are important to you and the changes that need to happen.