Advocating with your Elected Officials

We Believe

Method
Outcome

We know

We developed

We learned
Civic Engagement/Advocacy

We Believe

Democracy requires active participation.

“The people’s voice” is important in the political decision-making process.

Advocacy with elected officials is one of the fundamentals of a democratic society.
People need knowledge and skills to be effective and heard by their elected officials.

Many with intellectual disabilities and low literacy are disenfranchised from the political system due to lack of understanding.

Clear and accessible information facilitates greater engagement in the advocacy process.
People with low literacy and those with intellectual disabilities are less likely to advocate and vote.

People must advocate and engage in the political process to avoid human rights abuse.

Legislative Advocacy Project
Increase number of community members engaged in meaningful interaction with elected officials.
Background

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN Treaty ensures people with disabilities and people without disabilities are treated equally.

Article 21

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Provide information intended for the public to persons with disabilities in accessible formats they can understand and use.
Article 29
Participation in political and public life

Equal political rights and opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others.

... Ensure materials are appropriate, accessible, easy to understand and use.
Nearly 25% adults, with and without disabilities, have a difficult time reading basic signs and labels.

Nearly 53% (Los Angeles) working-age adults cannot read well enough to use a bus schedule or complete a job application.

People with disabilities and/or low literacy are typically marginalized and removed from the political system.

- Limited or no voice - people speak for them
- Lack knowledge - effective ways to advocate
Advocating with your Elected Officials

Objectives:
- Easy-to-use advocacy tool
- Individual/small group process
- Designed by-and-for intended group
- Sustainable approach

Outcomes:
- Increased engagement with elected officials.
- Lead others by example
3 - Steps

Method

**Identify**
The end-user
Key consultants, designers (end-users)
Accessible strategy (Think-Plan-Do)

**Develop**
Multi-media approach
Sequenced learning
Web based and group orientation formats

**Verify**
Community focus groups
Field-test, Revise, Apply
Advocacy Tools

Making Complex Ideas Simple™

Easy-to-use Workbook:
- Sending an email or letter
- Meeting with elected official
- Calling elected official

Companion Video:
- Illustrate/narrate each step
Advocacy Tools

Outcome

Interactive Website

Elected Officials
Links to legislation

Training Video
Group training slides
Workbook
Collaborative, flexible approaches that assist individuals, groups and organizations assure inclusive decision making, policy development and service delivery using plain language and accessible formats, person/user-centered commitment to make complex ideas simple.

BRC provides a library of tools that assist individuals and organizations support people they serve to live quality self-determined lives and contribute to their communities. They are organized in three categories: Include, Connect, Transform and are free of charge. [http://brcenter.org/lib_library.html](http://brcenter.org/lib_library.html)

BRC produces periodic newsletters that feature new trends, strategies and our new public domain print and digital media tools. BRC self-advocate advisors share data they collect surveying community members about employment, community life and ways to access natural supports.

Training and technical tools to increase access to new ideas and resources that create natural community experience, relationships and collaborative partnerships.

Facilitation and tools that lead to greater connections and active membership for individuals and their families in neighborhood communities, agency-to-agency collaboration, public/private cooperation that enhance agency effectiveness.

Training and facilitation for organizations to assist with system transformation. BRC acts as a coach and support team to encourage new ways of thinking about mission fulfillment and service.