# Disability Advocacy

## **Disability** Disability is when someone has an impairment and faces barriers to fully take part in daily activities. There are lots of types of disability including:

* physical disability
* intellectual disability
* psychosocial disability
* sensory disability.

People can be born with disability or acquire a disability at some point in their life. Disability can be short-term or permanent.

## **Disability advocates** Disability advocates may advocate for themselves, another person, or a group of people with disability. They work through issues that have an adverse effect on rights for an individual or group. Advocates may be paid or voluntary.

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*“Advocates can help you to understand* ***all*** *of your options, so that you can make an* ***informed decision.”***

**- Leanne**

## **Types of disability advocacy**

There are lots of different types of disability advocacy. Some of them are listed below.

* **Self-advocacy –** is when someone with disability speaks up and represents themselves.
* **Individual advocacy –** a one-on-one approach by a worker, relative, friend or volunteer, to help someone with a disability.
* **Group advocacy** – advocating for a group of people with disability.
* **Systemic advocacy** – involves working for long-term social change to ensure the collective rights and interests of people with disability are supported in legislation, policies and practices.
* **Legal advocacy** – when a lawyer provides representation or gives legal advice to people with disability about their rights.

## **What disability advocates do**

Disability advocacy may include things like:

* Providing information to people with disability about their rights.
* Assisting people with disability to stand up for their rights by speaking with and writing to people and organisations to raise awareness of problems and seek solutions.
* Helping people with disability make complaints or engage in legal action.
* Writing submissions and lobbying government to make changes to laws, policies and programs.

## **Advocacy support**

If you need support to learn about or advocate for your rights, you can ask an advocate to help.

You can find an advocate at the Australian Government **website:**[**Disability Advocacy Finder**](https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/)