

WORKING WITH ADVOCATES

People with a disability may at times need Advocates to help them achieve their needs. An advocate can mean speaking-up on behalf of people or it can mean standing beside someone and helping them to speak for themselves.

Role of a disability Advocate and types

Disability advocates can take action on their own behalf, or can assist another person, or a group of people with disability; they may work in a paid or voluntary capacity. Their work can include:

- providing information to people with a disability about their human rights, and identifying instances of discrimination
- assisting people with a disability to uphold their rights by speaking with and writing to people and organisations to raise awareness of problems and seek solutions
- helping people with a disability negotiate complaints processes or legal action to enforce their human rights
- writing submissions and lobbying government to make changes that promote and protect the rights of people with a disability
- campaigning for social change by speaking to the media to raise awareness and highlight situations where people with a disability are treated unfairly

Disability advocacy is not:

- providing counselling
- making decisions for another person
- providing mediation
- providing case management



There are a number of disability advocacy agencies across Australia, some are funded by the Australian Government under the National Disability Advocacy Program, some by state and territory governments, and others receive funding from more than one source.

Types of advocacy:

- · Self-Advocacy - Encourage and promote independence including self-representation. Provide and support training and development opportunities for clients to enhance self-advocacy skills.
- · Systemic Advocacy - To advocate for change in systems within the community that may affect clients
- · Parent/Family Advocacy - To assist families of clients to represent their interests in the community and within government
- · Citizenship Advocacy - To represent client rights to equal status in the community
- · Legal Advocacy - To support clients to access skilled professionals to represent and defend their human and legal rights
- · Individual Advocacy - To ensure that clients understand the role of an advocate as well as their right to use an advocate when engaging with Exceptional Bonds Pty Ltd representatives.

Where for find more information

More information on what is an Advocate and where to find one can be found on the Disability Advocacy Network Australia - <https://www.dana.org.au/how-to-advocate/>