

Advocacy and Empowerment with Students with Intellectual Disability and Severe Disabilities

SPC ED 524-001

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Course Overview

- Introductions What brought you here tonight?
- Discuss course rationale, content, policies, and assignments
 - Review syllabus
 - Class website:
http://www.unm.edu/~susanrc/Site/SPCD_524.html
- Consider who are advocates and what do they do?
 - Examine terms: advocacy, advocate, self-advocate, and empowerment

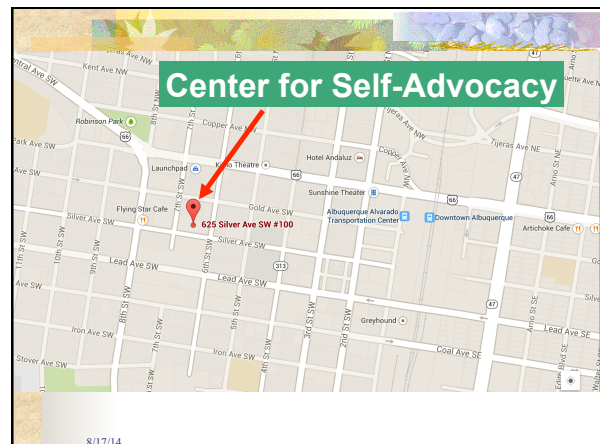
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Graduate Student Resource Center

- Mesa Vista Hall, Suite 1057
- <http://www.unm.edu/~grad/grc/grc.html>

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Center for Self-Advocacy



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NM Center for Self-Advocacy

- Website:
<http://www.nmddpc.com/csa>

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Who are 'advocates'?



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Important Terms (American Heritage Dictionary)

- Advocate
 - 1. One that argues for a cause; a supporter or defender: 2. One that pleads in another's behalf; an intercessor
 - To speak, plead, or argue in favor of. (v.t.)
- Advocacy
 - The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support.

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What Advocates Do (in educational settings):

- Gather information
- Learn about local school district/service system
- Learn about legal rights/responsibilities
- Plan and prepare for important meetings
- Keep written records
- Ask questions and listen to the answers
- Identify problems
- Propose solutions

(Wright's Law, 2003)

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Different Types of Advocates (in special education)

- **Lay advocates**
 - People with specialized knowledge and skills (about legal rights/responsibilities) who help parents resolve problems with school systems (e.g., PRO)
- **Educational advocates**
 - Professionals who evaluate children and make educational recommendations for those children (e.g., outside evaluator)
- **School employees**
 - Teachers and others who support children and families by their actions and interactions (e.g., **YOU!!**)
- **Parents and Family Members**
 - "natural" advocates; actively plan for child's education and services by working with schools and service systems

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Important Terms

- **Empowerment**
 - 1. To invest with power, especially legal power or official authority 2. **To equip or supply with an ability; enable**
- **Self-advocacy**
 - Acting and communicating for oneself
(The Arc, 1990)

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Next Week

- Read the readings for Weeks 1 and 2
- Look over the syllabus and assignment descriptions and come to class with any questions that might arise.
- Check the website and bring handouts for next week's class.
- Get your background check done/get a copy to UNM Field Services.

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