**Advocating for Yourself After Brain Injury: Yes You Can!**

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* What is Self Advocacy?
  + Knowing yourself
  + Communicating your needs
  + Taking Action to get your needs met
* Why is Self Advocacy Important after Brain Injury?
  + Needs may increase and be different than before
  + The injury may create obstacles – in confidence, memory, communication, etc.
* You don’t need to do it alone!

My Advocacy Team:

**Know Yourself – Strengths and Challenges**

My SA Strengths:

My SA Challenges:

**Take Care of Yourself – Have a Balanced Wellness Wheel**

**Gather Information – About Your Injury and About Resources**

* Learn about brain injury so you can communicate your needs
* Learn about community resources so you can find ways to meet your needs

Websites with information and resources:

* BIAC: biacolorado.org
* Brain Injury Association of America: biausa.org
* TBI Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center: msktc.org/tbi
* Brainline: brainline.org

**Be Organized and Prepared**

* Find an organization system that works for you! (phone, calendar, planner)
* Prepare for meetings and for phone calls
* Write down questions ahead of time
* Bring someone with you to take notes
* Follow-up meetings or calls with an email to verify
* Set a time to organize every day

**Assertively Communicate and Negotiate**

* Attack the problem, not the person
* Start with “I” rather than “You”
* Stick to the facts, stay goal- directed
* Say what you want instead of what you don’t
* Say what you feel, rather than showing it
* Take the time you need
* Listen, really listen to the other person
  + Show that you’re listening – nod your head, have eye contact
  + Comment to show that you are listening “It sounds like…” or “I hear you saying…”
  + Check to see if you got it right “Is that what you mean?” “Did I get that right?”

-I need – I want – I prefer- I feel – I hear you -

**“This is not a short race, it’s a marathon”**   
**“Asking for help – helps me take charge of my life”  
“Get out there, say what you need, & get on with it!”**