



# Leadership Development & Advocacy Training



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## People First Language

### What do you call a person with a disability? A Person.



What words define who you are? The color of your skin or hair? Your age? Your weight? Of course not. When words alone define a person, the result is a label—a label that often reinforces barriers created by negative and stereotypical attitudes. Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect—regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, hair color, or anything else.

### People First Language

People First Language is an objective and respectful way to speak about people with disabilities by emphasizing the person first, rather than the disability. It acknowledges what a person has, and recognizes that a person is not the disability. In putting the person before the disability, People First Language highlights a person's value, individuality and capabilities.

### What should you say?

When referring to individuals with disabilities, be considerate when choosing your words. Focus on the person—and never use terms that label, generalize, stereotype, devalue or discriminate. Unless it is relevant to the conversation, you don't even need to refer to or mention the disability. The following chart has some examples of People First Language.

| Say This  | Not This   |
|---|--|
| people with disabilities  | the handicapped, the disabled  |
| people without disabilities   | normal, healthy, whole or typical people                             |
| person who has a congenital disability  | person with a birth defect   |
| person who has (or has been diagnosed with)...  | person afflicted with, suffers from, a victim of...                  |
| person who has Down syndrome  | Downs person, mongoloid, mongol                                      |
| person who has (or has been diagnosed with) autism  | the autistic   |
| person with quadriplegia, person with paraplegia, person diagnosed with a physical disability     | a quadriplegic, a paraplegic   |
| person with a physical disability   | a cripple  |
| person of short stature, little person  | a dwarf, a midget  |
| person who is unable to speak, person who uses a communication device                             | dumb, mute   |
| people who are blind, person who is visually impaired   | the blind  |
| person with a learning disability   | learning disabled  |
| person diagnosed with a mental health condition   | crazy, insane, psycho, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, demented |
| person diagnosed with a cognitive disability or with an intellectual and developmental disability | mentally retarded, retarded, slow, idiot, moron                      |
| student who receives special education services   | special ed student, special education student                        |
| person who uses a wheelchair or a mobility chair  | confined to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound                           |
| accessible parking, bathrooms, etc.   | handicapped parking, bathrooms, etc.                                 |



## Person-Centered



### Thinking

#### What is it?

Person-centered thinking is a strengths-based approach that shifts ideas about people with developmental disabilities away from their deficits or needs. It is a set of values, skills, and tools used in person-centered planning.

#### People-First Language

It is important to address the person first and not define a person by their disability. Here is an example of **preferred language** and **language to avoid**:



### Planning

#### What is it?

Person-centered planning is putting thoughts to work as people with disabilities take charge of the services they utilize, their social lives, and their needs. This empowers a person to advocate and leads to greater societal inclusion.

#### Your Toolbox

It's important to have a toolbox of skills and resources a person can use to lead a person-centered life. Tools can include:



### Supporting Person-Centered Thinking

Ensure the individual with the developmental disability is involved and is the center of any person-centered plan.

Create a one-page profile so that teachers, employers, etc. will see you the way you want them to.

### Example

Diana is twenty-two years old, has a disability, and wants to be employed. In order for her to get to work, she has to apply for transportation services, which she does on her own. The service takes her to three interviews, and at each one, she leaves a copy of her one-page profile. This makes her potential employers more comfortable, and she receives two job offers.

## About Me: One Pager Template



Directions:

- Spend more time on #1 , #2 and #5 **for teachers and employers** (including volunteer).
- Spend more time on #3 , #4 and #6 **for new attendants or doctors** (*you may want to add a summary of health concerns*).
- Spend more time on #7 **for employers and volunteer opportunities**.
- Spend more time on #3, #6, #7 and #8 **for providers and case managers**.

Spend more time on #1, #2, #3, #4, #6, #7 and #8 **for groups you participate in with your community**.

1. Who I am: (introduce yourself)

2. I am excited about (why are you excited about joining them? What made you decide to start now? What are you hoping to learn? How might you give to the group, apart from what you need?):

3. What I need from you: (accommodations you might need from this person):

4. What I don't need from you (what can you handle by yourself that they may not know):

5. What I have learned (have you done something similar before, that you have learned something that might be helpful?):

6. Things that may come up (is there anything else they need to know that isn't every day?):

7. Things people notice about me (what do people tell you you are good at, or that they like about you?):

8. Other things I like to do or that I'm involved in (are there other things you do that might be helpful to this person, or that you want to tell them about? Remember that you are a whole person, not just the pieces that they might see)

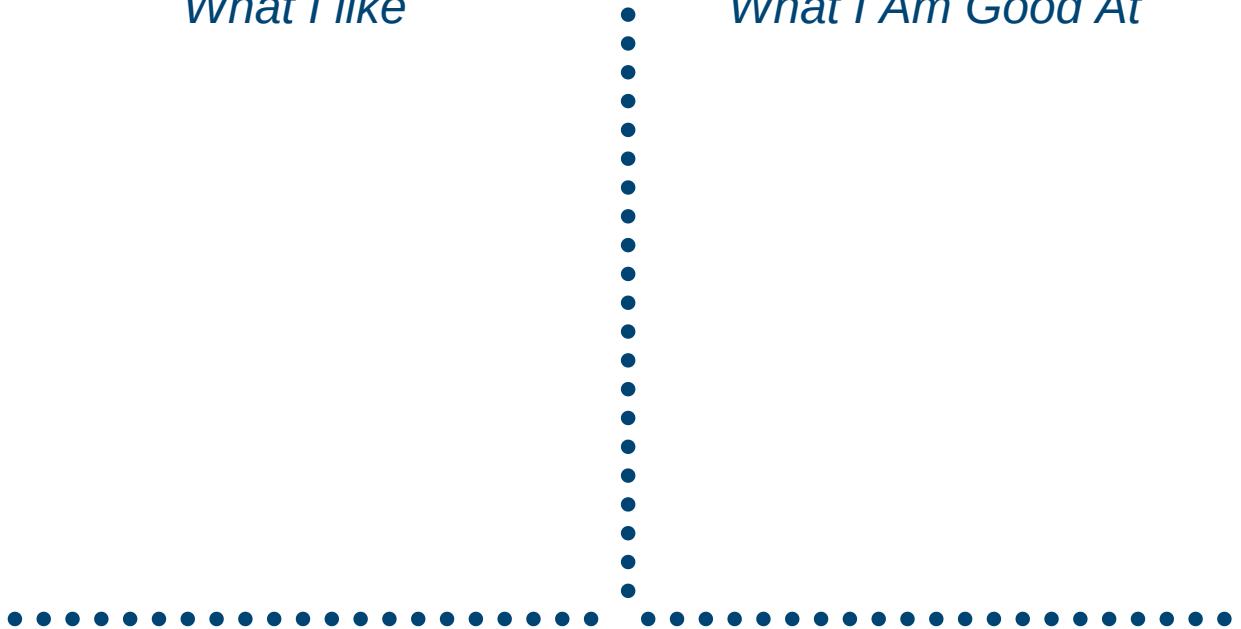
9. Ending section (show that you are open to answering questions and more conversation):

About Me: One Pager Profile



*What I like*

*What I Am Good At*



*What Others Like About Me*

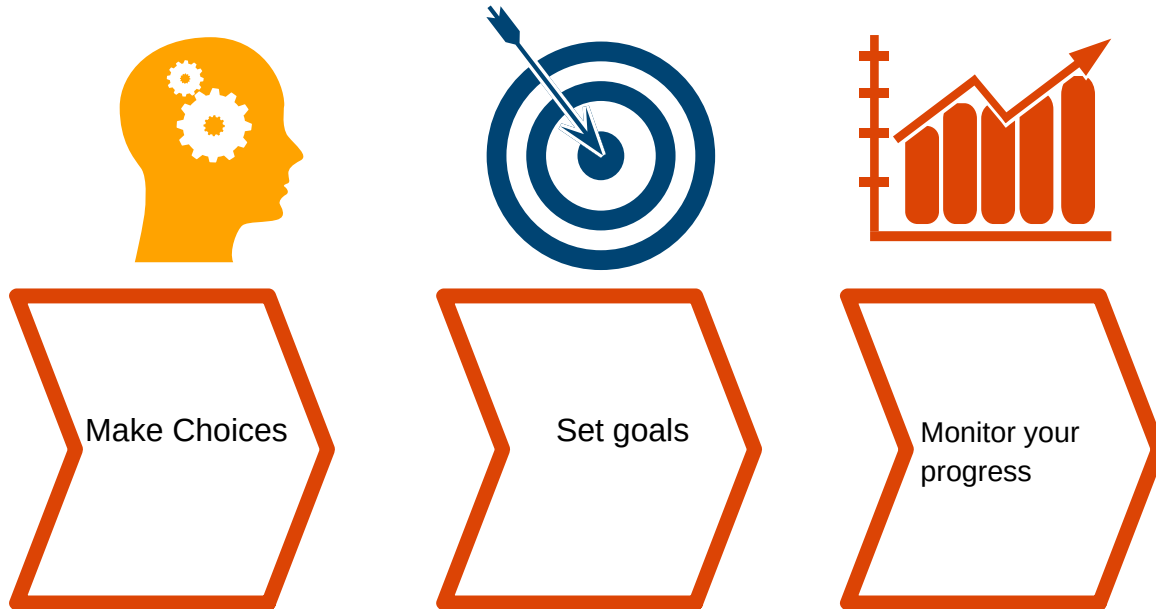
*How You Can Support Me*



# Self-Determination: How to Own You

## Jaime Template

Individuals make choices and decisions based on their own interests and preferences, set goals, and monitor their own progress.



|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>You have the ability to choose what you want your life to look like. You can exercise control over your services and supports.</p>  | <p>Once you know what you want, make a plan to get the resources you need.<br/>Write, or ask for help writing down how you're going to get what you want.</p>  | <p>You know yourself better than anyone, so you can measure your improvement best. Keep track of the goals you're reaching, and see how you can better approach the ones you aren't.</p>                      |
| <p>Jaime is six years old, has Autism and is nonverbal. He likes chocolate cereal, but when his mom stopped buying it, Jaime's behavior started to escalate. He began to refuse breakfast and shove his food away because he was trying to communicate his likes and dislikes.</p> | <p>Jaime's parents make the following goals:<br/>1. Have Jaime come to the store and pick three cereals<br/>2. Let Jaime pick his cereal every morning<br/>3. Give Jaime "yes" or "no" cards to show when making choices</p> | <p>After six months, Jaime plans every breakfast and snack. One day, when Jaime's mom asks if they want to go to the zoo, Jaime says, "No," and points to his fish tank. They go to the aquarium instead.</p> |

### Practice!

Living a self-determined life means taking control of planning and decisions, as well as experiencing consequences of making choices. This takes practice. It also takes support from family and friends or a mentor. Start early by engaging in ample opportunities to make as many choices as possible.

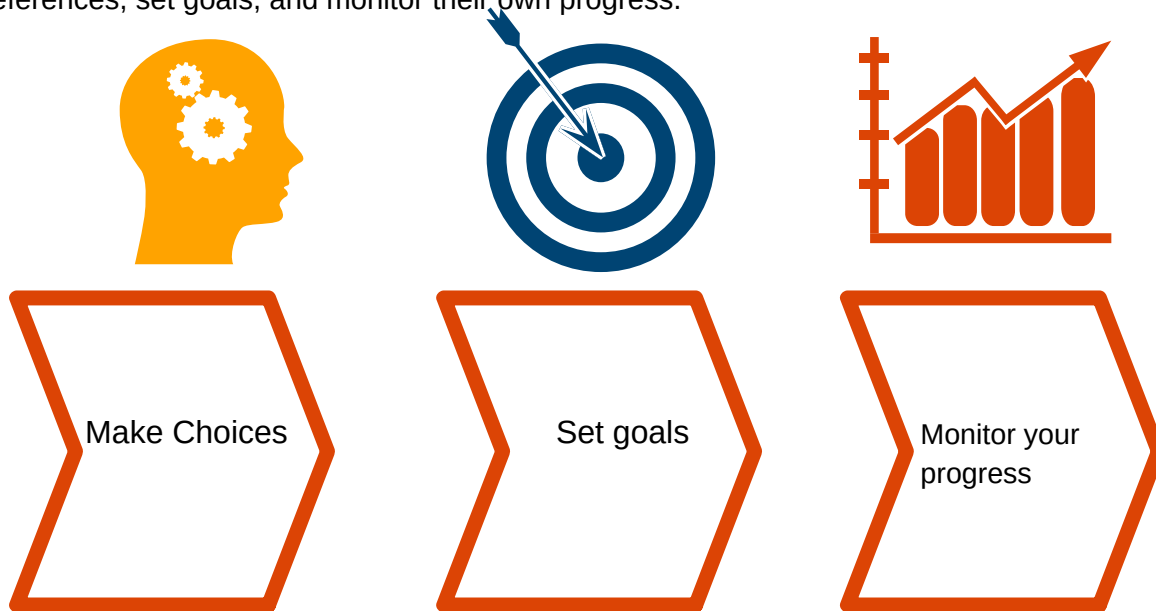


# Self-Determination: How to Own You

## Alex Template



Individuals make choices and decisions based on their own interests and preferences, set goals, and monitor their own progress.



|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>You have the ability to choose what you want your life to look like. You can exercise control over your services and supports.</p>   | <p>Once you know what you want, make a plan to get the resources you need.<br/>Write, or ask for help writing down how you're going to get what you want.</p>   | <p>You know yourself better than anyone, so you can measure your improvement best. Keep track of the goals you're reaching, and see how you can better approach the ones you aren't.</p>   |
| <p>Alex is fifteen years old, is visually impaired, and loves science. Alex has always wanted to go to school for nutrition, but the middle school has always avoided placing her in advanced classes because of her disability. Entering high school, Alex decides to take the classes that will look good on a college application.</p> | <p>Alex makes the following goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attend my ARD meetings</li> <li>2. Take Chemistry</li> <li>3. Get at least B's in all my classes Freshman year</li> <li>4. Get A's Sophomore year</li> </ol> | <p>Alex attends every ARD meeting and notices teachers do not fully understand her potential. Alex keeps every report card, and notices her grades go up every time she meets with her teachers. By Sophomore year, Alex places in advanced Chemistry.</p> |

### Practice!

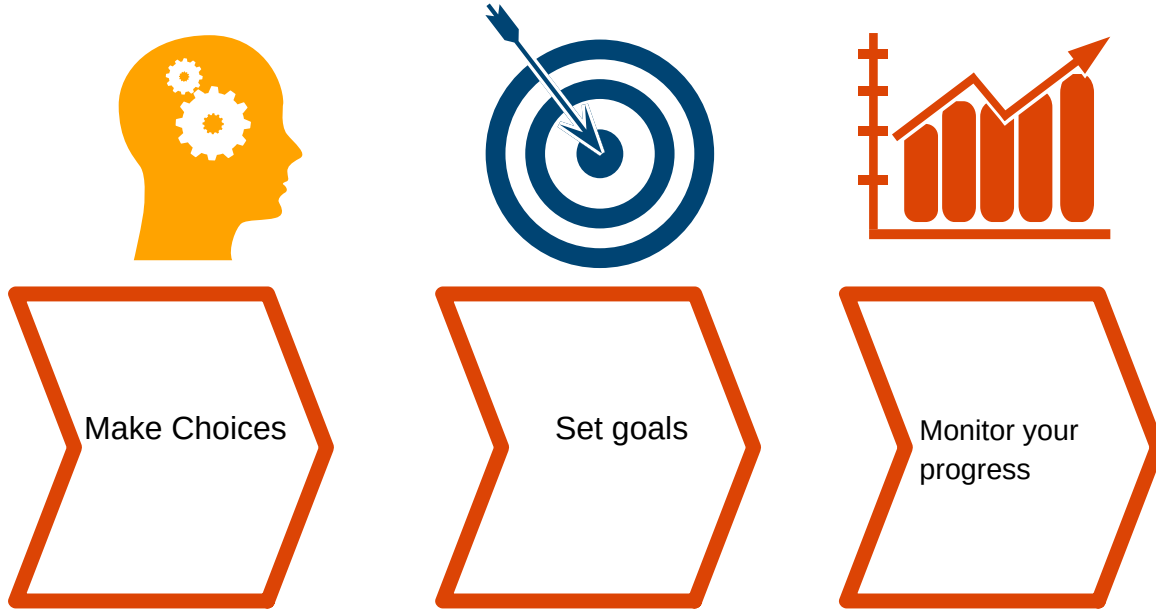
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# Self-Determination: How to Own You

## Practice Template



Individuals make choices and decisions based on their own interests and preferences, set goals, and monitor their own progress.



|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>You have the ability to choose what you want your life to look like. You can exercise control over your services and supports.</p> | <p>Once you know what you want, make a plan to get the resources you need. Write, or ask for help writing down how you're going to get what you want.</p> | <p>You know yourself better than anyone, so you can measure your improvement best. Keep track of the goals you're reaching, and see how you can better approach the ones you aren't.</p> |
|   |   |  |

### Practice!

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## Identifying a Priority Issue



1. What issues are important to me?
2. What is my priority?
3. What is the benefit? (Human and financial)
4. What level of advocacy is this? (Personal, local, state, federal)
5. Who are relevant decision-makers? (School board, city council, state agency, state legislator, etc.)
6. Are there any advisory committees or groups that address this issue?
7. Who are my partners?
8. Who may oppose this?
9. Where are my opportunities to engage?
10. How do I follow up?

# How to Effectively Communicate with Legislators



When addressing your legislator or legislative staff, use the following:

- Senator: “Senator \_\_\_\_\_”
- Member of the House of Representatives: “Representative \_\_\_\_\_”
- Chairman or chairwoman “Chairman (last name), or Madam Chair “(last name)”

\*More often than not, you will be meeting with a staffer from your legislator’s office. These individuals communicate directly with legislators and are a valuable audience to hear your concern or support for an issue. Extend them the same respect you would to your legislators.\*

## Be Personal

- Introduce yourself- your name, where you are from, if you are representing yourself or an organization.
- Be sure to let them know if you are a constituent.
- Connect your talking points to your story; how a policy or bill may impact yourself, your family, clients, etc.

## Provide Data

- If possible, provide at least one piece of data that supports your position, but keep it brief.
- Additional data or printed materials can always be left with staff or forwarded to the office later.

## Be Focused

- Stick to main talking points and be conscious of time.
- Be polite, but gear the conversation back to your issue if it seems like the conversation is going off track.

## Be Positive

- Avoid being argumentative. Your legislator may not agree with your position, but it is important to be professional and continue the dialogue.
- Do not be discouraged by tough questions. Legislators may ask you questions that will be asked of them. Provide solid information, or offer to follow up with additional information if you don’t know.
- Remember your goal is to develop a long term relationship.

## Make the Ask

- Ask your legislator to support your position or a piece of legislation.
- Ask them if they have any other questions or need additional information.

## Close the Discussion

- Thank the legislator and let them know you look forward to additional discussion in the future.
- Follow up with a thank you note and/or any updates.

## How to Effectively Communicate with Legislators Worksheet



Visit Who Represents Me to determine your legislator: <https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/>

**Name of Legislator:**

**Phone Number:**

**Address:**

**Appointment Time:**

**Introduction:** Address the Legislator or their staff member and thank them for their time. Introduce yourself, provide them with your name and who you are speaking on behalf of. Typically, you will be speaking on your own behalf. Be sure to inform them if you are a constituent of their district!

**Ask:** Make a clear ask. You can ask your legislator to support (or not support) a specific bill, or budget item. Note if they provide you with an answer about their opinion on the bill or budget item.

**Story:** Tell them how the policy would impact your life. If possible, include at least 1 piece of data.

**Conclusion:** Thank them for their time, offer to answer any questions, and send them a follow up email.

Name and contact information of who you spoke with:

Questions you need to respond to or information you will provide:

## Legislative Advocacy Resources



### Websites

- **Who Represents Me?** Who Represents Me provides information about current districts and members of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, the Texas delegation to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the State Board of Education. Simply enter your address to find out who represents you! <https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home>
- **Texas Legislature Online:** Will provide you with information about the Texas House and Senate, the legislative process, searching and tracking bills, watching broadcasts, viewing calendars and more! <https://capitol.texas.gov/Home.aspx>
  - You can also create a list of bills and track their progress following the steps listed here: <https://capitol.texas.gov/MyTLO/Login/Login.aspx>  
[ReturnUrl=%2fMyTLO%2fBillList%2fBillList.aspx](https://capitol.texas.gov/MyTLO/BillList/BillList.aspx)
- **The Texas Senate:** <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/>
  - Hearing information for the Texas Senate committees can be found: <https://capitol.texas.gov/Committees/MeetingsSenate.aspx>
- **The Texas House:** <http://www.house.state.tx.us>
  - Hearing information for Texas House committees can be found: <https://www.house.texas.gov/schedules/committee-schedules/>
- **Texas House Witness Registration:** <http://hwrs.house.state.tx.us/>
- **Texas Senate Witness Registration:** <http://swrs.senate.state.tx.us/>
  - \*Note that in order to register your opinion you must be at the Texas Capitol Building and be connected to their WiFi.
- **Easterseals Coalition Serving Texas:** Follow us on Facebook @EasterSealsTXAdvocates for the latest updates on disability policy in Texas!

### Instructional Videos

- To learn more about Capitol accessibility and registering to testify, visit this resource created by Easterseals: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQ2AIRBCFIM&feature=youtu.be>
- You can also watch this instructional video about Texas House Witness registration: <https://mytxlegis.capitol.texas.gov/HWRSPublic/Video/HouseWitnessReg.mp4>

### Legislator Contact Information

State Representative \_\_\_\_\_

State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

Important Committees \_\_\_\_\_

Texas US Senator \_\_\_\_\_

Texas US Representative \_\_\_\_\_