

Advocacy

Advocacy Definition

1. To speak out when someone cannot speak because they are afraid or do not have the understanding from which to speak for themselves
2. To be an advocate is to protect rights, change unfair discriminatory or abusive treatment to fair, equal, and humane treatment
3. To improve services, to better meet the needs of an individual

Advocacy exists at a number of levels. You can advocate for change to policy, practice or the way an institution is run. You can also advocate for someone to empower them and give them a voice

Midwifery Advocate

Empowering woman and promoting their interests. Midwives as advocates ensure that women have all the information they need to make decisions or they have confidence in decisions midwives/doctors are making. Midwives also advocate against policies, practices and institutions that disempower women and they advocate for those things that will empower women

Midwives can support woman in the following ways

Midwife can ensure that the woman/family understands what is said by doctors and

- ensure that if they have something to say they are empowered to speak
- Midwife can ensure the woman/family understands and the woman gives her consent to what is going to happen
- Midwife can ensure that if the woman/family have questions that they have the opportunity to ask them
- The midwife can interpret for the woman what the doctor is saying if the woman does not understand the medical language.
- The midwife can refer in a professional an appropriate way so the doctor has all the information to follow on the care
- The midwife can work to change policies, practices and institutions which disempower woman or provide woman with an inadequate service.

*it is important not to take over or patronize the woman but to empower and ensure her questions are answered and her concerns addressed. It can be a fine balance.

Assertiveness

1. Speak up when you have an idea or opinion.
2. Stand up for your opinions and hold to them.
3. Make requests and ask for favors.
4. Refuse requests if they are unreasonable.
5. Accept both compliments and feedback.
6. Question rules or traditions that don't make sense or don't seem fair.
7. Insist that your rights be respected. <http://www.mtstcil.org/skills/assert-4.html>

Assertiveness- A tool for using in practice

Define assertiveness

- Assertiveness is a way of getting your voice heard without offending others. At the heart of assertiveness is **respect**.

Process for being assertive

1. **Respect both yourself and the other person (or people) involved.**
2. **Begin with a disarming statement** – choose one depending on situation or personal preference
3. Once you use a disarming statement, state your needs
4. **Negotiate (but stand firm as to your concern)**

Content 1. Respect both yourself and the other person (or people) involved.

1. Respect can be seen in our behaviour and in the way we address someone, our body language and our tone of voice.
2. Professional respect means that we portray a professional image
3. Professional respect means that we treat everyone with the same respect , the doctor or the cleaner

REMEMBER THE FIRST ASEPECT OF RESPECT AND PROFESSIONAL RESPECT IS TO RESPECT YOURSELF.

Content: 2 Begin with a disarming statement – choose one depending on situation or personal preference

A disarming statement is once which allows you to be professionally assertive and get your point across but to not offend the other. It is a way of starting the discussion around a sensitive point.

Examples

Do you mind if I ask a question?

I really respect your practice

I am sorry if you take offence at

I can see why you would do that

Thank you for that

Content: 3 Once you use a disarming statement, state your needs

This means that once you have said your disarming statement you then to follow on with what you want to say.

Example

Do you mind if I ask a question?...I am wondering why you would give that drug when this has been recommended.

I am sorry if you take offence at thisbut I really have to (say) ask why that

I really respect your practice... but in this situation do you think...

I can see why you would do that.... but I believe it is better for this woman if ...

Thank you for that.... but I think this is maybe the best option. What do you think?

Content: 4 Negotiate (but stand firm as to your concern)

If the other person is still adamant in their stance you then need to negotiate – but you must stand firm in your concern.

Content: Communication has three important aspects

Understanding – need to be able to clearly identify issue and know your ground and present it well

Speaking – concise explanation of the problem. Facts are presented in a rational manner using the word I so you own what you are saying. I believe this is the best course of action rather than You are taking the wrong course of action

Listening – listening is an active process encourage the other to voice there concerns and ask questions like. I understand that you are saying ... is that correct? Active listening lets the other person know that you are hearing them and respecting them. Statements like "I'd like to hear from you about why you think that how you are feeling" encourages communication and better understanding between people

Successful negotiation

- **Show respect**
- **Recognize and define the problem**
- **Seek a variety of solutions**
 - Collaborate**
 - Preserve the relationship**

Practice makes perfect.

Recognize that it may be scary at first and that it probably won't be perfect. Don't be too hard on yourself. Simply resolve to learn from each attempt about how to do it better next time.

Becoming assertive may be one of the hardest things you have ever done.

Celebrate each success. Give yourself a pat on the back for each time you are assertive. Each attempt will boost your confidence.