



# Teachers' Guide

## Freedom Self-Advocacy Curriculum Second Workshop

**National Mental Health Consumers'  
Self-Help Clearinghouse**  
1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 1207  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(800) 553-4KEY (4539)  
(215) 636-6312 (FAX)  
Web site: <http://www.mhselfhelp.org>  
E-mail: [info@mhselfhelp.org](mailto:info@mhselfhelp.org)

In cooperation with:

**National Mental Health Association  
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems**

With grateful acknowledgement to the Community Support Program (CSP) of the federal  
Center for Mental Health Services.

All material appearing in this volume is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from the  
National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse. Citation of the source is appreciated.

## Second Workshop – Knowledge

<b>Introduction to the second workshop</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Preparing for the second workshop</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Agenda for the second workshop</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Teaching the second workshop</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I. Preliminary activities</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>II. Building our knowledge</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>III. Looking at problems</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IV. Solving advocacy problems</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Handouts</b>	<b>9</b>

## ***Introduction to the second workshop***

The second workshop will focus on building your students' *knowledge* of the mental health system, financial benefits, community support services, and other systems affecting their recovery. After you provide your students with information about where they should go for certain types of services, they will be better able to apply the self-advocacy skills that they are developing.

In the first part of the workshop, you will be going through the *Advocacy and Government Contacts* booklet, which you should complete yourself. (As described in *Preparing for the workshops*, you should fill in local contact information for the services indicated in the booklet, such as your P&A agency, elected officials, and local advocacy groups.)

In the second part of this workshop, you introduce **Advocacy Modules**. You will choose one Advocacy Module and will continue to use this Advocacy Module throughout the remainder of the second and third workshops. The Advocacy Modules consist of:

- A Consumer's Story,
- Legal Background, and
- Class Exercises.

The Advocacy Modules were developed as a means of giving you, the instructor, some flexibility in the way that you teach your course. You should use the Advocacy Module that relates most closely to the issues your students are dealing with. Regardless of which Advocacy Module you select for the remainder of the workshops, you will teach:

- Analyzing a problem;
- Formulating a solution;
- Deciding on an action plan;
- Written communication (in the third workshop); and
- Verbal communication (in the third workshop).

The three Advocacy Modules that you can choose from use the following illustrative situations:

- The first Advocacy Module uses the example of someone who wants his insurer to pay for additional therapy sessions;
- The second Advocacy Module works through the process of preparing an advance directive and discussing it with health care professionals;
- The third Advocacy Module illustrates a tenant who is harassed and wants to end the harassment and request a "reasonable accommodation."

**Choose *one*:**

Advocacy Module A  
Insurance Treatment  
Denials

\$

Advocacy Module B  
Advance Directives



Advocacy Module C  
Housing Rights



At the end of the second workshop, you will distribute the part of the Advocacy Module called the Legal Background. Both the teacher and the students should read through the Legal Background carefully and consult the recommended resources if they would like more information about the issue the module deals with.

### ***Preparing for the second workshop***

1. Make sure that you've provided local contact information in the *Advocacy and Government Contacts* booklet.
2. Make enough photocopies of the *Advocacy and Government Contacts* booklet (with the local information filled in) for everyone in the class.
3. Make sure you're familiar with what the local agencies do, because you'll be discussing them with your class.
4. Select the *one* Advocacy Module that you will be using for this workshop and the following workshop:
  - Advocacy Module A (Insurance Treatment Denials).
  - Advocacy Module B (Advance Directives).
  - Advocacy Module C (Housing Rights).
5. Fill in the resources in the Legal Background section of the Advocacy Module. This is the portion of the Advocacy Module that the students can take with them to become more expert in the issue covered in the module.
6. Make enough photocopies of the Advocacy Module (A, B, or C) – both the Consumer's Story and the Legal Background.

7. Find out where in your community your students can gain free or low-cost access to the Internet.

## ***Agenda for the second workshop***

- Objectives:** Students will learn:
- what resources (local, state, and national) are available for consumers
  - where to go for information on or assistance with specific topics
  - how to analyze a problem, formulate a solution, and decide on an action plan

**Materials:** Consumer's Story for the Advocacy Module (A, B, or C)  
 Legal Background for the Advocacy Module (A, B, or C)  
 HANDOUT G  
 HANDOUT H  
 HANDOUT I  
*Advocacy and Government Contacts* booklet  
 Flipchart and markers, or blackboard and chalk

**Time:** 90 minutes.

### **Timeline:**

	<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Method</u></b>	<b><u>Materials</u></b>
<b>I. Preliminary activities</b>	<b>(10 min. total)</b>		
A. Overview of today's topic	5 min.	lecture	
B. What do we want to know?	5 min.	Q & A	
<b>II. Building our knowledge</b>	<b>(10 min. total)</b>		
A. Review <i>Advocacy and Government Contacts</i>	10 min	lecture	<i>Advocacy &amp; Gov't</i> booklet
<b>III. Looking at problems</b>	<b>(25 min. total)</b>		
A. General communication	5 min.	lecture	HANDOUT G
B. A real-life scenario	10 min.	Q & A	HANDOUT H
C. Sample action plan	10 min.	Q & A	HANDOUT I
<b>IV. Solving advocacy problems</b>	<b>(45 min. total)</b>		
A. A real-life scenario	10 min.	reading	Consumer's Story for the Advocacy Module (A,B,C)
B. Analyzing the problem	10 min.	Q & A	"
C. Formulating a solution	10 min.	Q & A	"
D. Deciding on an action plan	5 min.	Q & A	"
E. Learning more about the legal background	5 min.	lecture	Legal Background for the Advocacy Module (A,B,C)
F. Wrapping-up	5 min.	lecture	

## ***Teaching the second workshop***

### ***I. Preliminary activities***

#### **I.A. Overview of today's topic**

(5 minutes.)

1. Explain that the topic of today's workshop is *increasing knowledge* necessary to analyze a problem, formulate a solution, and decide on an action plan.
1. Explain that the more your students know about the mental health system and other issues affecting them, the more effective self-advocates they will be.
2. Remind students that all discussions are confidential. Whatever is said in the room, stays in the room. This should allow for a more open discussion.
3. Keep in mind that some of the issues discussed in your workshops may stir up negative feelings of fear, anger, or frustration in some of your students. Make sure everyone knows that, if they need a break, they're free to take one.

#### **I.B. What do we want to know?**

(5 minutes.)

1. Ask your students to suggest examples of topics they'd like to know more about.
2. Suggest the following categories:
  - mental health system
  - mental health issues
  - employment
  - housing
  - financial assistance
  - legal issues
3. Make a list on the flipchart or blackboard of issues that interest the students.

## **II. Building our knowledge**

### **II.A. Review *Advocacy and Government Contacts* booklet**

(10 minutes. Materials: *Advocacy and Government Contacts* booklet.)

1. Go through the *Advocacy and Government Contacts* booklet, explaining briefly what each agency does.
2. When you come to an agency that deals with the issues raised by your students in the previous exercise, note this connection to your students.

## **III. Looking at problems**

### **III.A General communication**

(5 minutes. Materials: HANDOUT G)

1. Read or review the first three sections of HANDOUT G.
2. Explain to the students that the first three topics, analyzing a problem, formulating a solution and deciding on an action plan, are the subject of the second workshop.

### **III.B A real life scenario**

(10 minutes. Materials: HANDOUT H)

1. Read, or have a volunteer, read the story. Explain that this is a situation from every-day life meant to teach the general process of analyzing a problem. It does not have to do with mental health issues.
2. Read the questions under the story and discuss (using the flip chart) the ways to analyze the problem, formulate a solution, and then decide on an action plan.

### **III.C. Sample action plan**

(10 minutes. Materials: HANDOUT G and I)

1. Now it is time to pull it all together. Have the students fill in HANDOUT I as though they were Jessica in the scenario they just read.

2. Be prepared to answer questions the students might have about this process. Important points they should consider are:
- Jessica could talk to the Human Resources Department about open positions;
  - She could talk to her boss about a promotion;
  - She could look into daycare for her kids so that she can attend some of the after-work sessions;
  - She could go back to school on the weekends to earn her Bachelor's degree;
  - She might need proof of the courses she took at the Community College;
  - She could ask her boss what else they look for when promoting people, to determine whether or not she is qualified for other positions.

#### ***IV. Solving advocacy problems***

**At this point, please note that there are three versions of section IV of this workshop, corresponding to the three Advocacy Modules. You should have chosen one version to use, as described in the *Introduction to the second workshop*. Follow the correct version of section IV.**

Advocacy Module A  
Insurance Treatment  
Denials

\$

Advocacy Module B  
Advance Directives



Advocacy Module C  
Housing Rights



# **HANDOUT G**

## **An Overview of Self-Advocacy**

### **Analyze the Problem**

*Ask yourself:*

1. What is the problem?
2. Can I break it down into smaller problems?
3. Who is the problem harming me?
4. Who is responsible for the problem?
5. Is someone violating a law, policy, or procedure?

### **Formulate a Solution**

*Ask yourself:*

1. What do *I* want to happen?
2. Who will I approach?
3. What are the strengths of my case?
4. What does the other side have to gain?
5. What is my action plan?

### **Decide on an Action Plan**

*Ask yourself:*

1. Are there any formal procedures to follow?
  2. What type of communication (written, phone, in-person) is most appropriate?
  3. What type of communication am *I* best at/most comfortable with?
- 

### **Written Communication**

### **Verbal Communication**

*On the phone and in person:*

*In person:*

# **HANDOUT H**

Scenario:

Jessica works for a large corporation. She is a single mother with two young children and she lives in a small apartment in the middle of the city. Jessica graduated from the community college with an associate degree in computer science; and, while she likes her job, she often gets frustrated by her low position at work.

Every few months, she sees other employees with associate degrees get promoted. Jessica realized that her colleagues were getting these new jobs because they were able to attend workshops after work. Jessica can't attend any of these workshops; she has to get home to be with her kids by 4:00 because her job does not provide daycare.

Jessica isn't sure what other jobs are available within the company, but she knows that she is qualified for a lot more than what she is doing at the moment. She knows that she is smart, but she does not feel like she has been given the chance to demonstrate it at work. Jessica knows that she needs to understand the ways that she can advance within the company, and how to do so.

**Questions:**

## **Analyzing a Problem**

1. What is the problem?
2. Can Jessica break it down into smaller problems?
3. Who is the problem harming?
4. Who is responsible for the problem?
5. Is someone violating a law, policy, or procedure?

## **Formulating a Solution**

1. What does Jessica want to happen?
2. Who will she approach?
3. What are the strengths of her case?
4. What does the other side have to gain?
5. What is her action plan?

## **Deciding on an Action Plan**

1. Are there any formal procedures to follow?
2. What type of communication (written, phone, in-person) is most appropriate?
3. What type of communication am I best at/most comfortable with?

# **HANDOUT I**

## **Sample Action Plan**

### **Step One: What is the problem?**

Fact

Why is this important?

### **Step Two: Resolving the Problem.**

What do I want to happen?

What would I be willing to accept?

### **Step Three: Building a Case.**

What documents do I need?

Who can help me with my problem?

### **Step Four: Initial Strategy.**

Who can resolve my problem for me?

I will call/meet with/write this person by \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_.

If my problem is not solved by \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_, they I will follow up with this person.

### **Step Five: Appeal Strategy.**

Who do I appeal this decision?

I will appeal by phone/in person/in writing by \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_.