

THE STATE OF SELF-ADVOCACY IN KANSAS



SACK

- ✘ **The Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK)** is a statewide advocacy group made up of adults with developmental disabilities, the majority of whom receive services through the Kansas Developmental Disabilities Service System. SACK encourages and teaches people to speak up for themselves and to obtain the highest possible level of independence.

LOCAL GROUPS

- ✘ There are approximately 25 local self-advocacy groups around the state
- ✘ After the SABE conference in Kansas City last fall, several others have asked for SACK's help in forming groups in there area.

RESOURCES

Name of self- advocacy organization	Who provides the resource(s)?	What resource(s) is provided?
SACK	Arc of Douglas County	Office Space, meeting rooms, facilitator.
SACK	Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities	Funding for conferences and stipends to self-advocates who cannot afford registration fees.
SACK	Social Rehabilitation Services (SRS)	Funds for staff transportation, and the statewide conference.

WHAT WORKS

- ✘ Having self-advocates testify before the state legislature on disability-related law and policy.
- ✘ Self-advocates' participation on panels and committees for many disability organizations (InterHab, DDC, DRC, & KUCDD).
- ✘ People with disabilities' completing Partners in Policymaking

WHAT WORKS (CONT.)

- ✘ The commitment of our state DD program and our DD providers to support self advocacy. SACK receives a yearly contract from SRS to provide consumer input to their policies and workgroups.
- ✘ a strong grass roots approach to self advocacy; our individuals and local groups are the heart and soul of SACK
- ✘ bridging the geographical gap by leveraging the use of technology including electronic communications and social media

WHAT WORKS (CONT.)

- ✘ continual (re)education of policymakers and legislators about issues that are important to self advocates
- ✘ the Kansas Independent Living Moment truly values and honors the voice of the consumer.
- ✘ the open exchange of ideas and tolerances for difference of opinion

CHALLENGES

- ✘ Kansas is a large state with many rural areas, so transportation is a major hurdle.
- ✘ It is difficult to obtain funding for all we want to do.
- ✘ Lack of mentoring
- ✘ Lack of participation in empowering youth and listening to youth with disabilities

SUCCESSSES

- ✘ The growth of self advocacy in Kansas. In the past few years, attendance at the SACK conference has tripled, and many new local groups have formed.
- ✘ The development of the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy, which provides empowerment programs for youth with disabilities across Kansas. We especially teach youth how to advocate for not only themselves but for others as well.
- ✘ Passage of the Disability Awareness And History Bill

GOALS & DREAMS

- ✘ End waiting lists for community based services.
- ✘ More funding for advocacy and awareness programs.
- ✘ Better transportation options.
- ✘ Employment First - To have all people with DD considered able to work.
- ✘ Emphasis on mentoring youth with disabilities so they are not only taught their rights but also their responsibility as community members.
- ✘ Educating consumers that self advocacy is not just about employment or waiver services, but also about relationships, sexual health, domestic violence, families, etc.

TEAM KANSAS

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