



Council for  
Intellectual Disability



# How to be a self advocate for closing down disability institutions



**Easy Read**

[www.cid.org.au](http://www.cid.org.au)

# About this information



The organisations that made this information are

- NSW Council for Intellectual Disability

- University of Technology Sydney.



This information is about being a **self advocate** for closing down **disability institutions**.



A **self advocate** is someone who speaks up for their rights.



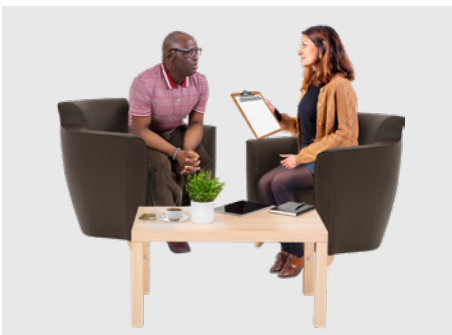
**Disability institutions** are big places where many people with disability used to live.



People with disability moved into the community when disability institutions closed.



This is called **deinstitutionalisation**.



We talked to lots of self advocates with intellectual disability to make this information.



They talked to us about deinstitutionalisation.



They shared their ideas and told us their stories.



It can be hard to talk about disability institutions.



You can ask for support to read this information if you need it.

# Being a self advocate for deinstitutionalisation



Big disability institutions in NSW have closed.



Some big disability institutions in NSW were

- Rydalmere Centre

- Stockton Centre.



But there are different types of institutions that are still open.

Institutions that are still open are places like



- Mental health hospitals



- Jails



- Group homes.



We still need self advocates who can speak up for people in institutions.



This is so big disability institutions do not happen again.





Being a self advocate means to do things like come up with your own ideas.



It means you make your own decisions.



Being a self advocate can mean you speak up for others who are like you.



Self advocacy can be when you teach people about what is important to you.



It can be hard to be a self advocate sometimes.



For some people their family might stop them from

- Learning about their rights
- Joining self advocacy groups.



You might also feel like you do not know the right thing to say.



We can learn from older self advocates who helped close down institutions.



# Skills to be a self advocate



There are **skills** that can help you be a self advocate to help close down institutions.



**Skills** are things you know how to do.



The self advocates we spoke to told us some skills you need to help close down institutions.

They said some good self advocacy skills are



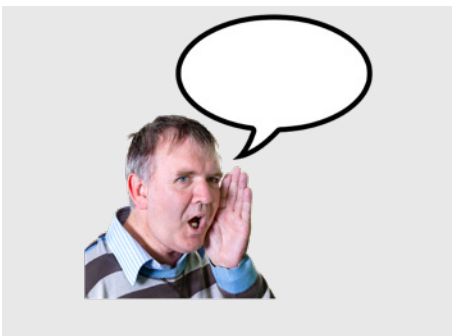
- Find out the right information



- Speak up for what you believe in



- Make good relationships with people in the community.



It is good to tell your story if you feel okay to.



It can help other people learn.

Other self advocacy skills that can help close down institutions are



- Public speaking



- Talk to people in a way that is easy for them to understand



- Be professional.



To learn self advocacy skills you can talk to other self advocates.



You can practice speaking up at home.



You can join a self advocacy group.

# Lessons from self advocates



These are some lessons self advocates shared about closing down institutions.



Doing self advocacy can feel hard at first.



It gets easier the more you do it.



It can take time but you will be heard.



Do not give up.



It is good to remember you are not alone.



You are doing a good thing.



If you are not being treated right you can speak up for yourself.



You can speak up to friends or workers if your family stops you from being a self advocate.

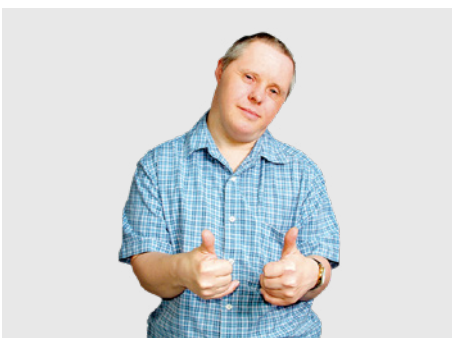




You have the right to be in charge of your own life.



Sometimes other people might not agree with you.



That is okay.



You can use your self advocacy skills to speak up for people with disability.



This will help make sure disability institutions do not happen again.



It will keep people with disability part of the community.

Council for Intellectual Disability made this document Easy Read. **CID** for short. Email CID at [business@cid.org.au](mailto:business@cid.org.au) if you want to use any pictures.