Sexual Self-Advocacy

Sexual Self-Advocacy is a new term and this fact sheet will help to explain it. But first, you need to understand something about self-advocacy.

According to the website of the national self-advocate organization, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE):

    Self-Advocacy is about independent groups of people with disabilities working together for justice by helping each other take charge of their lives and fight discrimination. It teaches us how to make decisions and choices that affect our lives so we can be more independent. It teaches us about our rights, but along with learning about our rights, we learn about our responsibilities. The way we learn about advocating for ourselves is supporting each other and helping each other gain confidence in ourselves to speak out for what we believe in.  (SABE, 1991)

Self-Advocates have identified some topics like romance, intimacy, dating, sexuality education, personal safety and marriage as important to their lives.

Sexual Self-Advocacy means:
    People with disabilities taking control of their own sexuality by making their own decisions and speaking up for themselves and others about sexuality.

In Illinois, self-advocates have spoken up about Sexual Self-Advocacy. They believe it means:
    • Finding someone you can trust to talk about sexuality
    • Getting educated about sexuality!
    • Understanding there are many different types of relationships
    • Learning how to be in a relationship
    • Learning how to find help if you have been abused
    • Learning about choice and respect in relationships

Across the nation, self-advocates are speaking up about the topic of sexuality: “We are sexual beings. We are interested in knowing how to express our sexuality in safe and healthy ways. We want to have our own relationships- of our own choosing, in our own time frame, and shaped by our own values.”  (Green Mountain Self-Advocates)

www.idhd.org/SDC.html