



Art of Advocacy™

**“It’s not a program
it’s a way of life”**



Art of Advocacy: Assuring the Rights of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

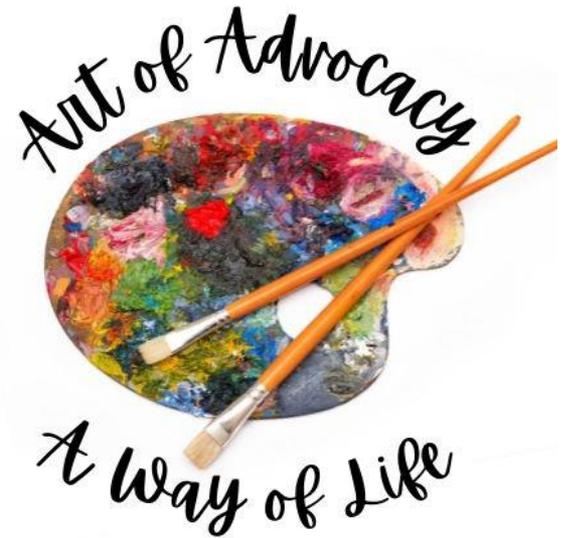
Vision

Every person with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities will live their best lives and be included in the community where they live, learn, play, and work (when and if they are able)



Mission Statement

We teach and inspire people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families, and allies to become more effective advocates in their own lives, so they can impact the larger systems in their own ways



Judith Heumann

(1947-2023)

“I wanna see a feisty group of disabled people around the world...if you don't respect yourself and if you don't demand what you believe in for yourself, you're not gonna get it”

Art of Advocacy



A Way of Life



Agenda

- **Why the Art of Advocacy?**
- **How We Teach**
- **What You Will Learn**
- **Successes**
- **How to Find an Organization**
- **Next Steps**





Why the Art of Advocacy?

- For years people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families, and allies have had to fight for their rights and their rightful places in their communities
- Landmark decisions at the federal level have come about only because advocates have been able to help assure their civil rights
- We can become effective advocates, but each person needs to find their own voice

Why the Art of Advocacy?

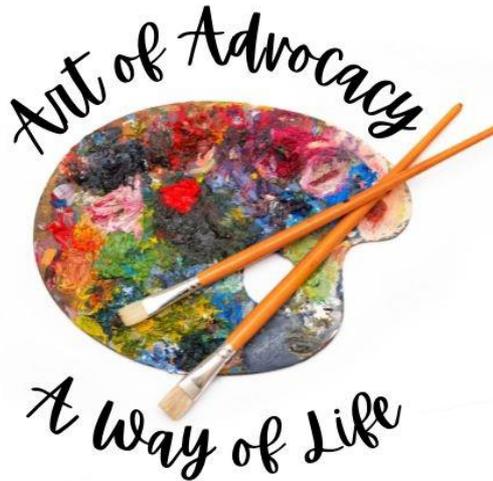
- Each person is unique; we all have different gifts, we all have different talents
- The Art of Advocacy will allow you to learn at your own pace, there is no timeline for completion; we all learn throughout life
- Consider your life as a canvass, we each have the power inside of us to paint the picture the way you want it to look



Why the Art of Advocacy?

“As the system changes, I realized I needed to develop this way of life to help me work within the system that serves me, and make it better for others, and I wanted to share my knowledge”

Bj Stasio, Advocate



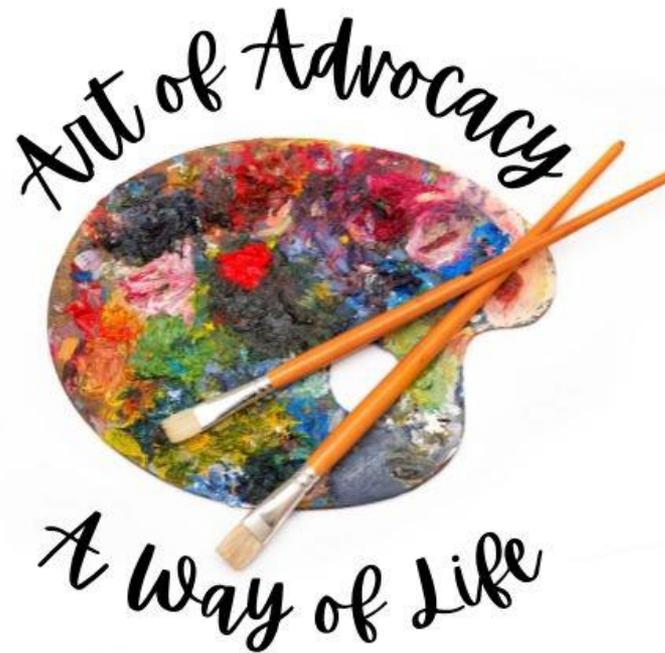
Why the Art of Advocacy?



“My concern for the future for our son Craig, is that we don’t have enough parents, family members, self advocates, or allies adequately skilled in advocacy to make the system become more responsive and adequately funded.”

Max Donatelli, Family Advocate

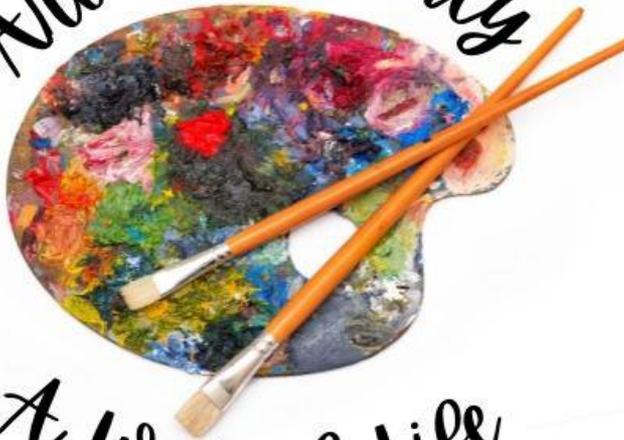




How We Teach

- There are laws on the books to assure people's rights to an education:
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- And be included in their communities:
 - Olmsted Decision
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
- However, advocates need to be *educated* on their rights
- And to *find their voices* to help assure these rights

Art of Advocacy



A Way of Life

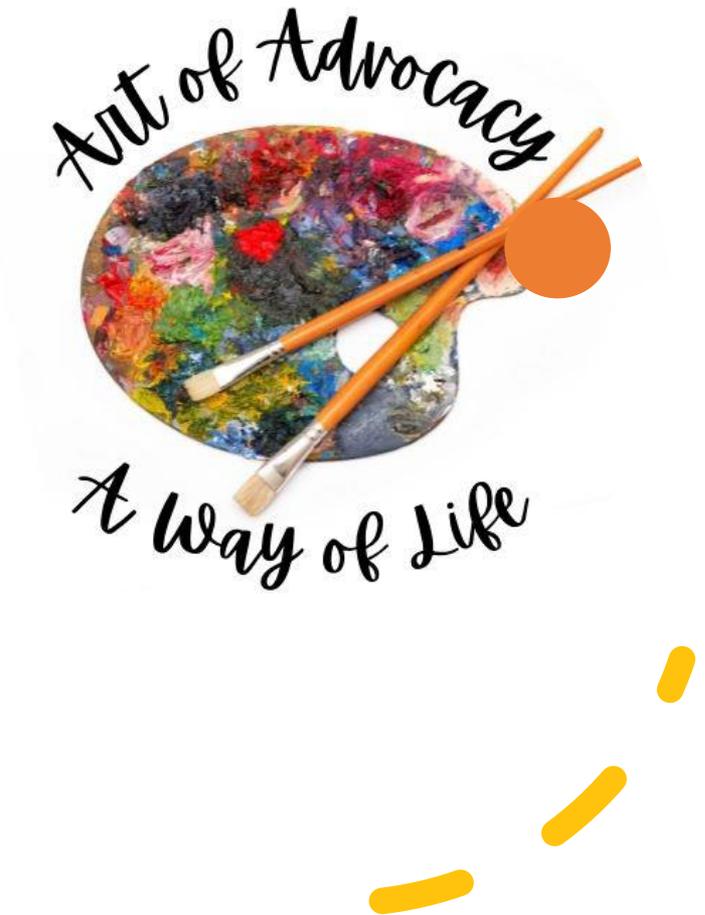
How We Teach

- In addition, services and accommodations need to be available so funding and public policy needs to be adequate
- This requires people identifying their own personal needs and what it takes to live their best life

How We Teach

Art of Advocacy offers resources for personal support such as

- how to find your voice,
- how to tell your story,
- how to identify effective ways to live your best life;
- as well as, how to become more effective in overcoming barriers, and for those that can, do system advocacy



How We Teach

- Art of Advocacy is patterned after Tae Kwon Do and Karate; instead of belts we use wristbands, and we encourage celebrating when someone moves up to the next level
- All new advocates start with a White wristband; a Yellow Band is earned by completing all of the items on the checklist for that level



How We Teach



- The Yellow Band focuses primarily on personal advocacy, finding your voice, and developing a trusted circle of supporters
- As you gain in advocacy skills you may transition into the higher Bands and doing system advocacy; but this may not be for everyone and that's okay
- The Bands go from White to Black with Black being the highest



Novice Level



Speaks Up for Self Level



Beginner Speaking Up for Others Level



Recognized Advocate Level



Mastery Level

What You Will Learn



- Engage in a baseline conversation on advocacy
- Each interested person gets a White Band and a checklist to follow
- In most situations, a more seasoned advocate will work alongside you to help coach you on each of the items
- Once all the items are checked, you will be tested by a seasoned advocate
- When successful in completing these requirements, you will be promoted to the Yellow Band Level
- You can then start to complete requirements for the Green Band Level or continue to learn how to best advocate for yourself getting your best life, and that's okay, not everyone will do systems advocacy

What You Will Learn



Art of Advocacy Toolkit

- Band Level Checklists, how to order wristbands, Advocacy Agreement, Mentor Support
- Encourage that you read “Credo for Support” and watch “Crip Camp” (info on both will be supplied)
- To start we recommend learning to tell your story (resources will be supplied)
- Working with your mentor we will provide additional resources geared to your own situation
- Most important of this is your motivation to learn and the knowledge and experience of your mentor
- A friendly reminder everyone learns at their own pace and the resources might have to be different based on your needs as a new advocate

Successes

- Working with People Inc
- Working with Person Centered Services
- Working with OPWDD State Operated IRAs
- Working with the ARCs of NY
- Working with NY Alliance of Inclusion and Innovation
- Working with BestSelf Peer Support

How to Find an Organization

- We plan to work with a variety of organizations and networks
- If interested you can see if the agency you are receiving services from is working with us or is willing to start
- We are available to help you connect and get started



Next Steps

- Once again, the Art of Advocacy is not a program “it’s a way of life”
- We are all the “paintbrushes, and we paint the canvases of our lives”
- We need to support one another, other advocates, and those that can’t advocate for themselves, direct support professionals, and allies
- It takes many voices to make system change, and we want you to help be a part of this
- We are working with a number of organizations that can help support you learning more about the Art of Advocacy
- We want to thank you for your time, and we can help you to find a resource and help you to get started

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