

# **CHOOSING TO MOVE FORWARD:**

**HOW SELF ADVOCACY BUILDS A BETTER FUTURE**



# INTRODUCTIONS: LEANNE KENWORTHY

- KEY MEMBER OF RGA'S SELF-ADVOCACY GROUP - THE RGA COUNCIL
- SECRETARY FOR THE ILLINOIS SELF ADVOCACY ALLIANCE
- VOLUNTEERS FOR THE HANSON CENTER BARN HORSEMANSHIP PROGRAM
- CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR A JOB
- IN MY FREE TIME I LIKE TO COLOR, READ, GO TO OUTDOOR CONCERTS

# INTRODUCTIONS: ANNE THURSTON

- KEY MEMBER OF RGA'S SELF-ADVOCACY GROUP - THE RGA COUNCIL
- FORMER MEMBER OF RGA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- CO-CHAIR OF RGA'S WELLNESS COMMITTEE
- RGA'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEMBER
- 7 YEARS GOODWILL EMPLOYEE
- PROUD AUNT TO FOUR (RACHEL, RALYN, MS. LANELY, AND 3-YEAR-OLD CHAD)
- IN MY FREE TIME I LOVE TO DRAW AND PAINT

# RIGHTS ICEBREAKER

YOU MUST HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR  
RIGHTS TO BE A GOOD SELF ADVOCATE!





# DO YOU.....

- KNOW YOUR RIGHTS?
- HAVE AN ADVOCACY GROUP OR COUNCIL TO HELP YOU LEARN TO SPEAK UP & OUT ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS?
- KNOW HOW TO “GET A SEAT AT THE TABLE”?

**OUR TIPS FOR YOU.....**

# How to make sure you are at the table and have a voice:

## #1: Know your rights

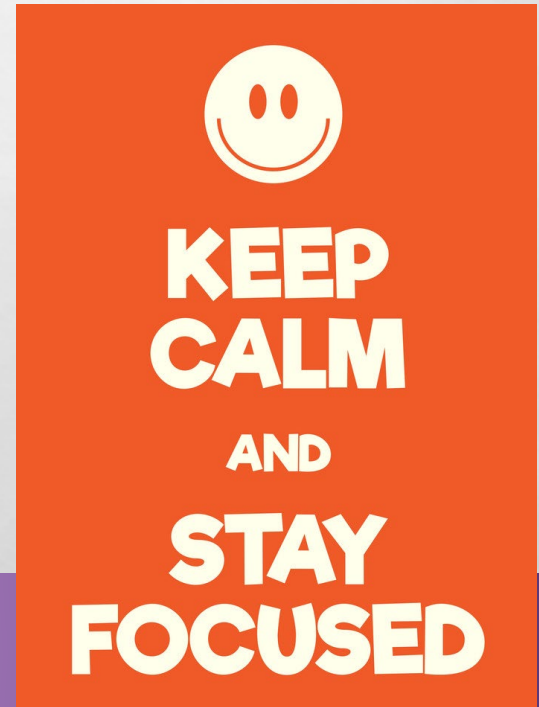
- Read! State Constitution, Laws, Rules & Regulations
- Listen to other self advocates
- Discussion groups
- Attend & Learn at SUSO



# How to make sure you are at the table and have a voice:

## #2: Exercise your rights in the right way

- Stay polite
- Stay focused on issue at hand
- Stay calm
- Don't be scared



# How to make sure you are at the table and have a voice:

## More on #2: Exercise your rights in the right way

- Honor yourself *and* respect others
  - Be worthy of who you are
  - Respect yourself first – okay to put yourself first
  - Speak about yourself in a positive way





# Be strong as the journey can be challenging!

STAY POSITIVE

STAY FOCUSED

STAY STRONG

- Be willing to change
  - Believe in yourself
  - Know that you can do it /be better
  - Hard times don't last forever
  - Know who to talk to – who you trust – It's OKAY to ask for help. You don't have to do it alone!
  - Setbacks can be step ups
  - NEVER GIVE UP!
- 
- From Leanne: *When I found myself in a hole...I finally found the light & followed it, I knew that I could get out. I had to keep walking through until I walked through & out*
  - From Anne: *When you are questioning yourself or in negative self talk – talk yourself out of & through it!*

# **Stay confident & positive!**

**Trust that you are not alone – there are people out there that will support you.**

**Help one another. Remember to respect others' privacy.**

**Share only what they have told you is okay to share.**

# LANGUAGE: IT MUST BE POSITIVE!

## GET RID OF THE NEGATIVE:

- CAN'T
- WORTHLESS
- NO CHOICE
- ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ME
- HANDICAPPED/SPECIAL NEEDS/DISABLED  
(NO "DIS")
- NO

## **BE POSITIVE!**

- CAN
- WORTHY!
- YOUR CHOICE!!
- GET TO KNOW ME!
- ABILITY!!
- YES!!



# JOURNEYS.....

**EACH PERSON'S JOURNEY IS DIFFERENT**

**OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU & YOUR "HOMEWORK"**





# YOUR HOMEWORK

WHAT IS YOUR JOURNEY?

**\*MAP IT OUT**

**\* WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS & HOW WILL YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

**\*TAKE A SMALL STEP**

**\*CELEBRATE ALL SUCCESSES!**



# EVERYTHING

the way you look at things,  
how you start your journey and  
all you do along the way is a choice.

**Your choice!      GO FOR IT!**

# Questions & Answers

Feel free to contact us at  
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