



Stage 1: Advocacy for Self

The Steps:



Step 1: Process the Situation

Step Overview: Before advocating for help, it is important to take time to identify needs. In this step, students work through the internal processing that will help them identify their challenge or obstacle, determine their needs, and decide if the situation requires self-advocacy. In grades 6-8, as students become more independent and responsible for their health, it is important for them to analyze the need to seek help and ensure they are asking for something reasonable and feasible. If the situation does not require self-advocacy, guide students to other health skills that could aid them in overcoming their challenge, such as *Decision-Making* and *Goal-Setting*. If the situation does require self-advocacy, students should continue on to Step 2.

Sub Skill(s):

- Identify the obstacle/challenge
- Determine need(s)
- Decide if the situation requires self-advocacy



Step 2: Seek Attention

Step Overview: Once an individual processes their challenge or obstacle and identifies their needs, it is then important to use appropriate strategies that elicit the attention of individuals who can help. Students in this step should practice specific behaviors necessary for seeking and grabbing the attention of those who may be able to offer them help with their challenge. In addition to utilizing strategies that get attention in productive ways, students should also spend time identifying who they would go to with this request. For additional practice in identifying helpful individuals, see *Access Valid & Reliable Resources*.

Sub Skill(s):

- Name helpful individuals
- Use appropriate strategies to seek attention
 - Approach in-person
 - Ask if it is the right time
 - Call
 - Write a note, email, or text
 - Use non-verbal communication



Step 3: Ask For What I Need

Step Overview: In Step 3, students provide clear background information and ask specific questions in order for a helper to provide necessary support. When asking for help it is important to first provide the person with context to ensure they have an understanding of the challenge. Then, students should state their need to overcome the challenge, so that the helper understands what is needed. Finally, students should directly ask for the support they need, which allows the helper to know concretely they are being asked for help. In addition to asking for help, students should also recognize that sometimes a helper can not provide the help they have requested. In this case, they must work to negotiate next steps to be able to move forward.

Sub Skill(s):

- Ask for what you need
 - State the challenge/obstacle
 - State the need
 - Make a request
- Negotiate next steps



Step 4: Reflect

Step Overview: Learning to reflect takes practice and intention. After an individual advocates, they then must reflect on how they feel after the situation, if additional follow up is necessary, and what they want to remember next time they are advocating for themselves. Building time for students to reflect is crucial in developing metacognition, which supports other health skills, such as *Decision-Making, Goal-Setting, and Self-Management*.

Reflection Question(s):

- What was the challenge/obstacle?
- How did I know the situation required self-advocacy?
- Who did I go to for help? Why?
- How did I seek attention? Why?
- How do I communicate my needs?
- Were my needs met? Why or why not?



Teaching Tips

- Use stories about individuals facing problems or obstacles to provide practice opportunities for students to identify problems.
- Prompt students to think about problems they can handle on their own and problems that require assistance.
- Be careful about how you define attention and attention seeking. The ways people gain attention, whether appropriate or inappropriate, can be cultural or a survival mechanism. When students suggest or demonstrate an inappropriate way to gain attention, debrief this with them to better understand what they are trying to do and refer them to support services as needed.
- Provide a variety of strategies students can use to get attention from helpers (e.g. raising their hand, calling for help, approaching someone in person, writing an email, text, or letter).
- Allow students to share who they go to when they need help and why by asking them to draw pictures or bring photographs in to share with the class.
- Pair *Stage 1: Advocacy for Self* with *Access Valid & Reliable Resources* to reinforce identifying individuals who can help.
- Pair *Stage 1: Advocacy for Self* with *Stage 1: Communication Techniques of Interpersonal Communication* to reinforce speaking strategies one needs when asking for help.

See *Teaching Progression* for suggested learning activities.