



Stage 1: Advocacy for Self

The Steps:



Step 1: Figure out the Problem

Step Overview: To begin *Stage 1: Advocacy for Self*, students first learn to identify and name various problems in their life that they should seek help from others. Naming a problem is an important first step that leads to asking for a specific type of help to address their needs and wants. In addition to recognizing a problem, students spend time determining what they need in order to overcome this problem. From there, students are able to decide if their needs require the help of others before moving on to Step 2.

Sub Skill(s):

- Identify the problem
- Determine my need(s)
- Decide if the situation requires self-advocacy



Step 2: Get Attention of Helper

Step Overview: Once an individual processes the problem and identifies their needs, it is then important to identify who is best situated to support them. For additional practice in identifying helpful individuals, see *Access Valid & Reliable Resources*. After identifying those who can help, students should practice using appropriate strategies that elicit the attention of those 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 problem.

Sub Skill(s):

- Identify individuals who can help
- Choose an appropriate strategy to get support
 - 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: Asking for what you need is the final step in learning to advocate for oneself.

There are three important components that should be included when asking for what is needed.

These components ensure that the helper understands the problem and is able to provide the support requested. The three components that support student development of asking for what is needed are: stating the problem, stating what is needed, and asking a specific question of the helper that supports solving the problem. Having students practice these three components through the use of the *Language of Health Literacy* is an effective way to build understanding and memory for this step of self-advocacy.

Sub Skill(s):

- Say the problem
- Say what is needed
- Ask for support



Step 4: Look Back & Learn

Step Overview: Learning to reflect takes practice and intention. After an individual advocates for themselves, 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 problem?
- How did I know the situation required self-advocacy?
- Who did I go to for help? Why?
- How did I seek attention? Why?
- How did I communicate my needs?



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).
- 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 trusted adults.
- 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.