


Self-Advocacy Training Development

HELPING STUDENTS CREATE THEIR VOICE

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Objectives

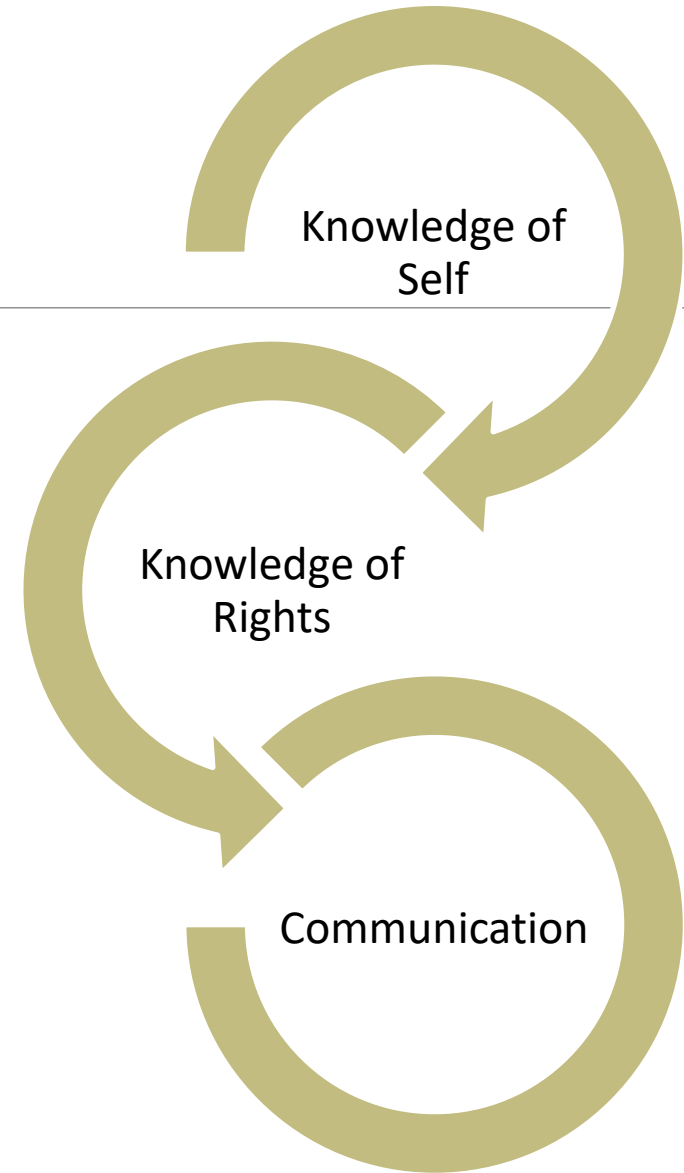
- Understand the importance of self-advocacy training for students with disabilities.
- Gain insight on building blocks for an effective self-advocacy training.
- Provide best practices for training implementation.

Scenario

Dylan has asked to meet with you about possible accommodations. During your intake meeting with Dylan you ask him more about his disability and realize he is unable to put the effects in functional terms and cannot really tell you the accommodations he needs. He states that he had an IEP in high school and was separated from the class for tests but does not know if things like that can happen in college, simply because its college and students are supposed to perform without help. Dylan also is afraid that if he gets accommodations his instructors will look at him differently and will refuse to help him.

Defining Self-Advocacy

- Knowledge of Self
 - Effects of the disability on the student in an academic and social setting
- Knowledge of Rights
 - Awareness of ADA and Section 504 as well as the responsibility in the accommodation process.
- Effective Communication
 - Ability to explain effects of disability in functional terms, share needs based on diagnosis, and negotiate/confirm accommodations with instructors.



Importance of Self-Advocacy

As students with a disability make the transition from the structured and guided educational process of high school to a self-directed path after graduation, the importance of self-advocacy increases (Daly-Cano, Vacarro, Newman, 2015).

- Barriers introduced without presence of self-advocacy skills
 - Inability to properly disclose disability
 - Challenges gaining access to useful accommodations in college and workplace
 - Completion rate for any type of college is 41%, compared to 52% of all young adults (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2017).

Training Design

Training Framework, M.F. Skinner (1998): Students achieve self-advocacy when they, "a) demonstrate an understanding of their disability, b) are aware of their legal rights, and, c) demonstrate competence in communicating rights and needs to those in a position of authority." (p. 278).

Action Research

- **Identify the problem**-Deficits in academic achievement among college students with a learning difference due to lack of self-advocacy skills.
- **Gather data**-Disability Services Directors previewed research material and provided feedback.
- **Create practice based on evidence**- Keys to Self-Advocacy Training.
- **Evaluate outcome**

Training Design



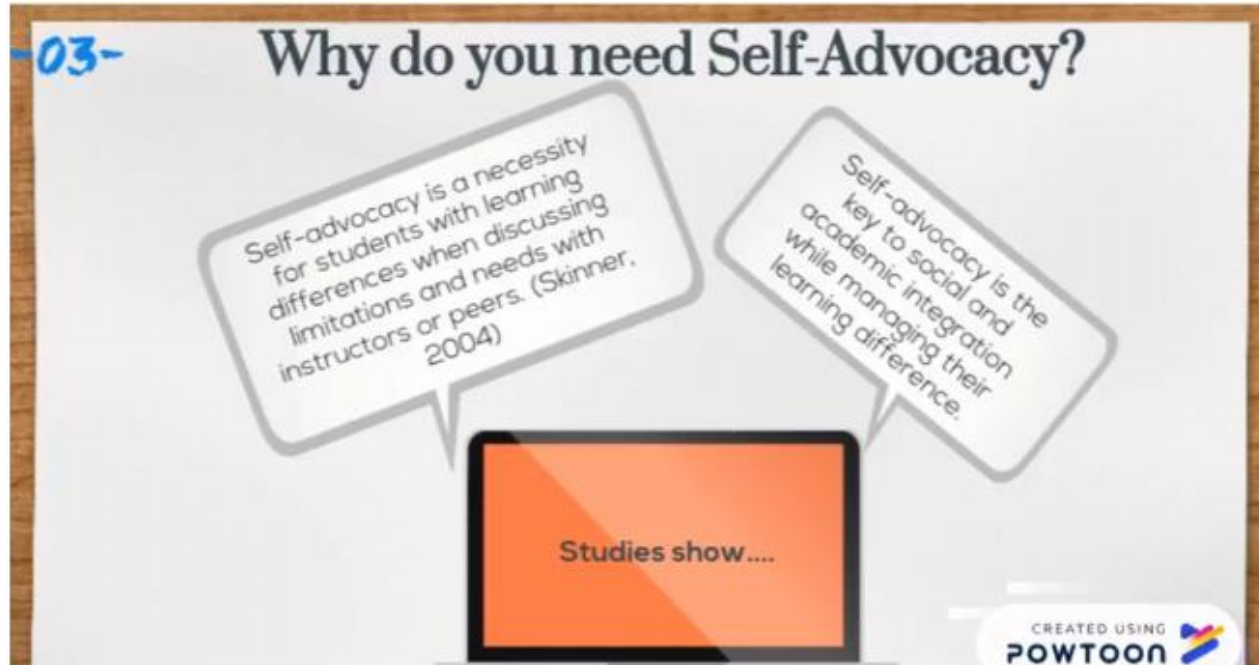
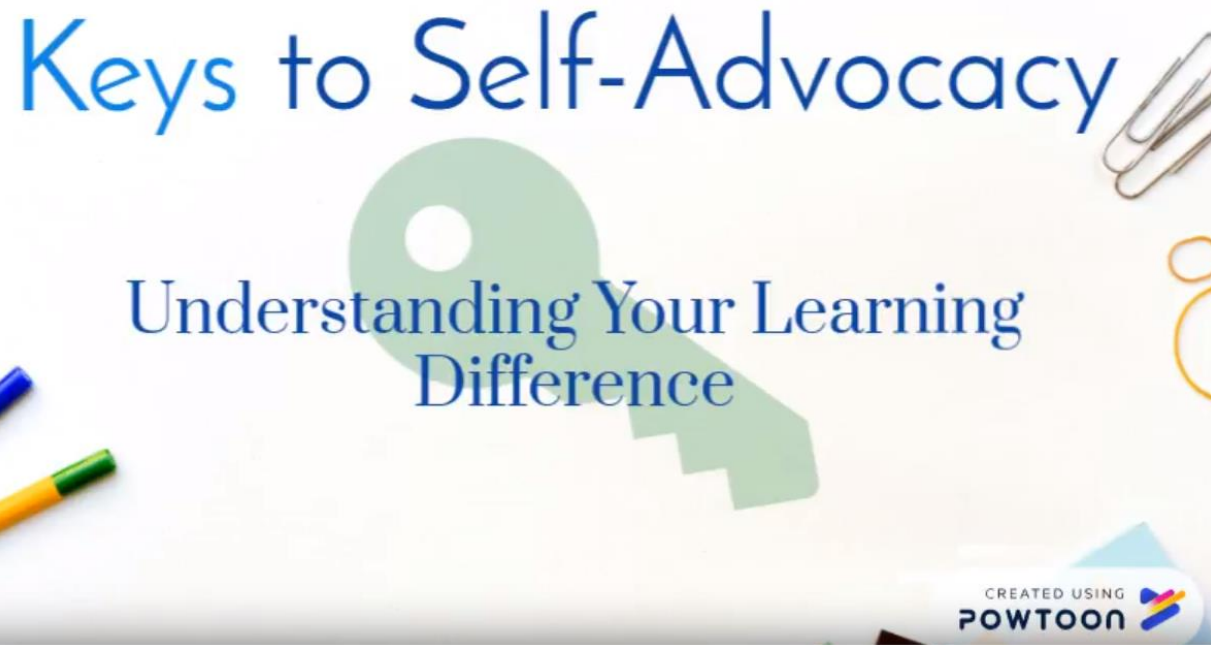
Pre and post-training survey administered via Qualtrics was a modified version of the paper post-test created for Palmer and Roessler's (2000) SACR Training. Survey responses on Likert scale: 5 statements of agreement (strongly agree 5-strongly disagree 1).

Training Video Format

- Defines self-advocacy
- Importance of self-advocacy
- Topic content (knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, ability to communicate)
- Recap and identification of key points to take away from training

Knowledge of Self

The first step of knowing oneself means understanding individual strengths and limitations related to the disability as well as accommodation needs in any setting



Knowledge of Rights

Module addresses:

- Rights the students should be aware of while in college:
 - ADA
 - Section 504
 - In-school Grievance Process
- Outline who is responsible for what within the accommodation process.
 - Disability Services Coordinator, Faculty, Student
- Discuss the importance of disclosure and confidentiality when talking with faculty about accommodations.

Knowledge of Rights

Keys To Self-Advocacy

Disability Rights in Higher Education

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What are Educational Rights?

Educational rights apply to persons with a learning difference who are currently pursuing or participating in an educational or degree program.

Colleges and Universities are mandated by educational regulations to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with a documented learning difference.

Educational Regulations also ensure that students with learning differences are not discriminated against or purposefully excluded from educational programs because of the disability.

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Effective Communication

Module addresses:

- Role play common scenario
- Practicing how to talk about the disability
- Putting it in easy to explain terms
- Conflict if accommodations are refused
- Target behaviors for an effective accommodation conversation

Target Behaviors

^aGreet Instructor

1. Identify disability status
2. Explain needs functionally
3. Mention previous accommodations
4. Explain benefits of past accommodations
5. Request use of accommodations
6. Identify resources and how they help
7. Explain what you will do
8. Ask for agreement
9. Affirm agreement
10. Restate accommodations
11. Clarify your role or Clarify instructor's role

^aClose with positive statement

Effective Communication



Analysis-Module 1

Module 1: Knowledge of Self-Understanding Your Learning Difference

Statement	<i>Pre-test M</i>	<i>Post-test M</i>	<i>Change (Δ)</i>
I can identify my learning disability/difference in functional terms (i.e., specifically how your disability affects what you do).	4.33	4.67	0.34
I am aware of how my learning disability/difference affects me in a social setting.	4.00	4.33	0.33
I am aware of how my learning disability/difference an affect me in an academic setting.	4.67	5.00	0.33
I know the needs I have in association with my learning disability/difference	4.33	4.67	0.34
I am aware of the name of my learning disability/difference (i.e., the name of the disability in which I have been diagnosed).	3.33	4.00	0.67
Overall	4.13	4.53	0.40

Analysis-Module 2

Module 2: Knowledge of Rights-Disability Rights in Higher Education

Statement	<i>Pre-test M</i>	<i>Post-test M</i>	<i>Change (Δ)</i>
I am aware that my instructors are obligated by law to provide me with reasonable accommodations.	2.00	3.00	1.00
After receiving my approved accommodation plan with Disability Support Services I realize the need to meet with my instructors to discuss my accommodations.	2.00	3.00	1.00
I am aware of the process to file a formal grievance on campus if I am denied accommodations.	2.00	3.00	1.00
I am aware of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	2.00	3.00	1.00
I am aware of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.	2.00	3.00	1.00
Overall	2.00	3.00	1.00

Analysis-Module 3

Module 3: Ability to Communicate-Effective Accommodation Conversation

Statement	<i>Pre-test M</i>	<i>Post-test M</i>	<i>Change (Δ)</i>
I can present the benefits of accommodations I have used in the past.	4.50	5.00	0.50
I can request a specific accommodation from my instructor.	4.00	5.00	1.00
I can outline each party's responsibilities for implementing my accommodations.	3.00	4.00	1.00
I can determine if the accommodation arrangements are acceptable.	4.50	4.50	0.00
I can discuss issues if accommodations are not being provided.	4.50	5.00	0.50
Overall	4.10	4.70	0.60

Feedback

5 of the 6 students provided feedback via Likert scale questions.

- 80% (4) of the students “somewhat agreed” that the information provided in the training was useful.
- 60% (3) of the participants “strongly agreed” that the format of the training was easy to follow.
- 80% (4) of students “somewhat agreed” that the information in the video would help them in future situations concerning their disability and accommodations.
- 60% (3) “somewhat agreed that the content covered was relevant.

Best Practices for Implementation

- Guided virtual module: set benchmarks for completion
- Virtual/Face-to-face: Have one-on-one meeting with students for knowledge of self portion and then send remaining modules to student via electronic platform.
- Full day face-to-face workshop
 - Knowledge of rights
 - Effective Conversation role-play in small groups
 - Knowledge of self: facilitate in one-on-one session prior to workshop to help students identify limitations and understand the effects of the disability.
- To help close disclosure gap this training can be given quickly during a freshman orientation/first-year experience course discussing the overall components of self-advocacy.
- The virtual training can be integrated into a Learning Management System to easily monitor progress and send reminders to accounts that are inactive.

Questions



Thank You

If you would like to view the Keys to Self-Advocacy training videos please email Russellm1@evms.edu to receive link.