**Advocacy: Reality or Rhetoric Inventory**

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**Instructions:**

**• Read each item carefully and decide if it is TRUE or FALSE.**

**• Be tough - don't respond to a statement with "sometimes" or "sort of."**

**• Put a - ? - after items you don’t understand or don’t agree.**

**• Choose the top 5 items you feel your center needs to work on as soon as**

**possible.**

**Philosophy / Values**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center reinforces independent living philosophy with our staff, board, and volunteers through a process that includes performance appraisals, job descriptions, and open communication channels to correct any misunderstandings or inconsistent behavior.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Our staff, board, and volunteers live self-determined life styles and support the principles of the disability rights/independent living movement in their private and public lives.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center hires a mix of people, with and without disabilities, who are committed, passionate, and/or militant about the independent living movement and politically astute.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Our staff, board, and volunteers are civil‑rights oriented and promote a "rights bearing" attitude when representing our center to others.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center's top priorities are systemic advocacy and social change.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center is actively involved in a variety of progressive political issues such as civil rights implementation and enforcement, and active individual participation in community affairs.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center actively participates in the state, regional, and national organizations of centers for independent living.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center raises money for the specific purpose of social change, lobbying, advocacy, and community organizing.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center refuses to submit proposals for grants and contracts requiring activities inconsistent with the principles and philosophy of independent living.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Our board and management staff address issues of language and independent living philosophy when negotiating contracts for the center.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center actively protests against the use of public funds for projects that undermine principles of independent living.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center conducts and supports independent living value-based fund raising ( promotes productive and contributing images, correct language; attention paid to dignity; avoidance of evoking pity, guilt, and sympathy; etc.).
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Our staff, board, and volunteers correct language that is negative as well as stereotypical portrayals of people with disabilities.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Our staff, board, and volunteers enhance our consumers' positive self‑images and encourage identification with disability and the independent living/disability rights movement by promoting pride in disability culture.
15. \_\_\_\_ Our center rejects deficiency-oriented language used by service providers that overshadows many positive traits and skills of people and conveys messages of devaluation and dependence.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Our staff, board, and volunteers use "disability‑neutral" language and reject medical model, charitable, and deficiency‑oriented language when communicating with people with disabilities and the public.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center does not do for people with disabilities anything they can do or learn to do themselves.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ Policies consistent with the independent living philosophy guide our center in the delivery of all services.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center bases a significant part of its success on the satisfaction of the people with disabilities in our community.

Planning

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center includes consumers, staff, board and volunteers in developing and integrating the center's advocacy goals into our short and long range plans.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center has a clear advocacy-based mission or purpose statement with clear advocacy goals and projected outcomes for how it will fulfill its mission and realize its vision.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center allocates a percentage of the annual budget to support the center's systems advocacy effort.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center bases its needs assessments on the consumer's view of what's wrong with the system and what are the systemic problems versus consumer needs?

Training

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center (at least annually) conducts a clear, consistent and thorough orientation and training program on independent living philosophy for all our staff, board members, and volunteers.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center views teaching advocacy skills and supporting self-advocacy and systems advocacy as a top priority.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center trains and supports the development of strong and visible spokespersons with disabilities.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center provides funding to send center representatives and up-and-coming advocates to local, state, and national meetings and conferences related to independent living and disability rights.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center's top priority in service delivery is training people with disabilities to understand the independent living philosophy and how to advocate for themselves.

Community Organizing

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center is a leader in local and state advocacy including active lobbying for public policy supportive of independent living philosophy and goals.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center encourages advocates to use the center's phones, fax, computers, advocacy-oriented mailing lists, copying machines, clerical support, postage, space for meetings, occasional financial assistance with transportation, and staff assistance as needed and requested for disability-related advocacy activities.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center assures individuals with disabilities testify at public hearings.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center has set up local systems advocacy organizations.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center has organized activists from the local community into a hard hitting disability coalition.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center openly supports and sponsors demonstrations that are confrontational and/or contentious.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Our center uses telephone, mail, e-mail and fax alerts as well as the world wide web, list serves, newsgroups as advocacy communication tools.

Image

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The public sees our center as a social change organization primarily and a service provider secondarily.

**This is an evolving tool and comments from users are encouraged. Please feel free to improve or take exception to the material. If you disagree with items or know of additional items which should be mentioned, please let the author know.**

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