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# WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

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The NDIS is about giving you back power in your life by ensuring you have choice and control. Some people, even those who are not living with a mental health condition, may find it hard to speak up about what they want or need. Sometimes you may need help from a family member, friend or paid worker with your NDIS access request. Other times you may need a person to do this for you, someone to fight for things on your behalf and make sure your rights are protected. This person, a family member, a friend, a carer, worker or someone who has been engaged to act on your behalf, may be referred to as an individual advocate (ie, they support your self-advocacy). An advocate, like a supporter, can participate in phone calls and meetings with you. An advocate is someone who will speak, write or act on your behalf in order to promote, protect and defend your rights.

## AN ADVOCATE SHOULD:

- Not have a bias (meaning they are only doing what is right for you and not what is right for someone else)
- Be on your side and no one else's
- Be focused on your wants and needs
- Be loyal to you whilst respecting the rights of others
- Be able to be your voice when you need it.

## ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

There are many external programs that do provide advocacy support. One of these programs is the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP).

NDAP can also tell you about any local programs or peer support that can help with advocacy. Some state and territory programs are listed here: [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au).

**All NDIS Participants are entitled to use an advocate. Talk to your Support Coordinator if you need more information about advocacy or finding an advocate.**