You were born!

You went to Kindergarten

You went to Elementary School

You survived Middle School

You experienced High School

Congratulations!

You have Transitioned to Adulthood!

Bravo!
Kudos!
Phew, you made it!

A Workshop Facilitated By: Arizona Youth Leaders Who Have Disabilities
Self Determination Your Choice

• Self-determination is a belief that you can control your own destiny which manifests as a combination of attitudes and abilities that lead people to set goals for themselves, and take the initiative to reach those goals.

• Self-determination means using your skills and life experience to make choices and decisions about your life, that are based on your own preferences, interests, and dreams.

• Self-determination means making your own choices, learning to effectively solve problems, and taking control and responsibility for your life, which includes experiencing the consequences of the choices you make.
• Self-determination involves many attitudes and abilities including: self-awareness, assertiveness, creativity, pride, problem solving, and self-advocacy skills.

• To take charge of your own life, you must be able to set goals, evaluate options, make choices and then work to achieve your goals.

• Developing self-determination begins in childhood and continues throughout your lifetime.

Many times, people forget that those of us who have disabilities have our own hopes and dreams, which is why it is important for you to identify what is important to you and share that with others. When you don’t share what you want, others may start to build a plan for your future that may not look the way you would like it to.
My name is:

My disability is:

The way my disability influences my life is:

What sets me up for success is:

The accommodations that are helpful to me are:
Self-Advocacy means knowing that you have a say in the decisions made about your life, and exercising your right to make those decisions.

Self-advocacy means asking for what you need in a direct and respectful manner, while respecting the needs of others.

Self-advocacy means sticking up for yourself and for what is important to and for you.

Self-advocacy skills are important because they allow you to:
- Obtain what you need
- Contribute to problem solving in your own life
- Make decisions about your life
- Be empowered when asking for help
- Say no in a constructive way
- Express disagreement respectfully
- Practice interdependence
Nobody makes 100% of the choices and decisions in their life, on their own. Most people consult with loved ones, respected advisors, and confidants when making decisions about their lives.

Sometimes others have information or resources that may be helpful to you, knowledge about accommodations that may be useful, or insight about what we may need assistance with, as we practice self-determination and self-advocacy.

Others may also make assumptions about what you can and cannot do, be, or accomplish. The truth is, we cannot all be and do everything we wish.

If someone is presenting a concern, further exploration may be necessary to determine whether there is a true barrier behind that concern. This investigation leads to your ability to make an informed decision, which means a decision made after learning all the relevant facts.
• Those who support you can always provide suggestions about your life, and their input is often quite valuable.

• In the end, it’s up to you to determine what works the best for you, and when you are ready to try something that may be new or difficult. That is how everyone learns, and as a people who have disabilities, we must advocate for ourselves to have those opportunities.

• People who have disabilities have the right to make mistakes as they go through life, just like everyone else. This is called dignity of risk.

• Everyone has the right to try and to ultimately fail.

• Everyone has the right to try and to ultimately succeed.
How to Advocate for Yourself

• Know your rights.
• Know your strengths and skills.
• Know the areas in which you would benefit from more training or experience.
• Take the initiative to ask directly and specifically for what you need or want.
• Be courteous and respectful as you engage with others.
• Listen to the response of others without interrupting.
• Listen with an open mind, as there may be factors presented that would be helpful for you to consider.
• Be patient. Others may need time to consider what you have presented.
• If you feel you are not being understood or acknowledged, ask for support from an elder or peer that you trust.
• Be prepared to agree to disagree at the time and set the expectation that the discussion will continue later (if this is important/necessary).
Tips for Practicing Self-Advocacy

• **Take a deep breath.** *Deep breathing gives your body lots of oxygen, and oxygen helps you feel calmer and think more clearly.*

• **Think about what you want to be different.** *Before you talk to the other person, make sure you know what you want to happen. Do you want to be treated differently? Do you want that person to stop doing something?*

• **Speak clearly and slowly.** *Start by saying something like, “I would like to talk with you about...” and then calmly describe how you see the situation.*
Tips for Practicing Self-Advocacy

• **Let the other person speak.** Being a self-advocate doesn’t mean that only you talk. The other person needs a chance to respond to what you are saying. If that person becomes impatient, try to stay calm and take a deep breath.

• **Don’t expect immediate results.** Change is not always instant or lasting. Sometimes it takes many conversations with the other person before anything changes. You may even have to remind the person more than once.

• **Ask someone to help.** There may be times when you and the other person cannot agree, or the other person becomes unreasonable. One of the best parts of being your own advocate is that you don’t have to solve all the problems on your own. You can and should ask for help. Asking for help is also advocating for yourself.
The Golden Rule
“Treat others as you wish to be treated.”

The Platinum Rule
“Treat others as they wish to be treated.”

How do Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy fit into these core values???
Opportunities to make more choices about my life

YOUR CHOICE

YOUR VOICE

Opportunities to use my voice about my life
Leading My Life Goal

Goal Statement:

Objective:

Objective:

Objective:

**Goal**: a broad statement about a long-term desired outcome.

**Objective**: a measurable result that will be achieved in a specific timeframe to help accomplish a desired goal.
Although purposeful and relevant, the true value of Arizona Youth Leadership Initiatives is not found in a workbook or in the words of an accomplished presenter, it is found in the climate of trust, mutual respect, and absolute acceptance, which allow youth to be themselves, to be heard, and to be changed.

AZYLF invests in our most precious resource, the youth who will transform our tomorrows.
Connecting to Arizona Youth Leadership Initiatives starts with AZYLF

Arizona Youth Leadership Forum (AZYLF) for Students and Young Adults Who Have Disabilities, Who Are Experiencing Transition to Adulthood is an innovative, 5-day summer conference, to educate and empower young people as they navigate the process of transition to adulthood. Designed to foster personal growth through self-discovery, AZYLF provides peer-based, and experiential learning opportunities, to assist each individual as they identify and embrace their strengths and gifts, in conjunction with planning for their future.

Facilitated by Diverse Ability Incorporated, AZYLF offers a dynamic environment, which focuses on personal skill development, career exploration, effective advocacy, and empowers through heightened awareness of disability history and culture. Invitation to participate is competitive, and open to Arizona youth who have a variety of disabilities, who demonstrate leadership potential, academic success, involvement in extra-curricular activities, community involvement, and have the desire to interact effectively with peers and elder role models.
To be eligible for selection as a Delegate to Arizona Youth Leadership Forum, you must:

- Have a disability that you acknowledge and that others regard you having;
- Have completed at least one year of high school by June, be a recent graduate, or a young adult working through the process of transition to adulthood;
- Have the desire to interact effectively with peers and elder role models;
- Have demonstrated potential for personal leadership or self-advocacy;
- Reside in Arizona

AZYLF is held each summer in 5 regions of Arizona. Email mellie@diverseabilityincorporated.org to be added to the email list for recruitment!
How AZYLF is beneficial:

• AZYLF provides education on topics such as: self-determination, higher education options, career exploration, the history of disability as a culture, and personal/civic leadership.

• Delegates participate in Person Centered Planning and are assisted in developing a Personal Leadership Plan which includes specific action items upon return to their communities.

• Delegates receive mentoring and Alumni Association opportunities after completing AZYLF.