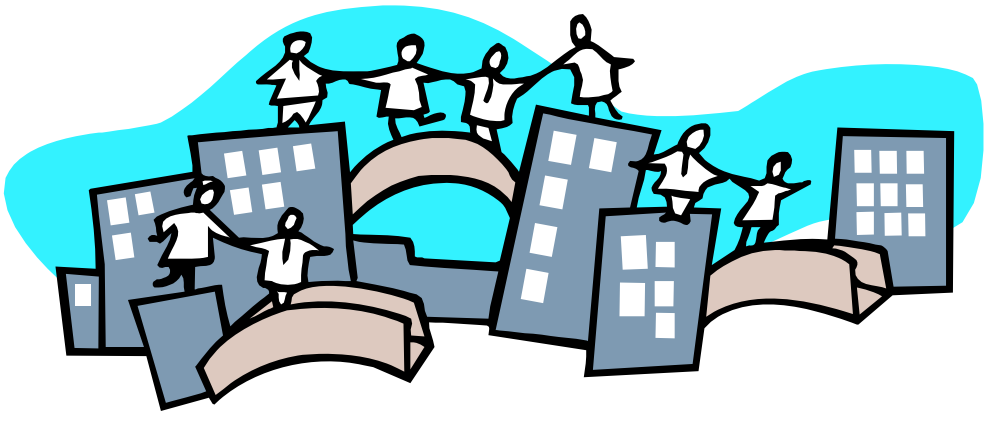
Community Learning Experience

A Guide for
Mobilization Teams



This Book Belongs to: _____

Prepared by:

Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership

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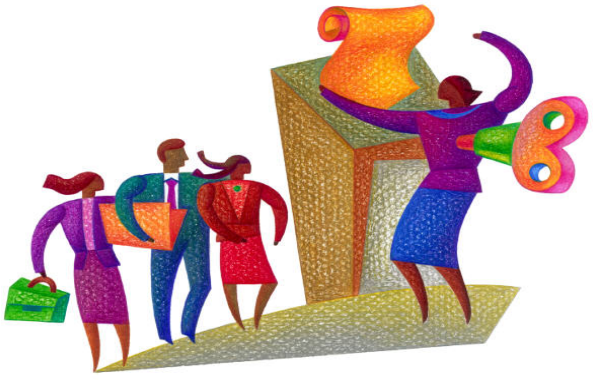
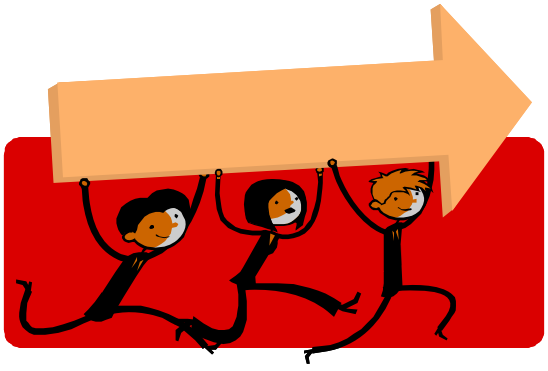
What is this workbook for?

This workbook guides you through a process of picking an issue that is important to people with disabilities, learning about the issue within communities, and sharing with community leaders how the issue affects the lives of people with disabilities in their home communities.



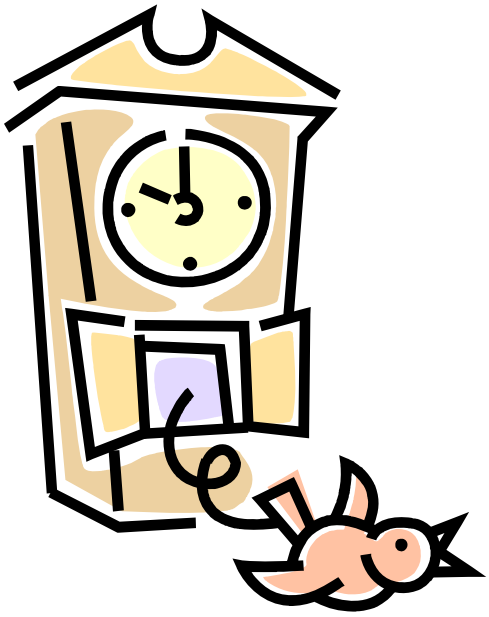
Who will help guide the process?

In your community, a group of individuals with disabilities or an agency or group that supports individuals will help organize the process. Support will also be available through the Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership at the Partnership for People with Disabilities.



Chapters

- Chapter 1-Introduction to the Community Learning Experience
- Chapter 2-How to Pick an Issue
- Chapter 3-Learning About the Issue in Your Community
- Chapter 4-Sharing What You Have Learned With Others



Let’s get started~~~

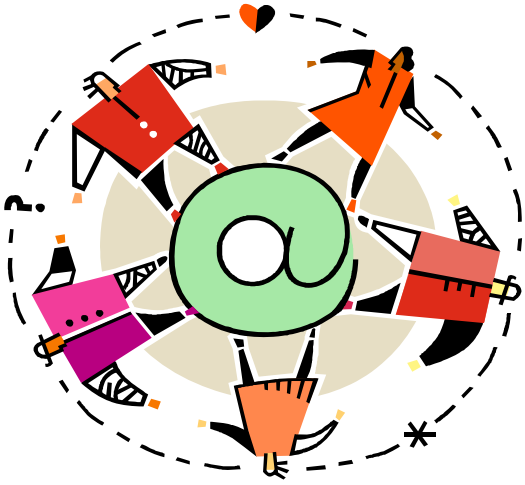
Chapter 1:

Introduction to the Community Learning Experience

What is a Community Learning Experience?

A way to explore your community and learn about an issue that is important in your life and in the lives of others with disabilities.

What are Mobilization Teams?



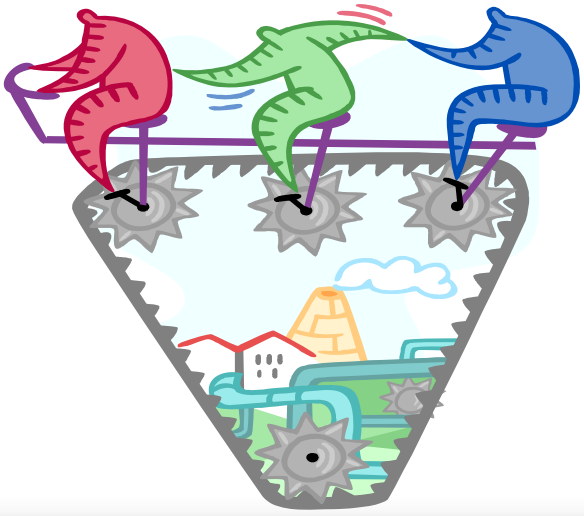
A group of people who work together to:

- **learn about an issue**
- **agree on common ideas about the issue**
- **talk about what they found**

Mobilize: to prepare for action (of a vigorous nature)

Members of a Mobilization Team should include:

- Self-advocates (from People 1st, Arc, CIL, schools/colleges, providers, etc.)
- Allies (family members, support staff, service providers, etc.)
- Others interested in the issue (community members, advocates, etc.)



Our Team Members are:

Name	Address	Phone	email

Team worksheet

Our Team Members are:

Name	Address	Phone	email

Team worksheet

Chapter 2:

How to Pick an Issue

How do you pick an issue important to you?

1. List individual issues from each team member
2. Talk about the issues to make sure everyone understands the different issues
3. Group together issues that are alike
4. Have everyone vote for the 3 issues they think are most important
5. Add up the number of votes for each issue and figure out which 3 issues got the most votes

Our 3 top issues are:

Using the scores, list the 3 issues with the most votes…

The issue with the MOST votes:

_____

The issue with the SECOND MOST votes:

_____

The issue with the THIRD MOST votes:

_____

Team worksheet

Of the 3 most important issues, what is the 1 issue you will work on?

For each of the 3 issues, answer the following questions:

- Will this help improve the lives of people with disabilities?
- Is this issue doable (not too big to solve)?
- Is this an issue most of the team feels strongly about?
- Is the issue easy to understand?

Think about the answers to the questions and vote again or have a team discussion and decide which ONE issue your team will work on.

What issue will our team learn about?

The issue chosen by us as being important to individuals with disabilities is:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Team worksheet

Now that you have chosen an issue to learn more about in your community…

What's Next?

Chapter 3:

Learning About the Issue in Your Community

Chapter 3 is divided into steps for you to follow. The steps are:

Step 1: Set up a Team Meeting Timeline and Schedule

Step 2: Talk as a Team about the Issue to Understand It

Step 3: Plan How You Will Learn More About the Issue in your Community

Step 4: Come up With a Plan for Your Small Group to Gather Information

Step 5: Gather Information About the Issue

Step 6: Share What Groups Learned with Team Members

Step 1

Set up a Team Meeting Timeline and Schedule

Notes for Step 1

Our Timeline

Date	Action
	Meet as a team
	Break into small groups
	Explore the issue
	Share findings
	Decide on action to take
	Prepare presentation on issue and action to take
	Make presentation to key people/groups in your community
	Share presentation with Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership

Team worksheet

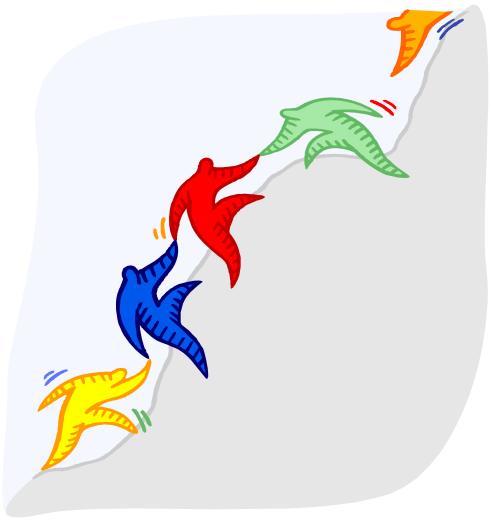
Our Meeting Schedule

Date	What we plan to talk about
	Meet together; learn about the Community Learning Experience; understand the issue

Team worksheet

Step 2

Talk as a Team about the Issue to Understand It



Notes for Step 2

What We Say About the Issue

Some of our comments	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Here is our statement that we will use to tell others about the issue

Team worksheet

Some Questions We Will ask About the Issue

After talking as a team, we decided to ask others the following questions about the issue	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	

Team worksheet

Step 3

Plan How You Will Learn More About the Issue in your Community

- Talk about ways to learn about the issue
- Ask each person about their interests and learning styles
- Decide who will work together
- Talk about what each person will do

Notes for Step 3

Some Ways to Learn About the Issue

How we will learn about the issue – who will we talk to? where will we go?	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	
❖	

Team worksheet

Team Members' Interests and Talents

Members names	Areas of interests and skills

Team worksheet

Step 4

Come up With a Plan for Your Small Group to Gather Information

- Talk within your small group
- Decide who will ask/do what
- Arrange time to “explore”
- Write down your plan

Notes for Step 4

Who Will Work Together

(make additional copies as needed)

	Team Member Name	Team Member Name	Team Member Name
Group 1			
Group 2			
Group 3			
Group 4			
Group 5			

Team worksheet

Exploring in Small Groups

(make copies of this page for each group)

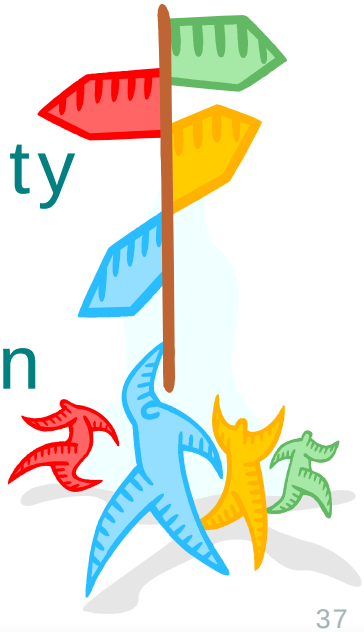
Group _____	What we will do; where we will go

Team worksheet

Step 5

Gather Information About the Issue

- Have all small groups follow their plans for collecting information
- Explore your community
- Write down information you collect



Notes for Step 5

Some Examples of Ways to Collect Information

Use the computer to surf the web

Do a survey

Call People

Read Reports

Take pictures

Visit the library

What we learned

(make copies of this page for each group)

Who we talked to or where we went	What we found out about the issue

Team worksheet

Step 6

Share What Groups Learned with Team Members

- Share what each group learned with the team
- See if you learned some of the same things
- See if you learned different things
- Decide if there information missing
- Write down main ideas

Notes for Step 6

Information from all groups

Key ideas - “findings”
.
.
.
.
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Team worksheet

Discussion Questions

What Else do We Want to Know?	Who Do We Talk To/Where Do We Go?

Team worksheet

Additional Information We Learned

Additional key ideas - “findings”
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.
.
.

Now that you have explored an issue and shared what you learned about the issue with each other…

What's Next?

Chapter 4:

Sharing What You Have Learned with Others

In Chapter 4, you will put together what you learned into a presentation or paper

- Talk about who you want to hear about your issue
- Talk about what you want others to know about the issue
- Talk about how to present what you found
- Develop a paper or presentation
- Present what you learned to others

Who Needs to Hear About Your Issue?

- Brainstorm with your team about who would be interested in hearing more about your issue
- Some examples are:
  - boards of supervisors
  - boards of directors of nonprofit organizations
  - state legislators

People or groups that we plan to talk with are:

- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..

Team worksheet

Your Presentation: what you will say

Here is a brief outline that you might want to follow. The next pages are sheets that you can fill in.

- The issue you learned more about and how you told others about the issue
- The people on your team
- Who you interviewed
- Places you went to get information
- What you found out about the issue
- What you believe can be done

The issue and ways we talked with others about the issue are:

- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..

Team worksheet

The people on our team are:

*..

*..

*..

*..

*..

*..

*..

*..

*..

Team worksheet

The people we talked to about the issue are:

- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..

Team worksheet

The places we went to get information are:

- ..
- ..
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- ..
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- ..
- ..
- ..

Team worksheet

The information we found out is:

- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
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- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..

Team worksheet

What we think can be done about this issue is:

- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..
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- ..
- ..
- ..

Team worksheet

Types of Presentations

There are many ways you can present information. You may wish to present your information in several ways. Some examples are:

- 3 to 5 minute public comment
- Written reports
- Overhead/PowerPoint presentation
- Fact sheets
- Press releases
- Videos

We decided that we would present information in the following ways:

- ..
- ..
- ..
- ..

Team worksheet

Preparing Your Presentation

- Use the information from your worksheets.
- Come up with the main message about the issue.
- Include “findings” about what you learned about the issue.
- Use examples.
- Put your information in a format to share with others.
- Decide who will present.

Giving Your Presentation

- Be on time.
- Dress in your best clothes.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be polite.
- If you do not know the answer to any questions, say “Let me check into that and I will get back to you.”
- Remember to say ‘thank you’ at the end of your presentation.

Now That You Have Presented What You Learned About the Issue with Key People in Your Community ...

What's Next?

Treat your team to something really special...

Celebrate!

Self-Advocacy Mobilization:

A project of the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University with funding from a grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

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