



The European Platform of Self-Advocates

EPSA Conference **Hear our Voices**

Peniche, 30 September to 3 October 2011

During 4 days, more than 100 self-advocates talked about their lives and how to make their voices heard.

We talked about:

Access to health,
the importance of getting a job,
how to start a self-advocacy group,
how to campaign and involve the media,
the importance of political participation,
the right to get married and start a family,
how to use new technologies to share our stories,
the importance of living independently
and enjoying our lives.

We also talked about inclusion and
the importance of the Convention for the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities and the Disability Action Plan.

To make sure that our voices are heard all over Europe here are the messages
from the self-advocates that attended the Conference.

This document is an Easy-To-Read version produced by: Inclusion Europe

Galleries de la Toison d'Or – 29 Chaussée d'Ixelles #393/32 –1050 Brussels – Belgium
Tel.: +32-2-502 28 15 – Fax: +32-2-502 80 10 – e-mail: secretariat@inclusion-europe.org

Messages to our families:

- Families need to be involved.
- Families need more support so they can support self-advocacy.
- We need your support but we are the ones who should make the choices.
- We want respect for our privacy.
- Families are really important for self-advocates.
- Families need to recognise that we want to work, earn our own money and make our own decisions.
- It isn't easy to find a job, so we need your support and advice.
- Help us to be involved. Support us.
- Allow us to be included in different activities.
- Families must understand that we do grow up to be adults.
- We have feelings and desires like other adults.
- Families must be prepared to let us take risks and be there for us whilst we live the life we choose.
- Let us go but keep us close to your hearts.
- Empower us to fight for our rights to equal health care.
- Support us to express our views and share our experiences.
- Do not accept bad practices – fight for equality of care and equal access to health services.
- Be involved in training health professionals in learning disability awareness within hospitals, universities and other settings.
- Support us to campaign and raise awareness. We want to speak up!

Messages to organisations:

- Empower people and let them know about the Convention.
- Professionals should listen to us and not make decisions for us.
- Do more to get people with learning disabilities into regular jobs.
- Provide guidelines for employers as to how to provide work for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Get to know our abilities and represent our interests.
- Give facts to governments and do research to prove it can work.
- You need to be involved at local, national and international level.
- You need to involve more young people with disabilities in your organisations.
- You should provide more support to people with intellectual disabilities to be included in different activities.
- You must campaign to ensure we can exercise our rights.
- You must support us to understand our rights and you must support us in ways that allow us to exercise our rights.
- You must listen to us and work with us.
- You must support us to express our views and opinions.
- You should facilitate research to find out the good and bad practice people experience within the health services.
- Educate people with intellectual disabilities on the standard of good health care they should expect and that they deserve.
- Find out how people with disabilities wish to tackle the issue of inequality of care.
- Support people with intellectual disabilities to design and deliver inclusive intellectual disability awareness training.

- Ask us how we think health care can be improved, and how we want to be involved.
- Have more people with intellectual disabilities on television.
- Show positive images of people with intellectual disabilities.
- We are human beings and deserve a voice.

Messages to our governments:

- Acknowledge that people with intellectual disabilities are here.
- Do not cut the funding for services.
- Make efforts to shut down institutions.
- We want self-advocates in politics!
- We want results, not only words!
- Make things in the community accessible.
- Do away with institutions that don't let us live independently.
- We have the same rights to work.
- Everyone should get the same pay for the same job.
- Provide more money to organisations so that there are REAL work opportunities.
- Make polling stations accessible.
- Provide easy-to-read documents, including the ballot paper.
- Promote electoral issues in our schools and the education system.
- Provide financial funds so people with disabilities can enjoy their life to the full.
- Make sure we can exercise our rights to live with who we choose, get married and have children.
- Make sure that the United Nations Convention is put into practice and enforced.
- Go to Conferences and events organised by us to understand ongoing issues.

- Review universities curriculums to ensure healthcare practitioners know about intellectual disabilities.
- Make sure that in all policies and government publications the rights of people with intellectual disabilities are outlined – including mainstream reports.
- Get to the 21st century!
- Raise awareness of the issues that people with intellectual disabilities face, and encourage the media to talk about them.
- We are human beings and deserve a voice. We must be listened to!
- **Hear our Voices!**