

## A FEW TIPS FOR SELF ADVOCATES

When dealing with decision-makers, officials and other people whose assistance you want...

- Stay calm. Don't let emotion override your message.
- Explain what you want briefly and clearly (you can write down an explanation ahead of time and read it aloud).
- Write down questions ahead of time and practice conversations with a friend (or with the mirror).
- Try to anticipate what you might be asked. Try to think of possible responses. You can write them out.
- Listen carefully and don't hesitate to ask people to wait while you write notes. Repeat back important information to confirm that you got it right.
- Write down names and titles of whomever you talk or meet with, and include the date.
- Be persistent. Keep asking for explanations until you understand what is being said.
- It's OK to remind people to be patient and to repeat things.
- Do explain your point of view, but try not to argue with people when you disagree.
- Don't feel pressured to answer every question put to you or to make decisions immediately - you can ask for time to think about things and consult friends or family.
- At the end of a call or meeting, summarize the major points that were made and go over what each of you has agreed to do. Put this in writing and send a copy after the meeting to those who attended.
- Make official requests in writing. Letters should be brief, polite and contain all the vital information.
- Keep correspondence where you can find it.
- Write yourself reminders for follow-up activities.
- Keep track of what other people say they will do, and exactly when they will call you back. If you don't hear from them, call them and remind them politely but firmly.
- Ask a friend or someone else you trust to be with you when you have a phone call or meeting to attend. They can take notes, remind you of questions to ask and be your support.
- Sometimes you need to get specialized information. Contact the Alzheimer Society of B.C.
- Sometimes you may not feel safe or comfortable to push your issue forward at this time. That's okay.

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