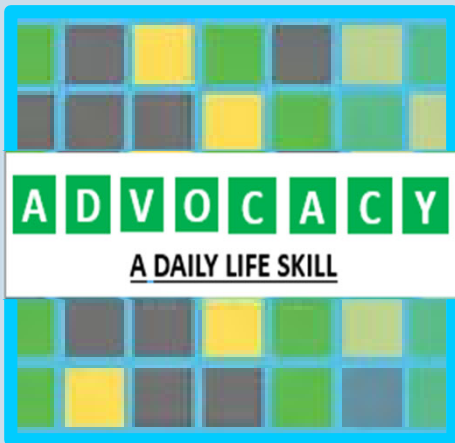


YOUTH SUMMIT  
PRESENTATION  
2025



# ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF:

LET'S TALK ABOUT  
COMMUNICATING WHAT YOU  
WANT

# SPEAKERS



## **Dar Pung**

Self-Advocate, Peer Social Coach at Balance  
MI-Skills

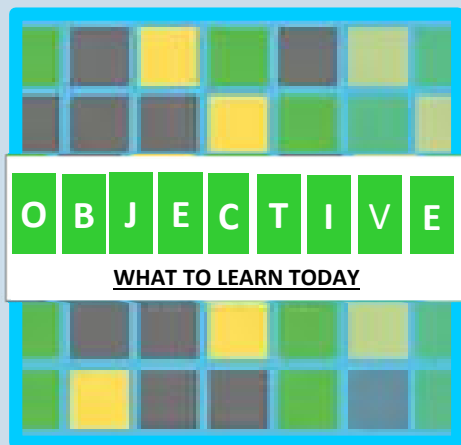
Pronouns: he, his, him



## **Corissa Pittman**

Self-Advocate, CYVYC Youth Ambassador,  
YEAH Ambassador

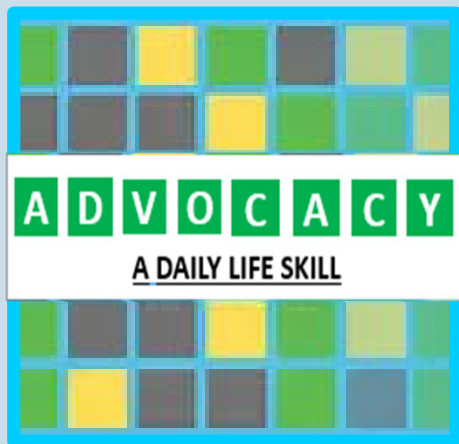
Pronouns: he, they, them



# WHAT TO LEARN

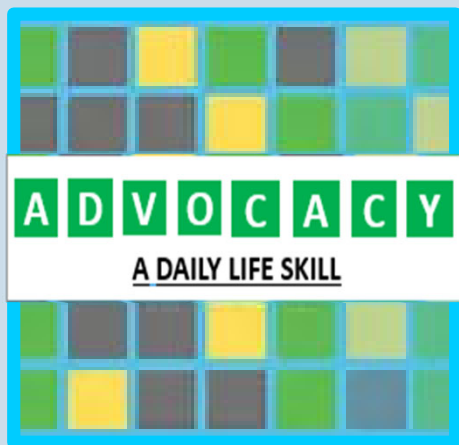
- Listening to yourself
- Learning about the support you need
- Telling others what you want
- Growing your self-confidence
- Lead yourself, then lead others

## ~DISABILITY SCOOP, 8.26.21



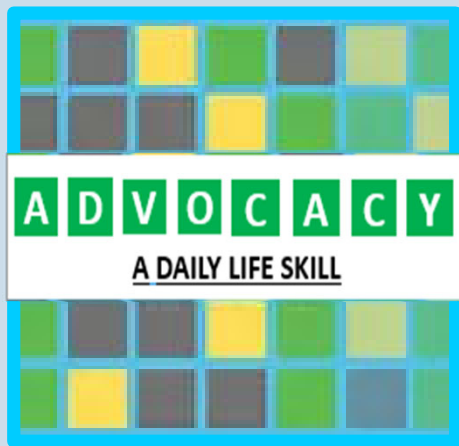
Young adults with disabilities and their parents argue that health care officials, regional centers, and school districts need to foster more awareness about what it's like for youth with disabilities to transition to adulthood. Far too many families don't know what to expect, they said, or how to advocate for the services they need.

# ADVOCACY MEANS...



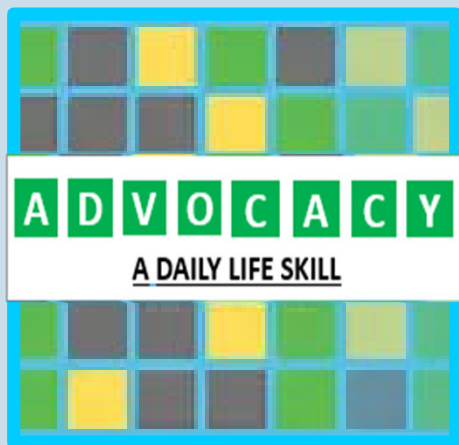
- Advocacy = The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal (Merriam-Webster)
- What was the last time you advocated in your life?

# SELF-ADVOCACY MEANS.....



- Taking the initiative to speak up in your everyday life to improve your situation, change the story, or help someone else
- What does self-advocacy mean to you?

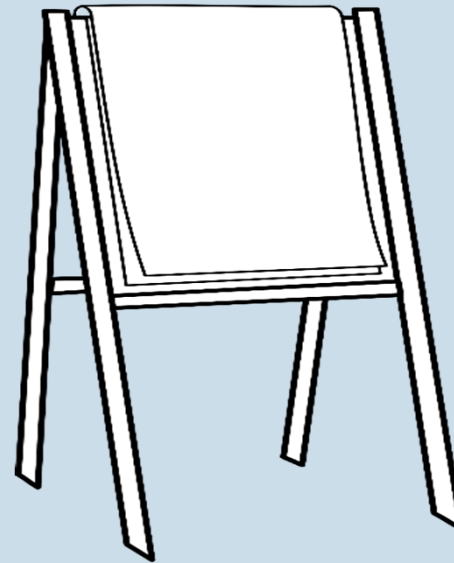
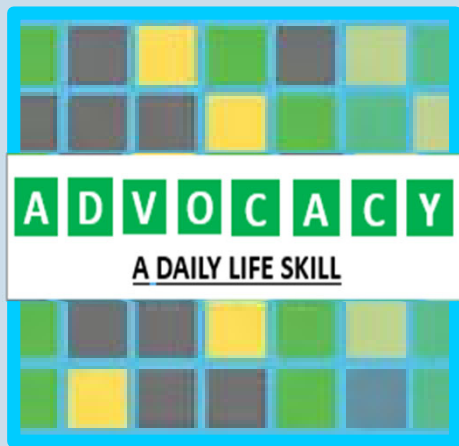




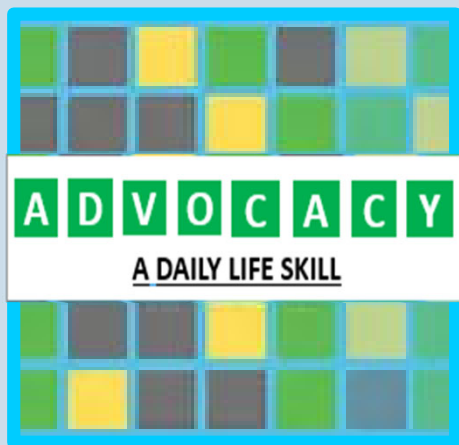
## WHY DO WE ADVOCATE?

- To share wants, needs
- To make a change in our lives, or for others
- To bring attention to issues
- To have the kind of life we want

# WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW YOU ADVOCATED FOR YOURSELF, THIS WEEK?





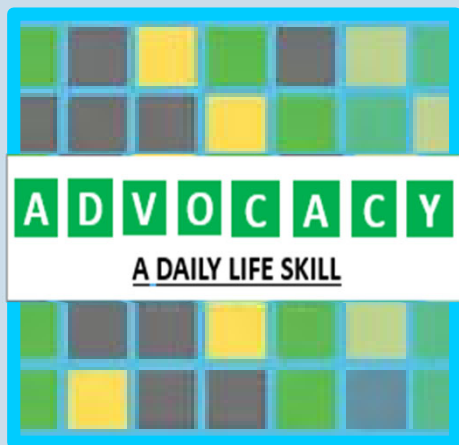


# PERSONAL

- Things that affect just you

## PERSONAL DECISIONS INCLUDE:

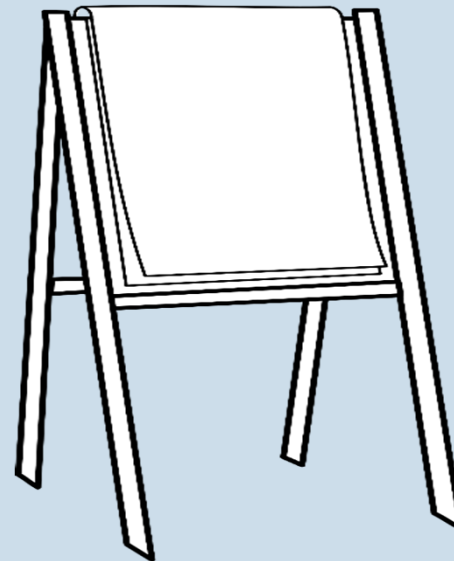
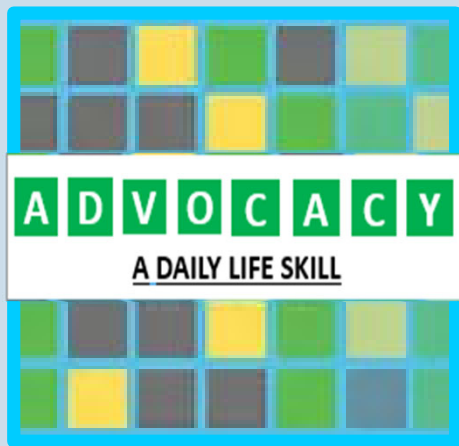
- Deciding who to invite to your Individualized Education Program (IEP) Or your Person-Centered Plan (PCP)
- Advocating in your relationships
- Requesting accommodations at work



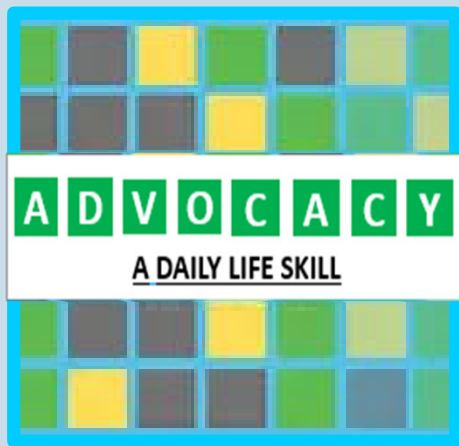
## WHY IS SELF-ADVOCACY IMPORTANT?

- Identifies what you want
- Helps build inclusiveness
- Helps change the community around you

# WHY IS SELF-ADVOCACY IMPORTANT TO YOU?

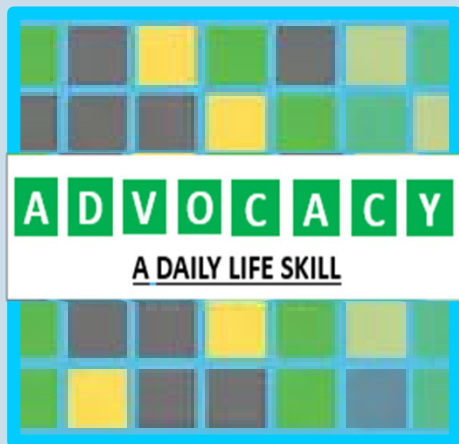


# USING YOUR VOICE WHERE IT MATTERS – EXAMPLES:

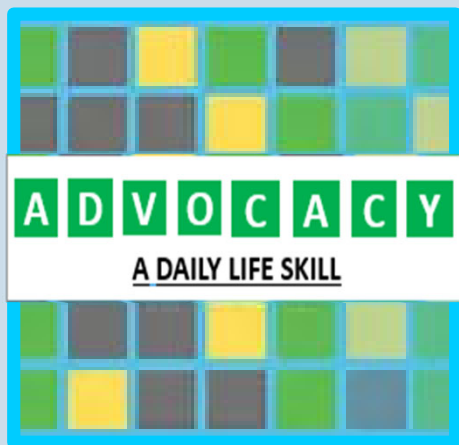


- Organizing your own IEP meeting
- Being included on making medical decisions
- Making decisions about money with the supports you need

# THE KINDS OF CHOICES STUDENTS NEED TO MAKE



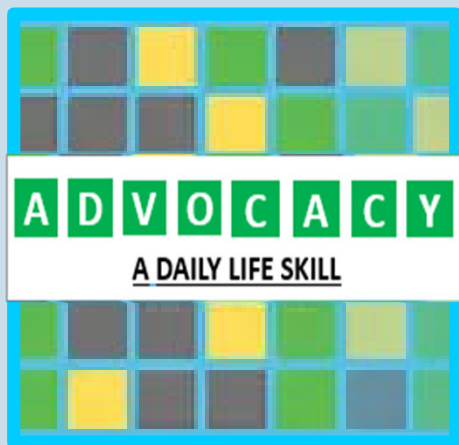
- Who you want at your IEP
- Telling what you need in terms of supports
- Telling your supporters when you like or, don't like something



# YOUR IEP FORM

Connections must be established between what you are learning in school and what you will be doing after school.

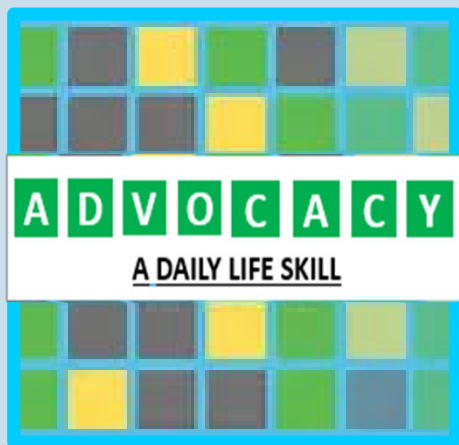
- Your IEP goals are outcomes
- They should match what you want as an adult (postsecondary goals)
- What your doing in school should help you reach those goals



# YOUR IEP DOCUMENT

Connections must be established between what you are learning in school and what you will be doing after school.

- Your IEP goals are outcomes
- They should match what you want as an adult (postsecondary goals)
- What your doing in school should help you reach those goals

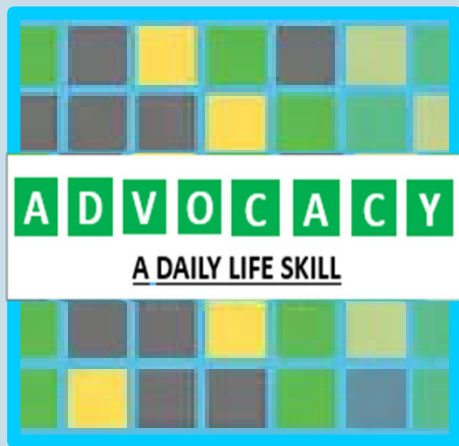


## ADULT CHOICES TO MAKE

- Choose who they want at a PCP
- Not be pressured to invite someone you do not want there
- Telling what you need in terms of supports
- Telling people when you like or, don't like something



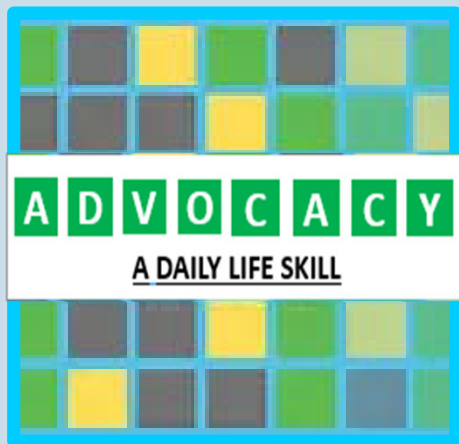
# THE LAW ABOUT ADULT SUPPORTS



Michigan law requires that all individuals who receive services from a mental health agency will have an individual plan of service developed through a Person-Centered Planning process, regardless of age, disability, or residential setting. (330.1712)

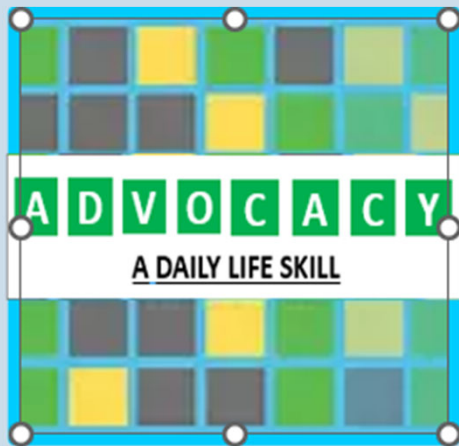
- The Mental Health Code require a “person centered” approach to the planning, selection, and delivery of supports
- It honors your choices, and abilities, while involving family, friends and professionals as you want or request

# PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING IS PART SELF-DETERMINATION

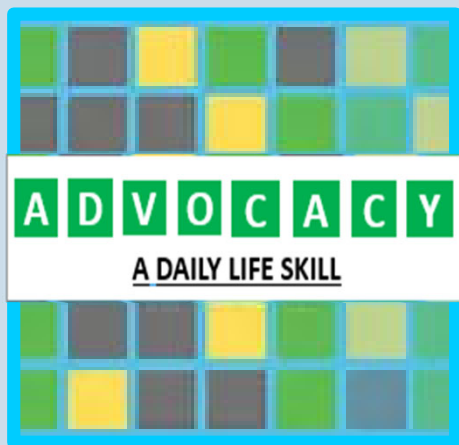


- Everything is individualized
- There is a requirement that PCP's can be adjusted when it is needed
- If a person has a PCP, and thinks it needs to be changed, they can request a review

# SELF-DETERMINATION VIDEO



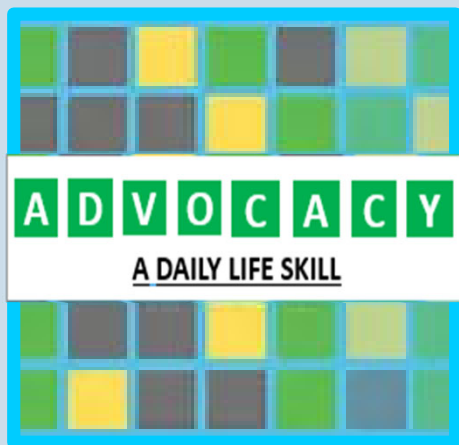
<https://vimeo.com/256473639>



## SELF-DETERMINATION

“The public mental health system must offer arrangements that support self-determination, assuring methods for the person to exert direct control over how, by whom, and to what ends they are served and supported.”

Michigan Department Of Community Health, Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Self-Determination Policy & Practice Guideline-October 1, 2012



# LOCAL ADVOCACY

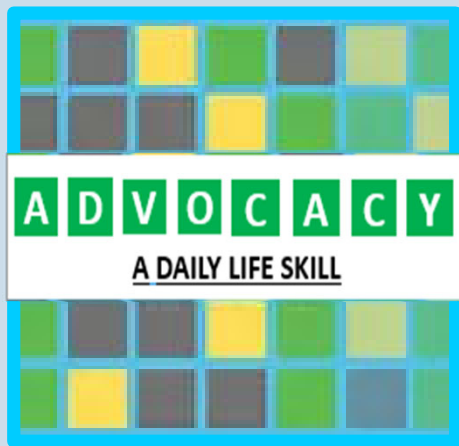
## Local Issues

- Contact your local city/township

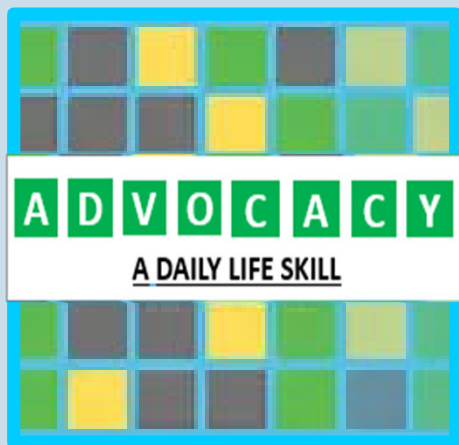
## Examples of local issues include:

- Sidewalks
- Local bus travel
- Police and fire
- Local zoning for housing

# VOTING



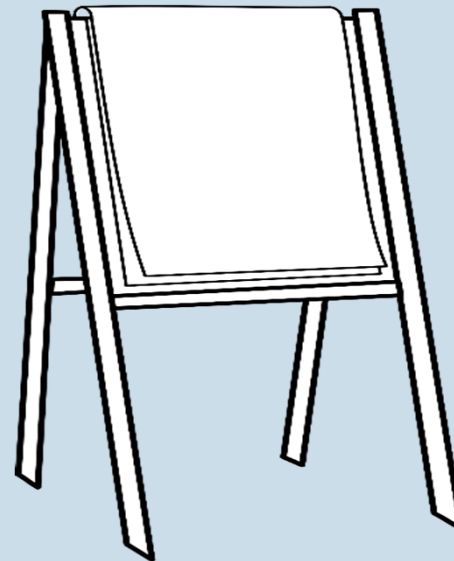
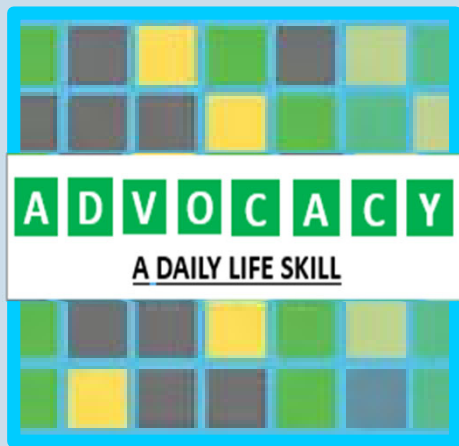
- Voting is also a very important form of advocacy
- It allows individuals to choose who will serve them in public office
- Also helps establish community priorities



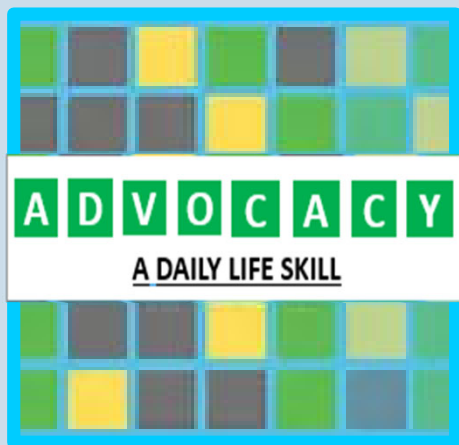
# COMMUNICATION LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

The phrase “behavior is communication,” refers to a person’s trying to communicate like, dislikes, and needs. They may do so in a traditional verbal manner. Other people call that behavior because those other people do not understand them. It is important for you to find a way to help others understand your choices.

# WHAT ARE SOME WAYS PEOPLE COMMUNICATE?

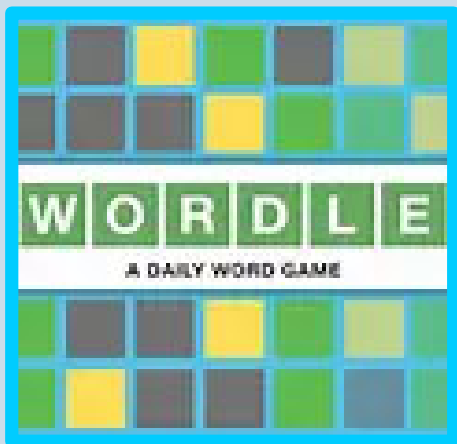






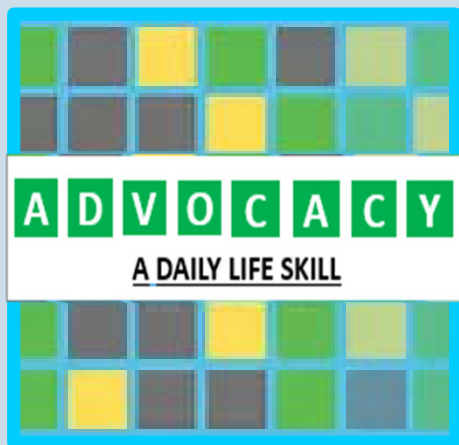
# SELF-ADVOCACY DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE ALONE

We all need supporters, helpers and consultants in our lives so we can make good decisions, whether we have a disability or not.



## SELF-ADVOCACY CAN ALSO BE DONE AT A COMMUNITY LEVEL

- Helps promote change – if it helps you, it may help others
- Helps makes people aware of disability issues
- Promotes community inclusion



# COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Looking at your community and beyond

- There are many opportunities to advocate at a larger level
- Advocacy does not stop at your front door
- Issues people with disabilities face, happen in every part of the state

# CORISSA'S STORY

## What made me an advocate?

- I became an advocate because I wanted a good life for my sister, then realized I need support too

## What started my advocacy journey?

- I had to learn to go to my own IEP meeting, I talk to my doctors myself. I communicate to my teachers when I need help. I get involved in group advocacy

## What are ways I advocate for myself in my own life?

- I am CYVYC Youth Amb. YEAH Amb. Elevatus Advisory Board,, and a Youth Equity Ambassador

## What are ways I advocate for different groups?

- Presentations, speak to legislators, mentor others

## What leadership roles do I have?

- Using your voice to say what you want is one of the most powerful tools you have





# DAR'S STORY

## What made me an advocate?

- I became an advocate to help others

## What started my advocacy journey?

- I started by advocating for myself, which led into supporting others

## What are ways I advocate for myself in my own life?

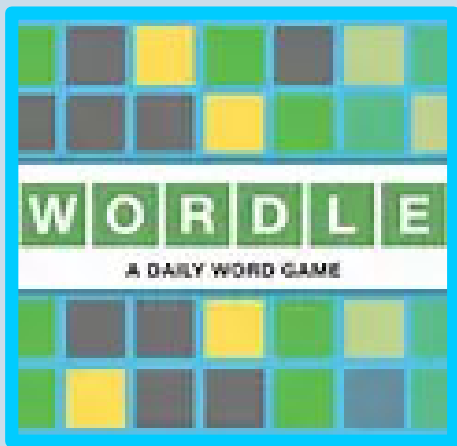
- I advocate for myself in my own life by communicating my wants and needs to my family, bosses, and co-workers. I also set boundaries and seek out mental health services as needed

## What are ways I advocate for different groups?

- I advocate for others through my job

## What leadership roles do I have?

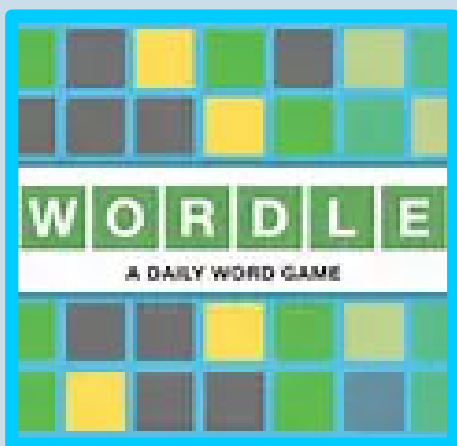
- I am currently learning how to teach classes at my job, and I am working towards presenting various topics through organizations in Michigan, such as MiDDC



# YOU CAN CHANGE THINGS

- A single person can spark changes for many
- Advocacy has not changed through the years, methods have
- It takes an idea and desire for change
- It is never a “won” and done

# RESOURCES



## Michigan Alliance for Families

- [Self-Advocacy](#)
- [Self-Determination](#)

## Pacer's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment

- [Videos listed on different topics related to young adults with disabilities](#)



# QUESTIONS

- Now is your time!
- What questions do you have for us?







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