

Standing Up For Yourself

Presented by:
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Disability Rights

RHODE ISLAND

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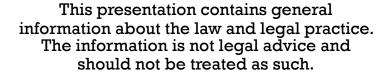
Clients: 800.733.5332



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Legal Disclaimer







You must not rely on the information in this presentation as an alternative to legal advice from your lawyer or other professional services provider.



Introduction: About Disability Rights Rhode Island (DRRI)

- Disability Rights Rhode Island is Rhode Island's designated Protection and Advocacy system.
- We are part of the national network of Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies created by Congress, existing in every state and territory, to help secure and advance the rights of people with disabilities. There are 57 P&As in the United States, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.
- Our purpose is to protect individuals with disabilities from abuse and neglect and to advocate for their civil rights.



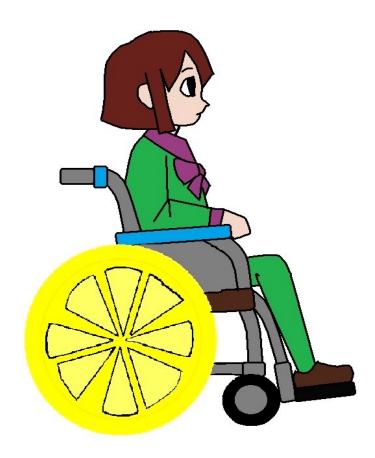
TDRRI Provides:

- ■Information and referral
- Advice and self-help materials
- **■Individual representation**
- Trainings on disability-related legal rights
- ■Systemic reform





Federal Disability Law





Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin
- One of the most significant legislative acts in US history
- **■** People with disabilities were excluded



Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- Prohibits discrimination on basis of disability in programs conducted by the federal government
- Often referred to as "Section 504"
- Includes requirements of reasonable accommodations, program accessibility, effective communication, physical accessibility
- Delayed implementation until 1977 ("Crip Camp")



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Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

- Extension of Civil Rights Act of 1964 to people with disabilities
- Extension of Rehab Act to non-federal entities
- Sections:
 - Title I: Covers employment
 - Title II: Covers public entities
 - **Title III: Covers public accommodations**
 - Title IV: Telecommunications
 - Title V: Miscellaneous (including retaliation)



Fair Housing Act

- Originally 1968, added people with disabilities in 1988
- **Prohibits discrimination based on disability**
- Allows for a request for reasonable accommodation/modification
- Prohibits coercing, intimidating, threatening, or interfering with the enjoyment of dwelling





Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990)

- Everyone entitled to Free and Appropriate Public Education
- Students with disabilities receive an Individualized Education Plan
- **Education provided in least restrictive environment**
- Appropriate evaluation is required
- Parent and Teacher both involved
- Procedural safeguards are in place



Overall Goal: Community Integration

Everyone with a disability should be able to live in the community and fully participate in every aspect to the best of their ability and desire.





Ten Steps to Effective Self-Advocacy





Believe in Yourself and Prioritize Your Needs

- ■No one knows a person's needs better than that person
- **■**Believe in yourself!
- You can make decisions and you can have a quality life
- ■But you have to plan!



Know Your Rights

- **■Know the laws (federal and state)**
- Know that you can get this information in a variety of ways and with accommodation



*Keep Records

- Sometimes you have to prove that you need something
- Sometimes you have to show that you have been denied
- Sometimes you have to show the history of your efforts
- Records will all substantiate your story!



Prepare and Plan

- ■Figure out what you need and make a list
- Write down questions or your needs before an appointment
- ■Talk with others about what helps them
- Make sure you have an outline or notes when you make requests or meet with decision makers



Be Creative and Assertive



- Consider how much history is helpful
- Conflict is inevitable! How you react is important
- ■Be assertive, not aggressive and try to foster cooperation



Get Information and Decisions in Writing

- ■Meetings are stressful and oftentimes jargony take notes and ask for information to be provided in writing
- ■The more data you have, the better you will be at advocacy
- ■If you disagree with a decision, get the reasoning in writing



Right to Appeal



- ■Most decisions have a higher authority
- ■You typically have rights to due process including appeal
- **■**These appeals have strict procedures and timelines!



Interim Solutions



- ■While you wait for decisions, is there something else?
- ■A lot of this takes time...is there a shorter solution for now?



Confirm Agreements and Sign Documents



- Many times, both sides will have to agree and sign documents
- Take your time, read it all
- ■Discuss it with trusted people in your life
- ■Don't sign unless you agree!



Follow Up and Thank



- Make sure you stay on top of things and be persistent
- Watch deadlines
- **■**Keep addresses up to date
- ■Thank those that helped along the way



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DRRI Contact Information

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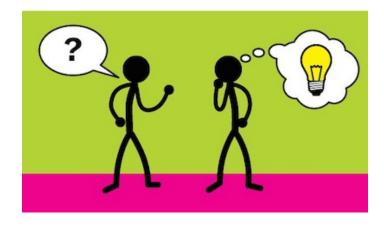
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+ Thank you!

Questions?



■ Please fill out our survey to help us improve our trainings: https://drri.org/training-and-presentation-evaluation-form/

