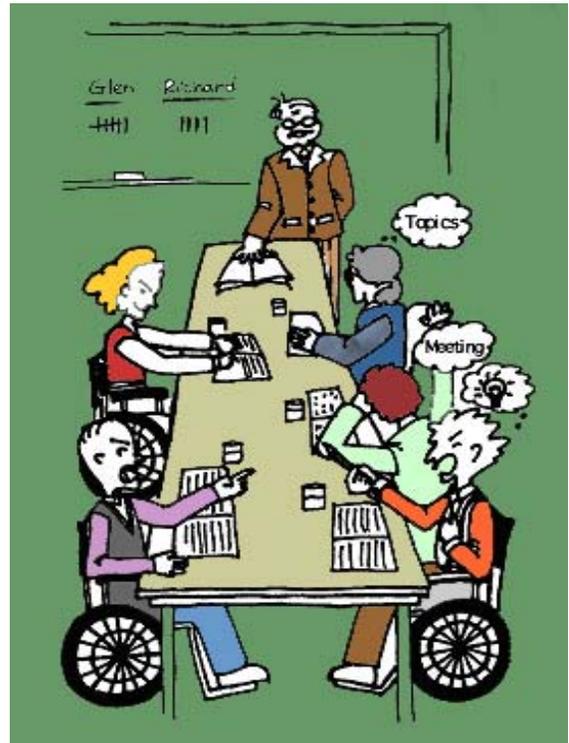


Training Consumers With Acquired Brain Injuries to Serve on Independent Living Center Committees and Boards



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Training Consumers with Acquired Brain Injuries to Serve on ILC Committees and Boards

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I. Introduction to Manual

A. Topics Covered

At some time or another, people who want to solve a problem in their town or on the job or who want to plan an event or activity in their club or family find themselves sitting down to a meeting. Meetings are commonplace for many people, but others still may be unsure about what should happen at a meeting. They may not know what to expect or what will be expected of them when they attend or lead a meeting. This manual will make you feel more at ease at meetings. It will tell you how a meeting is run and will talk about the various tasks that go into making a meeting productive. You'll learn how to prepare an agenda, how to take notes, and how to keep a meeting on track. You'll also learn how a meeting can help people identify a problem and how people can get along with one another so they can come up with good ways to solve the problem. One day your skills in getting together with others to solve a problem may help you become a supporter or an advocate for people like yourself who have a disability. Your willingness to attend or lead a meeting may result in an action or bring about a change that will improve the lives of others. At the end of this manual, you'll find a chapter that talks about the legal rights of people with disabilities and the role advocacy has played in securing and maintaining these rights. The rights all Americans enjoy today came about because people like yourself attended meetings and worked with others to solve a problem. Whether that meeting was to discuss and write the Declaration of Independence in 1776 or the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, the results were a better life for many.

Sometimes people have to keep going to meetings to assert their rights. This manual will show how you can be most effective in a group as you link your ideas and efforts with other people. It also lists ways to arrange the meeting room to accommodate your needs or ways to enlist the help of others so you can be more productive at a meeting.

The manual is divided into five chapters. Each chapter provides a short description of the main topic followed by a discussion section. In the chapters, you will find materials that will help you as you go to meetings and talk with others about your ideas and concerns. You will also find activities to help you practice the skills you'll need to carry out successful meetings.

B. Intent of Materials

This manual is a easy-to-use guide that tells you how to conduct and oversee meetings. It also offers exercises that will help you practice the basic parts that make up a meeting. Please feel free to use these materials to refresh your skills or to find strategies that will help you at future meetings.

C. How to Use the Manual

Here are some tips on how to get the most out of this manual:

1. Take a quick scan of the whole manual so you can get an idea of what's inside.
2. Then read and study each section until you understand the material.
3. If the section includes a practice exercise, complete the exercise before moving on to a new section.

4. Make the manual your own. Write down your ideas, comments, and questions in the margins. Writing down your thoughts will make the manual more useful to you.
5. Highlight or clip the pages you find really useful. That way you'll quickly find your way back to the parts most helpful to you.

II. Meetings

Meeting (me' ting) - n. a gathering of people in one location.

A. What is the Purpose of a Meeting?

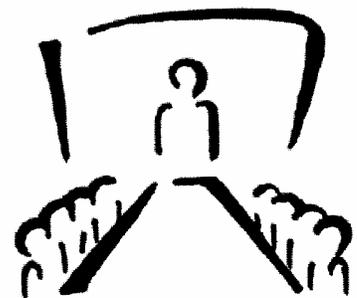
A meeting brings a group of people together to discuss one or more issues, to identify critical issues, and to list the options for addressing them. Meetings also provide a structure for making decisions based on what group members believe is best for the organization. Simply coming together in one location does not ensure the group will actually achieve its objectives. Many things can be done to make a meeting more effective. Who leads a meeting, how people get along, and how they divide the work, all affect a meeting's outcome. Each of these issues and others will be addressed in the following pages.

B. How Do You Prepare for a Meeting?

Planning helps a meeting run smoothly. Planning a meeting requires doing a number of things before the meeting. Things that can be done to help plan a meeting are scheduling the time and place, deciding the purpose of the meeting, and the topics that will be covered. An agenda should be created and mailed to everyone who will be coming to the meeting with enough time for them to review it before the meeting.

- **Time and place.** Schedule when and where the meeting will be held.
- **Purpose.** Decide why the group is meeting.
- **Topics.** List the topics that will be covered and what potential decisions will be made.
- **Create an agenda.** Write the issues that members will discuss in the meeting. Based on the time available, decide how much time should be spent on each topic.
- **Provide materials in advance.** Send members a copy of the agenda and other materials at least a week before the meeting so they can prepare for the topics to be discussed.

To prepare for a meeting, you also need to be ready to discuss what is on the agenda and to provide thoughtful input to the discussions. You should know where you stand on the issues and anticipate what other views may come up that are different from yours. Be prepared to share your point of view and to listen to what others have to say. Think about the following points as you prepare for a meeting:



Checklist for Meeting Preparations

- **Evaluate your role.** Every decision affects someone. Think about how issues affect you or those you represent.

- **Take a position:** Identify your opinion on the matter. Consider your beliefs and thoughts on the issue.
- **Be ready to present your idea.** Your viewpoint may not be represented in the discussion. Prepare a logical argument of the value and importance of your view.
- **What is the benefit?** Know how your view benefits the group and be prepared to share examples of this with others.
- **Plan for conflict.** Anticipate that others may not always agree with you and will present opposing viewpoints. If others disagree with you, try to see the problem or issue from their point of view.
- **Be open to compromise.** Meetings don't have to create win-lose situations. Think about the changes or alternatives you may suggest and how they may fit with your long-term goals.
- **Evaluate the results.** After the meeting, think about how people responded to your position. Think about what could have been done to increase support or future success.

C. Who Leads a Meeting?

The chairperson runs the meeting and ensures that business is done in an effective and timely manner. Anyone can be a chairperson; however, a good chair does a number of things to help the meeting run smoothly. The following section provides a brief look at the duties of a good chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for planning the meeting in advance, organizing and running an efficient meeting, and seeing that everything is discussed at the meeting or is arranged to be addressed at the next one. A good chairperson also facilitates positive relations among all group members and does not take sides or have favorites.

The chairperson

- Leads, but does not control the meeting
- Sets the stage for a good meeting
- Gets the group started
- Allows the group to discuss the issues

The chairperson leads the meeting, but does not control what the group does. The chair must remember that he or she sets the stage for the meeting, but that everyone contributes to a good meeting. So, a good chairperson gets the group started and helps facilitate the group as they address the issues.

When a chairperson does everything listed above, the meeting improves. Few people can do all these things listed without practice. Those who lead good meetings have practiced the strategies that help them carry out their duties. The next section describes the basic tasks performed at a successful meeting.

D. What Are the Tasks at a Meeting?

1. Set an agenda.
2. Take notes.
3. Keep minutes.
5. Begin discussion of issues.
6. Monitor progress.
7. Handle votes.

4. Open the meeting.

8. Close the meeting.

1. Set an agenda.

An agenda is an organized, brief list of topics to be discussed at each meeting. Agendas outline the meeting goals. They also help plan and organize the meeting and decide how much time is allocated for each individual topic at the meeting. Agendas help members prepare for the meeting and monitor the status of projects. The parts of a meeting come together like a completed puzzle. Every task on the agenda that is done well contributes to the success of the whole meeting.

Each agenda includes the meeting's:

Time, date, and place

Directions are helpful if the location is hard to find.

Example: The meeting will be held on Tuesday November 15, from 8 pm-9 pm in Library Hall.

Title

A title gives the group a meeting focus.

Example: "General Business Meeting" or "Special Meeting to Plan Disability Awareness Day"

Invited guests

List the names of those invited to speak to the group and the organizations they represent.

Example: John Newman, City Council Member and Lori Peters, Insurance Broker from ASI Insurance

Topics

Each item should be listed that will be discussed during the meeting.

Example: Shopping Center Attendants Program

For each topic listed, there should be a note for members as to what will be done with the topic.

Some items will only be informational. That means the group should be informed about the topic. Other items will be open for discussion, meaning the group needs to talk together about the issue. Also, items may be ready for the group to take action, which means the issue will be voted on or that a committee should be started.

Old business

Briefly describe carryover business from the last meeting or items that need more study or discussion before the group can reach a decision.

Example: "OK, last week we tabled discussion on purchase of a new photocopier. Brad met with three dealers and has prices for us to discuss at today's meeting. "

New business

List the new items that will be presented and discussed at the meeting. The chair often introduces new items, but others may introduce a new topic if it fits in with the meeting and if there is time

for discussion. Otherwise, members can notify the chair about a new item, and she or he can be sure to include the topic in the next meeting's agenda when there is more time for discussion.

Example: "Mary has asked to talk about the new training program for our speakers bureau. Mary we have about 10 minutes to discuss this program, so please share what is happening in this area."

Other Agenda Considerations

Provide supportive documents with the agenda

Members need to be well informed so they can make good decisions. To be well prepared for discussions, members need to have supporting background information on the agenda topics before the meeting. Information about the topic must be organized, with both the positive and negative sides of the issue presented. This information should be included in the packet with the agenda and be provided at least a week before the meeting. If the information is detailed or complicated, a two-week lead time is even better. The chair is the one responsible for compiling the agenda and supporting documents. The following is a list of the types of information that can be included as supporting background materials.

- Previous minutes for review and approval
- Financial reports
- Committee reports
- Identification of priority issues
- Copies of any correspondence
- Background information
- Details of planned study sessions
- Description of information not included in the packet

Setting an agenda: What needs to be included

- The name of the group
- The date, time, and place of the meeting
- Names of speakers or guests invited to the meeting
- The list of topics to be discussed
- Note what the group is to do with the topic (discuss? act?)
- Set time for how long each topic will be discussed
- Make copies for other group members
- Send members a copy at least one week before the meeting
- Bring extra copies to the meeting

MEETING AGENDA

Organization: "LOOK INTO IT" TASK FORCE

Title: General Business

Meeting Date: 11-15-96 Place of Meeting: Library Hall

Beginning Time : 8:00 PM Ending Time: 9:00 PM

- Supporting materials were included in the meeting package.
- Bring the following to the meeting. Copy of Liability Insurance Policy
- Invited guests at the meeting are: Councilman Newman, Lori Peters - ASI Insurance

AGENDA ITEMS	Time	Info	Discuss	Action
Introductions: John Newman - City Government Lori Peters - Insurance Broker	8:00			
Minutes:	8:05			✓
Item 1: Shopping Center Attendants Program	8:10		✓	
Item 2: Transportation Committee Driver Training Insurance Claim	8:20	✓		
Item 3: City Commission Meeting	8:40		✓	
Item 4: Car Pool Volunteers	8:50	✓		
Adjourn:	9:00			✓

Agenda Activities:

Time = Alloted time to talk about the topic (i.e., 8:15 - 8:30).

Info = Material presented or discussed to inform the board.

Discuss = Issue is up for discussion, a decision may result.

Actions = Board action is requested, such as a vote or a committee assignment.

Below is a scenario that you should read so you can practice filling out an agenda. Once you have read this scenario, fill out the blank agenda.

Scenario 1

Boy Scout Troop 396 is planning a camping trip to Rocky Mountain National Park. Three members of the troop have physical disabilities and will need accommodations to be made so they can also go camping.

John is 12 years old and uses crutches to walk but also owns a wheelchair, he is very independent; Steve, 11, uses a power wheelchair and needs assistance to transfer in or out of his chair; and Larry, 12, lives with cerebral palsy, is able to walk short distances, but gets tired easily. Everyone wants to be sure the trip is successful, so a small group composed of parents, the scoutmasters, and a few senior scouts have gotten together with you to help plan this trip.

The individuals in the group have never worked together, but are all committed to include everyone in the scouting activities. You have been asked to chair the planning meetings and help develop plans for the entire scout troop and report back in one month.

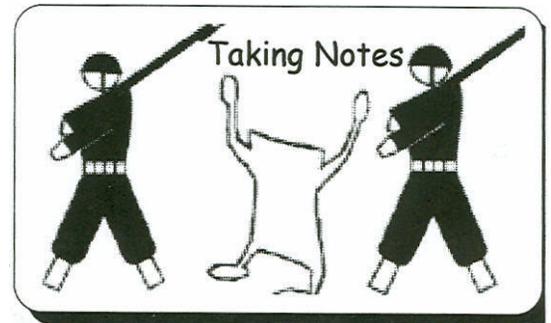
Organization: _____
Title: _____
Meeting date: _____ **Meeting place:** _____
Beginning time: _____ **Ending time:** _____
Bring the following to meeting: _____
Invited guests to the meeting are: _____
Agenda items:

2. Taking notes.

It helps to take notes during the meeting. Many things will be discussed, and you may not remember all the details. So, write down the things you wish to remember. If you'd like to make a point, but can't at the moment you think of it, jot a note to yourself about what you'd like to say. When it's your turn to speak, you'll have your thoughts in front of you.

Reasons for Taking Notes

- Provides a written record you can review later
- Forces you to pay attention to important information



- Leave plenty of white space between ideas so you have room to add other points later.
- Practice. Listening carefully while writing can be done; it just takes time to learn the skill.

Time for Review

- ◆ Soon after the meeting, go back and fill in your notes where you may have missed something important or may not have had time to write enough about the ideas you wanted to remember.
- ◆ Review your notes before the next meeting. This will refresh your memory about what happened at the last meeting and will remind you of things you need to do before the next meeting.

3. Keeping minutes.

Minutes are the written record of what happened during meetings. Minutes should be kept for every meeting and can be referred to as a historical document of actions taken over time. Minutes are kept by a secretary, or when the secretary is absent, by an appointed stand-in. The minutes can also be taken from tapes if you record the meetings. However, as a courtesy to the group, you should inform them you will be recording the meeting. Generally, taping meetings should be fine, but there may be some meetings where this is not allowed.

The minutes should include the time, date, and place, as well as the names of all members and guests present and the chairperson. The minutes should be short and highlight the most essential business items such as what actions were taken on the issues and what decisions were made. The minutes should not be a lengthy summary of the discussion.

4. Opening the meeting.

It's the chairperson's job to make sure the meeting starts on time. Before jumping into the main items of business, the chairperson should set the stage for the meeting. To open a meeting the chair should do the following:

- Call the meeting to order. *Example: "I see it is 7 o'clock; the meeting will now begin."*
- Introduce any guests and speakers. *Example: "I would like to introduce Jane Doe, who has come to talk to us about selling craft items as a fundraiser."*
- Review and approve the previous meeting's minutes. *Example: "Would everyone please review the minutes from the last meeting to ensure the record accurately reflects what we did at that time? If anyone sees a mistake or would like to make a change to the minutes or wants to add something to the record, please let me know now. If there are no changes, the minutes will remain as they are." Often, the chair will ask for a motion to approve the minutes. "I have a motion that the minutes be approved?"*
- Ask for other items that should be included on the agenda. *Example: "Would anyone*

like to add an item to the agenda for tonight's meeting?"

- Insure that priority issues are placed on the agenda first. *Example: "Does anyone wish to move an item higher up on the agenda?"*
- Allow members to make brief announcements. *Example: "Are there any announcements that should be made at this time?"*
- Suggest a general time limit for items to be discussed. *Example: "We only have an hour and a half tonight, and a number of items to discuss. To be sure we have time to talk about all the issues, I am going to limit discussion on each item to about 15 minutes. "*

Opening the Meeting

What you should do	What you should say
Call the meeting to order.	"It's 8 o'clock and time to start the meeting." "This is a meeting of the ..."
Introduce any guests and speakers	"I'd like to introduce ..." "He/she will be talking to us tonight about..."
Review and approve the previous meeting's minutes.	"Everyone has received minutes from the last meeting, are there any corrections?" "Is there a motion to approve the minutes?"
Ask for other items that should be included on the agenda.	"Does anyone have an issue that should be discussed at tonight's meeting that is not already on the agenda?"
Insure that priority issues are placed on the agenda first.	"Does everyone agree on the order of the things to cover for today's agenda?"
Allow members to make brief announcements.	"Does anyone have a brief announcement to make?"
Suggest a general time limit.	"We only have an hour, which gives us about ... to discuss each item on the agenda."

5. Beginning discussion of issues.

Once the meeting has been called to order and the preliminary business has been addressed, the chairperson begins the discussion of the items on the agenda. The chair introduces items that require the group to plan, make a decision, or take action. The chair is responsible for making

sure that every issue introduced is discussed by the group. It's also the chair's role to make sure all members are involved in the discussion, especially those members who have special knowledge, experiences, or points of view on a topic.

Beginning Discussion

What you should do...	What you should say...
Introduce the first agenda item.	"The first issue we will discuss is....."
Give a brief description of the topic to inform the group of the relevance of the topic.	"We need to decide..." or "A number of people have asked ..."

6. Monitoring progress.

Once discussion starts, the chair should follow the conversation and be able to summarize what has been said. When following a conversation, consider these two questions:

- 1) Has the conversation strayed from the specific agenda topic?
- 2) Has the discussion gone over the allotted time?

When the conversation strays from the agenda, the chairperson brings it back on track. When a discussion runs over its allotted time, the chair needs to tell the group that time is running out or that it has run out. The chair then summarizes the course of the discussion. It's important that the summary correctly reflect what members have said, because the group then decides what action will be taken on the issue. It may help to remember that the chair is not being rude when he or she redirects or stops a discussion, but is simply moving the meeting along.

If members are in agreement about an issue and ready to make a decision, a vote should be taken. If, however, the issue is complicated and further information needs to be gathered or sorted out, the chair can suggest that the issue be tabled and brought up again at the next meeting or that a subcommittee look into the matter further.

Often, it takes more than one meeting to fully discuss an issue. When this happens, the chair should assign some people to study the issue further and report back their findings to the group at a later time. The section "Delegation of Work" in Chapter IV, Section D (see page 45) provides more information about how to divide the workload among all group members.

Checklist for Monitoring Progress

- ✓ How much time is allotted to discuss the topic?

- ✓ Is the discussion actually addressing the issue?
- ✓ Should the discussion be interrupted and brought back on track?
- ✓ Is the discussion going over the allotted time?
- ✓ Should the discussion be continued at this time?
- ✓ Should the discussion be continued at the next meeting?

When the discussion moves away from items on the agenda, a number of things can be done to help bring members back on track.

Checklist for Staying on Track

- ✓ Discussion that's off the topic should be kept to a minimum, and the chair should step in to redirect the discussion and remind members of the main issues and the purpose of the discussion.
- ✓ Questions should be held until after the discussion. This helps ensure that the relevant details are covered and that there are few distractions.
- ✓ Interruptions to the meeting should be kept to a minimum. People should leave the room as they need to without calling for an official recess.
- ✓ Meetings should **begin and end on time**, and the time allotted for each agenda item should be followed.

Staying on Track

What you should do...	What you should say...
If the group is off track, tell them.	“We’ve gotten away from the topic...” or “Those are all good points, but we are talking about...”
Recommend the group discuss the topic later, either at the end of the meeting if there is time or at the next meeting.	“This is an interesting discussion, maybe we can bring it up at the end of the meeting or if there is not enough time then, at the next meeting.”
Summarize the points that have been made.	“Before we got off track we were talking about...” “Let me try to summarize what has already

	been said..."
If discussion has gone over the allotted time, let the group know.	"It is now... and discussion of the issue has gone longer than we intended."
Recommend an action be taken and ask the group whether they wish to continue discussion or delay further discussion until the next meeting.	"This is an interesting discussion, but in the interest of everyone's time, we need to decide whether to continue talking about the issue or wait until the next meeting to continue the discussion so that we can get to other business."

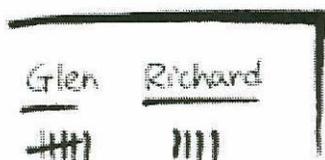
Scenario 2

Harry and Jane have recently moved to Lawrence, Kansas. They moved from Minnesota to be closer to their family. Harry used to work as a warehouse foreman and was employed by the 3M Company at the time he was injured. Jane worked as a bookkeeper and was employed by a pediatric clinic. When they arrived in town, they contacted Independence Inc., an independent living center (ILC) serving the area, to get better acquainted with Lawrence's disability community and to learn more about services available for persons with disabilities. The ILC introduced them to the New Arrivals Support Group which meets weekly. The support group introduces new consumers to the ILC and community services and helps with housing, employment, and transportation issues. Since the couple is temporarily living with her family, housing and transportation issues are not an immediate concern, but finding new employment is an urgent matter. Jane wants to find work in a doctors office, but Harry is still uncertain about what options to pursue.

As the chair of the New Arrivals Support Group, think about what the group can do to help Harry and Jane explore their options. Then, create an agenda for the next support group meeting.

7. Voting

Voting (vo' ting) - v. a formal way for people to express their preference on an issue; allows each member to have a say about the issue being considered.



Voting ensures that everyone's point-of-view is counted toward a final decision. As a decision-making body representing an organization, every member of the group is responsible for choosing decisions that will be in the best interest of the consumers they represent. Each member's input is valuable, so a vote should always be taken on actions that require a decision from the group.

Before voting, the group must first understand the issue being voted on. All points of view should be discussed so that everyone knows the positive and negative aspects of the issue.

MEETING AGENDA

Organization: New Arrivals Support Group
 Title: Regularly Scheduled Meeting
 Meeting Date: 11/30/97 Place of Meeting: Independence Inc.
 Beginning Time : 6:30 pm Ending Time: 7:45 pm
 Supporting materials were included in the meeting package.
 Bring the following to the meeting. _____
 Invited guests at the meeting are: Harry and Jane Rolls

AGENDA ITEMS	Time	Info	Discuss	Action
1. Introductions Harry and Jane Rolls	6:30	X		
2. Announcements Pot-Luck Dinner	6:35	X		
3. Approval of Minutes	6:40	X		
4. New Business Harry and Jane's story Exploring Employment/Career Options Interests/Experiences/Skills New Skills and Vocational Training Job Coaching Funding/Benefits Workers Compensation Social Security Insurance Claims Advocacy Training	6:50	X		
			X	
			X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
5. Old Business Approval of Resume Writing Workshop	7:30	X	X	X

Agenda Activities:

Time = Allotted time to talk about the topic (i.e., 8:15 - 8:30).
 Info = Material presented or discussed to inform the board.
 Discuss = Issue is up for discussion, a decision may result.

It is possible to accommodate the different views held by the group through *compromise*. Compromising means the group works together to resolve differences in opinion and is flexible

in making a decision. Group members should remember that making a good decision is not a matter of winning or losing, but a matter of considering the relevant issues before voting.

When everyone in the group agrees with a decision, this means the group reached *consensus* or that the members agreed *unanimously*. Unfortunately, consensus or unanimous opinion is hard to reach. However, good decisions can still be made even when everyone does not agree. In this situation the group reaches a *simple majority*.

This is done by calling for a *vote* to be taken. Voting begins with a member making a *motion*. A motion is a statement made out loud for everyone in the group to consider. For example, a member may say, "I move that we select Nancy to represent us at the city's next planning meeting." The motion must then be *seconded* by another person. To second a motion a second person simply says, "I second the motion." Although this person *seconds* the motion, she or he does not have to agree with the statement. Seconding a motion simply allows a vote to be taken. The chair then asks for those who support the motion to be counted, and then the chair asks for a count of those who oppose the motion. The side with the most votes determines what the group will do. This process allows the *majority opinion* of the group to direct the group's action.

Voting

What you should do	What you should say
State the motion that is being voted on.	"The group needs to decide whether.."
Open the motion up for group discussion.	"The issue is open for discussion."
Members need to make a motion to take a vote and second the motion.	To make a motion: "I move to ..." or To second a motion: "I second the motion."
If no one seconds the motion.	"No one seconded the motion, therefore, the motion drops."
Call for the votes to be counted.	"All in favor... All opposed ..."
Announce the result of the vote.	"The motion passes." Or "The motion does not pass."

8. Closing a meeting.

Meetings should end on time, even if all agenda items haven't been discussed. A member of the group can ask for a brief extension of the meeting if things can be wrapped up quickly. But before the meeting is allowed to run over time, the group needs to agree that the meeting may be extended a little beyond the scheduled time. Extending meetings should not be done regularly. People may be unable to stay late, and their time should be respected. Those issues not resolved or addressed should be considered at the following meeting or assigned to a subcommittee to work on for the next meeting. As the chair prepares to end the meeting, she or he should remind

members of the tasks that need to be done by the next meeting and should remind people of what they have accomplished at the present meeting.

Closing the Meeting

What you should do...	What you should say...
Remind the group that the meeting is about over and they should try to wrap-up the discussion	"It is almost 6 o'clock and we should be winding things down."
Review the meeting's key points.	"During tonight's meeting, we've discussed...and decided to ..."
Remind members who are responsible to do things by next meeting.	"... agreed to work on ... and... will to help with the project."
Answer any questions that members may have.	"Does anyone have questions about what was discussed at our meeting?"
If some things were not discussed, recommend that unfinished business be dealt with at the next meeting.	"We were not able to discuss ... tonight, we will discuss it at the next meeting."
Ask if other items should go on the agenda for next time.	"Are there other items that should go on the agenda for the next meeting?"
After business has been taken care of, ask for a motion to adjourn and close the meeting.	"We've finished our business for this meeting, is there a motion to adjourn?"

E. What Is a Successful Meeting?

Ideally, meetings accomplish their purpose in a timely manner, and members leave knowing their contributions were worthwhile. Members also know what tasks they must complete by the next meeting. A number of factors contribute to making meetings successful.

- Members know and are comfortable with each other.
- Agendas are written and sent to members before the meeting.
- Members arrive prepared.
- Members actively participate.
- Discussions follow the agenda.
- The meeting closes with an outline of the group's accomplishments and notes to carryover

business to the next meeting.

- Members are reminded of their tasks to be done for the next meeting.

F. Evaluating a Meeting

Now that the planning is over and the meeting has happened, how did things go? To make this assessment, it helps to consider a few factors. The following section provides several things to consider. As you think about how your meeting stacked up in each of these areas, you will find out which things went well and which caused problems. Based on what you find, you can try to plan for a better meeting the next time. Below are some evaluative questions and troubleshooting tips to help future meetings be more successful.

- Did all members attend the meeting?
- Did members respect one another and each person's opinion? . Was the space comfortable for conducting business?
- Did the meeting begin and end on time?
- Was the agenda organized?
- Did the chair guide the meeting?
- Did the meeting run smoothly?
- Were members prepared for discussion?
- Did the discussion follow the agenda?
- Was the conversation focused?
- Was information clearly presented and well-organized?
- Did the members function like a team?
- Was the discussion respectful and did all members offer their opinion?
- Were controversial matters handled carefully?
- Were printed materials easy to read and understand?

III. Getting Things Done

A. Problem Solving

PROBLEM SOLVING - The activities involved in looking at a situation that ends in the *generation* of possible solutions for the problem, the *implementation* of a single solution, and

evaluation of how the solution worked.

Every group finds itself in a situation where the members are not happy and would like to see changes address their concerns. For example, one member may think that the stores in the community are not accessible enough for wheelchair users, while another member may believe that the lack of affordable and accessible transportation prevents good workers from getting and holding down jobs.

Naturally, as a group member you will ask yourself: "How can I really solve this problem for the best possible outcome?" or, "How will I know if my effort, and the group's efforts were successful?" Before reading about the nuts and bolts of this process, it may help to think of the problem-solving process as a funnel. When you start to solve a problem, you are at the mouth or top of the funnel. Here the problem is mixed up with many other factors. Some factors may make the problem worse and confusing, while others may actually improve the situation.

As the group works its way toward a solution, it moves from the widest part at the funnel's opening down to where the funnel narrows. When the group narrows its options, some potential solutions to the problem may become more obvious. As the group moves down the funnel, it keeps narrowing the scope of the problem down to a point where the group can shrink the issue to a manageable size. This is important because if the problem is too large and complex, realistic and workable solutions will be difficult to identify and carry out.

For example, if a community had curbscuts that were in place but out of date with the current ADA accessibility standards, it might be unreasonable to ask the city to replace and update all the ramps at once because of the high costs involved. However, it might be reasonable to analyze which ramps have the most wheelchair traffic and prioritize them for the earliest modifications. This simple example showed that there are multiple ways to solve any problem. The most complex solution is not always the best one.

Over the next several pages you will learn how to be a problem solver. Instead of having problems be barriers to reaching your goals, you can learn to apply strategies which will help you become more successful. This section will cover the following issues listed below:

- Identify the problem
- Generate possible solutions
- Sort through the solutions
- Evaluate possible solutions (with possible benefits or limitations)
- Put the solution into action
- Evaluate the results of the solution

1. Identify the problem.

Before you can solve a problem that affects people in your community you have to:

- (1) Define the problem.
- (2) Evaluate the relevant issues.

To *define* the problem, the group needs to be able to fully answer the following questions:

What is the problem?

The group's answer should address how long the problem has existed, how it evolved, and what factors contribute to the issue. If it is a complex problem, how can it be broken down into easy-to-understand issues to be addressed. *

** For example, if consumers are dissatisfied with the city's transportation service, what is really the problem? Is it that the bus does not run on schedule? Is it because personnel are not courteous, or do not load and unload wheelchair users in a safe manner? or, Is it too expensive? All of these may be part of the overall problem, but each could be analyzed individually.*

Why is this a problem?

This answer should attempt to identify more fully the nature of the problem. For example, is something happening when it should not be happening? Or is it not happening enough? Or is it something that is inconsistent when it should be consistent? Does it happen to some people but not others? Under what conditions does it happen and where?

Who is affected?

This answer should list everyone who is affected by the present situation, those who are harmed, or likely to be harmed by the situation, as well as those who may benefit from the situation.

Here are two helpful questions that will help you figure how to tackle the problem you are working to solve.

What areas can you make changes in with respect to this issue?

What areas are beyond your control in trying to change this issue?

2. Generate possible solutions.

Before a group can come up with solutions, it must consider a number of factors. It should be able to answer the following questions about the problem:

- Who is affected by the problem and in what ways?
- What is known about the problem?
- Is this information accurate?

- Is the problem new or has it occurred in the past? If it has occurred in the past, how often?
- What would happen if nothing were done about the problem?
- Are there established procedures that already address the problem?
- Are other issues related to the problem?
- Who has the authority to make a decision on the matter?
- What are the views of those who do not consider this issue a problem?
- How can these views be positively influenced towards your side?

When these questions have been discussed and answered, the group needs to come up with possible solutions. In this early stage, the group's members need to be as creative as possible and think about as many ways to deal with the problem as they can. The point is not to consider only those options that will solve the problem, but also to consider many different ways to address it. Listed below are three approaches (brainstorming, surveys, and discussion groups) that can be used to come up with potential solutions to your problems:

A. Brainstorming -- In this approach, participants are encouraged to "think out loud" and spontaneously come up with as many ideas as possible in an attempt to solve a problem. The ideas are not evaluated until the brainstorming session is over and the group has a list of all the ideas.

Key Elements of Brainstorming

One person records all the ideas that come up during the session. He or she can use a chalkboard or large sheets of paper hung on the wall for the group to see. Both methods allow the group to look at the ideas as they come up. Taping the session is another way to capture the ideas.

- Say any ideas or solutions that come to mind.
- All ideas are good. The goal is to produce as many ideas as possible. Evaluation of the ideas comes later.
- Allot a specific amount of time for brainstorming.
- The group should review the list and select the best ideas.

B. Surveys -- Sometimes finding a solution involves the broader community. Surveys help gather information from a group of people. Surveys enable people to respond to a number of questions. Their answers can be open-ended, meaning that you ask for their explanation of the answer; questions can also be listed in multiple-choice fashion; or even be asked in such a way as to require a yes or no answer. Surveys gather the views of many different people and provides additional information when searching for solutions to a problem. It should be noted that surveys are only as representative as those who are filling them out and returning them. For example, if you sent out a survey to all consumers of an ILC and they were mostly filled out by people with

physical disabilities, and you were interested in adding new services for people with acquired brain injuries, you would want to weigh this factor when reviewing the surveys.

C. Discussion groups -- Another technique used to identify possible solutions is to gather together a small group of people who are directly involved or informed about the problem to discuss their views and ideas. This meeting will allow participants to think through the issues and produce a list of potential solutions. This process focuses on the issues involved, not the personalities of the participants.

After you have generated a good number of potential solutions using one of the strategies above, or perhaps other strategies, you will want to spend some time sorting through the potential solutions and evaluating them.

3. Sorting and evaluating potential solutions.

Now that you have identified all these possible solutions, how do you decide which ones are best for you and your organization. This section offers several standards for consideration of each of the potential solutions.

Checklist for Sorting Through Solutions

Feasible -- Is the solution realistic? Any proposed solution should consider not only the immediate goals, but also the long-term effects. Whose assistance is needed in order to bring about the potential solution? Will this solution step on people's toes? Is there money in the budget to pay for the needed changes? Is it clear what actions need to be taken? Have the key players in the process made a commitment to be involved?

Acceptable -- Decide what results are acceptable and what are NOT acceptable to you personally and to those of your organization. Consider not only your point of view, but also the view of other groups who also are interested in the outcome. Additionally, look at whether the solution will be acceptable to others involved in implementing the solution (e.g., government agencies, non-profit agencies, businesses). If the answer is no, how can you get these change agents "on board" with you?

Supportable -- Will the solution be supported by the group you represent as well as by the public? Are there other disability support groups or organizations that will sign on and support your chosen solution for this problem? Is it something in their best interest as well? Finally, after weighing all of the positive and negative factors, pause and reflect whether the risk is worth the gains you might receive.

Sustainable -- Is the solution you select likely to resolve the identified problem over the long run? For example, if you are needing rides for support group members to get to meetings on a regular basis and are finding a solution to transportation problems, will the solution you come up with just be a "band-aid" or will you identify an approach that allows for regular and dependable transportation to and from the support group meetings over the long haul?

Below is a checklist that provides some questions for reflection when you are determining the best solution for your identified problem.

Checklist for Evaluating Possible Solutions

- ✓ Does the solution answer the original problem?
- ✓ What are the side-effects or limitations of the solution?
- ✓ How will the solution affect existing practices?
- ✓ Who are the "change agents" responsible for taking action?
- ✓ Is the timetable of the action plan achievable?
- ✓ Is the solution likely to lead to long-term results?
- ✓ Will the solution "win the battle but lose the war"?
- ✓ Have you consulted other consumers or experts about your solution? Were they supportive of it?
- ✓ Is the solution still the best option?

As you are sorting out your potential solutions, evaluate them as to their projected effectiveness to address the problem you have identified. Again, the list below provides several standards from which to judge the likelihood that your solution will resolve your identified problem.

Appropriate -- Is it acceptable to use this solution? Does the solution match with the circumstance or objectives? Are there ethical issues that need to be considered?

Adequate -- Considering the scope of the problem, does the solution make a difference in addressing the problem you have identified? Will those working with you to solve this problem feel they have been successful if this solution is taken, or will they be discouraged because it was not demanding enough or it was not carried out in a timely fashion?

Effective -- Will this alternative reach the stated objective? What is the probability of obtaining positive results?

Efficient -- Are the benefits worth the cost of money, time, and resources? Would it be beneficial to combine any of the alternatives?

Side effects -- What are the positive and negative aspects of the alternatives? Do any of the alternatives create new problems?

4. Identify limitations in reaching a solution.

Every solution has pluses and minuses. The pluses are easy to see, but the group should also consider the negative side to each solution. On a RARE occasion, a single solution might be a "Magic Bullet" to solve a problem (e.g., the Salk Vaccine to cure polio), but most likely you will want to reflect on the possible limitations of your solution. To assist you, we have developed the following list of potential limitations that may restrict the impact a solution can have:

- **Technical limitations** -- a lack of equipment or knowledge.

- **Legal restrictions** -- the idea conflicts with federal, state, or local laws or the rules that govern an organization.
- **Economic considerations** -- the solution may cost too much.
- **Special interests** -- presence and influence of special interest groups who have influence or power in a group or community that may oppose the solution and fight it.
- **Human resources** -- There may not be enough time or talent to get the job done; or people may not be organized or motivated enough to work to implement the selected solutions.
- **Political limitations** -- People in or running for government office may not like the idea.

5. Put the solution into action.

Once a solution has been selected, it must be put into action before the group can see any results. When starting, it helps to break the goal down into several small steps. The following list will assist you in accomplishing your goal.

- Identify the larger goal in implementing your solution and decide what smaller steps must be done to achieve this goal.
- Establish a time line of when each step should be accomplished.
- List any resources of time, money, and people that will be needed to accomplish the goal. Involve those people who should be included in the process right from the very start.
- Recognize and identify any problems that may be encountered during the process and try to anticipate how these problems should be dealt with.
- Meet with your "team members" regularly to discuss what actions have been taken and the results of the actions.
- Revise goals and/or create new ones to achieve your goals.

6. Evaluate the results of the solution.

The following questions will help a group decide if it is reaching its problem-solving goal:

Checklist for Evaluating Results

- ✓ Are group members following through on assignments to reach your stated goals?
- ✓ Is information being provided to all those interested in and affected by the outcomes?

- ✓ Are you receiving any word from other consumers or professionals that your actions to implement then selected solutions are working?
- ✓ Is this information reported back to you on a timely basis?
- ✓ Is the solution you are implementing making any difference in addressing the problem you have identified?

B. Decision Making



DECISION MAKING - The process by which *choices are made* at each step of the problem-solving process.

As the group moves toward solving a problem, it must make decisions. They must decide which solutions are possible and which may be eliminated from consideration. You want the process to go smoothly. You also want each member to feel like he or she played a part in the final decision. To do this, it's important to consider a number of issues and follow a few rules. This section lists what activities should go into the decision-making process.

- **Gather information:** Good decisions are made when decision-makers are well informed. If the group does not have all information relevant to its concern, it should gather more information. This information should be objective, meaning that it should be based on fact, not simply on opinions.
- **Show initiative:** The person or group who begins the decision-making process should take responsibility for informing the group about the issues involved and assure that the process reaches a conclusion.
- **Be selective:** The available information may be extensive. However, few problems allow enough time to gather all information that is available. Decide what information is most valuable to your group and make the best decision you can with what you have gathered. Remember, don't get so distracted by the details that you lose focus.
- **Be comprehensive:** Consider all important alternatives before making a final decision. Think about the advantages and disadvantages for each option. Decide which option serves the larger goal.
- **Be pro-active:** Good decisions mean actively making changes. However, changes you choose to make may also create changes in other programs, policies, or activities. Therefore, anticipate what changes may occur as a result of doing things differently. Decide whether the unanticipated changes are worth the risk.
- **Be responsive:** Decisions respond to current needs and take advantage of present

opportunities. Make sure that the actions match today's concerns.

- **Future options:** Consider the long-term impact of the decision and whether that matches where the group wants to be going.
- **Be flexible:** Be willing to try a new and different approach, especially if circumstances change.

Basic Ground Rules for Making Good Decisions

Good decisions are made when the group works together. Every individual in a group shares the responsibility of making an informed decision. Informed decisions are made by considering all the *facts* and *sides* of an issue. This can only be done when all sides have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Following is a list of things to keep in mind to assure all sides are heard.

Checklist for Making Decisions

- ✓ Keep a fair and open mind when evaluating the issues.
- ✓ Discuss the issue openly with the group.
- ✓ Respect all opinions expressed in the group.
- ✓ Define the problem specifically before deciding on its solution.
- ✓ Determine what result is wanted before discussing the solution.
- ✓ Gather and organize all relevant data -- are there hidden issues?
- ✓ Ensure that all interested parties have a voice in the process.
- ✓ Avoid extreme positions -- preserve the integrity of the group.
- ✓ Respect and encourage new ideas and perspectives.



C. Getting Along

People get involved and stay involved in groups that promote respect among the members. Groups that value respect and who demonstrate this respect during meetings create an environment where members feel free to voice their opinions. The friendly atmosphere of these groups often allow members to get more done. The chair should work to create this type of positive environment. The

following section outlines how you can work toward the goal of getting along:

1. Create a positive meeting environment.

- Members know one another.
- Members prepare for meetings by reading the agenda and becoming familiar with the issues.
- Members share their opinions whether they are in agreement with the group or not.
- Members follow rules of order.

2. Facilitate members' involvement.

- Always introduce new members or invited guests to the group.
- Have members wear name tags especially when members do not know each other or have difficulty remembering names.
- During discussions, draw people who may not be talking into the conversation. Ask for their opinion on a specific topic.
- After a meeting, ask the more reserved members if they would like a chance to talk more in the next meeting.

3. Maintain good relations.

- All members should be encouraged to participate in problem solving, decision making, and task completion.
- Group success depends upon a sense of togetherness. Productive groups tend to be smaller (6-8 people) and have stable membership. Constant changes in the membership affect how well people work together.
- Members should have all the information regarding the group's activities. Morale is enhanced when everyone knows what is going on.
- Dissenting opinions are valued. Everyone won't always agree, but a variety of ideas expand the possibilities and enhances the outcomes.
- Effective groups are active, they meet deadlines and make decisions.
- Full participation requires that members be involved and that they speak up. One person cannot run the show; all members are needed to be successful.
- Don't monopolize the floor on issues.
- Members should be recognized for their time and hard work.
- Think before speaking. An idea can be conveyed in a number of ways. Be sure to voice your reservations, concerns, and even disagreements, but do so without directly

challenging someone.

- When speaking about a topic, address the issue at hand.
- Avoid absolutes. Things can be seen in more than one way. Allowing room for various viewpoints keeps the discussion going and builds trust.
- Present facts over opinion. Everyone has an opinion, but facts are more credible and harder to dispute. Recognize though that everyone in the group is entitled to their opinion.
- Respect commonly held beliefs. Some widely held beliefs may seem to go against reason, but don't call these beliefs foolish. Try to work around common misconceptions by stating facts rather than beliefs.
- Do not disagree simply to make a point. Disagreements are healthy, but consider other points of view and be open to other ideas. Those who always disagree lose respect. Save your objections for those issues you feel strongly about. Moderation is the key.
- Keep an open mind. Not everyone will agree with you. Be considerate of other opinions and points of view.
- Never assume you know how others feel, and don't tell them how they should feel. You can tell others how you feel about an issue and suggest what you would like to be done about it, but do not assume your feelings represent someone else's opinion.

D. Delegation of Work

No single person can nor should be expected to complete a project alone. The tasks should be broken down into manageable pieces and the work divided among a number of people. It is the responsibility of the chair to delegate tasks to people whose energy and talents will help get the project done. Anyone interested in being involved with a project should volunteer their help. The following guidelines promote the delegation of work:

- **Define the task.** Decide what needs to be done.
- **Identify responsibility.** Identify who should be responsible for the work. Think about who is interested in the issue, who is motivated, and who has the skills.
- **Consult the group.** The decision of whom to involve should be made with the group's cooperation. No one should be imposed upon. Someone in the group may have ideas about others who might be willing to help. Thinking carefully about who will do the work increases the likelihood that those involved will be able to follow-through with their duties.



- **Develop a short list.** Not all members may be able, interested, or willing to get involved with a particular task. Consider who else to call upon for critical assignments or in an emergency.
- **Don't overload.** Members should be encouraged to take on only those tasks they can realistically complete.
- **Set up manageable tasks.** The work to be done should be broken down into small, manageable pieces and assigned to those who will be involved in the process.
- **Set deadlines.** Set specific goals and be sure that people know about their assignments.
- **Follow-up.** Arrange times to have people report on their progress.
- **Recognize hard work.** Publicly thank people for their hard work, especially for projects that have been successful and that were completed on time.

IV. Independent Living and Advocacy

The history of the Independent Living Movement is based upon the principle of consumer control. The term "consumer" is a term used by many people with disabilities to refer to themselves as part of the buying and spending public that is able to choose and use services that most satisfy their needs and desires. This is important because as a buyer of services you also have rights and don't have to accept what is routinely given to you without comment. Consumers have rights and are able to buy what they like. A consumer control philosophy enables people who use community, social, or legal services to be directly involved in making the decisions that affect their lives.

In the early 1960s and 1970s, many disability groups were frustrated with the services people with disabilities received. They were also angry about the discrimination that still existed in many communities against people with disabilities. So they decided to organize a coalition or group of people with diverse backgrounds and even disabilities around the core concerns that affected their lives. They organized and held meetings to find ways that all could work together to solve common problems and address their needs and the needs of other people with disabilities. They worked hard and together they figured out ways their needs could be met. The process helped to teach the group about each others particular needs. More importantly, the value of jointly advocating for common concerns increased the cohesiveness of the group despite their coming from diverse backgrounds.

Advocacy is a new idea to some, yet most of us have been advocates in one form or another at times. When we promote a new idea for making services better for us, we are advocating to cause a change in the way services are delivered to us and others with similar needs. We have rights as a consumer of services and we choose to exercise our rights through advocacy to improve them. Also, when a person chooses not to remain passive in a meeting and decides to speak-up and contribute ideas to the discussion, words then begin to have a new power, contributing to understanding and educating others about what is important to that person.

Actions, coupled with consideration of others needs, lead to meaningful solutions. However, before one is able to advocate successfully, one must have self-determination, meaning that they act with purpose and responsibly in making their own choices and make decisions free from other's undue influences. This is important because quite often people with disabilities are treated as if they can't make good decisions or they don't know what is best for them. Being self-determined communicates personal responsibility for consequences that follow the decision. Listed below are some common forms of advocacy.

- **Advocacy:** Protecting the rights of people by promoting more choices and by encouraging the formation of needed service or resources for people that need them to live independently.
- **Self-Advocacy:** Educating and informing people of their civil or human rights and to promote their protection in all choices.
- **Individual advocacy:** Protecting your own rights or assisting others in protecting theirs, holding to the ideal that individual rights must be preserved in society.
- **Systems advocacy:** Protecting the rights of a group of people by promoting a change within a bureaucracy or organization.
- **Legislative advocacy:** Promoting the passage of legislation or interpreting administrative rulings on behalf of a group.

Forming a group to respond to all forms of advocacy concerns is a real challenge. Successful efforts require that a comprehensive plan be developed and adopted that takes into account the contributions made by all to draft a strategy the majority can support. In doing so, decisions must be made that don't always have complete agreement and some members are not always happy. It is therefore very important that leaders emerge and are willing to take actions to hold the working group focused on the larger ideals and purpose behind the steps being taken to accomplish their goal. Leaders work closely with others, assign responsibilities, and monitor progress regularly. In a nutshell, the expansion and improvement of community services we enjoy today as a person with a disability, resulted out of people working together and advocating to decision-makers to modify their policies and practices and better serve or accommodate consumers with disabilities.

A. Independent Living Resource Centers

Ideas that resulted from these meetings spurred a number of service delivery centers to open. These centers, known as independent living centers, or ILCs, were run by and for people with disabilities. The centers had a major goal: to maximize the overall independence of all people with disabilities. The centers' work improved people's physical independence and mobility by providing or advocating for accessible public transportation or by adapting their homes to make them safer and easier to move around in. They helped them to get jobs and become economically self-sufficient. By finding or setting up housing within a community, they made it possible for people to become part of a neighborhood and a community. These centers also had staff who fought for the rights of people with disabilities to make decisions about how they would live their lives.

In support of this consumer-focused approach, the federal government passed a law that required the majority of the people who ran or worked in these centers to be people with disabilities. By the late 1970s, hundreds of centers opened nationwide; today the United States has more than 400 centers. This push for greater independence for people with disabilities greatly influenced not only how services were delivered to them, but also how social service and health professionals thought about and treated their clients who had a disability. Throughout the world, these professionals started to see people with disabilities not as people who needed to be "fixed" or treated like children, but as adults who could make decisions about their lives and who could ask for services that better met their needs.

Funding for ILCs comes from federal, state, and private sources. In 1978, through an amendment to the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Congress authorized the start of a national program to promote independent living for people with severe disabilities. The program allots grants to centers whose efforts promote this principle. All those centers who receive funding are required to provide core services covering advocacy, peer counseling, information and referral, and training in independent living skills. Many centers also offer other services like keeping a registry of affordable and accessible housing options in their communities; where to find community transportation services; how to get attendant care training and referrals to assistants that help with personal, academic or recreational needs, such as note-taking or interpreting sign language; how to qualify for financial supports and other benefits; and how to participate in community-wide education projects that teach other residents about people with disabilities.

B. Core Independent Living Services

Described below are the basic services that all ILCs provide to consumers living in their community. They are somewhat broad definitions, and thus allow for much flexibility.

- **Advocacy** - This broadly encompasses all the previous definitions, protecting the human and civil rights of consumers with disabilities, working for systemic change on how people with disability are viewed by society, and how services are delivered to them. Thus, ILCs are locally-based consumer organizations that monitor local, state, and national disability-related policy decisions affecting their local community and all people with disabilities. Staying informed of possible changes in laws or how services are provided is very demanding work and centers need to be ready to provide needed information when and where ideas are first being discussed. The influence they provide to policy discussions helps assure that changes or potential solutions are acceptable to people with disabilities. Thus, advocacy skills are taught and practiced. ILCs are interested in helping all consumers find answers to their problems by allowing individuals to develop the necessary skills that enable them to have a voice in the solutions.
- **Peer Counseling** - Peer counselors are people with disabilities who use their own successful experiences to assist others to understand and cope with their disability. Peer counselors have achieved a desired level of independence, they are involved in their communities, and they share their knowledge and experiences with others. Peer counselors help other consumers to become assertive advocates for themselves; they teach problem-solving skills and lend emotional support and guidance. They act as

models for others to learn from and in return give back to ILCs.

- **Information and Referral** - ILCs provide problem-solving information on many issues ranging from attendant care and housing options, to job opportunities. Centers also offer referral sources for everyday problems like where to get a wheelchair repaired or where to seek funding for adaptive equipment. ILCs seek to integrate consumers into existing community resources and try not to duplicate community services. That is why a referral is important to teach other organizations that people with disabilities don't need or want separate services, but to be included into what the community already offers to all its citizens.
- **Independent Living Skills Training** - ILCs offer educational programs individually and in groups to give people the information they need to be more self-reliant and to lead productive lives at home and in the community. These programs teach such life skills as how to manage money and a household, how to hire and work with personal assistants in their homes, how to get a job, and how to communicate their ideas with others.

Challenges Affecting People with Disabilities

The following are important issues that require continued consumer advocate support and participation. Advocates have played an important role in protecting these laws and rights and must be vigilant in the future.

- Equal employment opportunities.
- Supportive employment - Job training assistance. 0 Open and equal access to public places.
- Free, equal, and non-segregated public education. 0 The right to have, adopt, and raise children.
- Equal access to financial opportunities and risk.
- Full participation in public events.

C. Independent Living Values

People in the independent living movement share a common set of beliefs or values about how people with disabilities must be treated and how they can expect to live their lives. These values guide the work done at ILCs nationwide and unite the staffs around common goals. The following core beliefs, or basic values, provide the foundation of the independent living movement:

- **Consumer Control** - People with disabilities plan and make the decisions about the services they receive. Because ILCs are controlled by consumers, these centers can speak about the services consumers need and want.

- **Cross Disability** - The experience of having a disability unites people in their common goals to be self-reliant and independent. When they work together, people with disabilities have a stronger voice than if they were grouped or divided by their various disabilities. Community service programs must also integrate their programs and not separate consumer services based on disability.
- **Equal Access** - People with disabilities should have a voice in the design and delivery of all community service programs that are open to all citizens. In the spirit of the ADA, these programs must advance independence for people with all forms of disability, promote self-help, choice, dignity, personal responsibility, and equal access to the nations latest technological advances that may improve one's quality of life.

D. Orienting Points of View of Disability

Having a disability is often a matter of how one is perceived by society. An individual's ability to live independently and do what is required to care for themselves or provide for their needs are described as activities of daily living. When these living functions are not able to be performed, it is often said the person has a disability. A label is placed on the person and the label generally conveys a message that one's performance is impaired or limited in a particular way. This labeling often means that the person or "patient" has a problem and it must be corrected if "normal" life is going to be restored. For some professionals, this point of view guides the way they see people with disability.

Understanding what occurs when labels are given to people is very important. A person with limited mobility due to injury--say he received a head injury in an auto accident--may be labeled by a doctor as a patient with a problem that must be "cured." The doctor sees the patient's problem as something he can cure. The same person, on the other hand, may be seen as a "client" by a rehabilitation professional. In this case, the rehab professional may want to "maximize running ability" because that is what rehabilitation specialists do. In both cases, the labels they place and the expectations they set are determined by a professional who views the world from their professional point-of-view.

Consider, on the other hand, a person who is legally blind and cannot drive an automobile, but is able to read the newspaper with the aide of a magnifying glass. One might say that a visual impairment may be a disability for driving, and but not for reading. However, if science develops a visual aid that allows a legally blind person to drive, then it may be said that some visual impairments are only a limitation if one is not allowed to use an assistive device. The disability label is no longer valid. Living in a society that tends to label people, and then use those given labels to pass judgments, is the reason why so many people develop preconceived ideas about people. Quite often a "cure" or "maximum running ability" are not as important as living well or having a high quality of life. For most people with a disability, all that it takes is finding the right technology to help a change in the environment we live in.

The following table outlines how traditional points of view frame the ideas of disability. These points-of-view or "models" are:

- *The Medical Model*

- *The Rehabilitation Model*
- *The Independent Living Model*

Study how each describe the "problem," where it comes from, the solution, who is in control of the decisions, and the ultimate goal.

E. Views of Disability

	Orientation		
	Medical	Rehabilitation	Independent Living
The Problem	Physical, mental, emotional impairment	Because of the disability, the person lacks the vocational skills	Too much dependence on medical professionals, family, friends, to get needs met.
Origins of Problem	The disability	Individual	The environment—physical and attitudinal—the rehab process.
Solutions of Problem	Emphasis on cures with drugs, surgeries, invasive treatment.	Vocational Rehab Services, Sheltered Workshops, Physical Therapist, Adaptive Technology	Mutual support, Self-help, Peer Counseling, Advocacy, Consumer Control, Removal of Barriers
Social Role of Person	Medical Patient	Rehabilitation Client	Consumer of Services
Who is in Control	Doctors, Medical Schools, Medical Suppliers, Drug Co.	Funding Sources, Insurance Co., Agencies, Charities, Government	The Consumer
Desired Goals	A Cure	Maximum Activities of Daily Living, Normal Gainful Employment.	Living independently in the community, on own terms.

F. Lessons Learned: Applied Independent Living Philosophy

Disability advocacy fights for the rights of people with disabilities and promotes consumer control. It encourages community supports for consumers who want to live independently within the regular community. That remains a real challenge for many. For many people with disabilities, living outside medical institutions or group living arrangements only requires a low level of assisted living. In some cases, group living arrangements require a high level of supportive services so staff help is brought into the home. Some neighborhoods have organized campaigns restricting these types of living options to certain areas of the city. To the disability community, this is a form of discrimination and unfairness. Many neighborhoods just don't understand people with disabilities and their needs. They fear people with disabilities will affect the value of their property. People with disabilities have a right to make their homes anywhere. The role of disability advocates is to educate and influence this type of debate at the local level. A consumer who understands fair housing laws and is able to point out the unfairness of some actions will have some success winning over discrimination.

Unfortunately, this type of discussion often occurs suddenly and, quite often, people with disabilities are caught unprepared to make a response. Or even worse, people with disabilities expect some outside advocacy organization to do the necessary work to stop this type of action. People with disabilities must remain organized and monitor what is going on locally. Independent living centers teach that the consumer must take on the responsibility to protect his rights wherever they are being challenged.

A grassroots movement to advocate for the rights of those with disabilities has grown worldwide. In the United States, this movement has successfully advocated for the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the Air Carriers Access Act, the Civil Rights Restoration Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992. Consumers with disabilities have compiled a fine record of legislative wins. However, they were not won with the actions of one lone individual, but rather with a corps of committed coalitions, each doing their part and working intelligently toward a common purpose.

Consumer control has been a key to the movement's success. Consumers have met with advocates, law makers, and each other to make the decisions and shape the policies that affects them and fought for the right actions to become laws. They argued effectively that society and the environment is what needs fixing, not people with disabilities. They proved again, that abilities and accommodations empower groups and individuals to achieve their goals.

G. Laws Protecting People With Disabilities

The following are highlights of significant achievements reached by people with disabilities advocating and working together toward a common goal. They are achievements of solving problems by planning action steps and following a goal-oriented strategy.

- **The Civil Rights Act of 1964.** Prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, and gender. It prohibited discrimination in the areas of private employment, public accommodations, and programs or activities funded by the federal government. This law did not include disabilities, but served as a model for later disability rights legislation.

- **The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968.** Established access standards for federal buildings. Unfortunately, this requirement was symbolic and compliance was voluntary.
- **The Rehabilitation Act of 1973.** Recognized that all people with disabilities belong to a "class" or group regardless of the type of disability. Discrimination was seen as a root cause of isolation, segregation, and loss of full citizenship. Thus, the problem of how people with disabilities were treated was seen as a problem with society, not as a problem with those who have disabilities.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1975 (PL-142).** This public law extended to children with disabilities and mandated that they have access to a free, appropriate, and public education. The educational act, now known as IDEA, provides that these efforts be provided in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the child.
- **Issuance of Section 504 of the Rehab Act (1977).** Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it sought to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. It did not address private employment or public accommodations, but organizations and institutions that received federal dollars were required to comply with federal law. Thus, it did put more pressure on political institutions to create more equal opportunities and to help create more tolerant communities that integrated people with disabilities into everyday lives.
- **Air Carrier Act of 1986.** Prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities in air travel.
- **Handicapped Children's Protection Act of 1986.** Provided fees for lawyers representing children with disabilities in enforcement actions.
- **Fair Housing Act of 1988.** Amended the 1968 law by making it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities in the selling and renting of public and private housing. Required landlords to allow tenants to modify the space to make it accessible, required new multi-family housing to have basic accessibility features, and made zoning discrimination practices illegal.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act 1990.** The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment; public accommodations; activities of the federal, state, and local governments; public and private transportation; and telecommunication services.