

Advocacy skills (part 2)

1. **Fear, guilt and overwhelm** can hold you back. You might feel scared about speaking up; you might feel guilty for something you have or haven't done; you might feel overwhelmed at the enormity of the things that you want to change. Remember that no one can do it all. Be kind to yourself, take it step by step and do what you can.
2. **Working in partnership** strengthens relationships so issues can be resolved quickly and amicably in future.
3. **Focus on the bigger picture** and keep returning to this. For example, "I'd like my brother to live pain free" is ultimately what you're looking to achieve by requesting that he has a dentist appointment soon. The bigger picture is often hard to argue with.
4. **Don't agree to anything you feel uncomfortable with.** Ask for more information. Ask for time to think about it, if it's not an emergency.
5. **Think about the language you use.** "My sister has put on weight since coming here" might make people feel defensive. Saying "I'm concerned about my sister's weight because of her diabetes" focuses on the problem itself. Stock phrases can help, such as: "Can you show/tell me how you arrived at this?"; "That sounds interesting, tell me more"; "How can we..." help people respond more openly.