



# Moorpark College ACCESS

## Self-Advocacy



(Adapted from [www.going-to-college.org](http://www.going-to-college.org))

### Overview

**Self-advocacy** means speaking up for yourself and communicating what you need to others. It involves knowing your strengths and weaknesses, knowing what your rights are and effectively communicating through speaking and listening.

These advocacy skills are needed in many aspects of life (i.e., in school with your teachers, at home with your family, at work with your boss and co-workers, and with your friends). Advocacy skills are equally important in college. Being a self-advocate does not mean that you will always get what you want. However, many times, effective communication does change the behavior of others.

### Effective Communication:

Self-advocacy involves effective communication. Using assertive communication to advocate for our wants and needs can help us achieve our goals, help us feel good about ourselves, develop positive relationships with others built on respect, and support our decision-making abilities.

#### There are three types of communication:

- Passive communicators never stand up for what they want or need and are often afraid of hurting others' feelings or being rejected.
- Aggressive communicators, on the other hand, may be impulsive, bold, and overbearing. They may even include sarcastic or belittling comments to communicate.
- Assertive communicators express both positive and negative thoughts and ideas in a clear, direct way, without stepping on anyone's toes. Effective self-advocacy involves assertive communication.

#### How to communicate assertively:

- Use "I" statements and consider the feelings of others.
- Be conscious of your tone of voice. Be firm and calm but nice.
- Stick to the facts.
- Be respectful of others' opinions and feelings.
- Use appropriate body language such as making eye contact, facing the individual you are talking with, and having a pleasant but serious facial expression.
- Listen to the individual you are talking with about their opinions or feelings.

### What are your rights?

As an individual with a disability, you are protected under three laws. It is important to know your rights in order to ask for what you want and require.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the law stating that students with disabilities in high school have the right to a free and appropriate education where you will get appropriate special education services.

In college, qualified students with disabilities are eligible for service and are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. There are no special education classes in college, but students with disabilities can receive accommodations. Accommodations are modifications or adjustments to help you perform tasks. For example, one type of accommodation in college is receiving extended time on exams.

### For More Information:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

<https://bit.ly/2MPmLEc>

U.S. Department of Education

<https://bit.ly/2r2XzSB>

Spotlight on Section 504

<https://bit.ly/2C9EaT0>