

Contraception Self-Advocacy Brainstorm

The purpose of this activity is for young people to understand the concept of self-advocacy in healthcare settings and how to practice it when it comes to their contraceptive needs. This can be added on to your existing contraceptive methods lesson plan.

TOOLS AVAILABLE TO EDUCATORS

To explain the concept of self-advocacy, check out these tools on our website:

- Self-advocacy primer + video
 - Advocating for your Contraceptive Needs infographic
-

HOW THE ACTIVITY WORKS

After having reviewed contraceptive methods, the facilitator will introduce the concept of self-advocacy. Explain that **self-advocacy** is the practice of speaking up for yourself and your needs and wishes. Explain that, in healthcare settings, this means communicating clearly with your healthcare provider to ensure that your concerns are addressed, your questions are answered, and you leave your appointment feeling informed and good about the decisions you made. (Depending on the developmental stage of the young people you are teaching, you can bring up concepts like medical bias, discrimination, and knowing your rights.)

The facilitator will then lead the participants into this brainstorm activity. Participants will have time (around 5 minutes) to think of all the ways that they can practice self-advocacy around their contraceptive needs. This can be done in many ways, for example:

- Participants (individually or in teams) write their ideas on sticky notes (one sticky note per idea), then place all the sticky notes on a large sheet of paper, whiteboard, wall, canvas, or other surface.
- For virtual learning, the facilitator can utilize a Jamboard or other virtual whiteboard for students to place sticky notes and/or text boxes with ideas.

If participants are having difficulty in brainstorming, the facilitator can give some example ideas, such as “do your research before your appointment,” “tell your provider which method you know you want,” or “ask your provider for clarification if you don’t understand something.” Ask your students to think outside the box; maybe bring up male contraceptive methods and how advocating for their contraceptive needs may look like sharing a post about the need for more contraceptive methods or calling a legislator and urging them to fund contraceptive research. At the end of the 5 minutes, the facilitator will give participants time to read what the other participants or teams have written. The facilitator will then guide the participants in categorizing the sticky notes by similar ideas or themes. The facilitator will lead the group in a short discussion.

Discussion Questions:

- How easy or difficult was it to brainstorm ways we can advocate for our contraceptive needs? Why was it easy/difficult?
- Why is advocating for your contraceptive needs important?
- What could happen if you don’t advocate for yourself in medical settings?