



Self-Advocacy and Self-Expression

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[Jenny Carter & Lucrecia Jacques](#)

Self-Advocacy

This month we will be focusing on self-advocacy and self-expression; the importance of being able to express yourself, say how you feel, make choices and be heard. From the perspective of a Speech and Language Therapist, self-advocacy and self-expression are arguably ultimate goals. We want to highlight two very different forms of expression, the first piece is by Jenny Carter who is a leading voice for self-advocacy in the North West UK and was recently awarded lifetime membership of LD England.



Hi everyone my name is Jenny Carter and I am one of the leads for self-advocacy in the Wirral and one of the directors of Together All Are Able. Together All Are able is a community interest company and the self-advocacy organisation for the Wirral. I have a few different disabilities but today I with some help from my friends I talk about speaking up.

I personally feel empowered when I speak up. I am able to meet and work with other people and meet new friends. Speaking up is not just about using verbal communication you can use different ways to communicate with a person. I have worked with people with limited verbal communication and found it very interesting empowering as I could make a difference to their lives.

Speaking up is very powerful as one kind word can change the person's whole world. As they are able to make new friends, change their lives and able to choose what they want to do. The person learns new skills and uses their existing ones. It is important to feel listened to and to help others to do the same. This included their wish to be free to travel to new places do new things and have fun. We can find what's right for us as long as we are in control of our own lives and the support networks we have.

When this is taken away bad things happen, the person can feel depressed, useless and frustrated. I personally have experienced this and had almost everything imaginable verbally thrown at me because people don't understand about self-advocacy and don't like change. I have had to use Facebook and social media because my voice was taken away from me so had to be creative about it.

I like change when I am in control of the change because I know I can make it as positive as it can be. Don't let self-advocacy groups disappear. Don't moan or talk about how bad it is in the current climate.

Self-advocacy groups are disappearing - do something about it.

Thanks for reading this blog.

Self -Expression

The second piece is a poem by Lucrecia Jacques who experiences social communication difficulties associated with autistic spectrum disorder. Lucrecia has found that poetry can help her express feelings and ideas which may take a while to formulate verbally. Lucrecia's poem is a powerful account of her experience in making sense of the world and we wanted to highlight her talents as a writer by including her work in this month's blog.

My mind is muddled

*My mind is muddled when they
make non-obvious jokes and
everyone laughs but me looking at
me befuddled.*

*My mind is muddled when thinking
the mean girls and boys are nice,
treat my mind like a toy, I do not
realize and never think twice.*

*My mind is like a puzzle where it is
confusing and torturous going back
and forth, never on course or
victorious.*

*I am a rubik cube few try to twist
and turn me until they get it right,
when they finish I become a less
confusing fight.*

