



# My Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

This is the property of:

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The Arc Allegany-Steuben

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# Introduction

Every effort should be made to inform you of your rights in a way that is at the level of your understanding. Staff, family and friends should make learning about yourself easier. US citizens have certain, inherent rights. Those who live and are supported by the ARC of Allegany Steuben have these individual rights as well.

As a citizen of the United States you have rights that you were given at birth and people under the care of The Arc have the same rights. The Arc of Allegany Steuben believes that even if you have a disability, these rights cannot be taken away. No matter what conditions you are born with, including race, religion, age, gender, or any disability, you still have your given rights. This also means that you will have complete privacy.

Those who receive care, should be well informed of their rights and how they can use them. This handbook includes examples of the rights that you have and the responsibilities that come with those rights.

Each citizen needs to know what their rights are and how they can exercise those rights and responsibilities. Everyone also needs to know what to do if those rights are violated.

Everyone needs more information about their rights. One large problem is that many people don't know where to find information about their rights.

This handbook is designed to help you understand your rights. This book contains words and pictures that you may not understand. If you do not understand the content within this book, it is important that you see a friend, family member, or a staff person to help you understand.

While you learn about your rights, you need to learn about your responsibilities as well. As an individual, you make decisions and these decisions have consequences. It is your responsibility to make appropriate decisions while being a member of the ARC of Allegany Steuben. This handbook will help you understand the differences between rights and responsibilities.

**Example: If you have signed up to do a job, that means you have the responsibility to do the work that comes with that job.**

Making choices and decisions can be scary. This is why it is important to remember that mistakes can happen, and they can happen to anyone, which is why you have the right to make mistakes. This is how people learn. When you make a choice, you are responsible for its consequences. It is always a good idea to talk with people if you have an important decision to make.

**Talk with people you trust.**

You have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else.

If you have personal property, you must take care of it. This includes protecting your personal property from damage or theft to the best of your ability and knowing any laws about your property. You must also respect other people's property. You will be held accountable if you intentionally hurt someone, destroy, or steal their property. This includes being responsible for any replacement costs. It is also your responsibility to respond to any legal searches or calls to court.

You cannot use your rights as an excuse to justify any actions where you risk the health, safety, wellbeing, or beliefs of others.

It is important to know that disrespecting someone else versus disrespecting their property has different consequences. This means that someone's life is far more important than a broken iPad.

Being responsible means that you can be trusted.

Being responsible means that you know what your own rights are and how to respect the rights of others.

If you show respect for others, you can help create a good living community.

Using your rights can sometimes mean that there are risks. Such risks will be discussed with you, your parents, guardians, advocates, or employees.

Some rights may need to be changed to meet the needs of people who need protection or extra safety. Health care workers will justify any such changes. For other individuals, their rights may be limited. If someone were to limit your rights, there must be a specific time and reason.

# 01 PERSONAL RIGHTS

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to be free from physical or emotional abuse, unnecessary use of mechanical restraining devices, and physical punishment.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to be nice to other people, do my best to resolve problems, avoid hurting others at all times, and to tell someone if I see someone being mistreated.



# PERSONAL RIGHTS 02

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to a balanced and nutritious diet with choices of foods. Food may not be denied for behavior management purposes.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to eat my food with good manners, follow my diet, and be nice to others while dining.





## 03 PERSONAL RIGHTS

### MY RIGHT

I have the right to receive support and guidance from people who are trained adequately, skillfully, safely, and humanely with full respect for all people's dignity and integrity. I also have the right to work with people who have good attitudes about me and my potential.

### MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to listen to what the person who is helping me has to say and if I disagree for any reason, I will say something politely.



# PERSONAL RIGHTS 04

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to access training and information on services regarding the topics of sexuality and family planning. I also have the right to make decisions about conception and pregnancy for myself.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to be informed on the topics of pregnancy and conception and to use this information to make the best decisions for myself.



# 05 PERSONAL RIGHTS

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to freely to express my sexuality as long as such expressions do not violate the rights of other people or facilities that have reasonably limited the expression of sexuality, including time and location.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to be informed on sexuality and to accept how others express themselves.



# PERSONAL RIGHTS 04

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to vote as a citizen of the United States. It is the American Way.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to learn about the issues, the candidates and how to cast my vote. I also have the responsibility to learn about current events and the community where I live.



# 07 PERSONAL RIGHTS

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to a personal, written plan of supports with the goal of expanding my abilities to live and work independently. I have the right to participate in the development and changes of this plan. I also have the right to disagree with any part of the plan and appeal to any decisions about the plan that I disagree with.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to be informed of my personal plan, attend and participate in meetings about my plan, and ask questions if I have any. If I want to change anything in my plan, I will let the staff know.



# PERSONAL RIGHTS 08

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to participate in meaningful and productive activities that interest me, even though some risk may be involved.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to attend the activities that I agree to go to and if I have any questions, I will ask politely.



# 09 ENVIRONMENTAL

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to a safe and clean environment as well as an area for safe, individual storage.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to keep my area clean and to do household chores to the best of my ability.



# ENVIRONMENTAL 10

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to ask for a different residential setting, such as a new house or a room change. I have the right to be involved in any decisions about any change.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to tell someone if I feel that a change is necessary.





# 11 ENVIRONMENTAL

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to have visitors or make visits with anyone in or outside of the facility at any time. I have the right to privacy when I have people visiting me.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to treat my visitors with respect and to be respectful when I visit others.



# ENVIRONMENTAL 12

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to be involved in the selection of my clothing.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to ensure that the clothing fits nicely, is well maintained, is appropriate for my age, and is appropriate for the weather and activities for the day.



# 13 MEDICAL

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to make an informed decision about cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and Health Care Proxy decisions.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to alert the people around me when I see that a person may be having a medical emergency and to ask questions about my medical care.



# PERSONAL RIGHTS 04

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to good health care, and the opportunity to get a second opinion.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to ask questions about my medical care and form good health habits.



## MY RIGHT

I have the right to be free from taking too much or unnecessary medication.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to take my medication(s) regularly, avoid judging others for medicine they may need to take, and to ask questions about my medical care.



# 15 MEDICAL

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to have all the information in my personal record available to me and for it to be kept private from others.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to not discuss personal information with others if they are not comfortable, or question others on their health.



## MY RIGHT

I have the right to be free from discrimination based on if I have had an HIV related test, been diagnosed with HIV, AIDS, or any other HIV-related illness.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to not judge other people with an HIV related illness and to take HIV seriously.



# 17 OTHER

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to participate in the religion of my choice, through the means of my choice, including the right to choose not to participate.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to respect people and religions that are different from mine.





## MY RIGHT

I have the right to an adequate supply of my own grooming and personal hygiene supplies.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to use the proper grooming and personal hygiene supplies daily in order to take care of myself and to tell someone when I need more supplies.



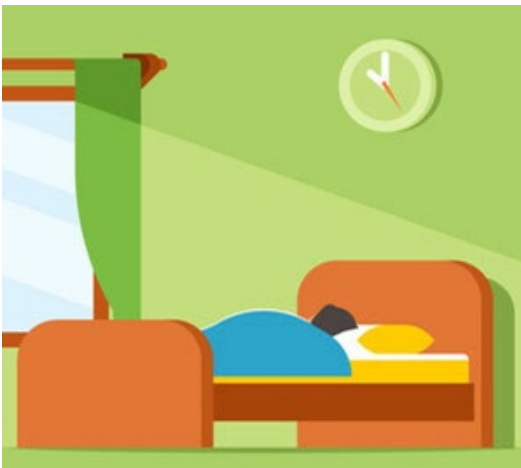
# 19 OTHER

## MY RIGHT

I have the right to a reasonable degree of privacy in sleeping, bathing, and toileting areas.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to respect others and their privacy in these areas as well.



## MY RIGHT

I have the right to fair pay for work that I perform and to be informed of the pay rate and any deductions planned.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to ask about pay before and after I perform a job and to discuss any disagreements politely.



## 21 OTHER

### MY RIGHT

I have the right to personally, or through a parent, guardian, or friend, express grievances, concerns, and suggestions to any staff person or supervisor at any time, without fear of retaliation.

### MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to seek someone out and politely tell them about any grievances, concerns, or suggestions that I may have.



## MY RIGHT

I have the right to receive information on or before starting a service about the supplies and supports the service provides and any additional charges that will be made.

## MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to be informed and ask any questions that I have about a service before I decide (with the help of someone else if necessary) if the service is right for me.



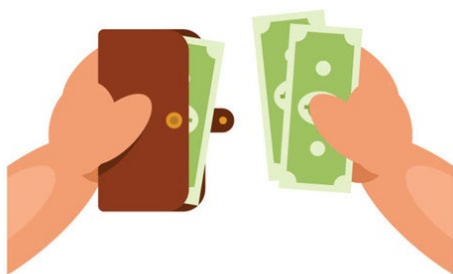
## 23 OTHER

### MY RIGHT

I have the right to use my personal money and property, including frequent notice of my financial status. I have the right to be provided with appropriate assistance in the use of my resources.

### MY RESPONSIBILITY

My responsibility is to spend my money wisely, develop a budget for myself, and take care of any personal property that I may have.



# Contact

In addition to all of your rights, there are people that you may contact in order to discuss your complaint or concerns. You may speak with the person Managing or Directing your program, or your Service Coordinator. Other parties who will help and may be contacted at any time are listed on this page (you may request assistance by contacting any of the following people).

## **Chief Executive Officer - The Arc Allegany-Steuben**

50 Farnum Street

Wellsville, New York 14895

Phone (585) 593-5700

## **Corporate Compliance Officer - The Arc Allegany-Steuben**

One Arc Way

Bath, New York 14810

Confidential Hotline (607) 622-1950

## **Human Rights Committee Chairperson - The Arc Allegany-Steuben**

50 Farnum Street

Wellsville, NY 14895

Phone (585) 593-5700 ext. 257

**Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities**

401 State Street  
Schenectady, NY 12305-2397  
Phone (800) 624-4143

**Commissioner of OPWDD**

44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12229  
Phone (518) 473-1997

**Mental Hygiene Legal Services**

438 Main Street,  
Suite 400 Buffalo, NY 14202-3211  
Phone (716) 845-3650

**WNY DDSO**

1200 East and West Road  
West Seneca, NY 14224  
Phone (716) 517-2000

**Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs**

161 Delaware Avenue  
Delmar, NY 12054-1310  
Phone (855) 373-2122



# About The Authors

This booklet was created by the Incredible Voice self-advocates in partnership with Alfred State College's Technical Writing students.

The Arc Allegany-Steuben's Incredible Voice self-advocates are committed to helping each other grow and find their own voice by creating opportunities for each person to be productive and independent by learning about rights and sharing personal stories and accomplishments.

# Notes