

What is Advocacy?

There are many definitions of advocacy and much debate exists regarding which one is the most appropriate to use. Having a definition of advocacy is necessary so that we have something to refer to, to check against and to encourage discussion about what we are doing. Action for Advocacy Development uses the following definition, which is based on the work of Dr Wolf Wolfensberger. Advocacy groups in Australia discussed this definition during a National Advocacy Workshop in Sydney in June 1994. Most of these elements were agreed to:

Advocacy is speaking, acting and writing, with minimal conflict of interest, on behalf of the sincerely perceived interests of a disadvantaged person or group to promote, protect and defend their welfare and justice by

- **being on their side and no-one else's**
- **being primarily concerned with their fundamental needs**
- **remaining loyal and accountable to them in a way which is emphatic and vigorous and which is, or is likely to be, costly to the advocate or advocacy group**