

# Patient Self-Advocacy: Taking Charge of Your Healthcare

## What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-advocacy is the ability to speak up for your needs, make informed decisions, and actively participate in your healthcare journey. For individuals managing chronic conditions, like heart failure, self-advocacy ensures you receive the best possible care aligned with your personal goals and values.



## Strategies for Effective Self-Advocacy

### 1 Be Informed:

- Learn about your condition and treatment options from trusted sources.
- Attend educational programs or support groups, such as those offered by HeartLife Academy.

### 2 Set Goals:

- Identify what you want to achieve with your healthcare, such as symptom management, improved mobility, or better quality of life.
- Break larger goals into smaller, manageable steps.

### 3 Prepare for Appointments:

- Write down questions and concerns before each visit.
- Keep a record of symptoms, medications, and changes in your health.
- Bring a trusted friend or family member to help take notes or provide support.

### 4 Ask Questions:

- Inquire about treatment risks, benefits, and alternatives.
- Seek clarification if something is unclear.
- Examples of questions include: “What are the side effects of this medication?” or “How does this treatment align with my goals?”

### 5 Build Relationships:

- Develop a collaborative partnership with your healthcare providers.
- Share your preferences and concerns openly to ensure your care plan aligns with your values.

## The Foundations of Self-Advocacy

### 1 Self-Awareness:

- Understand your condition, symptoms, and treatment options.
- Identify your personal needs, strengths, and areas where you may need support.

### 2 Building Confidence:

- Trust your knowledge and ability to make decisions about your health.
- Remember, you are the expert on your body and experiences.

### 3 Communication Skills:

- Practice clear and assertive communication with your healthcare team.
- Use phrases like “I need more information about...” or “Can you explain that in simpler terms?”



# Overcoming Challenges in Self-Advocacy



## 1 Dealing with Setbacks:

- Understand that challenges are part of the journey.
- Reflect on what you can learn from setbacks and seek additional support if needed.

## 2 Navigating the Healthcare System:

- Keep detailed records and stay organized to ensure continuity of care.
- Utilize patient portals to access your medical information and communicate with providers.

## 3 Handling Emotional Barriers:

- Acknowledge feelings of fear or anxiety and seek professional help if needed.
- Join support groups to connect with others who share similar experiences.



### Key Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. What are my priorities and goals for my health?
2. Do I fully understand my treatment options?
3. Am I communicating my needs and concerns effectively?
4. Who can I turn to for support in my self-advocacy journey?

## Take Action Today

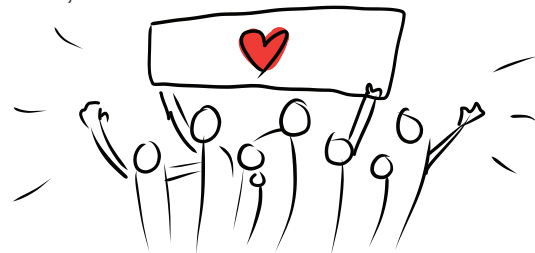
Self-advocacy empowers you to take an active role in your healthcare, improving outcomes and enhancing your quality of life. Stay informed, set clear goals, and build strong partnerships with your healthcare team.



For more support, information and resources, visit [heartlife.ca](http://heartlife.ca), a leading patient led heart health charity.

### HeartLife Foundation

Canada's patient-led heart failure charity  
"It's About Life, Not Failure™"



## Mission

The HeartLife Foundation is a patient-driven charity whose mission is to transform the quality of life for people living with cardiovascular diseases by engaging, educating, and empowering a global community. We aim to create lasting solutions, drive innovation, and build healthier lives for patients, caregivers, and families worldwide.

For more information on **Patient Self-Advocacy** and other support please visit us at [heartlife.ca/academy/](http://heartlife.ca/academy/)  
[heartlife.academy](http://heartlife.academy)



[www.heartlife.ca](http://www.heartlife.ca)

It's About Life, Not Failure™  
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