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## Self-Advocacy in the Face of Inequity in the Workplace

Self-advocacy is the ability to communicate your own personal needs and standing up for your rights. This is an important and valuable skill, as it helps draw awareness to specific and unique needs that are unmet, which might be an issue for others who are also facing similar inequities. It also helps individuals increase confidence and is closely linked with greater enjoyment of the workplace.

The responsibility to maintain an equitable work environment belongs to employers, management teams, and all staff. **Your needs and goals are unique, and no one person or group can know you better than yourself.**

When faced with barriers to equity, self-advocacy is critical in making your needs known and gaining more access to rights and opportunities. Within the workplace, there is great power in sharing your own personal needs and challenges, and asking for resources, support and/or the removal of barriers to help you have equal opportunities as others.

It helps to reflect on what your needs are: have self-awareness to identify your own personal strengths, challenges and needs, and share your thoughts in a clear and organized way.

Remember: [Effective self-advocacy begins with a strong sense of self.](#)

See below for strategies on building self-advocacy skills.



## Reflection:

Build Your Self-Advocacy Skills	Self-Reflection Question
Know your power (build a strong sense of identity)	How well do I know myself? Who am I? What are my strengths? What are my needs?
Know your supports	What are my resources? What organizations can I turn to for support? Who can I turn to in the workplace? (People & Culture, Supervisor, Manager, etc.) Do I need or have time to collaborate with peers? Are there appropriate channels to speak to my supports and access my resources? What are they?
Reflect and strengthen self-awareness	Are there feelings of fear, apprehension, or indignation about having to self-advocate? Is there a historical context that may be driving these feelings? Are there traditional dynamics of authority or power, which contribute to any fear, apprehension, or indignation? Why? Is there a particular situation or examples that alerted me to my unmet needs in the workplace?

# Power of Words: When does self-advocacy become self-entitlement?



The key difference between self-advocacy and self-entitlement in the workplace lies in the approach and attitude one adopts toward one’s needs, rights, and expectations.

While self-advocacy involves proactively and respectfully communicating one's needs, goals, or boundaries to foster a productive and fair work environment, **self-entitlement implies an unreasonable expectation that one deserves special treatment or privileges without necessarily putting in the effort and/or at the expense of honoring others’ needs and boundaries.** For example, expecting a promotion without sufficient merit or disregarding team contributions while expecting individual recognition.

## Resources

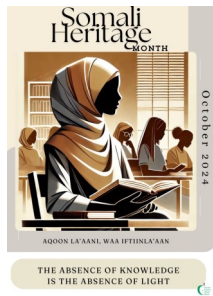
- ◇ [TDSB Equity Leadership Competencies](#)
- ◇ [How to improve workplace equity: Evidence-based actions for employers](#)
- ◇ [TDSB’s Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression](#)
- ◇ [TDSB’s Addressing Hate and Geopolitical Tensions within Ontario's Schools](#)
- ◇ [TDSB’s Policies, Procedures, Forms – Policy P031 – Human Rights](#)
- ◇ [TDSB’s Promoting a Positive School Climate](#)
- ◇ [TDSB's Promoting Respect Posters](#)
- ◇ [Self-Advocacy and Challenging Inequities](#)
- ◇ [What does Self-Advocacy Mean?](#)
- ◇ [Advocacy for Inclusion \[Video\]](#)
- ◇ [TDSB’s Reporting and Responding to Racism and Hate Incidents Involving or Impacting Students In Schools \[PDF\]](#)
- ◇ [Why Self-Advocacy is Important](#)

## Heritage Months/Days of Significance



### Islamic Heritage Month—October 2024

TDSB has proudly recognized Islamic Heritage Month (IHM) during the month of October since 2016. This year, the theme is **Sabr and Shukr**. Sabr and shukr are oft-mentioned concepts in the Qu'ran that offer guidance as to how Muslims should face challenges. **Sabr** is patience, perseverance, and persistence, which are essential to accomplishing goals, overcoming obstacles, and dealing with setbacks. **Shukr** is gratitude that allows one to recognize one's blessings and can take the form of words, feelings, or behaviours.



### Somali Heritage Month—October 2024

This year, the theme of Somali Heritage Month is Aqoon la'aani, waa iftiinla'aan - The absence of knowledge is the absence of light. The saying highlights the fundamental value of knowledge and education. By choosing this saying, we hope to underscore the importance of learning and intellectual growth, aligning with our educational mission of fostering a knowledgeable and enlightened student body.

### Hindu Heritage Month—November 2024