

# Lesson 1: Self-Advocacy - Finding Your Voice, Claiming Your Space

Welcome to Project VIEW Softskills Development series: Self-Advocacy: Finding Your Voice, Claiming Your Space.

Imagine this.

You have gone through the recruitment process, answered the interview questions, and earned the job.

On your first day, you sit down at your computer and discover that your screen reader has not been installed. You do not have administrator access to install it. The HR system contains buttons your screen reader cannot identify. And the report you have been asked to review is a scanned PDF.

Suddenly the question becomes:

“Can you actually do this job?”

But that is often the wrong question.

The better question is:

“What is stopping you from doing the job, and what needs to change?”

That is where self-advocacy begins.

And before we go any further, remove one idea completely: asking for the tools you need to work is not asking for a favour.

Think about a pilot stepping into a cockpit.

The pilot does not apologise for needing flight instruments.

They do not say:

“I am sorry to cause trouble, but would it be possible for me to have an altimeter?”

Those instruments are part of what allows the pilot to do the job safely and effectively.

The same principle applies to workplace accessibility.

If you use JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver, screen magnification, a braille display, keyboard navigation, or another accessibility tool, that technology is part of how you access information and perform the work.

A screen reader is not the job.

It is one of the tools that allows you to do the job.

Sometimes the hardest part of being blind or having low vision at work is not completing the task. It is explaining how you complete the task.

You may have to explain why a scanned PDF creates a barrier.

Why an unlabeled button matters.

Why an accessible digital format allows you to work independently.