



National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)

## Disability Advisory Group

*To Empower and Include People with Disabilities in APS*

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### **Why the Disability Advisory Group is Important:** *William's Story*

I grew up just outside New York City in a family where multiple members, including myself, had disabilities. During the 1980s and 1990s, disability services were limited and often shared only through word of mouth. From a young age, I witnessed the critical importance of advocacy particularly through my parents, who consistently fought for equal access to education.

As a teenager, I attended a blind advocacy convention that was a turning point in my journey. Hearing the experiences of others helped me realize I wasn't alone. I began to find my own voice, and my first personal advocacy success came when I persuaded my school to allow the use of my white cane indoors. Throughout my education, I actively participated in my IEP meetings, advocated for assistive technology, and worked to attend a school with other students who were blind. In college, I led a disability advocacy group, where we addressed accessibility concerns, including calling attention to unsafe practices such as locked elevators.

My advocacy efforts extended beyond campus, as I worked with civil rights organizations and met with lawmakers in both New York and Massachusetts to advance disability rights. I believe deeply in the value of peer support. People with disabilities have unique insights and the capacity to uplift one another. Peer-led spaces are not only affirming, but they are also powerful tools for change and healing.