

Personal Advocacy Plan

Advocacy Boot Camp: Learning to Become an Effective Advocate for Children with Disabilities
SDBP Advocacy Committee Half-Day Workshop – October 2017

I. Set Your Goals

What issues are important to you? What are common concerns or problems that you see in your practice? What brought you to this workshop? What do you or your patients need to thrive?

Action Step 1: Determine your key issues.

List three key issues here:

Action Step 2: Determine your goal.

If you have multiple goals, prioritize them here.

II. Develop Your Message

Action Step 3: Identify your key audience.

- Who are your supporters or key decision-makers in your organization? Who would you like to have on your side?
- Why are your issues important to them?

Action Step 4: Clarify your key messages.

- What is the most important thing for others to know? This is the message that you will repeat over and over again. The message should be concise and something that you can replicate as an “elevator speech,” as well as in interviews or presentations to groups. It should be easy to say and remember – It may be as simple as:

“Millions of people are impacted by ASD each year, and there is a significant deficit in funding and available resources to patients and their families.”

- Consider this key message to be your “campaign slogan” and use it consistently in various methods of communication (i.e., news releases, letters-to-the-editor)
- Take into account your audience. What do you want them to think? Feel? Do? Emotions are strong motivators, and your goal when delivering the message is to elicit a feeling (i.e., compassion, concern, frustration, joy).

Write down your key messages:

III. Develop Your Talking Points

Identify stories or examples that support your key message. Using personal, descriptive examples is an effective method to gain attention and support from key people and decision-makers. These stories may change based on the audience’s interests and needs.

Ensure that your stories are clear and have a specific message with a “punch line.” It is helpful to show the main character solving a problem or filling a need. When talking about patients, be sure to maintain confidentiality and relay the message in an appropriate and respectful manner. Be specific.

Bridge, Hook, and Flag techniques for controlling the conversation and relaying main points to an audience:

- **Bridge:** To avoid being sidetracked into areas of a conversation that you do not want to discuss, use the opportunity to say, “I think the real question is...” and return to your main point.
- **Hook:** To lead your listener to follow-up on your first point and open the door for you to get a second point in, you can say, “There are two very important things to consider before you support this proposal. First...” It is likely that the legislator or key person will ask or allow you to follow up on the second point.

- Flag: Emphasize your key points by giving verbal cues to the audience about what you consider to be important. For example, “If you remember nothing else, please remember these two points...”

Action Step 5: Brainstorm some talking points

IV. Get the Message Out

Consider the many possibilities to get your message out, including the following:
Hospital/Organization Newsletters; Websites; General Promotion Materials; Letters to the Editor; Op-Ed Pieces; Radio; Television Coverage; Presentations

Action Step 6: Identify some ways that you can deliver your message to your intended audience. What will you need to effectively build your case (i.e., fact sheets, brochures, materials)?

V. Seek Support

It is important to have a network of support, and it is likely that you have shared goals with others inside and outside of your profession.

Action Step 7: Who is my network?

- Friends in my profession:

- Other faculty members

- Trustees:
- Community Leaders:
- Other:

Action Step 8: Identify three things you can do when you return home to strengthen the relationships with the people you listed as your “network” above?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Optional Step: Create a Committee

Forming a committee related to your goal helps to ensure that these advocacy efforts become reality. The committee can create structure to monitor and maintain many pieces of the project, including setting deadlines and delegating tasks. Consider the following:

- Who will serve as Chair?
- Who might serve on the committee?
- Who is responsible for contacting and recruiting members?
- When and where will the committee meet?

Some projects may require task forces or subcommittees to assist with task completion. Types of task forces include: Oversight Task Force, Publications and Design Task Force, Media Task Force, and Presentations Task Force.

My Advocacy Plan Summary

What are my goals?

Who is my audience?

What are my key messages?

Who is on my team?

What committees and task forces will I need?

What strategies will I implement?

Create a timeline:

Activity	Date of Completion	Resources Needed (people, materials, etc.)