



Informed Advocacy: Speaking Up and Speaking Out on Policy Issues

PREPERATION - HOW TO PREPARE FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY:

Storytelling: Introduce the concept of storytelling as an important advocacy skill and the importance of connecting personal experience to the issues you care about.

- **ASK** – What is storytelling?
- It's through our experiences that inform our opinions about issues
- Storytelling is a powerful way to share our experiences and voice our concerns.
- WE CHANGE MINDS AND OPINIONS THROUGH EMOTION, THROUGH THE HEART, NOT WITH NUMBERS AND DATA - Storytelling is the most effective way to advocate for an issue that you care about. Most legislators know the statistics, they know the numbers but many do not know the human impact. Storytelling helps us understand why your issue matters.
- Talk about personal stories as a way to establish CREDIBILITY AND TRUST with law makers.- No one can argue with a personal story – MUST BE AUTHENTIC/TRUE
- Transition - Revisit the power of storytelling and remind that it is important to understand how you connect to the issue as you begin to prepare your message.

Research:

- Know the facts about your issue – be an informed constituent.
- Research which legislator you need to contact and research their opinion or stance on the issue.



Message Development: Introduce 3 Easy Pieces

- **Change** – what is the issue they want to address and the change they want to make
- **Credibility** – this is your story – and your story is what makes you worth listening to because your personal experience is what makes you knowledgeable about the issue
- **Ask** – be sure to ask them directly for a commitment to support or oppose you issue – the commitment to support the change

Practice:

- Write out your message, including your story (why you care and establish credibility)
- Discuss with a trusted adult and practice

Scheduling:

- Call the office to introduce yourself and to make sure they know you live in their district –
- Request a meeting with the legislator
- Confirm – the day before call or email to confirm your meeting

ACTION

Appearance & Time:

- Stress importance of presenting yourself well – dress nicely
- Arrive 15 minutes early

Introduction:

- Introduce Yourself and what school you are from
- Thank them for meeting with you



- Give your message
- If you don't know their stance – ASK them what it is
- ASK them what you can do to help them change their mind?
- Be a good listener
- Thank them for their time

FOLLOW UP:

Keep promises:

- If you have agreed to provide them with more information, make sure you take notes and follow through on your commitments

Thank you note:

- Send a hand written thank you note and include your "ASK" one more time.

