

Advocacy: From Barriers to Breakthroughs

Systemic approaches to Choice, Control and Community.

Presented by:

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Say “Hey Neighbor”

- Everyone greet your neighbor, (please describe yourself and share where you are from or anything other relevant information.)

Icebreaker: What is your advocacy superpower? Share with your group or neighbor.

- Volunteers feel free to share with the collective.



Rules of Engagement

Every group must move through 3 stages, Protect, Persist and Prosper while encountering real world barriers that we, as advocates face. There will be a community issue, barrier card and resource tokens which will determine the group's path. Some groups will receive power cards to outline inequities in advocacy.

- Group members will collaborate to produce solutions to overcome the barriers.
- The group will choose a note taker or utilize a rotate model.



Structural Framework of Advocacy

Protect- Defending established civil and human rights from regulatory rollback and systemic dilution.

Persist- Maintaining tactical momentum under structural resistance and resource scarcity through strategic partnership

Prosper- Designing and implementing long-term sustainable community solutions that foster absolute self determination.



Inequity and Team Dynamics in Collaborative Spaces

1. Systemic privilege, utilizing power cards to model structural resource imbalances that exist in advocacy.
2. Integrating mixed levels of expertise and organizational roles. Pair seasoned staff with frontline staff to ensure experience guides policy.



Group 1

Community Issue: Housing Inequity

Barrier:

- Burnout
- Policy delays

Resource Token: New Staff

Power Card: Media attention



Group 2

Community Issue: Education funding

Barrier:

- Misinformation
- Volunteer burnout

Resource Token: Time



Group 3

Community Issue: Environmental Protection issues (i.e., clean water)

Barrier:

- New Administration
- Opposition group mobilizes

Resource Token: Money

Power Card: Grassroots Movement Surge



Group 4

Community Issue: Healthcare Access

Barrier:

- Community distrust due to past failures
- Opposition Lobbying

Resource Token: Money



Group 5

Community Issue: Food Desert

Barrier:

- Awareness
- Funding cuts

Resource Token: Money

Power Card: Celebrity Endorsement



Advocacy Action Plan Template

Goal/Questions to think about critically

My Plan

1. Issue I am advocating for?
2. Why does it matter?
3. Who is affected?
4. Decision Maker(s)
5. Allies and Partners?
6. My advocacy message. (30) seconds
7. First Action to take?
8. Timeline
9. How will I measure success?



Coalition Building Toolkit - Strong Coalitions create strong change.

Who should be at the table? Be imaginative.

1. Centers for Independent Living
2. People across disability
3. Family Members
4. Aging organizations
5. Veterans Organizations
6. Mental Health Organizations
7. Transportation agencies
8. State and local policymakers
9. Housing Partners etc.



Coalition Toolkit 2

Tip Jar

1. Lead with shared goals and not organizational agendas.
2. Center lived experience while applying quantitative evidence.
3. Give everyone a meaningful role that centers their strengths.
4. Use SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound) goals to track progress.
5. Celebrate small wins.
6. Stay connected once shared goals are accomplished.
7. The most impactful coalitions are built across sectors, generations, and lived experience. Build cross generational cohorts.
8. Use what is at your disposal. No form of advocacy is too small.



DRAW A BARRIER CARD

Protect

Each group must protect existing rights or services from being weakened while fighting to expand them.

Choose one advocacy Action:

1. Meet with Lawmakers
2. Organize Community Members
3. Run a Public Awareness Campaign
4. File Legal Action



Reflection:

What made protecting existing rights difficult?



Persist

DRAW ANOTHER BARRIER CARD

Groups Must:

1. Adapt a strategy.
2. Use a resource token.
3. Possibly partner with another group.



Reflection:

What helped you keep going when the process became difficult?



Prosper

Groups design a solution that helps the community long-term (i.e):

1. Policy change.
2. New Programming.
3. Coalition Building.
4. Economic Investment.



Reflection:

Which stage was the hardest? Protect, Persist or Prosper?

Who tends to face the biggest barriers in advocacy?

What resources make advocacy more successful?



HUDDLE

"Nothing About Us Without Us" ensures that we are the architects of the systems and policies that impact us. Within that we must be mindful that we are caring for our bodies and minds through strategic rest.

We must also build strong mentorship circles so that intergenerational cohorts can carry and lead this movement.

Qualitative Data sharing is a huge part of awareness; please share your stories. You never know who you may reach.



HUDDLE 2

Know your rights! Try to stay current on policy changes and organizations that can assist in your ability to advocate for yourself and others.

Always know that community is at your fingertips. The ability to build coalitions, engage in community-based partnerships and accessing support is the backbone to coalition building.



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING; We look forward to continuing this work with you all!



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