

# Advocacy Skill Building Toolkit

## Facilitator Guide



*To conduct engaging workshops with emerging Independent Living leaders and youth with disabilities*

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## Acknowledgements

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The Facilitator Guide and the improv activities contained within were developed and modified by Mike Beers, John Howard, and Tyler Nielson at BASE, an affiliate of Summit Independent Living Center in Missoula, MT, and are influenced by the [Living Well with a Disability<sup>1</sup>](#) curriculum.

Special thanks to Mary Olson and APRIL for development and advisory assistance.

The *Advocacy Skill Building Toolkit* includes materials updated and adapted from the following products<sup>2</sup> developed by RTC:Rural:

- [\*A Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor: Expressing Your Opinion to the Public Effectively\*](#)
- [\*A Guide to Writing Letters to Public Officials: Contributing to Important Decisions Affecting You and Others\*](#)
- [\*A Guide for Personal Testimony: The Art of Using Your Personal Experience to Influence Policy Decisions\*](#)

Video filming, editing, and production by Trevor Crawford, Missoula, MT.

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<sup>1</sup> Ravesloot, C. (Ed.) et al. (2010). *Living Well with a Disability* (Rev.ed.). Missoula: The University of Montana Rural Institute Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities.

<sup>2</sup> These products were developed by the RTC:Rural at the University of Montana and the University of Kansas Research and Training Center on Independent Living, © 1984, Tom Seekins and Stephen B. Fawcett. Reprinted with permission of the KU RTC/IL.

# Notes For Facilitators

## Foreword

This toolkit is a guide for Centers for Independent Living to conduct interactive and engaging workshops to facilitate the development of advocacy skills of emerging Independent Living leaders and youth with disabilities. It describes how to introduce advocacy through the facilitation of unique activities and discussions, identifying issues of importance, and putting advocacy skills into practice. A unique approach presented in this toolkit is the use of improv to introduce, invite, and engage others into and with the world of advocacy.



## How to Use This Toolkit

The Toolkit contains a Facilitator Guide, PowerPoint slides, and advocacy practice worksheets. The Facilitator Guide provides an overview of each workshop session, which includes tips, recommendations, the presentation slides, discussion points, and activities. The improv activities are demonstrated and explained through online videos. PowerPoint slides are meant to be used as a tool for facilitators to stay on track and to help guide the workshop participants. The slides are NOT meant to be used to lecture or teach a group of participants.

It is important that facilitators are actively listening and watching throughout the entire workshop, so they are able to take comments and connections made by the group in the activities and discussions and incorporate those connections into later workshop activities. This is made easier by having multiple facilitators.

## Introduction

Advocacy has been a cornerstone of Independent Living and Disability Rights movements since the beginning. The core idea of Independent Living is that individuals with disabilities are the best experts on their needs, and have the right to make their own choices to fulfill those needs. If an individual is unable to fulfill a want or need, advocacy is the answer.



Advocacy requires specific skills and strategies, as well as practice and patience. Advocacy can come in many shapes and forms, because it is about using an individual's strengths to achieve their goals. There is no one right way to advocate. In fact, many people advocate every day without knowing that what they are doing is called advocacy.

Before attempting to advocate, an individual must first educate. This may mean a few different things. Individuals may need to educate themselves on what, exactly, they need or want. They could need to understand the strengths that will help them achieve their advocacy goals, which could mean figuring out if they are a strong writer, public speaker, organizer, or creative thinker. In addition, this could mean learning more about the resources available to help them advocate or gather more information on the issue, and learning more about the others in the community who may also be affected. Sometimes what began as an individual goal could lead to the opportunity to change the system to benefit the wider community. But an important part of advocacy, no matter if the goal is to help one person or many, is establishing a confident voice, developed and supported in a community of peer support.

This workshop and accompanying toolkit materials give participants the opportunity to explore their voices, build confidence, and display their skills both verbally as well as in written form. The intent is to provide a safe space among peers and trusted facilitators to introduce the concept of both group and self-advocacy.



## Using Improv to Build Advocacy Skills

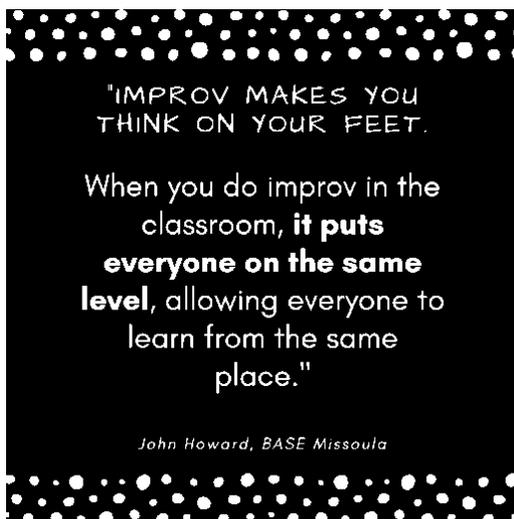
Improv is a form of acting where the performance develops without the use of a prepared script. It is a technique often used in comedy performances, such as the television shows “Whose Line Is It Anyway?” and “Curb Your Enthusiasm.” However, improv is not always comedic. An example is the Playback Theatre group, which enacts stories (sometimes with live music accompaniment) that have just been told by the audience or group members.



The beginning of modern improv can be credited to Viola Spolin, who developed activities and techniques to be used in theatre training.

Called “Theater Games,” these techniques provided a way for participants to work together to solve problems while overcoming hesitation and self-judgement that may be holding them back from taking part in the game. This is a foundation of becoming an advocate: becoming comfortable with the uncomfortable, or moving past the potential disapproval of those who seem to be in power in order to claim that power for oneself.

Using improv hones communication and public speaking skills, stimulates fast thinking, and encourages engagement with ideas, all skills that are important for effective advocacy. Improv also provides a supportive environment that allows participants to take risks, try out new ideas, and build their confidence. The activities incorporate different learning styles, and can easily be modified to accommodate everyone.



As a teaching method, improv promotes a much more engaged and adaptive teaching style. “Improv makes you think on your feet,” said John Howard, BASE Coordinator, Confidence through Comedy Teacher, and founder of HomeGrown Comedy in Missoula, MT. “When you do improv in the classroom, it puts everyone on the same level, allowing everyone to learn from the same place.”

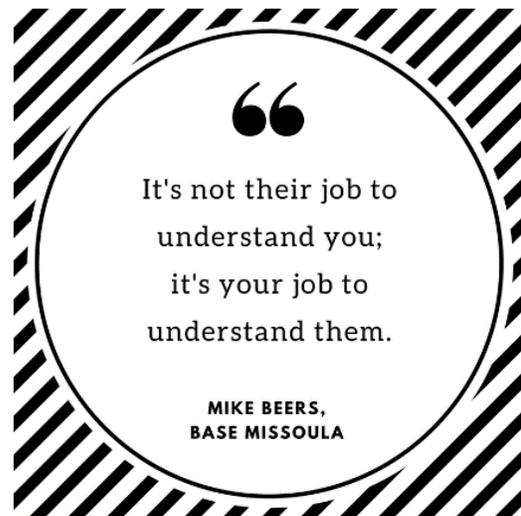
Improv pushes participants outside of their comfort zone, which is the point, said Mike Beers, Youth Transitions Coordinator at Summit Independent Living

Center and professional stand-up comedian. “We all enjoy sitting on the couch watching our favorite movie, but very rarely do we grow in those moments. We’re comfortable, but we’re not growing.”

“It’s when we push ourselves outside of those moments that growth happens. And that can be scary,” said Beers. Facilitators must carefully balance pushing participants out of their comfort zone with understanding what is too much for the participant in that moment. This comes with time and experience, as well as understanding the needs of workshop participants.

Having a background in improv, or any kind of performance, will make you a better teacher, says Beers. Instead of following a strict teaching plan and forcing participants to follow along, improv requires the instructor to listen, respond, and adapt to the participant’s needs as the workshop progresses, just as an improv comedian would “read,” or get a feel of, the audience at a stand-up performance.

“It’s really the relationship with the audience that is the most important. A comic or performer views an audience as someone they need to adapt to, not the other way around. The audience doesn’t have to understand you,” said Beers. “You have to take every individual as an audience, and your job as a performer is to do what you need to do to make them understand what you’re trying to do. It’s not their job to understand you; it’s your job to understand them.”



“Life is inherently improv,” said Beers. “When you go into a meeting or to give testimony to advocate, you’re not given a script of who will say what, and this is how you respond. Nor is it anarchy, where you have no idea what to expect. But you are given a loose set of instructions, and your ability to be successful is based on keeping the conversation going forward within those parameters. And that’s basically improv.”

**For more about how to use improv in this workshop and for more facilitation tips see the YouTube video [“Teaching with Improv: Q&A with Mike Beers and John Howard.”](#)**

## Conducting the Workshop

This workshop is presented in this guide as three 2-hour sessions. However, it can easily be modified into a longer afternoon or full-day workshop, or into a much shorter session to be used in a classroom during school hours. Ideally, a longer session would allow ample time for brainstorming and drafting letters and developing persuasive testimony.

### **Suggested outline for single workshop session**

- Why Are We Here? (Session 1, Slides 2 and 3)
- Introductory Icebreaker Activity: Name Symphony (Session 1, Slide 4)
- Setting Workshop Guidelines (Session 1, Slide 5)
- Introduction To Advocacy and Improv (Session 1, Slides 6 – 13)
- How To Be Persuasive (Session 1, Slides 15 and 16)
- Picking An Advocacy Focus (Session 1, Slide 19)
- Focus On One Topic (Session 1, Slide 20)
- Figuring Out Our Audience and Figuring Out Our Resources (combine) (Session 2, Slides 6 and 7)
- Introduction To Tone (Session 2, Slides 8 and 9)
- Improv Activity: Debate or Image Theatre (10 minutes)
  - Debate (Session 2, Slide 11)
  - Image Theatre (Session 3, Slide 5)
- Group Letter (Session 3, Slides 8 and 9)
- Workshop Wrap-Up (Session 3, Slides 10-12)

### **Accessibility**

Accessibility accommodations are provided with each activity, but general workshop recommendations are listed below. In addition to providing accommodations, encourage participants to practice asking for help from the facilitator and other participants in the safety of the workshop setting. Community building begins with supporting one another.

- Provide handouts in alternative formats based on participant need.
  - Examples: electronic handouts in rich text format; electronic format with fillable forms; braille, large print

- Arrange the physical space for easy navigation.
- As a facilitator, refrain from wearing perfumes or other scents, and opt for unscented markers and other materials to accommodate those with any chemical sensitivities.
- Ensure audio-visual materials are accessible.
  - At minimum, they must have closed-captioning and support audio description of images.
- Provide interpreters or listening devices upon request.
- Provide sufficient time for activities to be completed, and plan for breaks as needed.

If you need additional help making further modifications, use the resources listed below or contact RTC:Rural for more specific recommendations and/or technical assistance.

#### **RTC:Rural contact information**

- Email ([rtcrural@mso.umt.edu](mailto:rtcrural@mso.umt.edu))
- [Website](http://rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu) (rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu)
- [Facebook page](https://facebook.com/rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu) (facebook.com/rtc.ruralinstitute.umt.edu)

#### **Other Accessibility Resources**

- [A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings](#) (digital version) by June Isaacson Kailes and Darrell Jones, 1993.
- [Making Meetings Accessible](#) (PDF), by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- [Making Accessibility Real: A Guide for Planning Meetings, Conferences and Gatherings](#) (PDF), by The Home and Community-Based Services Resource Network.

## Glossary of terms used in this guide

Each of the three workshop sessions have accompanying workshop slides, which include notes for the facilitators.

- **Facilitator Script:** suggested script for the facilitator to say to the group. Modify as desired or needed.
- **How This Works:** written description of how to conduct an activity. These are meant to be notes for the facilitators, not suggested script.
- **Discussion Questions:** suggested discussion questions. These are meant to be a starting place to help guide discussion, and are meant to be modified as desired or needed.



# Introduction to Advocacy

## Session 1

### Facilitator's Overview

This session is an introduction to the workshop. It introduces and defines advocacy and what it means to be persuasive, and introduces persuasive writing and personal testimony. The group will pick one advocacy issue to focus on for the remainder of the workshop series.



### Workshop Length

- Including all activities: 90 minutes

### Materials Needed

- Session 1 Presentation Slides (PowerPoint format) and computer projector
- Way for facilitators to take notes during group discussions
  - Suggestions: a whiteboard or chalkboard; a large pad of paper on an easel in the front of the room; a computer connected to a projector
- Copies of the *Getting Started* worksheet
- Optional: Copies of the *Short Write* worksheet

### Session Introduction

Advocacy can help people get what they want and/or what they need to achieve their independent living goals. The purpose of this workshop is to teach youth with disabilities the skills they need to be effective advocates for themselves and others. In this workshop series, the group will learn about two different skills that can be used to be advocates: persuasive writing and personal testimony.

- Introductory icebreaker
  - See **Appendix B** for icebreaker suggestions
- Set workshop guidelines

## Session Focus

Advocacy is about getting needs met, both on a personal level and at a community level. In this workshop, the group will learn the skills to advocate for ourselves and for others by using persuasive writing and personal testimony.

By the end of this session, the group will know why it is important to advocate, understand what it means to be persuasive, and have identified one advocacy issue that we will focus on for the rest of the workshop series.

## Improv Activity

- Name Symphony

## Discussion Questions

- Why should we be advocates?
- What does it mean to be persuasive?
- In your community, what issues or problems do you care about? What do you like or not like? What would you change?
- How does this issue affect your life and the lives of others in your community?
- What is a solution to the issue?

## Definitions

- **Being Persuasive:** trying to convince a decision maker to think a certain way, do something, or not do something.

- **Decision Maker:** a person who decides things; the person you are trying to persuade.
- **Persuasive Writing:** a letter you write to a decision maker.
- **Personal Testimony:** a speech you read aloud to a decision maker.

## Examples of being persuasive

- **At home:** Persuading your mom to let you go to the movies.
  - **What want/need:** To go see the new Star Wars movie at the movie theater.
  - **Why:** To have fun and hang out with your friends.
  - **Supporting facts:** It is Friday night so there is no school tomorrow; you already finished all of your homework that's due on Monday; you've done all your chores this week.
- **At school:** Persuading your teacher to follow your Individualized Education Program (IEP).
  - **What want/need:** Accommodations to be able to succeed in your History class.
  - **Why:** Because you have dyslexia.
  - **Supporting facts:** it's the law— an IEP is a legal document; you have challenges with writing and reading, so it's easier for you to show how much you've learned if you can take your test out loud.
- **In the community:** Testifying before the local city council about accessibility in a proposed building.
  - **What want/need:** That a new movie theater being built is wheelchair accessible
  - **Why:** Because you use a wheelchair, and you want to be able to go to the movies with your friends.
  - **Supporting facts:** It's cheaper and easier to make sure a building is universally accessible in the building process instead of modifying it after it's already built; universal accessibility won't benefit only people who use wheelchairs but also families and groups who want to invite people who use other mobility devices to see movies; community funds are being used, so it needs to be universally accessible (county regulation).

## Workshop content and breaks

Proceed through the session, covering all major points. Allow enough time to complete the activities and to take breaks.

### Tips

- **Improv activities:** Keep in mind that for improv activities there are no right or wrong answers. This is the main factor in the success of using improvisation in teaching—each student will approach the activity differently, according to their strengths.
  - Encourage applause after each activity. It is a good way to show the participants that their participation, no matter what level, is supported and valued.
- **Examples of being persuasive:** Appendix C includes examples of being persuasive. If desired, modify one of these examples to be relevant to your group and their concerns.
- **Taking notes:** Make sure to keep a record of the group discussion notes during each workshop session. You will want to refer to them in later sessions. In Session 1, it is especially important to write down the following:
  - The guidelines developed by the group
  - The advocacy issue that the group decides to focus on for the remainder of the workshop
  - Any notes from the first group brainstorm of the problems and solution for the chosen advocacy issue

### Wrap up

Recap the major points and highlight what is coming up.

- To be effective advocates, we need to be persuasive.
- It is important to share your personal story because this helps decision makers see how the issue directly affects people.
- Persuasive writing is a letter you write to a decision maker.

- Personal testimony is a speech you read aloud to a decision maker.
- Review the advocacy issue chosen by group to focus on for remainder of workshop series.
- In the next session, we will learn how to figure out who to write our letters or give our personal testimony to (the audience), who we can ask for help and where we can find more information (resources), and what tone to use.



# Session 1 Workshop Slides

21 total slides

## Slide 1: Introduction to Advocacy



### Facilitator Script

- Welcome to our Advocacy Skill Building Workshop!
- My name is [*introduce yourself*], and these are my co-facilitators [*introduce co-facilitators*].
- We're looking forward to building our advocacy skills with you during this workshop. Let's get started!

## Slide 2: Why Are We Here?

# Why Are We Here? What Are We Going To Do?

- Learn how to be effective advocates
- How will we do that?
  - *Group activities and discussions*
  - *Learn and practice advocacy skills*
  - *Improv activities*
  - *Have fun!*



All photos from Healthy Community Living ([www.healthycommunityliving.com](http://www.healthycommunityliving.com)).

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## Facilitator Script

- In this workshop, we will learn skills that will help us be effective advocates.
  - Specifically, we're going to learn about two different skills that we can use to be advocates:
    - Persuasive writing
    - Giving personal testimony
- To learn these skills, we're going to:
  - Do group activities and discussions
  - Learn and practice advocacy skills
  - Do improv games
  - And have fun!

### Slide 3: What Are We Going To Do Today?

What Are We Going To Do Today?

- By the end of this session, we will:
  - *Know why it is important to advocate*
  - *Understand how to be persuasive*
  - *Pick one group advocacy issue*



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#### Facilitator Script

- By the end of this session, we will:
  - Know why it is important to advocate
  - Understand how to be persuasive
  - Have picked one advocacy issue that we will focus on as a group for the rest of the workshop series.

## Slide 4: Icebreaker Activity

### Icebreaker



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- See **Appendix B** for icebreaker activity suggestions.

## Slide 5: Setting Workshop Guidelines

# Setting Workshop Guidelines

- We all have the equal right to feel safe and supported during this workshop
- Remember:
  - *We are ALL responsible for upholding these guidelines during the workshop!*



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### How This Works

- Unlike other workshops, there are no predetermined guidelines for this workshop. Having participants create their own list gives them a sense of control and ownership in the workshop.
  - Tell the group that it doesn't make sense for the facilitator to make the guidelines, because the facilitator is only there to help lead discussions. The group members are the best experts on their lives and what they need to be successful in this workshop.
- In order to have a successful workshop, the group needs to recognize that they are all sharing a space together and that everyone has the equal right to feel safe and supported.
  - Emphasize to the participants that everyone in the room is both a teacher and a student. All are equally responsible for upholding these guidelines during the workshop.
- One facilitator will take notes for the group on the board or easel, and the other facilitators will solicit suggestions from the group, framing them appropriately and suggesting examples.
  - Encourage each participant to share one guideline that will help the workshop be successful.

- If they cannot think of a new guideline, have them share a guideline they support.
  - Examples: agreements about respecting each other; no use of cell phones; no interrupting when someone else is talking; giving positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- Once all the participants have shared or supported a suggested guideline, as a group decide which are the most important.
- Have the group approve and agree to abide by the guidelines.

### **Facilitator Script**

- This is your workshop. As the facilitator, I'm here to provide support and guide discussion. Since you're the experts on what you think will make this workshop successful for you, I want you all to create and set the guidelines.

## Slide 6: What Is Advocacy?



The slide features a title 'What Is Advocacy?' at the top. Below it is a bulleted list with three main items: 'Advocacy is:', 'Self-Advocacy', and 'Group Advocacy'. The first item has a sub-bullet: '- getting what we need and want to achieve our independent living goals'. To the right of the text is a photograph of a woman with glasses and a pink cardigan, sitting in a wheelchair and smiling. The number '6' is in the bottom right corner of the slide.

- Advocacy is:
  - *getting what we need and want to achieve our independent living goals*
- Self-Advocacy
- Group Advocacy



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### Facilitator Script

- What is advocacy?
  - Advocacy helps us get what we need and want in order to achieve our independent living goals.
- There are different ways to be an advocate.
  - When we advocate for ourselves, it's called being a self-advocate.
    - Self-advocacy is standing up for yourself so you can get what you need or want.
    - Self-advocacy is also educating yourself and other people about what you need, want, and what you deserve.
    - Self-advocacy means setting a goal and working through the steps to make it happen, and working through the barriers that make your goal hard.
- We can also advocate for other people, or groups of people that include ourselves.
  - Group advocacy is standing up for what the group wants or needs.
    - It involves the same things as being a self-advocate: standing up for what the group wants, and educating the group and others on what the group needs, wants, and deserves.

## Slide 7: Wait, What's Improv?

# Wait, What's Improv?

- Short for improvisational theater
- Participants don't use a script and make it up as they go
- Participants pay attention to each other and interact in ways that keep the performance going



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### Facilitator Script

- Improv is short for improvisational theater
  - Improv is a form of theater where the participants don't use a script, and make it up as they go.
    - In improv, participants pay attention to each other and interact in ways that keep the performance going.
    - One way to remember this is to say "Yes, and..." instead of "no" when someone else does something.
      - For example, if Person A says, "The sky is purple" and then Person B says "No it's not," that shuts down the conversation. But if Person B instead said "Yes it is, and the clouds are green. Do you think we're stuck inside a kindergartner's painting? Or a video game?" then the scene can keep going.
  - The most important thing to remember is that there are no right or wrong answers in improv!
    - There's no script, so no one can say you're doing it right or wrong—no one knows!

## Slide 8: Improv example

### Improv Example: *Whose Line Is It Anyway: Super Heroes*



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- Example of improv: Whose Line Is It Anyway: Super Heroes
  - Slide contains a link to a video from YouTube, a clip from the TV show “Whose Line Is It Anyway,” of a segment called Super Heroes where the comedians perform a skit where they are super heroes with super powers as suggested by the audience.
  - 03:15 minutes long

## Slide 9: What Does Improv Have To Do With Advocacy?

What Does Improv Have To Do With Advocacy?

- Communication and public speaking skills
- Think on our feet
- Engage with other people's ideas
- Overcome "Approval/Disapproval Syndrome"



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### Facilitator Script

- What does improv have to do with advocacy?
  - Improv can help us:
    - Work on communication and public speaking skills
    - Help us think on our feet
    - Learn how to engage with other people's ideas
    - Overcome "Approval/Disapproval Syndrome"
      - **Approval/Disapproval Syndrome** is when someone tells themselves that they shouldn't do something because they don't want someone else, like a teacher or someone in charge, or their friends or peers, to say no, or because they're scared it will change how people think about them.
      - It's when we get in our own way and hold ourselves back because of self-doubt.
      - When you do improv, you react or respond without having enough time to worry about whether it pleases the audience, director, teacher, or your peers.

- Improv is acting on instincts, and it allows your hidden strengths to shine through without you getting in your own way.
- All of those are skills that can help you be an effective advocate.

### **Discussion Questions**

- What does it mean to “get in your own way?”
- Would anyone like to share an example of a time that happened to them?
  - To start the discussion, one of the facilitators could provide a personal example.

## Slide 10: That Sounds Scary.

That Sounds Scary.  
I Don't Know If I Want To Do That.

- We grow when we're pushed outside of our comfort zones
- Workshop guidelines help us feel safe and supported



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### Facilitator Script

- The point of improv is to push us out of our comfort zone a little bit.
  - We grow when we're pushed out of our comfort zones
    - “We all enjoy sitting on the couch watching our favorite movie, but very rarely do we grow in those moments. We're comfortable, but we're not growing.”  
Quote by Mike Beers of BASE.
- Remember: there are no right or wrong answers in improv!
  - We all need to be willing to try something without worrying about if it doesn't make sense or what others think about us.
- The workshop guidelines we established earlier will help us all feel safe and supported so we can push beyond our comfort zones during this workshop.
- Learning how to do improv is just like when we learned how to talk\* as babies—at first, we said some pretty funny-sounding things that didn't make a lot of sense, but with practice we got better, and now we can effectively communicate.

*\*Modify example as needed, depending on workshop participants. For example, change “talk” to “communicate” if there are non-verbal participants.*

## Slide 11: Getting Started: Identifying Advocacy Issues

### Getting Started: Identifying Advocacy Issues

- Problems vs Issues
  - *Problems*
    - Personal want or need
  - *Issues*
    - Overall barrier that needs to be changed to solve the problem



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### Facilitator Script

- Before we learn advocacy skills, we need to figure out why we should advocate, and how to figure out when we should advocate.
- To do this, we can break things down into **problems** vs **issues**
  - A **problem** is my want or need.
  - The **issue** is what is keeping me from being able to get what I want or need. It's a larger systemic barrier that needs to be changed in order to solve the problem.
    - Example 1: In the school cafeteria.
      - The **problem** is that I can't eat lunch with my friends in the cafeteria.
      - The **issue** is that the cafeteria lunch tables are not accessible for those who use wheelchairs or other mobility equipment.
    - Example 2: Picture on slide 11 of man using a wheelchair not able to get out of his van because the car in the next parking space parked in the access aisle.
      - The **problem** is the man can't get out of his van to go where he wants.
      - The **issue** is that some people are not aware of what happens when they block access aisles in van accessible parking spaces and don't

understand that their laziness or inattention in not parking properly prevents others from fully participating in the community.

- Usually it's easier to figure out the problem first, and then figure out the issue that needs to be addressed so the problem is solved.
- Sometimes it's hard to figure out what the issue is. Talking to our friends, peers, or other people we trust can help us figure out the issue that is at the root of our problem.

## Slide 12: When Should I Advocate?

When Should I Advocate?

- 4 Step Advocacy Checklist
  - 1. Gut Check
  - 2. Passion Level
  - 3. What do you know about it?
  - 4. Check in with someone you trust (if you can)



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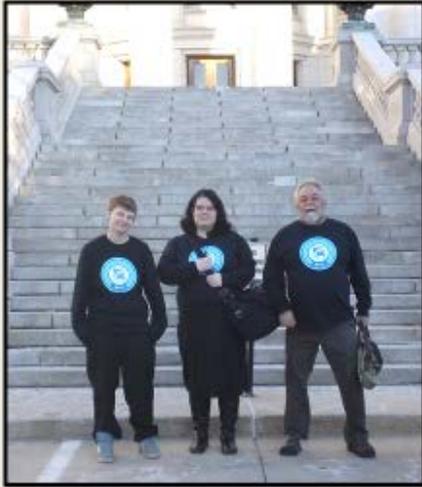
### Facilitator Script

- To decide when to advocate, use Mary Olson's handy-dandy 4 Step Advocacy Checklist:
  1. Gut Check
    - a. Does what is happening feel icky to you?
  2. Passion Level
    - a. Is it important to you? Do you feel strongly about it?
  3. What do you know about it?
    - a. Is it wrong? Do you know someone is breaking a rule or law, or violating your personal rights?
  4. Check in with someone you trust (if you can)
    - a. Sometimes advocacy needs to happen immediately and you can't check in, but if you have the time, talk to someone you trust and see if they also think it is wrong. Do they know more about it?

## Slide 13: How Can We Be Advocates?

# How Can We Be Advocates?

- Two ways to advocate:
  - *Persuasive Writing*
  - *Personal Testimony*



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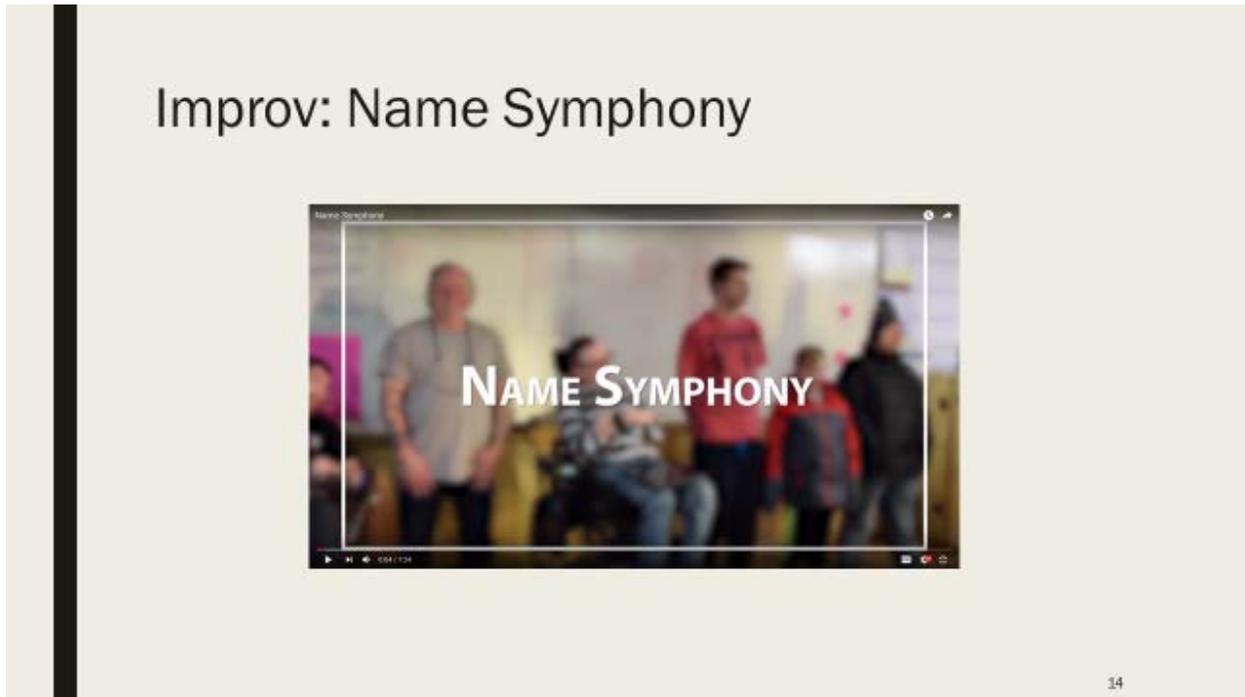
### Facilitator Script

- In this workshop, we'll learn the skills we need to advocate for ourselves and others by using persuasive writing and personal testimony. We're going to focus on two different types of advocating:
  - **Persuasive Writing** is writing a letter to communicate your interests and feelings about a particular issue with decision makers in your community.
  - **Personal Testimony** is speaking at a public hearing so that decision makers understand how a proposed change will directly affect the lives of people living in the community.

### Discussion Questions

- Why should we be advocates?
- What can happen if we don't advocate for ourselves or for others in our community?
- What happens if people don't know what we need or want?

## Slide 14: Name Symphony



**Link to demonstration video:** [Name Symphony Improv Demonstration](#)

- Video starts at minute 5 with beginning of activity demonstration.

### **How This Works:**

- Groups of up to 10 form a line facing the facilitator.
  - If more participants are in the “audience,” the group will face out, toward the audience.
  - Extra facilitators will be called on first to demonstrate the *Name Symphony*.
- The facilitator will point at one person and they will say their name.
  - Encourage the person to be bold, loud, silly, or whatever they feel – but to participate actively based on their strengths.
  - As they point at each person, the facilitator will use different hand movements and positions to indicate that the person should say their name louder, quieter, at a higher/lower pitch, or to repeat continuously.

- These movements should be as simple as holding the hand up for higher pitch, down for lower pitch, using both hands spread wide to indicate “louder” or circling hands in the air to indicate “repeat.”
  - Encouraging participants to repeat and not stop while the facilitator builds the symphony can be a challenge; be aware that some participants might need to be encouraged multiple times to keep repeating themselves.
  - Any other movement can be “discovered” to mean some change in tone or pitch during the symphony itself. Be creative, and encourage participants to do the same.
- Repeat with each person in the line individually.
- Once each person has individually said their name, the facilitator announces, “The instruments have been warmed up, we will now begin the Symphony.”
- The facilitator then points again to each person to get them going, and creates overlaps of people saying their own names, to the point where everyone is saying their name in a “Symphony.”
- Suggestion for ending activity: after “conducting” the *Name Symphony* for a few minutes, facilitator encourages everyone to get as loud as they can (crescendo to a high point) and then suddenly silences the group. Then select one participant to give a final “solo.”
- The goal is of course not to sound good, but to encourage participation and to have the participants say their name with confidence.
  - Laughter at this point will help you throughout the rest of the workshop.

**Accommodations:**

- For deaf or non-verbal participants, offer the option of performing a movement instead of speaking their name.
- For blind/low-vision participants, have a facilitator nearby to provide the individual with vocal cues, or give the commands by touch.
  - For example, a touch to the upper arm to indicate higher pitch, a touch to the lower arm for lower pitch, etc.

- When offering accommodations, it is important not to single anyone out, especially for this first activity. Therefore, offer any accommodations to everyone.
  - For example, if you are providing the option of performing a movement instead of speaking their name for one participant, offer this to all the participants, or offer the option to both speak and do a movement.

**Adjustment for a larger group:**

- Create groups of 6 to 10 and ask that as a group they come up with one word to say.
  - Suggest that each group come up with one word about their school or youth group, or something like their favorite color or cartoon character.
- Substitute a group for an individual, and go through the activity as described above.

## Slide 15: What Is Being Persuasive?

# What Is Being Persuasive?

- **Being persuasive** is trying to convince somebody to:
  - *Think a certain way*
  - *Do something*
  - *Not do something*
- A **decision maker** is a person who decides things

A photograph showing a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a black top, sitting at a wooden desk. She is looking towards a man sitting across from her. The man is wearing a maroon sweater and glasses. They appear to be in a professional or office setting, possibly a meeting or consultation. The desk has some papers and a pen holder on it. The background is a plain wall with some papers pinned to it.

15

### Facilitator Script

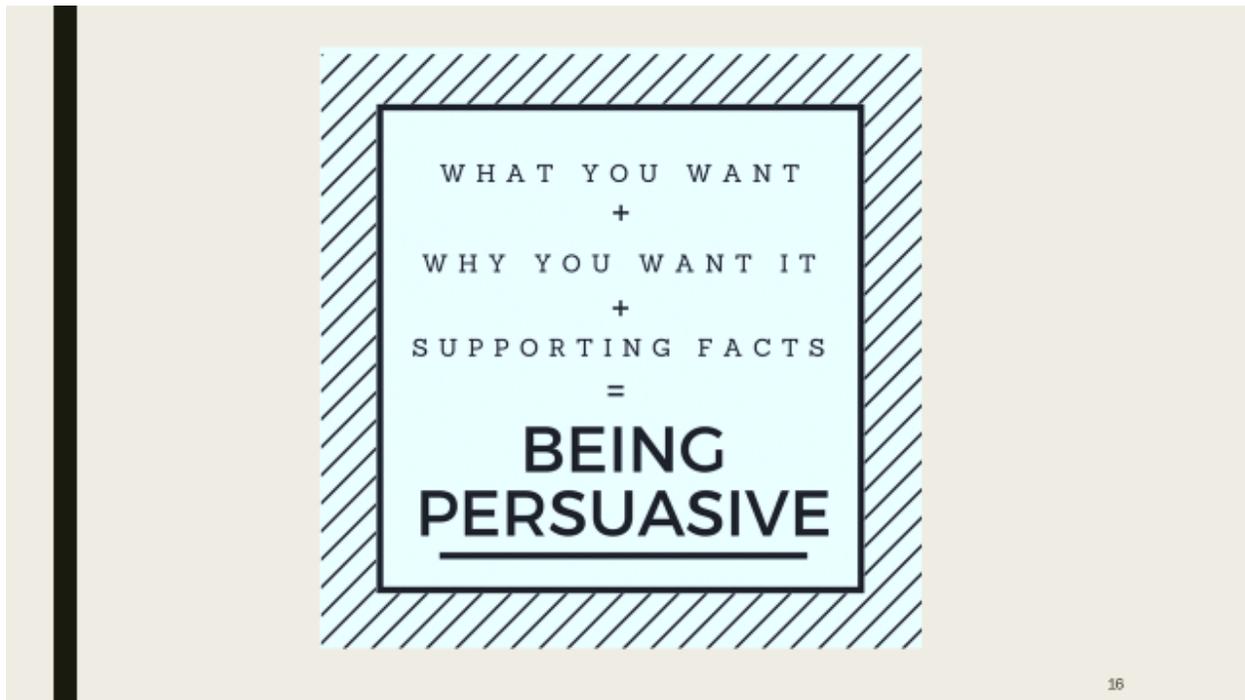
- Being persuasive is part of advocating for yourself and for others.
- Being persuasive means you are trying to convince somebody (a decision maker) to do one of three things:
  - Think a certain way
  - Do something
  - Not do something
- A decision maker is a person who decides things. They are the person you are trying to persuade.
  - Everyone is a decision maker. Which decision maker you are trying to persuade depends on the advocacy issue you are addressing.
    - Sometimes the decision maker is a person who is in charge, like your parents, a teacher, school principal, or city mayor.

- Sometimes the decision makers are a group of people, like a city council, a school board, or a group of friends.

### **Discussion Questions**

- What are some decisions or choices that you make for yourself?
  - Examples: I choose what I wear to school. I choose what I want to eat for breakfast.
- What are some decisions or choices that other people make for you?
  - Examples: My mom chooses what I eat for dinner and when I go to bed. My teacher decides how much time I have to take a test.
- Who makes those decisions for you?
- What are some decisions or choices that you want to make for yourself that you don't already?
- Who is the decision maker you would need to talk to about that decision or choice you want to make?

## Slide 16: How to Be Persuasive



### Facilitator Script

- **How to Be Persuasive**

- First, say what you want or need and why you want or need it.
  - Ask for what you want or need and say why:
    - “I need/want [blank] because it is hard for me to [blank].”
- Then, if you can, add some supporting facts to help make your case stronger. These could be laws or rules, or they could be more details about this issue affects you personally.

- **Make It Personal**

- Making your advocacy personal helps decision makers to see how the issue directly affects people.
  - It is important to make sure you say how and why the issue is important to you, and to make your feelings about it clear. Otherwise, the decision maker won't know what you want them to do.

- Many times the decision makers are separated from the effects of their decisions, and don't know the harm or good those decisions can cause.
  - This is especially true when the decision makers are politicians, like the governor, mayor, or another other elected official.

### **Discussion Questions**

- What does it mean to be persuasive?
- Can you think of any examples of being persuasive?
- Why is it important to make our advocacy personal?

## Slide 17: Skills to Help Us Advocate

# Skills To Help Us Advocate

- Persuasive Writing
  - *A letter you write to a decision maker*
- Personal Testimony
  - *A speech you read aloud to a decision maker*



17

### Facilitator Script

- Persuasive Writing and Personal Testimony are two different tools that help us advocate.
  - Both contain the same parts, but they are presented in different ways.
  - **Persuasive Writing** is a letter you write to a decision maker.
  - **Personal Testimony** is a speech you read aloud to a decision maker.

## Slide 18: Optional Short Write

### Activity: Short Write



18

### How This Works

- Pass out *Short Write* worksheet.
- Everyone in the group writes a short (2 to 4 sentences) persuasive writing piece about a fun or silly example. Choose something that your group finds engaging.
  - Suggestions:
    - Why we should/should not have a dinosaur as a class pet.
    - Why chocolate is better than vanilla (or vice versa).
    - Why we should/should not eat ice cream for breakfast.
- Encourage participants to share what they have written aloud.

### Modification

- Instead of a short write, do activity as a group discussion, with one facilitator writing on the board or easel and the other two directing the discussion.

## Slide 19: Picking an Advocacy Focus

# Picking An Advocacy Focus



- Is there anything at your school or in your community that you'd like to change?
- Is there something you're worried about at your school or at work?
- In your community, what issues do you care about? What issues bother you?

19

### How This Works

- As a group, brainstorm a list of different advocacy issues. Encourage everyone to share an issue they care about.
  - This may require some encouragement as the workshop transitions into real-world topics.
  - It may be easier to start with identifying individual problems, and then working together as a group to identify the underlying issue that would solve the problem.
- One facilitator will write the proposed advocacy issues on the board/easel, and the other two will lead and help focus the group discussion.

### Discussion Questions

- Is there anything at your school [or CIL, community, etc.] that you'd like to change?
- Is there something that you're happy or worried about in your school [or other location]?
- In your community, what issues do you care about? What issues bother you?

## Slide 20: Focus On One Topic

### Focus On One Topic



20

### How This Works

- Conduct a group vote to decide which advocacy issue the group will focus on for the remainder of the workshop.
- Acknowledge that all are important issues, but that you don't have time to go through them all in the workshop.
- Each participant gets 2 votes. Make accommodations as necessary.

## Slide 21: Brainstorm on Topic

# Brainstorm On Topic

- Why is our issue important?
- How does this issue affect your life and the lives of others in our community?
- What are the problems within this issue?
- What are the most important things to focus on?
- What needs to change?
- What might a solution be? What do you want someone to do?



21

### How This Works

- Together as a group, brainstorm on your selected topic and begin to draft a persuasive letter.
- Have one facilitator write notes on the board while the others lead and help direct the discussion.
- You could pass out the **Getting Started** worksheet to help with this process.

### Discussion Questions

- Why is this issue important?
- How does this issue affect your life and the lives of others in our community?
- What are the problems within this issue?
- What are the most important things to focus on?
- What needs to change?
- What might a solution be? What do you want someone to do to resolve this issue?

## Homework assignment for next session

- Pass out **Getting Started** worksheet
  - Before they leave, have everyone write down the group issue in the space at the top of the worksheet.
    - If able, post the topic online or email it to participants who need it in digital format.
  - As homework, have participants consider the list of questions on the worksheet.

# Audience, Resources, and Tone

## Session 2

### Facilitator's Overview

This session covers how to identify the appropriate audience for advocacy, how to identify resources who can help provide information to support a position or provide other help, and discusses tone and how different tones can affect how the message gets across to its intended audience.



### Workshop Length

- Including all activities: 90 minutes

### Materials Needed

- Session 2 Presentation Slides (PowerPoint format) and computer projector
- Way for facilitators to take notes during group discussions
  - Suggestions: a white board or chalkboard; a large pad of paper on an easel in the front of the room; a computer hooked up to a projector
- Copies of the *Audience, Resources, and Tone* worksheet in standard and appropriate alternative formats
- For optional *What and Because* activity:
  - Two pieces of paper per participant
  - Writing utensils
  - Two containers to put strips of paper into, such as hats, baskets, or a small box

## **Session Introduction**

Advocacy can help us get what we want and/or need in order to achieve our independent living goals. The last workshop session discussed how to be persuasive. In this session, participants will continue that discussion and talk about audience, the resources that can be used to help with advocacy, and what tone to use in persuasive writing and personal testimony.

- Icebreaker activity

## **Review**

Recap the major points from the last session.

- Review the group guidelines established in Session 1.
- Being persuasive means trying to convince somebody to think a certain way or to do or not do something.
- Two ways to be persuasive in advocacy are persuasive writing and personal testimony.
- It is important to share your personal story because this helps decision makers see how the issue directly affects people.
- Review the issue chosen by the group in Session 1.

## **Session Focus**

You can put a lot of thought and effort into writing a letter or preparing personal testimony, but if it doesn't reach the right people it might not be effective and cause change.

By the end of this session, participants will know how to identify who the appropriate audience is for their persuasive writing or personal testimony, who they can contact for help gathering information or to help with advocacy, and what tone or tones are appropriate to use.

## **Improv activities**

- Tone Symphony
- Debate (optional)

## Discussion questions

- Why is this issue important to you? How does it affect your life?
- Who do we need to talk to? Who is appropriate to talk to about this issue?
- Who can help us gather information about this issue?
- What tone or tones should we use to be the most effective in our advocacy?

## Definitions

- **Audience:** the decision makers you need to contact about an issue.
- **Resources:** people, groups, and places like online that can help you gather information about an issue or help you advocate.
- **Tone:** the attitude of a writer or speaker toward a subject or an audience. Tone comes across through word choice and the viewpoint of the writer/speaker.

## Examples of Audience, Resources, and Tone

- **Want/Need at home:** Persuading your mom to let you go to the movies.
  - **Audience:** Your mom.
  - **Resources:** Youth groups and peer-support groups, like [BASE Missoula](#); self-advocacy resources, like [Self-Advocacy Online](#).
  - **Tones to use:** Happy, informative, direct, informal, assertive.
- **Want/Need at school:** Persuading your teacher to follow your IEP.
  - **Audience:** Your teacher, and maybe the principal or other school administrators and your tutors.
  - **Resources:** [Centers for Independent Living](#), like [Summit Independent Living](#) in Montana; [Self-Advocacy Online](#); Montana Youth Transitions' [Steps to Self-Advocacy factsheet](#).
  - **Tones to use:** Informative, direct, formal, assertive.

- **Want/Need in the community:** Testifying before the local city council about accessibility in a proposed building.
  - **Audience:** Elected city officials; members of your community; paid city staff.
  - **Resources:** [Rural Institute For Inclusive Communities](#) and [RTC:Rural](#) at the University of Montana; [National Council on Independent Living \(NCIL\)](#); [Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living \(APRIL\)](#); [National Disability Rights Network](#), like [Disability Rights Montana](#); [Community Tool Box](#).
  - **Tones to use:** Informative, direct, formal, assertive.

## Workshop content and breaks

Proceed through the session, covering all major points. Allow enough time to complete the exercises and to take breaks.

## Tips

- **Improv activities:** Keep in mind that for improv there are no right or wrong answers. This is the main factor in the success of using improvisation in teaching—each student will approach the activity differently, according to his or her strengths.
  - Encourage applause after each game or activity. It is a good way to show the participants that their participation, no matter what level, is supported and valued.
- **Advocacy Resources:** It would be helpful to provide participants with a list of local advocacy group recourses. **Appendix C** includes a list of advocacy organizations and groups who may be good resources to contact for more information or help with the group’s issue.
- **Rules for Fighting Fair:** See **Appendix A** for “Rules for Fighting Fair” and a list of “Fouls” that can be referenced during the Debate activity.
- **Taking notes:** Make sure to keep a record of the group discussion notes during each workshop session. You will want to refer to them in later sessions. In Session 2, it is especially important to write down the audience for the issue, resources to contact for more information or help, and notes from the group brainstorm.

## Wrap Up

Recap the major points and highlight what is coming up.

- For advocacy to be most effective, it needs to reach the right audience.
- There are many local and national resources to use to get more information to support advocacy.
- The tone or tones used in persuasive writing and personal testimony can affect how well the message gets across. A letter that is aggressive won't make the audience want to help.
- Review progress made during group brainstorm.



# Session 2 Workshop Slides

12 total slides

## Slide 1: Audience, Resources, and Tone



### Facilitator Script

- Welcome to Session 2 of our Advocacy Skill Building Workshop, I'm glad you're all here with me today.
- My name is [*your name here*], and these are my co-facilitators [*introduce co-facilitators*].
- Let's get started with Session 2!

## Slide 2: Why Are We Here?

Why Are We Here?  
What Are We Going To Do?

- How to be effective advocates
- Today, we're going to learn about:
  - *Audience*
  - *Resources*
  - *Tone*
- Draft our group letter



2

### Facilitator Script

- Advocacy can help us get what we want or need in order to achieve our independent living goals.
- In the last workshop session, we learned about being persuasive.
- In this session, we will continue that discussion and then talk about:
  - The **audience**, or who we will write letters to or give personal testimony to.
  - **Resources** we can use to help us with our advocacy.
  - What **tone** we should use in our letters and personal testimony.

### Slide 3: Icebreaker Activity

## Icebreaker



- See **Appendix B** for Icebreaker activity suggestions.

## Slide 4: Review

Review

- Workshop Guidelines
- Being persuasive is...
- Persuasive writing
- Personal testimony
- Group advocacy issue



4

### Facilitator Script

- Review workshop guidelines established in Session 1.
- Being persuasive means trying to convince a decision maker to think a certain way, or to do or not do something.
- There are three parts to being persuasive:
  - First, say what you want or need.
  - Second, why you want or need it.
  - Third, support your want or need with facts.
- It is important to make sure you say how and why the issue is important to you, and to make your feelings about it clear. Otherwise, the decision maker won't know why you want them to do something about the issue.
- **Persuasive Writing** is writing a letter to communicate your interests and feelings about a particular issue with a decision maker in your community.

- **Personal Testimony** is speaking at a public hearing so that decision makers understand how a proposed change will directly affect the lives of people living in the community.
- Review homework from Session 1, on the **Getting Started** worksheet.

### Discussion Questions

- What are the three parts of being persuasive?
- Who has an example of being persuasive?
- In the example, can we ID the three parts?
  - What did the person want or need?
  - Why did they want or need it?
  - What were the supporting facts?

## Slide 5: Optional Activity: What and Because

### Activity: What and Because



5

#### How This Works

- Give each participant two pieces of paper.
- On the first paper, have them write a “what” statement—something that they want or need.
  - For example, “I want cheese,” or “I want people at school to stop being mean to me.”
  - If you want to focus on advocacy, encourage the participants to write a problem or issue “what” statement.
- On the second paper, have them write a “because” statement—any statement or answer that starts with the word “because.” The answer does not have to relate to the “what” statement.
  - For example, “Because I’m hungry,” or “Because the sky is blue.”
- In the front of the room, have two containers, one for each type of statement.
- Have the participants fold their papers in half and drop their statement in the corresponding container.

- One of the facilitators will mix up the responses in each container, and then the participants will take turns drawing one statement from each. They will then read aloud the two statements/parts of a persuasive argument.
  - Let as many participants have a turn as time allows (ideally all).

### **Modifications:**

- With a large group/mobility/dexterity issues: come up with statements by table/small group, and then put into hat. One person in the group (or a facilitator) writes; the others help come up with sentences.
  - If participants need accommodations, encourage them to self-advocate and tell facilitator or a peer what they need.

### **Modification to avoid writing (or reading) and needing supplies:**

- Separate full group into smaller groups.
- Assign each small group one of the statement types. Have them as a group come up with a statement.
  - Keep groups small to encourage participation.
- Go around the room sharing statements, combining into one persuasive sentence.

### **Discussion Questions**

- What happens when the “because” statement doesn’t match the “what” statement?
- Do all the “because” statements fit with the different “what” statements?
- Why is it important to make sure the “what” and “because” statements make sense together?
- What happens if there is only a “what” statement with no “because” statement?

## Slide 6: Figuring Out Our Audience

# Figuring Out Our Audience

- Audience
  - *the decision makers we need to contact about an issue*



6

### Facilitator Script

- Knowing who to contact about a certain issue is important. If your message doesn't reach the right people, it will not be effective and you will not get the change that you want.
- Your **audience** are the decision makers you need to write or talk to about your issue.
  - Some issues might have only one audience, but others might have more than one.
  - Sometimes audiences are a single person, and sometimes audiences are made of a mix of people.

### How This Works

- As a group, list different audiences for the chosen group advocacy issue.
- One facilitator will take notes on the board; the others will lead and help focus the group discussion.

## Discussion Questions

- Who is appropriate to contact about a certain issue?
  - Should you contact the President of the United States if you want to go to the movies on Friday night? What about your school principal? Or should you talk to your parents?
- Who is the audience for our chosen workshop issue?

## Slide 7: Figuring Out Our Resources

# Figuring Out Our Resources

- Resources
  - *people or groups that can help us gather information about an issue or help us advocate*



7

### Facilitator Script

- Sometimes you might want or need help to come up with supporting facts to make your persuasive writing more effective.
  - It's good to know who you can contact in your community to help you.
- Resources are the people or groups who can help us gather information about an issue, or help us advocate.

### Discussion Questions

- Who can help us gather information about our issue?

## Slide 8: Introduction to Tone

# Introduction to Tone

- Two types of persuasive writing/personal testimony
  - *Positive*
  - *Negative*
- Tone
  - *the attitude of the a writer or speaker toward a subject or audience*



8

### Facilitator Script

- There are two types of persuasive writing or personal testimony you can give:
  - **Positive:** in agreement with a decision or a proposal
  - **Negative:** against, or opposed, to a decision or proposal
- What type and what you want to say in your writing or testimony will help you decide what kind of tone you want to use.
- Tone is the attitude of a writer or speaker toward a subject or their audience.
  - In other words, it's how the writer or speaker feels about what they are writing or talking about.
  - Tone isn't just words you say or write. It also comes across with your body language.

## Slide 9: Examples of Tone

### Examples of Tone

- Happy
- Sad
- Angry
- Frustrated
- Confused
- Confident
- Uncaring
- Defensive
- Mean
- Polite
- Rude



9

### Facilitator Script

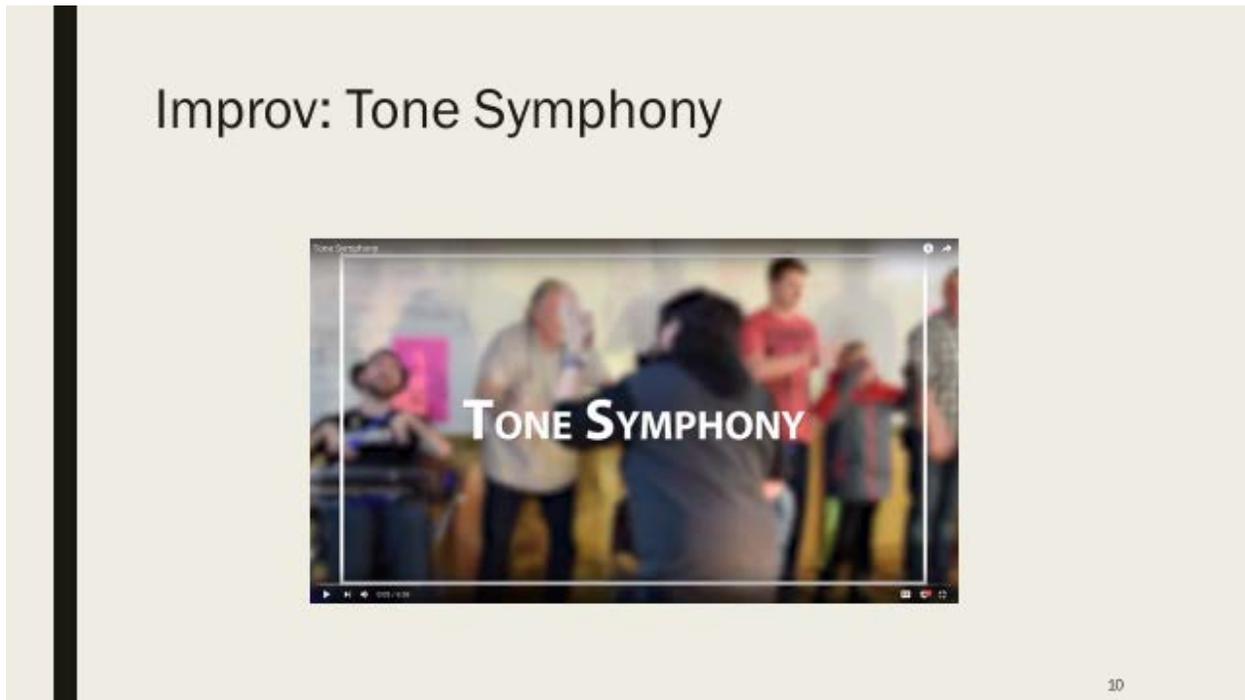
- Depending on our audience, we might use different tones.
- Anger is often a motivating reason why people want to write persuasive letters or give personal testimony, but if we speak with anger and hostility in our voices or word choices, it can make it hard for our audience to listen to our perspective and take us seriously.
  - It is good to express anger calmly and clearly, and then clearly explain why you feel that way.
  - If your word choice makes it sound like you're yelling or being mean, try to find different words to use instead.
- One good way to decide on an effective tone is to figure out how you are feeling and why you feel that way before you decide what you want to write or say.
  - One technique is to write two letters.
    - In the first letter, say everything you're thinking about the issue. This is a good place to express anger, or to vent. No one will see this letter, so don't worry about tone.

- If we don't give ourselves the opportunity to get the hurt feelings and anger out so we are aware of them, it is harder to keep them from creeping into our advocacy initiatives.
- In the second letter, think carefully about your tone. Try to write more calmly and clearly. Are your statements clear and persuasive, or are you attacking or hurting the person you are trying to persuade? Will your statements help your cause?
- Remember: tone isn't just written or spoken words, it's also conveyed with body language.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Is our group letter a positive or negative letter?
- What are different tones that we could use in our letter?
  - Generate a list of all possible tones. As a group, you will narrow down which to use after next activity.
  - Make sure to define and provide examples of any unfamiliar tones. This could be done as a brief demonstration by the facilitators, or by the participants.
- Other than through word choice, what are other ways that people convey tone?
  - If you're giving personal testimony, how do you convey tone?

## Slide 10: Tone Symphony



**Link to demonstration video:** [Tone Symphony Improv Demonstration.](#)

- Video starts at minute 1:38 with beginning of activity demonstration.

### How This Works

- Very similar to *Name Symphony*, but each participant will say a phrase instead of their name, and each participant will be assigned a different tone in which to say their phrase.
  - Use a phrase related to the advocacy issue brought up in the group discussion or something of interest to the group.
  - Example: “I want,” or “bullying” or “bus stop.”
- Groups of up to 10 form a line facing the facilitator.
  - If more participants are in the “audience,” the group will face out, towards the audience.
  - Extra facilitators will demonstrate the *Tone Symphony*.

- Each participant will be assigned a tone. Tones can be assigned either by the facilitator or by asking the group for suggestions.
  - Examples:
    - Happy
    - Sad
    - Angry
    - Aggressive, combative, hostile, mean
    - Confused
    - Confident
    - Defensive
    - Polite
    - Formal, proper (how you talk to the principal)
    - Informal (casual, using slang; how you talk to your friends)
    - Shy
    - Silly
    - Ditsy, spacy
    - Frightened
    - Embarrassed
    - Direct
    - Rude, mocking (making fun of someone)
    - Passive, apathetic, uncaring
- The facilitator will point at one participant and they will say their phrase in their assigned tone.
- Repeat with each participant individually.
- Once each person has individually said their phrase in their assigned tone, the facilitator announces, “The instruments have been warmed up, we will now begin the Symphony.”
- The facilitator then points again to each person to get them going, and creates overlaps of participants saying their phrase, to the point where everyone is speaking in a “Symphony.”
- The goal of course is not to sound good, but to encourage participation.

**Accommodations:**

- For deaf or non-verbal participants, offer the option of performing a movement instead of speaking the phrase.
- For blind/low-vision participants, have a facilitator nearby to provide the individual with vocal cues, or give the commands by touch.
- When offering accommodations, it is important not to single anyone out. Therefore, offer any accommodations to everyone.
  - For example, if you are providing the option of performing a movement instead of speaking for one participant, offer this to all the participants, or offer the option to both speak and do a movement.

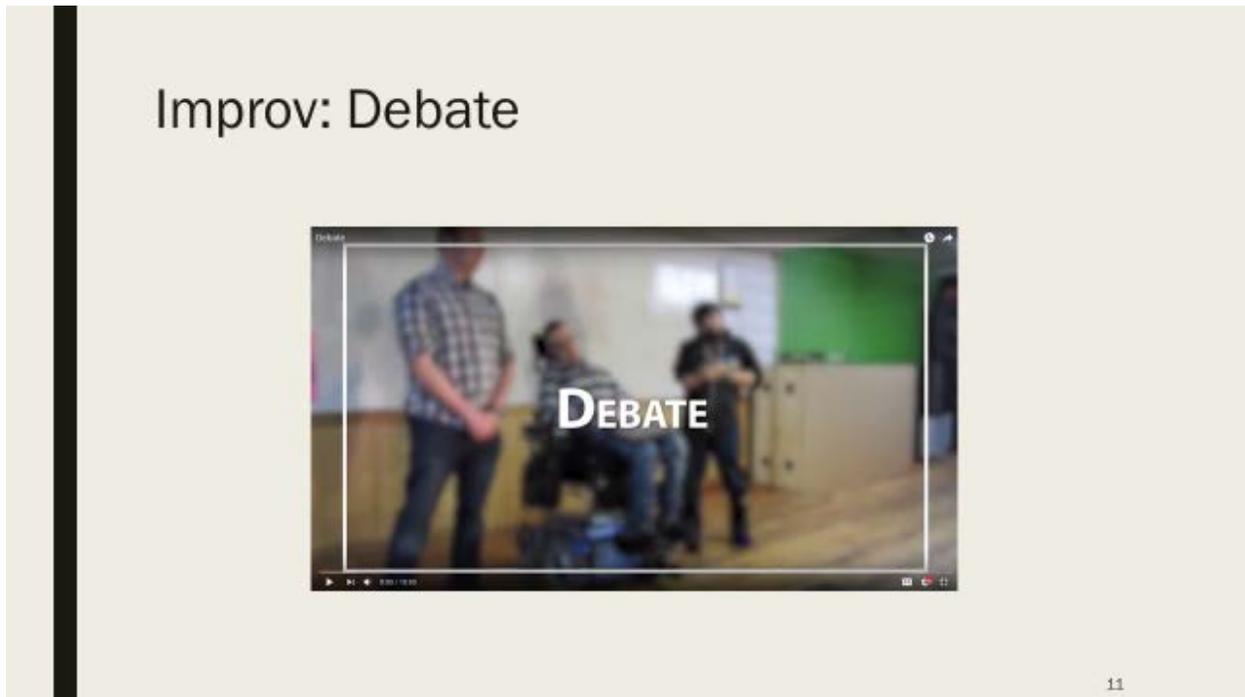
**Adjustment for a larger group:**

- Create groups of 6 to 10 and ask that as a group they come up with one word to say.
  - Suggest that each group come up with one word about their school or youth group, or something like their favorite color or cartoon character.
- Substitute a group or table for an individual, and go through the activity as described above.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What did you notice about the different tones?
- How effective would each tone be?
- Which tone or tones are best if you want someone to take you seriously?
- What tones should you avoid using if you don't want to hurt someone's feelings or make them angry?

## Slide 11: Optional Activity: Debate



**Link to demonstration video:** [Debate Improv Demonstration.](#)

- Video starts at minute 6:22 with beginning of activity demonstration.

### How This Works

- The three facilitators line up in the front of the room to debate about an agreed upon topic. Choose a topic that is silly, and that your group will find engaging.
  - Suggestions:
    - Why we should/should not have a dinosaur as a class pet.
    - Why chocolate is better than vanilla (and vice versa).
    - Why we should/should not eat ice cream for breakfast.
- One facilitator will be for, one against, and the third will moderate.
  - If you only have two facilitators, one of the class participants can be a moderator, or the debate can be done without a moderator.
- If time is running short, an option is to debate the groups' chosen advocacy issue.

- Ideally this activity would comprise of at least two rounds, the first being a silly example, the second with a more serious advocacy topic.
- There are three rounds to the debate. Each round is held in a different tone.
  - The three tones should illustrate a lesson (see suggested examples below).
- The moderator announces each round, and says which tone will be used in each.
  - First round: passive (unconfident, uncaring, meek, shy)
    - What the facilitators should convey:
      - Confused; mumbling; it's not clear what their points are; body language could be slumped shoulders, head turned to side, looking down at the ground and not at the speaker/not making eye contact (\*see note); fiddling with hands/papers/cell phone excessively.
  - Second round: aggressive and angry
    - What the facilitators should convey:
      - Insulting their opponent and their view; not listening to what the other person has to say and only making their own points; points not well thought-out; yelling; body language could be intimidating, motioning at other side with arms, pointing, etc.
  - Third round: assertive and direct
    - What the facilitators should convey:
      - Introduce themselves; acknowledge and thank the other person for being there; present their case clearly and articulately; consider the opposite side; respectfully disagree; are calm and considerate; body language could be confident, standing tall and relatively still (not excessively fiddling with their hands/papers/cell phone), looking at the moderator and person they are addressing.
- After each round, discuss with the participants what they noticed about each tone. Was that tone effective and persuasive? What about the tone made it effective or not effective?

- See **Appendix A** for “Rules for Fighting Fair” and a list of “Fouls.”

**\*Note about cultural context and eye contact:**

- Eye contact is not always appropriate to emphasize as an important part of public speaking. In some cultures, as with Plains Indians tribes in Montana, eye contact is a sign of disrespect, especially with an elder.
- Eye contact can also be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for people who have an autism spectrum disorder.
- Emphasize other types of body language, such as trying not to fidget too much, not playing with your cell phone or papers, and speaking clearly and calmly.

**Discussion Questions**

- Which round was the most effective or convincing?
- What did you notice about tone?
- What did you notice about body language?
- What wasn't effective, or good, about the passive round? The aggressive round?
- Is it easy to listen to someone when they are using an aggressive tone (like when they are yelling at you)? What tones do you find the easiest to listen to?
- If you want someone to do something for you, is it better to ask politely or to yell at them?

## Slide 12: Group Brainstorm

# Group Brainstorm

- Who is our audience?
- What does our audience need to know?
- What resources can we contact for more information?
- Are we writing a positive or negative letter?
- What tone or tones should we use?



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### How This Works

- Together as a group, brainstorm on your selected topic and continue to draft your group letter.
- Have one facilitator write notes on the board or easel while the others lead and help direct the discussion.
- Could pass out **Audience, Resources, and Tone** worksheet to help with this process.

### Discussion Questions

- Who is the audience for our issue?
- What does our audience need to know about this issue?
- What resources can we contact for more information about our issue?
- Are we writing a positive or negative letter?
- What tone or tones should we use when we write about this issue?

## Homework assignment for next session

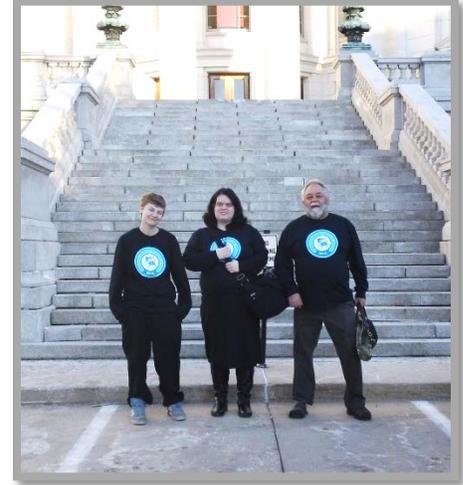
- Pass out ***Audience, Resources, and Tone*** worksheet

# Putting It All Together

## Session 3

### Facilitator's Overview

This session provides the space to put the advocacy skills acquired in the previous sessions to work and make a finalized draft of the group letter.



### Materials Needed

- Session 3 Presentation Slides (PowerPoint format) and computer projector
- Way for facilitators to take notes during group discussions.
  - Suggestions: a white board or chalkboard; a large pad of paper on an easel in the front of the room; a computer hooked up to a projector
- Two copies per participant of the *Drafting Your Letter* worksheet
- Optional: *Persuasive Writing Tips to Help Get Started* handout
- *How-To Guide, Writing Effective Letters to Decision Makers*
- *How-To Guide: Creating Your Personal Testimony to Influence Policy Change*

### Introduction

Advocacy can help people get what they want and/or need in order to achieve their independent living goals. In the last workshop session, participants learned about how to figure out the audience for their advocacy, how to identify resources to help gather information about the issue or provide other help, and how different tones can affect how their message gets across. In this session, participants will put their new persuasive writing skills to work and finish the group letter.

- Icebreaker activity

## **Review**

Recap the major points from the last session.

- Review the group rules established in Session 1.
- Review the issue chosen by the group in Session 1.
- Review group brainstorming from Session 2.
- It is important to share a personal story because this helps decision makers see how policies will affect individuals and their ability to do the things they want and need to do.
- Knowing who to contact about a certain issue is important. If the message doesn't reach the right people, it will not be effective.
- There are local and national resources to go to for more information about issues or for other help with our advocacy.
- The tones used in interactions with others can make the message more or less persuasive and effective.

## **Session focus**

Over the course of this workshop series, participants learned what it means to be persuasive, and they learned two different ways to advocate: persuasive writing and personal testimony.

By the end of this session participants will know why it is important to advocate, understand what it means to be persuasive, how to identify appropriate audience and resources to help with their advocacy, and how to decide what tones to use. The participants will also have completed a group letter.

## **Improv activity**

- Image Theatre

## **Discussion questions**

- In the first draft of the letter:

- Was the message clear?
- What was the tone?
- Is there anything you would like to hear more about in the letter?
- Was it personal?
- Did the letter identify resources and include supporting information?
- Is the letter addressed to the right audience?

### Workshop content and breaks

Proceed through the session, covering all major points. Allow enough time to complete the activities and to take breaks.

### Tips

- **Improv activity:** Keep in mind that for improv activities there are no right or wrong answers. This is the main factor in the success of using improvisation in teaching—each student will approach the activity differently, according to his or her strengths.
  - Encourage applause after each game or activity. It is a good way to show the participants that their participation, no matter what level, is supported and valued.
- **Advocacy Resources:** It would be helpful to provide participants with a list of local advocacy group resources. **Appendix C** includes a list of advocacy organizations and groups who may be good resources to contact for more information or help with the group's issue.
- **Real-world application:** If possible, provide the opportunity for participants to send their completed letter to the decision maker to whom it is addressed.
  - For example, find local groups who are working on the group's specific advocacy topic and figure out how to join their efforts. Or, find the dates of the next school board meeting, or of the next city planning meeting, and plan to attend to provide group personal testimony, which can be adapted easily from your group letter.

- If your advocacy could be strengthened by educating the general public, consider writing a Letter to the Editor for a local paper as well as sending a letter to a specific decision maker.
- **Examples of persuasive writing and personal testimony:** Optional handouts include examples of personal writing and personal testimony. These have been modified from examples in the *How-To Guide* packets.

## Wrap Up

Recap the major points.

- Questions to think about when writing persuasive letters and giving personal testimony:
  - Was the message clear?
  - What was the tone?
  - Was it personal?
  - Was the letter addressed to the right audience?
  - Were there any “fouls?” (see “Rules for Fighting Fair” in Appendix A).
- **Persuasive writing** is a letter written to a decision maker.
- **Personal testimony** is a speech read aloud to a decision maker.
- The **audience** are the decision makers you need to contact about an issue.
- **Resources** are people or groups that can help gather information about an issue or help advocate.
- **Tone** is the attitude of the writer or speaker toward a subject or audience. Tone comes across through word choice and the viewpoint of the writer/speaker.
- It is important to edit your letter and get feedback before you send it to decision makers. It is also important to practice giving personal testimony. Editing, practice, and feedback will make sure your message is clear.

# Session 3 Workshop Slides

12 total slides

## Slide 1: Putting It All Together



### Facilitator Script

- Welcome to the third and final session of our Advocacy Skill Building Workshop. Let's get started.

- **Slide 2: Why Are We Here?**

Why Are We Here?  
What Are We Going To Do?

- How to be effective advocates
- Today, we are going to:
  - *Finish our group letter*
  - *Wrap-up the workshop*



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**Facilitator Script**

- Advocacy can help us get what we want and/or need in order to achieve our independent living goals.
- In the last workshop session, we learned about being persuasive.
- In this session, we will continue that discussion and put our new advocacy skills to work in order to finish our group letter.

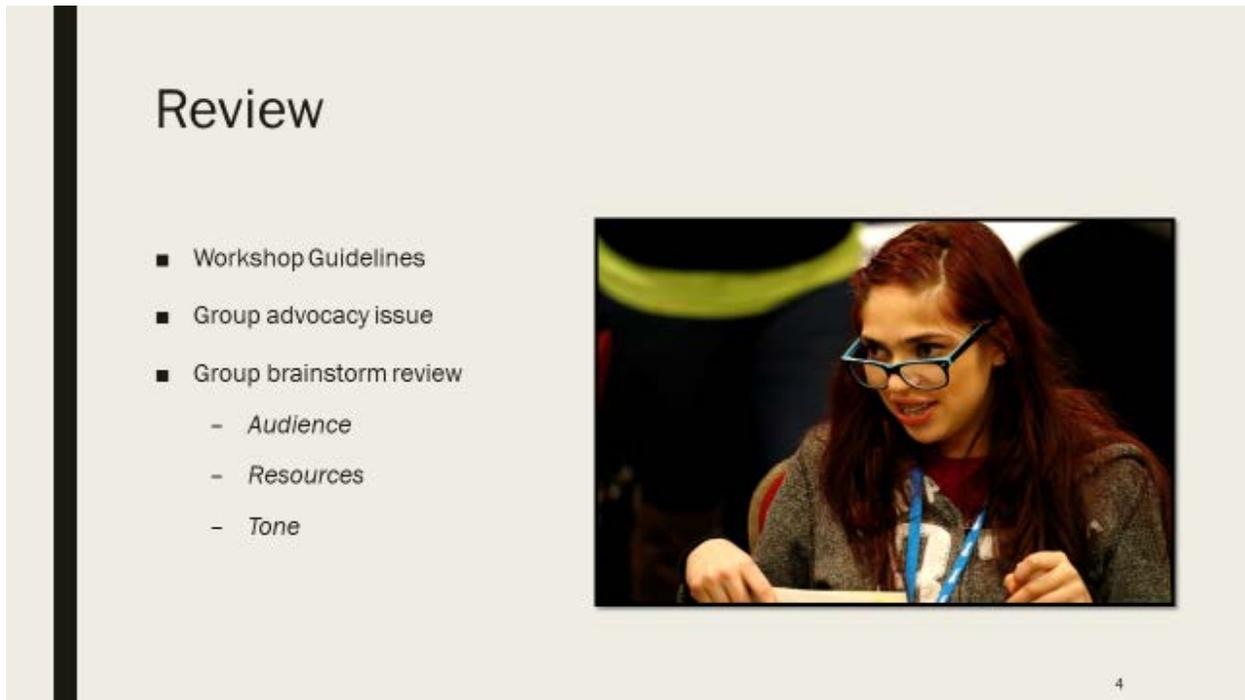
### Slide 3: Icebreaker Activity

## Icebreaker



- See **Appendix B** for icebreaker suggestions

## Slide 4: Review



The slide features a title 'Review' in a large, dark font. Below the title is a bulleted list of items: 'Workshop Guidelines', 'Group advocacy issue', and 'Group brainstorm review'. Under the last item, there are three sub-bullets: 'Audience', 'Resources', and 'Tone'. To the right of the list is a photograph of a young woman with long red hair and glasses, wearing a blue lanyard, looking down at a document she is holding. The slide has a light gray background with a dark vertical bar on the left side. A small number '4' is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide area.

### Facilitator Script

- Review guidelines established in Session 1.
- Review the issue chosen by the group in Session 2.
- It is important to make sure you say how and why the issue is important to you, and to make your feelings about it clear. Otherwise, the decision makers won't know what you want them to do and why you want them to do it.
- **Audience:** the decision makers you need to write or talk to.
- **Resources:** Sometimes you might want or need help to find supporting facts to make your persuasive writing more effective.
  - Resources in your community and online can help you.
- **Tone** is the attitude you have towards a subject or an audience.
  - Tone is shown through word choice and the viewpoint of the writer or speaker.

## **Discussion Questions**

- How do you figure out who your audience is? How do you decide who the decision makers are?
- Why is it important to have resources?
- What are effective tones to use in advocacy? Why does tone matter?

## Slide 5: Image Theatre



**Link to demonstration video:** [Image Theater Improv Demonstration](#)

- Video starts at minute 3:53 with beginning of activity demonstration.

### How This Works

- Invite 4 to 6 participants to the front of the room.
  - More than 6 or 7 is hard to work with. To include more participants, do the activity more than once, as time allows.
  - Remind everyone of ground rules (in terms of personal space, touching/grabbing each other during “snapshots,” etc.)
- Two facilitators will act as narrators. The other will join the students in each scene.
- The activity begins with the two facilitators describing the issue. After a brief description, one of the narrating facilitators will say “CLICK,” signaling to the participants to move into a scene depicting the issue. This is the “snapshot.”
  - Encourage participants to use big, exaggerated motions, and to interact with each other.

- After the participants are in place, the facilitators will narrate the “snapshot” as acted out by the participants.
  - Be silly while still staying on topic.
- After describing the first image, the facilitators will then narrate the second image. After a brief description, they will say, “CLICK” to signal the participants to move into a new scene.
- Repeat for the third image.
  - In the first image (Current Image), the participants act out the issue or problem.
  - In the second image (Working Image), participants act out how the issue has gotten a little better, but still isn’t completely resolved.
  - In the third image (Ideal Image), participants act out the resolved issue.
- Suggested option: have the facilitators narrate in character. Choose characters that are engaging and familiar to your group.
  - For example, as a Jedi and Sith pair (characters from Star Wars) who came back from an anti-bullying peace conference and are now friends.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How did you understand what message was coming across in each “snapshot?” What did you notice about body language and tone?
- How did the issue affect the people in the scenario?
- Who were the audience, or the decision makers, in this scenario?
- Who could the people in the snapshot have asked to help them with their advocacy?

## Slide 6: First Draft of Our Letters

# 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of Our Letters

- Persuasive writing skills
- Draft individual letters on the group topic



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### Facilitator Script

- Using our persuasive writing skills, we are now going to draft individual letters on our group topic.

### How This Works

- Pass out copies of the *Drafting Your Letter* worksheet.
- Participants will draft their own letter to the chosen group topic.
  - Letters can be in whole sentences, bullet points, or note form.
  - Have participants refer to the previous homework assignments: *Getting Stared* and *Audience, Resources, and Tone* worksheets.
- Discuss letters in the next section, after they are shared aloud with the group.

## Slide 7: Public Testimony

# Public Testimony

Things to think about while we're listening:

- Was the message clear?
- What was the tone? Does it do a good job communicating how the speaker feels?
- Does the speaker's opinion come across in a way that will be heard?
- Is there anything you'd like to hear more about in the letter?
- Was it personal?
- Were resources identified?
- Was the letter addressed to the right audience?
- Were there any "Fair Fighting Fouls?"



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### How This Works

- Have participants share their letters aloud with the whole group.
  - Try to hear from anyone who wants to read aloud.
- Remind the group of the workshop guidelines established in Session 1 before they provide feedback and discuss the letters as a group.

### Discussion Questions

- Things to think about while we're listening to others read their letters:
  - Was the message clear?
  - What was the tone? Does it do a good job communicating how the speaker feels?
  - Does the speaker's opinion come across in a way that will be heard?
  - Is there anything you'd like to hear more about in the letter?
  - Was it personal?
  - Were resources identified?
  - Was the letter addressed to the right audience?
  - Were there any "Fair Fighting Fouls?" [see **Appendix A** for "Rules for Fair Fighting"].

## Slide 8: Group Letter

### Group Letter

- Combine points from individual letters into one group letter



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### How This Works

- Compose a letter as a group on the chosen advocacy issue.
  - Incorporate important points from all or most of the individual letters.
- One facilitator will lead the discussion, another will take notes/write the letter on the board or easel, and the third will help prompt and focus the discussion.
- Use the optional *Tips to Help Get Started* handout as a guide, which can be passed out to participants as a step-by-step set of instructions to follow to write the letter.

## Slide 9: Tips to Help Get Started

### Tips to Help Get Started

1. Open the letter with a salutation.
2. Introduce yourself.
3. Explain why you're writing the letter.
4. Summarize the issue as you understand it.
5. Tell how the issue affects you.
6. Ask for the change you want.
7. Describe how the change you want would affect you and others.
8. Offer to help.
9. Thank the reader.
10. Sign your letter.



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### How This Works

- This slide contains the list of 10 tips from the *Persuasive Writing Tips to Help Get Started* handout and can be used as a guide while the group is putting together the letter. The handout can be used as a step-by-step guide to help start writing a letter.
- Tips to help get started
  - 1. Open the letter with a salutation.
  - 2. Introduce yourself.
  - 3. Explain why you're writing the letter.
  - 4. Summarize the issue as you understand it.
  - 5. Tell how the issue affects you.
  - 6. Ask for the change you want.
  - 7. Describe how the change you want would affect you and others.
  - 8. Offer to help.
  - 9. Thank the reader.
  - 10. Sign your letter.

## **Discussion Questions**

- What are the most important points or statements from everyone's letters that we want to put in our group letter?
- Who is our audience?
- Did we introduce ourselves?
- How do we explain why we are writing this letter?
- What is a summary of the issue?
- How does the issue affect us?
- What change do we want?
- How would this change affect us and others in our community?
- How could we offer to help in the decision-making process?

## Slide 10: Workshop Wrap-Up

# Workshop Wrap-Up

- Learning to advocate can be intimidating or scary.
- Decision makers need to know what we think!
- Slow and steady wins the race



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### Facilitator Script

- Learning to advocate can feel intimidating or scary, but decision makers really do need our input to make the best decisions.
  - With practice, we will feel more confident with advocacy.
  - We may even see the impact of our participation when policies are changed or started that improve the quality of life in our community.
- Most change happens slowly over time, small step by small step, and will take longer than we expect it to. This means we have to keep advocating, even when it seems like nothing is happening.
- It's important to remember to celebrate small successes. Being a leader and an advocate doesn't always mean that we reach our initial goals. Even if we don't see the change we were hoping for, we did do something.
  - Example of a small success:
    - Your city council didn't have enough votes to pass a rule that said all proposed public buildings need to be reviewed for accessibility by a local

committee. However, after you wrote letters to the council members and provided personal testimony at a city council meeting with your CIL youth group, two of the council members now understand the issue enough to advocate for it in the future.

- The first steps to being a leader and an advocate are caring, showing up, and trying.
  - It's like the saying, "Must be present to win." If we don't care enough to show up and try, we can never win.
- Politicians and decision makers won't forget you and your issue if you contact them regularly, especially if you're offering information and not just asking for something without offering to help.
  - It can be hard to tell when something will become important to decision makers, so we have to keep trying—we never know when we will have an impact!

## Slide 11: Wrap-Up, Continued

Wrap-Up, Continued

- What did we learn?
  - *Persuasive writing*
  - *Personal testimony*



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### Facilitator Script

- In this workshop, we learned skills to help us be effective advocates.
  - Specifically, we learned two different ways to advocate: Persuasive Writing and Personal Testimony

### Discussion Questions

- What is persuasive writing?
- What is personal testimony?
- Why and when would we use those advocacy skills?
- How do we figure out who our audience is for a particular advocacy issue?
- How do we figure out who and what we can use as resources to help with our advocacy?
- How do we decide what tone to use for our advocacy?
- What did you learn about what it means to be an advocate?
- What strengths did you discover about yourself as an advocate?



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# Appendix A

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## Toolkit Materials

- *Advocacy Toolkit Videos*
  - *Worksheets and Handouts Used In This Facilitator Guide*
  - *How-To Guides*
  - *Additional Handouts*
  - *Rules for Fighting Fair*
- 

## Advocacy Toolkit Videos

- [Teaching with Improv: Q & A with Mike Beers and John Howard](#)
- [Name Symphony Improv Demonstration](#)
- [Tone Symphony Improv Demonstration](#)
- [Debate Improv Demonstration](#)
- [Image Theater Improv Demonstration](#)

## Worksheets and Handouts Used In This Facilitator Guide

- [Getting Started](#) worksheet
- [Short Write](#) worksheet
- [Audience, Resources, and Tone](#) worksheet
- [Drafting Your Letter](#) worksheet
- [Persuasive Writing Tips to Help Get Started](#) handout

## How-To Guides

- [How-To Guide: Writing Effective Letters to Decision Makers](#)
- [How-To Guide: Creating Your Personal Testimony to Influence Policy Change](#)

## Additional Materials

- [Persuasive Writing Sample](#) handout
- [Persuasive Writing: Editing and Feedback Tips](#) handout

- [Personal Testimony Sample](#) handout
- [Personal Testimony Tips](#) handout

Visit [Advocacy Skill Building Toolkit](#) on the RTC:Rural website to find these and other materials and resources.

# Rules for Fighting Fair

## **Rules**

1. Find the problem
2. Attack the problem, not the person
3. Listen to each other
4. Care about each other's feelings
5. Be responsible for what you say and do

## **Fouls**

- Put downs
- Blaming
- Making excuses
- Not listening
- Name calling
- Bossing
- Teasing
- Getting even
- Threats
- Hitting



# Appendix B

## Icebreakers

- *Stand and Declare*
  - *Icebreaker Beach Ball*
  - *Say What?*
  - *Other icebreaker resources*
- 

## **Stand and Declare**

A game that allows people to express where they stand on an issue by literally standing along an imaginary spectrum.

## **How This Works**

- Space requirements: Anywhere.
- Materials: Four pieces of paper and a marker.
- Group Size: Any
- Preparation: Write one of the following on each of the four pieces of paper: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
- Instructions:
  - Give four participants one of the pieces of paper, and have them spread out across the room.
  - The facilitator will read a statement, and the participants will move to stand by the sign that best describes their feelings about the statement.
  - After all participants have chosen a sign to stand next to, give them five minutes in their mini-groups to discuss why they chose the sign they did.
  - After five minutes, have each small group explain to the larger group why they chose that stance.
    - Start with Strongly Agree, then Agree, then Disagree, then Strongly Disagree.
  - After hearing each mini-groups argument, give participants a moment to change their mind if they choose.
  - Debates could get heated, and if time allows let each group form a rebuttal to another group's comments if they want.

- After each mini-group has had the opportunity to be heard twice, allow for one more opportunity to change to a new sign.
- Sample Statements:
  - Silly icebreaker statements:
    - Pie is a better dessert than cake.
    - Fish make better pets than dogs.
    - Playing video games is a better way to spend free time than reading a book.
  - More serious advocacy and disability-related statements:
    - Everyone in the world has some kind of disability.
    - All characters in plays and movies with disabilities should be played by actors/actresses with disabilities.
    - All students with disabilities should be mainstreamed.
    - Invisible disabilities are less difficult to live with than physical disabilities.
    - If there was a cure for your disability, you would do it.

## Discussion

- During this game, we all had the opportunity to be advocates and leaders.
- The reason we play this game is to remind us that sometimes you are going to be asked to make a stand, and that sometimes you may feel so strongly about something that you are going to have to stand up for it.
- However, it's not enough just to make a decision. People want to know why, and we need to practice backing up our statements because not everyone is going to agree with us, and not everyone should agree.
  - It is important to be able to have your own opinion but still be able to listen with an open mind to what other people say.
- Also, it is okay to change your mind. That shows leadership, because you are listening and able to open yourself up to see someone else's point of view.
- Being an advocate is all about:
  - 1. Standing up for what you want or need.
  - 2. Saying why you want or need it.
  - 3. Listening to other people around you.
    - By listening, you can find those people who feel the same way as you to stand up with you to advocate for change.

- Listen respectfully to those who don't agree with you and try to understand their side. Use this information to be a better advocate.
- Finally, let's take a small poll. Who here thinks people with disabilities should be treated equally? (Presumably, all will raise their hands).
- Even though we all are fighting for the same thing, rights for those with disabilities, we feel differently about the discussions we just had. That's ok! We can still work together on a common issue even though we may not always agree on everything. That is what being a good advocate is!

## **Icebreaker Beach Ball**

### **How This Works**

- Space requirements: Anywhere
- Equipment: Beach ball, labels to tape to ball or marker to write on ball
- Group size: Any
- Activity goals:
  - To increase awareness of each other
  - To increase participant comfort in asking for accommodations
- Preparation:
  - Blow up beach ball and add any number of icebreaker questions using labels or the marker. Use any of the sample questions below, or add your own.
- Instructions:
  - Have the participants pick the finger (such as the index finger on their right hand; or the pinkie on their left hand) that they are going to use to pick the question.
    - Don't let them pick anything else with that finger 😊
  - Throw a participant the ball. Whichever question their chosen finger is closest to is the one they must answer.
    - Accommodations:
      - For catching the ball: the person the ball is meant to go to will still choose a finger, and a helper will catch the ball and ask them the question closest to the helper's designated finger.
      - Encourage participants to ask for accommodations as needed, such as if they need help reading a question. It gets them practicing asking for accommodations.
- Sample Questions:
  - If you knew you were going to be stranded on a deserted island, what three things would you bring?
  - What was the last book you read?
  - What talent do you wish you had?
  - What is one weird fact about you?
  - Do you have siblings? If yes, how many?
  - Do you play an instrument? If yes, what? If no, what instrument would you like to play?

- How old are you?
- Are clowns cute or creepy?
- What is your favorite ice cream?
- What is the worst movie ever?
- Can you speak another language? If yes, what?
- How do you vent your anger?
- What is your biggest fear?
- If you had one super power, what would it be?
- What is your favorite drink?
- If you moved to Sesame Street, who would you want as your neighbor?
- What month were you born?
- What is your favorite holiday, and why?
- If you were a crayon, what color would you be? Why?
- What is your favorite movie?
- What cartoon character would you be?
- What is the kindest act you have ever done?
- If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?
- What is the weirdest food you have ever eaten?
- What is your favorite childhood memory?
- If there was a movie about your life, who would play you?
- Name a song you know all the words to.
- What is your middle name?
- Based on something you have really done, how would you get in the book of world records?
- Do you have any pets? If yes, what are they?
- When was one time that you advocated (stood up) for yourself or someone else?

## Say What?

### How This Works

- Space requirements: Classroom/activity room
- Equipment: Way to keep time in 30 second increments, such as a timer app on a cell phone or a wrist watch
- Group size: Even numbered, 4 to 10 works best
- Activity goals:
  - Participants will learn that listening is important
  - They will also learn that sometimes people may need accommodations in order to communicate effectively.
- Preparation: None
- Instructions:
  - Break group into partners.
    - Let them select who is partner 1 and who is partner 2.
  - There are two rounds, each about 1 minute long followed by a short discussion.
  - Each partner will talk about a word for 30 seconds while the other partner listens silently.
    - For the first round, give partner 1 a word they have heard before and have them talk about this word for 30 seconds.
      - Example: shoe
    - After 30 seconds, the partners will switch roles and partner 2 will talk about a different word for 30 seconds.
      - If possible, have the word relate to partner 1's word. For example, if partner 1's word was "shoe," partner 2's word could be "sock."
  - After both partners have had their turn talking, one at a time have them say as much as they can remember about the other's word.
    - Start with Partner 2 discussing Partner 1's word, then Partner 1.
    - This can be done in a full group or between partners.
    - Ask:
      - When your partner repeated what you said about your word, did they leave anything out? Was what they said correct?
      - When you talked about what they said, did you leave anything out? Did you get all of the information correct?

- For the second round, give each a made-up word and have them repeat the exercise, each taking a turn to speak for 30 seconds about a made-up word.
  - Examples: shoomalaka, kazambinga
- Again, once they are done, have each partner tell the other as much as they can remember about the other's word.
  - Partner 2 should go first, and then Partner 1.

## Discussion

- This activity shows how we may not hear everything that is being said.
  - We can be distracted and miss things, or only catch part of the conversation.
- In order to communicate effectively we have to both talk effectively and listen actively and intensely.
- Have the group discuss what they felt like completing the exercise with the different words.
  - Did their bodies react differently at different times?
  - What were their thoughts?
  - After their turn speaking, were they still concerned with what they had just said, or were they listening to their partner?
  - When they were waiting for their turn, were they listening, or were they thinking about what they were going to say?
- It is easier to discuss a topic that you know about than one that catches you off guard. Therefore, try to be prepared if you are walking into a situation where you are advocating.
  - Before you advocate, educate yourself!
  - Also know that practicing thinking outside of the box and responding to the situation may feel uncomfortable at first, but if you keep going and don't give up you may be surprised what you can come up with.

## Other icebreaker resources

- [Icebreakers and Mixers that Promote Inclusion](#)
  - Camryn Krause, VISA, UW-Extension, Fond du Lac County, 2012. 4H
  - A collection of icebreakers for 4H groups, though only two are specific to 4H.
- [Lansing Community College Center for Teaching Excellence Icebreaker Activities](#)
  - A list of 32 icebreakers that could take anywhere from 10 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the icebreaker selected.
- [teAchnology Teacher Class Ice Breakers](#)
  - Icebreakers submitted by teachers, as well as other teaching tips and resources.

# Appendix C

## Resources

- *Informational resources*
    - *Advocacy resources*
    - *Self-advocacy resources*
    - *Other disability-related resources*
    - *Improv resources*
  - *Advocacy stories*
  - *Advocacy Examples*
- 

## Informational Resources

*Not all of the websites listed here may be fully accessible. RTC:Rural is not responsible for any links that may be broken.*

*This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but to give examples of different types of resources available. We recommend searching the internet for local and national resources related to your group's specific issues and interests.*

## Advocacy Resources

- [Civic Engagement Toolbox for Self-Advocates](#) from the Autistic Self Advocacy Network
  - A series of plain language toolkits that focus on the basics of civic engagement, including learning about how government works, and how to contact and communicate with elected officials.
- [Community Tool Box](#) : Tools to Change Our World
  - The Community Tool Box is a free online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change.
  - For advocacy, [Chapter 33: Conducting a Direct Action Campaign](#) is the most relevant, especially these sections:
    - Chapter 33, Section 1: [Writing Letters to Elected Officials](#)
    - Chapter 33, Section 6: [Using Personal Testimony](#)

- Both sections include information on each topic, a checklist to follow, examples, and a PowerPoint presentation to help teach the section topic.
  - Other chapters that may be useful references:
    - [Chapter 30: Principles of Advocacy](#)
    - [Chapter 31: Conducting Advocacy Research](#)
    - [Chapter 32: Providing Encouragement and Education](#)
    - [Chapter 34: Media Advocacy](#)
    - [Chapter 35: Responding to Counterattacks](#)
- [Resources on advocacy, self-advocacy and disability legislation/policy](#)
  - List of resources compiled by the Montana Disability & Health Program. Includes both Montana and national resources.
- [National Council on Independent Living \(NICL\)](#)
  - NICL's mission is to advance independent living and the rights of people with disabilities. They represent thousands of organizations and individuals who advocate for the human and civil rights of people without disabilities throughout the United States.
  - [The Advocacy Monitor: News & Policy \(a NICL project\)](#)
    - Independent Living News & Policy from NICL. A resource on current policy and advocacy on many topics, including [Youth Issues & Education](#).
- [National Disability Rights Network \(NDRN\): Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Disabilities](#)
  - NDRN works to improve the lives of people with disabilities by guarding against abuse; advocating for basic rights; and ensuring accountability in health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, and within the juvenile and criminal justice systems.
  - Here are two examples of NDRN Member Agencies:
    - [Disability Rights California](#)

- [Disability Rights Montana](#)
- Learning Disabilities Association of America: [Disability Rights and Advocacy](#)
  - List of websites offering information on disability rights and legal issues.
- [Statewide Montana Centers for Independent Living Action Alert System](#)
  - Statewide action alert portal administered by Montana’s CILs that informs about current local, state, and national issues and legislation that affect the lives of people with disabilities.
- Research & Training Center on Independent Living at the University of Kansas
  - [Advocacy Products Page](#)
    - Guides, training manuals, case studies, and other information that could be useful in advocacy efforts.
  - [Consumer & Advocacy Organizations](#)
    - List of national and Kansas advocacy organizations.

## **Self-Advocacy**

- [Self-Advocacy Online.](#)
  - Website with links to find self-advocacy groups, view stories from self-advocates, links to learn about self-advocacy, and links to research that could help support your persuasive writing or personal testimony.
- [Steps to Self-Advocacy Factsheet](#) from Montana Youth Transitions (PDF)
- [Transition: Self Advocacy Speaking Up For What You Want And Need](#) (11/29/2016) (video)
  - Video by the Rural Institute. Three expert presenters discuss how to teach and build self-advocacy skills.
- [Self-Advocacy For People With Learning Disabilities: A Guide For Adult Educators](#) (PDF)

## Other Disability-Related Resources

- [Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities at the University of Montana \(RTC:Rural\)](#)
  - The RTC:Rural conducts research in these focus areas: community participation and independent living; health & wellness; and employment & vocational rehabilitation. Our research findings are on our website, and we are a good source of information for data to support your advocacy goals.
- [Living Well with a Disability](#)
  - Living Well with a Disability is a ten week health and wellness workshop for people with disabilities that is grounded in peer-support and the Independent Living philosophy. Participants in the program learn the life skills they need to set and achieve quality-of-life goals and the important role health plays in helping them reach their dreams. Organizations are licensed to offer the program and individuals are trained and certified to conduct Living Well workshops through a licensed organization.
- [BASE Missoula](#)
  - A local Montana group that provides inclusive community activities and workshops in Missoula, Montana. BASE stands for home, like in hide-and-go-seek. In life, you have to establish a BASE first, that's where we come in.
- [Summit Independent Living](#)
  - Summit offers a wide range of services designed to give people with disabilities the tools and resources that are needed to improve self-confidence, knowledge, skills, and access to community resources. Based in Missoula, Montana. Services for students include:
    - IEP Advocacy
    - Youth Opening Doors through Advocacy (YODA)—youth advocacy group
    - Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership Skills (BALLS)—workshop taught in the classroom
- [Montana Youth Transitions](#)

- Mission: to improve transition services and increase the number of youth with disabilities who achieve their desired post-school outcomes.
  - The [Social and Recreation](#) page includes links to Montana and national Advocacy and Self-Advocacy resources.
- [Directory of Centers for Independent Living \(CILs\) and Associations](#)
  - Directory of CILs and Associations in all US States and Territories, with their location and contact information
- [Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living \(APRIL\)](#)
  - APRIL is a national membership organization dedicated to advancing the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities in rural America. They are committed to ensuring that young people with disabilities are integrated into all facets of program development and delivery.
- [Rooted In Rights](#)
  - Mission: to tell authentic, accessible stories that empower our community to advocate for disability rights. Dedicated to telling stories that are authentic representations of people with disabilities. Produce videos and social media campaigns on disability rights issues.
- [Countable](#)
  - A website that helps explain bills in Congress in clear, direct language. There is an app. Also gives users the ability to comment on each bill and contact their congressperson.

### **Improv Resources**

- [Teaching Self-Advocating Strategies Through Drama](#)
  - Schnapp, L. and Olsen, C. (2003). Teaching Self-Advocating Strategies Through Drama. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Vol. 38, Issue 4, 211-219. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/105345120303800403>.

- A research paper that discusses Project Access, a transition program at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland, that teaches self-advocacy skills using a variety of exercises and performance activities, including improv.
- [Theater Games For The Classroom: A Teacher’s Handbook](#)
  - Spolin, V. (1986). Theater Games For The Classroom: A Teacher’s Handbook. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
  - “Designed for the teacher who has little or no training in the theater, this book is a step-by-step guide to the organization of theater-game workshops in the classroom.”
- [10 Reasons for Teachers to Use Improv in the Classroom.](#)
  - The Second City, Feb. 7, 2014
  - Brief article that describes pedagogy behind using improv in the classroom.
- [How Improv Can Open Up the Mind to Learning in the Classroom and Beyond.](#)
  - Linda Flanagan, *MindShift*. Jan. 30, 2015.
  - Article about the educational value of improv.
- [Learning to Listen, With the Help of Improv](#)
  - Bouree Lam, *The Atlantic*. Apr. 22, 2016.
  - Interview with Julie Brister of the Upright Citizens Brigade, one of the most well-known improv comedy groups in the U.S.
- [Drama Resource](#)
  - Website with links to improv games, strategies, and tips for using improv and drama in teaching.
- [The Advocacy Game](#) (PDF), from the Educational Theatre Association
  - An improv game to help theater educators, students and other advocates “make the case” before legislators, administrators, school boards, and other decision makers. Not disability-related, but an example of using improv to teach advocacy skills.
- [Playback Theatre](#)

- Playback Theatre is a form of improv where audience or group members tell stories from their lives that are then enacted by the group. It “promotes the right way for any voice to be heard, brings group concerns to the surface, and stimulates a dialogue by making different perspectives visible.”

## Advocacy stories

- YouTube video: [IDF Young Adult Advocating for Change: Part Two—This is Just Your Prologue](#)
  - Maddie, a 16 year old Immune Deficiency Foundation Advocate and Volunteer, shares her story about what motivated her to become an active advocate for the Primary Immunodeficiency community.
    - Takeaway message: “This is just your prologue.” All superheroes have a backstory, and it’s usually not a happy one. Don’t let your challenges now keep you from advocating.
- YouTube video: [Disability Advocate Liz Jackson Urges J. Crew to Sell Canes](#)
  - Liz Jackson, a disability advocate, shares her story about encouraging J. Crew to make assistive devices.
    - Discussion points: Liz shares her personal story, which makes her message more powerful; she is bringing awareness to an issue that a decision maker (J. Crew) hadn’t thought about; uses research information to support her argument; and perseverance—she wrote blog posts and contacted J. Crew for over a year before anything happened.
- YouTube video: [The View From Here: My Path to Disability Advocacy— Liam Doyle- TEDxVermilionStreet](#)
  - Liam Doyle shares his story of traveling by wheelchair in his city, which brings attention to accessibility issues. He also talks about why he is an advocate, and highlights the importance of sharing a personal story.

## Advocacy Examples

- **At home:** Persuading your mom to let you go to the movies.
  - **What want/need:** To go see the new Star Wars movie at the movie theater.
  - **Why:** To have fun and hang out with your friends.
  - **Supporting facts:** It is Friday night so there is no school tomorrow; you already finished all of your homework that's due on Monday; you've done all your chores this week.
  - **Audience:** Your mom.
  - **Resources:** Youth groups and peer-support groups, like [BASE Missoula](#), and self-advocacy resources, like [Self-Advocacy Online](#).
  - **Tone:** Happy, informative, direct, informal.
  
- **At school:** Persuading your teacher to follow your IEP.
  - **What want/need:** Accommodations to be able to succeed in your History class.
  - **Why:** Because you have dyslexia.
  - **Supporting facts:** It's the law—an IEP is a legal document; you have challenges with writing and reading, so it's easier for you to show how much you've learned if you can take your test out loud.
  - **Audience:** Your teacher, and maybe the principal or other school administrators and your tutors.
  - **Resources:** [Centers for Independent Living](#), like [Summit Independent Living](#) in Montana; [Self-Advocacy Online](#); Montana Youth Transitions' [Steps to Self-Advocacy factsheet](#).
  - **Tone:** Informative, direct, formal.
  
- **At work:** Persuading your boss to shift your daily work schedule.
  - **What want/need:** That your workday start at 9:15 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m.

- **Why:** The city bus you take to work doesn't drop off until 9:05 a.m., but you are supposed to be at work at 9:00 a.m.
- **Supporting facts:** You take public transportation to work; you're a dedicated worker who works their best everyday and you want to make sure you're fulfilling your job duties; you've looked at the bus schedule and you can work until 5:15 p.m. instead of 5:00 p.m. and still make the bus home.
- **Audience:** Your boss.
- **Resources:** Your Vocational Rehabilitation or job counselor; [Centers for Independent Living](#), like [Summit Independent Living](#) in Montana; peer-support groups, like [BASE Missoula](#); self-advocacy resources, like [Self-Advocacy Online](#).
- **Tone:** Informative, assertive, direct, formal.
- **In the community:** Testifying before the local city council about accessibility in a proposed building.
  - **What want/need:** That a new movie theater being built is wheelchair accessible.
  - **Why:** Because you use a wheelchair, and you want to be able to go to the movies with your friends.
  - **Supporting facts:** It's cheaper and easier to make sure a building is universally accessible in the building process instead of modifying it after it's already built; universal accessibility won't benefit just people who use wheelchairs but also families and groups who want to invite people who use other mobility devices to see movies; community funds are being used, so it needs to be universally accessible (county regulation).
  - **Audience:** Elected city officials, members of your community, paid city staff.
  - **Resources:** [Rural Institute For Inclusive Communities](#) and [RTC:Rural](#) at the University of Montana; [National Council on Independent Living \(NCIL\)](#); [Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living \(APRIL\)](#); [National Disability Rights Network](#), like [Disability Rights Montana](#); [Community Tool Box](#).
  - **Tone:** Informative, direct, formal.

## For Additional Information

### Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities

The University of Montana Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities  
52 Corbin Hall, Missoula, MT 59812-7056  
(888) 268-2743 or (406) 246-5467  
(460) 243-4200 (TTY), (406) 243-2349 (Fax)  
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