

**Advocacy and the impact of  
public engagement on  
government policy**



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## What is advocacy?

**Advocacy** - Advocacy is an effort to shape public perception or to affect a policy change.

An advocate is someone who speaks up for others.

Advocacy involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause.



### What is advocacy?

Advocating on behalf of individuals and families affected by dementia is an important part of the Alzheimer Society of Canada's mission. Our organization is committed to improving the quality of life for those affected by Alzheimer's and Dementia through education, support programs, public policy and research.

## Why advocate?

In a planned and coordinated manner, advocacy raises political awareness and stimulates dialogue about your cause among decision makers.



What is advocacy?

Advocacy efforts can enable social mobilization and lead to changes in public policy.

### **How is advocacy put into action?**

Advocacy happens at many levels. It starts with a strategy for change. Advocacy usually happens when those most affected by the impact of government action or inaction decide they want to influence change.

Personal experiences form the foundation of advocacy work, which deal mainly with addressing the difficult that people face today. Research and analysis complement this work so that we can speak knowledgeably to government leaders about what needs to be done to address the problem.

## Your Issue

Organizations face more policy, program and advocacy challenges than it is possible for them to address effectively at any one time.



What is advocacy?

Be sure to develop an advocacy platform which ensures that your public policy priorities are realistic in relation available resources.

## Setting direction

**1. Identify your issue** - what is your concern, problem or focus?

**2. Set goals** - what is your objective?



### Setting Direction

1. This is where it all starts – often it is the issue itself which will galvanize and promote advocacy
2. What outcomes are acceptable and what alternatives are acceptable to the membership?

## Setting direction

**3. Research and get facts** - facts make your argument more credible.

**4. Determine your target audiences** - with whom are you trying to communicate?

**5. Develop a formal position** - develop statements, key messages, briefs or scientific paper.



### Setting Direction

3. Avoid anecdotes. Facts should be complimentary

4. Communication strategies will vary depending on the audience – web & social media versus print & radio

5. Formalize your principles -

## Setting direction

**6. Develop tactical action plan** – lay out timelines and activities.

**7. Develop a formal position** - develop statements, key messages, brief or scientific paper.

**8. Communicate with your audience-** inform your target audience of your concerns.



### Setting Direction

6. Assign responsibilities – know who is responsible for delivering your message
7. Message consistency is paramount
8. Establish communications and begin developing relationship

## Setting direction

**9. Consult your membership** - continue to seek input from your membership and involve them in the process.

**10. Build coalitions** - look to develop relationships with organizations of common interest.



### Setting Direction

9. Include your provincial counterparts, local champions and strong supporters

10. Seek feedback from members, media, public, officials. They can be good indicators of your future success.



## Communicating your message

Achieving success in your advocacy efforts is about matching the right message, with the right audience, in the right way.

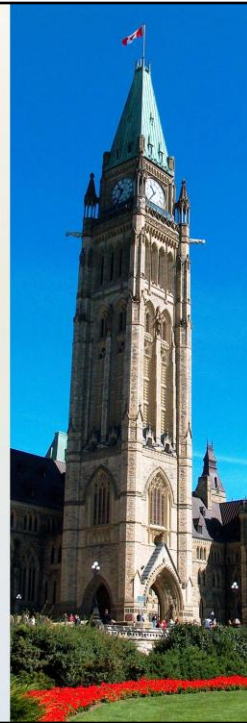


### Communicating your message

There is no “right way” to deliver a message to decision makers - only wrong ways.

## Working with MPs

Working with Members of Parliament  
And bureaucrats requires a range of  
techniques and approaches, from being  
supportive to respectfully adversarial,  
depending on situation, department and issue  
you are dealing with.



### Working with MP's

Ongoing communication is the only way MPs will know and understand how you feel about particular issues.

Elections are perfect time to engage both incumbent MPs and candidates (Kim Campbell Quote)

Identify ridings with champions

## Grassroots advocacy

Grassroots advocacy is a form of advocacy which originates among concerned citizens, rather than being orchestrated by organizations or companies.



### **Grassroots advocacy**

The term “grassroots” refers to a movement which grows spontaneously and naturally, without encouragement from outside sources, much like the roots of stubborn grass.

## Grassroots advocacy

Grassroots advocacy often involves low-level community activism. Local groups of concerned citizens may join together to increase their strength when it comes to pushing for change.



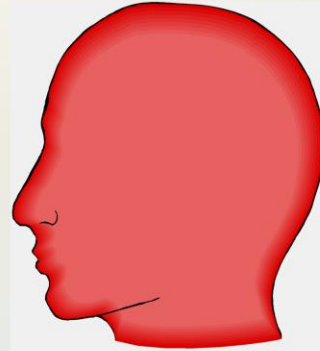
### Grassroots advocacy

## Advocacy in the dementia context

### To Advocate is to Educate

*"Advocacy can be done by one person, or it can be done as a group. It can be done quietly in the background or through loud demonstrations. It can involve meeting after meeting, or it can be one meeting or letter. For me – for us – it can and should be personal. Above all, advocacy is a necessary part of democracy."*

Jim Mann, Alzheimer Advocate



### Advocacy in the dementia context

The challenge of being an advocate for those who may not be able to speak for themselves.

## Advocacy in the dementia context

### What are we looking for this election?

1. Leadership
2. Resources
3. Support



### Provide support for your advocates

1. Provide a questionnaire for candidates
2. Support for all candidates meetings
3. Inform candidates about dementia



## Advocacy in the dementia context

## Conclusion

### What works...

Effective advocacy relies on membership involvement.

Grassroots communication has the greatest impact on local politicians.

Broad-based communication will be more effective if it supports a central message.



## Conclusion

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### What doesn't work...

Contact that looks purely bought and paid for, i.e. professional rather than grassroots.

A confrontational style that harasses or insults politicians.

Members who are under-informed or are speaking to issues without conviction.



## Conclusion



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Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Conclusion