Legislative Advocacy Module 2:

How to Share Your Personal Story & Effectively Talk with Legislators

OCDD Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

Oregon DD Coalition's GO! Project

What will we do today

- What is advocacy?
- Who is advocating?
- Who are supporters?
- What do you advocate about?
- How do you tell your story?

What is advocacy?

— Getting your needs met

— Self-determination

— Education + persuasive argument

— Simple, easy-to-understand language

— Personal stories to illustrate

— An “ask” to make of a decision-maker

Who is advocating?

- Advocates come from many backgrounds
- Advocates include
  - People with disabilities
  - Family members
  - Direct Support Professionals or PSWs
  - Case managers
  - Community advocacy groups

Who are supporters?

- Advocates may need support
- Support can come from

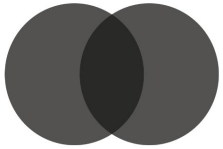
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities	OCDD	The Oregon DD Coalition	
Family Networks	OCFN Oregon Consortium of Family Networks	Family and friends	
Oregon Resource Association	ora Oregon Resource Association	Providers or caregivers	

What do you advocate about?

- It can be hard to pick an advocacy issue
- An advocacy issue might be about
  - – Services
  - – Provider stability
  - – Affordable and accessible housing
  - – Employment barriers

What do you advocate about?
Collaboration with a supporter is helpful

- Supporters can help:
  - ❖ Identify the problem
  - ❖ Understand how the advocate's experience overlaps with the problem you want to change



How do you tell your story?

- None of us can just show up and know what to say instantly
- A legislator might not know about the advocacy issue. Advocates can …
  - – provide the **information** that helps them to understand
  - – tie their **life experience** to the advocacy issue

How do you tell your story?
As the **advocate** in a legislator meeting:

- ☑ Introduce yourself.
- ☑ Introduce the people with you.
- ☑ Tell them what bill or policy you want to talk about.
- ☑ Share why the issue is important to you.
- ☑ Describe the impact of the problem and why it matters to you in your life.
- ☑ Connect it back to the bill or policy.
- ☑ Thank the legislator for their time.

How do you tell your story?

Use a simple messaging template:

- ❑ Issue or Bill: (what you are talking about)

- ❑ What I know: (short, simple explanation of the problem)
- ❑ My story: (how it impacts you)

- ❑ Key information: (connects story to the issue or bill)

How do you tell your story?
An example:

Hello (Legislator's Name),

My name is (Advocate's Name), and I live in _____ County. This is (Supporter's Name), and they are my supporter. I'm here to talk with you about (Issue or Bill Topic) that has to do with (What You Know / Simple Explanation).

This topic is important to me because (My Story and Key Information Connected to the Topic).

Thank you for your time.

How do you tell your story?

Steps for success:

- ✓ Develop your message before the meeting.
- ✓ Practice with someone who doesn't know what you are talking about.
- ✓ Identify possible supporters and what kinds of support early.

How do you support someone to tell their story?

As a supporter in a legislator meeting …
Get to know the advocate's story to be told
Assist the advocate to reorganize thoughts
Ask leading questions
Assist in developing notes for the meeting
Practice with the advocate beforehand
Help organize or prepare the agenda
Draft talking points the advocate may use

About the GO! Bulletin

- Weekly email during session
- Includes link to bill report
- Features information about advocacy opportunities in the coming week
- Explains legislative process relating to budget, policy bills, and important timelines

Sign up to get the GO! Bulletin:

www.orddcoalition.org/go-project

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Oregon DD Coalition
Advancing Opportunities
GO! Bulletin
An Introduction to Legislative Advocacy
Getting Started is Quicker & Easier Than You May Expect
If there is proposed legislation or a budget issue you are concerned about, the first step is to **contact your two state legislators** and let them know your position on the specific issue.
It takes a few seconds to find out who your current State Senator and State Representative are at www.oregonlegislature.gov
tact their office by phone or email, introduce yourself as a ent" and indicate that you support or oppose [bill or budget an be as simple as this.
c level of engagement is a great way to stretch your legislative advocacy muscles and get warmed up for this long session!

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- Website: www.orddcoalition.org
- Email: admin@orddcoalition.org
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/ORDDCoalition
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/ORDDCoalition