TIPS AND TOOLS TO ENGAGE IN PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

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Goals for today

■ Understand the fundamental concepts of the public policy process
■ Think about different approaches to advocacy
■ Get to know available resources to become educated on issues in state and federal disability policy
■ Explore strategies to engage in advocacy
“POLICY HAPPENS WHEN WE DECIDE TO DECIDE.”

Michael Munger (Duke University)
Policy Alternatives (Proposed changes)

Existing Policy & Regulation Environment

Existing Support

Implementation

Adoption

Gap/Solution Identification
Policy Alternatives (Proposed changes)

Existing Policy & Regulation Environment

Informs

Implementation

Existing Support

Informs

Advocacy

Self
Family/Community Practitioner
Special interest

Informs

Influences

Gap/Solution Identification

Influences

Adoption
Understanding policy

1. Identify the problem
2. Explain the background and supporting literature
3. Identify the policy goals
4. Do the analysis:
   Identify, describe and compare possible alternatives
5. Consider political, organizational, or other constraints
6. Summarize recommendations and implications:
   How will success be measured and evaluated?
What is the problem?
Reporting out

- What is the background and supporting literature?
Example: Competitive integrated employment

- Key issues
  - Segregated vs. inclusive environments
  - Use of subminimum wage

- Relevant policies / regulatatory guidance
  - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014)
  - Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA, 1938)
  - Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act (1938)
  - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990)
  - Rehabilitation Act (1973)
Helpful resources: State

- Infonet
- legis.iowa.gov
Helpful resources: Federal

- Resources for information specific to disability policy:
  - **AUCD and other organizations**
    - [http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=491](http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=491)
  - **Senate / House websites**
  - **Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities**
    - [http://www.c-c-d.org](http://www.c-c-d.org)
  - **Federal Register**
What are the policy goals?
1. Do the analysis:
   Identify, describe and compare possible alternatives
Reporting out

- What are the constraints and political context?
1. Summarize recommendations and implications:
   How will success be measured and evaluated?
On formulating recommendations

- Look for opposing views
  - Be open to the notion that these are the “alternatives”
  - Can you articulate the counter argument?
- Consider the source
  - What role does the Op-Ed play in informing your view of the issues?
  - Whose research / opinion is it?
- Is it representative of people with disabilities?
- Who is benefiting?
Now What?

- **Advocacy**: Arguing in favor of a cause, idea, or policy
  - Self-advocacy
  - Peer advocacy
  - Family advocacy
  - Systems advocacy
  - Legal advocacy
Preparing YOUR message: Step 1

- Develop talking points
  - *Who you are and the issue you came to discuss*

- Explain why they should care about this issue

- Be explicit about what you want them to do
Preparing YOUR message: Step 2

- Research your audience
  - Get to know your legislators
  - Do they have a personal connection to the issue you care about?
  - What is their voting record?
  - What committees do they sit on?

- Practice your speech
  - Prepare the full version AND the elevator speech!
  - Gather any supplemental resources you want to share
Delivering YOUR message: Step 3

- Schedule time to talk with your legislator
  - Many avenues: in-person, letters, emails, social media, calling

- Other considerations:
  - Try to relax, pace yourself
  - Avoid acronym use
  - Allow time for any questions
  - Offer to be a resource
Delivering YOUR message: Step 4

- Close your meeting with an ask that is both
  - Specific
  - Doable

- Say THANK YOU and offer to follow up
Delivering YOUR message: Step 5

- Follow up by sending a thank you letter or email
  - Briefly recap the meeting
- Who you are
- Issue
- What you asked for
- Offer to help
  - They may ask for a specific deliverable based on the meeting. Update them on status.
Questions?

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