



Session #405:

Democracy in Action

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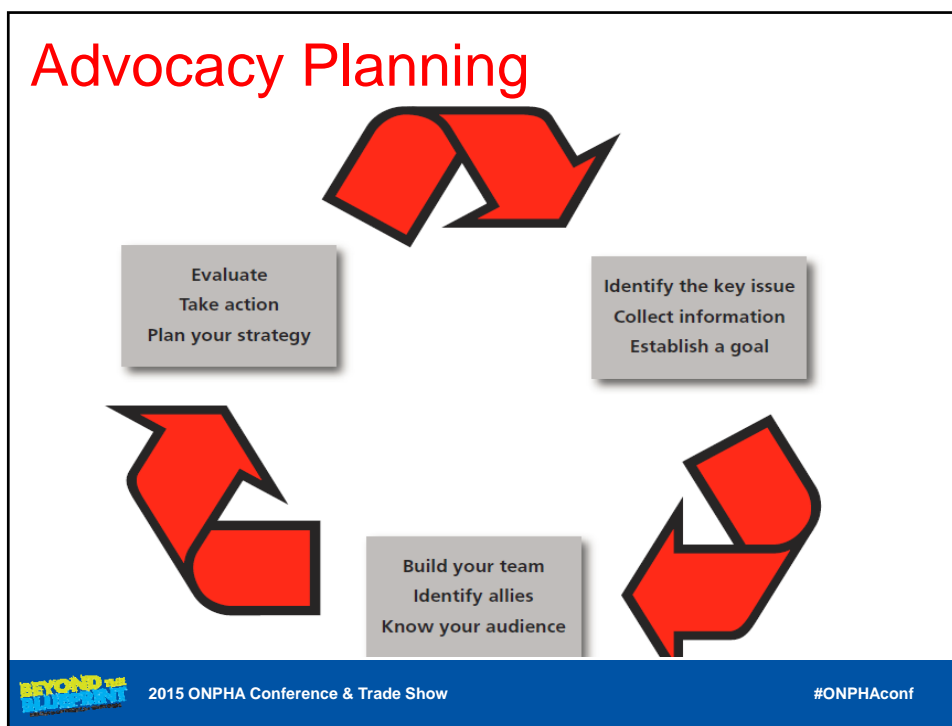
Manager, Government Relations

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What is Government Relations and Advocacy?

- Holistic approach - improve government policies, private industry practices and/or public attitudes.
- Non-partisan
- Municipal, provincial and federal
- Targets elected officials, political advisors and public servants.
- Non-governmental advocacy targets members of the public, media, external for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and private industry.



Identify the Key Issue, Collect Information and Establish a Goal

- General Problem – i.e. My town is not very accessible
- Key Issues – i.e. The sidewalks downtown are too high and narrow to accommodate people with wheelchairs and walkers.
- Research – provide substance, uncovers new information, builds strategy and credibility, reveals threats and challenges
- Establish SMART Goals i.e. Convince town council to widen Main Street sidewalks by X cm and reduce curb height by X cm by Summer 2017

Build Your Team, Identify Allies and Know Your Audience

- MS Ambassador Program – group of volunteers across the province that work to advance priority issues.
- Coalition partners and liked-minded people\organizations i.e. Ontario Caregiver Coalition
- Who are you targeting? Do they have a connection to the cause\issue? What is their role within government? Who are their influencers? Who are your potential opposers\challengers?
- Key players in government – elected officials (Members, Ministers), political staff, public servants, deputy ministers.



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Plan Your Strategy, Take Action, Evaluate

- Plan your strategy and take action! An action plan could look something like this

Action Step	Person(s) Responsible	Date(s) to be Completed	Resource(s) needed	Collaborator(s)
Send letter to city councilor	Jane	October 14	Sample letter statistics	John
Place follow-up phone call	Jane	October 23	Telephone script	John
Meet with council member	Jane and John	November 20	One page brief	Division staff
Send thank-you card and additional info	John	November 23	Note cards addresses	Jane
Issue is brought to committee	Councillor	December 13	Report	John, Jane, division staff



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Ways to Take Action

- Meetings with government officials and policymakers
- Organize a lobby day
- Letter writing
- Petitions
- Social Media campaigns
- Election strategy



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MS Society
Day at
Queen's
Park



Meeting with Government Officials

- Introduction – Your name, story and role. Be sure to inquire whether the official has knowledge or connection to the issue
- Discussion of Issues – What we are trying to achieve?
- Recommendations – Discuss recommendations and ask for advice
- Leave-behinds – have an information brief that contain statistics and research information including key recommendations



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After Your Meeting

- Debrief and record any action items or follow-ups
- Send a thank you letter\ e-mail
- Promote your efforts – tweet\ post a thanks to the official for their time! (Example: @JustinTrudeau Thanks for rocking a carnation today to support Canadians with #MS!)



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Other Considerations

- Know the ground rules – what you can and cannot do
- Timing of legislative, electoral and budgetary cycles
- Find common ground and develop relationships
- Learn as you go!



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Success Stories

Thumb's Up!

Bill 21 – Leave to Help Families Act

Ontario Electricity Support Program



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