ADVOCACY PROCESSES & TOOLS

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THE GOAL OF THIS SEMINAR IS ……

• To empower you to get what you need by using the right advocacy “tools.”
• To empower you to become an effective advocate in order to address the needs of the brain injury community.

WHAT ARE THE TOOLS?

Individual Advocacy
• Know how to develop a persuasive case.
• Know Who Your State And Federal Representatives Are And How To Contact Them

Systems Advocacy
• Join the Legislative Network
• Testifying Before Committees
• Building Coalitions and Relationships
ADVOCACY ... AN OVERVIEW

• What is advocacy?
• Why advocate?
• Who can advocate?
• To whom do you advocate?
• When do you advocate?
• How do you advocate?

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

Tool: Know How to Develop a Persuasive Case
How do you develop a persuasive case?

• Most importantly – have compelling stories.
• There is a logical and emotional angle to developing a persuasive case.
• Stories + Logical Argument = Persuasive Case

7-Step Format of a Persuasive Argument

• Develop a key message that is short and succinct.
• State problem or issue.
• Support with facts.
• State position.
• Explain why the position is the right one to take.
• Ask the lawmaker to act in such a way that is favorable to the position you are advocating.
• Explain how their action will impact the problem or issue.

More Tips On Developing A Persuasive Case

• Generally, a personal letter (or e-mail) is most effective.
• A legislator sometimes brings the most moving stories with him or her when it is time to debate or vote on a bill.
• A phone call can have a greater impact than a non-personalized form letter (or e-mail).
More tips (cont’d)

• Pick the most comfortable method FOR YOU.
• When speaking with legislators and/or aides, be honest and think of yourself as an educator, guide, or counselor.

Tool: Know Who Your State AND Federal Representatives Are And How To Contact Them

Determining Who Your State Representatives Are

• Determine who your state legislators are by visiting http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/districts/municipalities.asp
• Locate the name of your municipality in the index.
• Click "District (whatever number applies to your town)."
• For more detailed information, including e-mail address, about a particular legislator, simply click on the respective legislator’s name.
Determining Who Your Federal Representatives Are.

- Visit http://capwiz.com/bia/home/
- Scroll to “Elected Officials.”
  Type in your zip code and click "Go."
  - Click on "Info" for detailed information, which includes mailing address. To send an e-mail message, click "Send Message" then "Compose Your Own Letter." (NOTE: The "Compose Your Own Letter" step is not necessary when e-mailing the President.

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

- The Legislative Network is a group of brain injury advocates and people interested in brain injury issues.
- Members receive current public policy information related to brain injury.

Tool: The Legislative Network
**Tool: Testifying Before Committees**

- Preparation – Preparation – Preparation.
- Well-organized, succinct testimony.
- Compelling story and/or person.
- Respect.

**Tool: Building Coalitions and Relationships**

- Get on the Committee Agenda.
- Prepare for critical questions.
- Figure out how you are going to respond to critical questions. Practice responding.
Coalitions Are Important

- They maximize the power of individuals and groups through joint action.
- Develop a broad base of support and a stronger voice.
- Mobilize more talents, resources, and approaches to influence an issue than any single organization could achieve alone.

INDIVIDUAL & SYSTEMS ADVOCACY

Tool: Interacting Effectively With Lawmakers (Is pertinent to both individual and systems advocacy)
The Three Stages

- Before the meeting.
- During the meeting.
- After the meeting.

Before the Meeting

- Plan visit carefully by knowing precisely what your advocacy goal is.
- Arrange a specific time and place for the meeting.
- Know your material and be able to present it succinctly.

During the Meeting

- Be succinct. Do not ramble.
- Ask if they have any questions.
- Illustrate with examples.
- Illustrate why the lawmaker should make this a priority.
- Listen for additional needs.
- Define next steps.
After the Meeting

• Send a “Thank you” correspondence.
• Address any questions or concerns the lawmaker had with your presentation.
• Report back to lawmaker.

The New Jersey Legislature

• Understanding the legislative process in New Jersey is critical to knowing WHEN to advocate.
• There are specific times when advocacy should be used.

Visit BIANJ’s Website

• Visit BIANJ’s public policy page at http://www.bianj.org/bweb.html and click on “Public Policy.”
You Will Find….

• Analysis of issues of importance to the brain injury community.
• Legislation of interest to the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey.
• Legislative successes.
• Helpful hints while contacting legislators.
• Upcoming public events.
• Directions as to how you can get involved.
• ….. And more.

TOOL 2: KNOW THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Advocacy Techniques Can Be Used at Various Steps of the Legislative Process

• In Step 1…….. A need for the brain injury can be defined. An advocate(s) can approach a lawmaker and ask him / her to sponsor a bill to address this need.
• In Step 5 …….. When the bill is scheduled for consideration by a committee, advocate(s) can attend the meeting and convey why a bill should become law.

• In Step 8 …….. When the bill is scheduled for a house vote, advocates can contact all members of the house and encourage him/her to support a bill.

The Maze Is The Same.

• This same process can be used when the other house considers the bill.
• The maze is basically structured the same way in both houses.
Your almost there ....

- When a bill reaches Step 10, an advocate(s) can contact the Governor’s office to encourage a particular position.
- This could be the last step before your advocacy goal is realized.

TOOL 7: STUDY SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS

What has made other advocacy campaigns successful?
Elements

- Attaching yourself to other organizations (i.e. coalitions). Examples include the Coalition to Preserve Personal Injury Protection.
- Persistence (i.e. Brain Injury Research Act)
- Compelling need (i.e. Smart Gun Technology).
- Things outside your control (i.e. .08% BAC).

More Elements

- Taking initiative -- Contact your representatives and ask for a meeting.
- Taking advantage -- Of any opportunity to promote the issue.

...... more elements ......

- Have a humanitarian angle.
- An economic angle.
- Testify before the appropriate Senate and General Assembly Committees.
- Connect to lawmakers in leadership positions.
- Grassroots organizing (i.e. Legislative Network).
- Compelling stories.
- Contact the media.
- PROMOTE! .
Case Study: The Traumatic Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver

- Very compelling need.
- Saves the State of New Jersey money.
- Met with legislative leadership.
- Met with members of the Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee.
- Met with members of the General Assembly Budget Committee.
- Met with Chairs of these committees.
- Powerful testifiers.
- Makes humanitarian, healthcare and economic sense.