

# Advocacy Manual and Workbook

Community and Advocacy Support Unit

November 2010

Opportunities for people with a disability



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## How to use this manual

This manual and workbook is designed to give the person new to the adventure of advocacy a basic background into advocacy. This manual talks about how to conduct your activities at the systemic level; to start you out to do systems advocacy in your local community.

The manual and workbook covers three main themes

Firstly, information about advocacy is covered in:

- The Goal of Advocacy
- Defining Advocacy
- Types of Advocacy

Secondly, the manual contains the strategies and objectives of advocacy in:

- How do you change people's minds through advocacy?

Lastly, the workbook is designed to breakdown the strategies into a series of activities that together form a systemic advocacy campaign.

This manual and workbook is a work in progress. It will be reviewed at regular interviews to ensure that the contents remain relevant for advocates.

## **The Goal of Advocacy**

- To change people's minds.
- All law, policy and implementation are just reflections of what is in people's minds.
- Your job as an advocate is to help change people's minds about what they think about people with disability.

*"Advocacy is really the art of getting policy and practice changed by people in power.*

*"It's the skills and techniques you use to effectively persuade governments or others who have power to change their ways of thinking and doing things.*

*"There are real strengths in our sector around advocacy but I think for a lot of organizations there are many lessons that can be learned to make them more effective.*

*"Never underestimate the power of people to change the behavior and thinking of governments. This sector has many, many strengths but we need to remind ourselves sometimes because we forget our own power."*

**Marc Purcell, Director of the Australian Council for International Development**

## Defining Advocacy

### Australian Definition

Advocacy is speaking acting, writing with minimal conflict of interest on behalf of the sincerely perceived interests of a disadvantaged person or group to promote, protect and defend their welfare and justice by:

- being on their side and no-one else's
- being primarily concerned with their fundamental needs
- remaining loyal and accountable to them in a way which is emphatic and vigorous and which is, or is likely to be, costly to the advocate or advocacy group

### International Definitions

- **Advocacy** is an action directed at changing the policies, positions or programs of any type of institution.
- **Advocacy** is pleading for, defending or recommending an idea before other people.
- **Advocacy** is speaking up, drawing a community's attention to an important issue, and directing decision makers toward a solution.
- **Advocacy** is working with other people and organisations to make a difference.
- **Advocacy** is putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem and building support for acting on both the problem and the solution.
- **Advocacy** can aim to change an organisation internally or to alter an entire system.
- **Advocacy** is the process of people participating in decision-making processes which affect their lives.

## **Types of Advocacy**

A number of different types of advocacy exist. Here we will refer to five types of advocacy:

- Individual Advocacy
- Citizen Advocacy
- Systems Advocacy
- Parent Group Advocacy
- Self Advocacy

Sometimes only two types of advocacy are talked about, individual and systems. Self advocacy and citizen advocacy are often regarded as individual advocacy. Parent advocacy is often regarded as either individual or systems.

### **1. Individual Advocacy**

Individual advocacy is where the advocate concentrates their efforts on addressing issues in the daily lives of individual people. There are two common forms of individual advocacy:

#### **a. Informal Advocacy**

You may not know it, but you may have more than likely undertaken informal advocacy already.

Informal advocacy is when you assert the rights of another to change the system that impacts negatively on the life of the person concerned and you are not paid to do so. A parent undertakes informal advocacy whenever they advocate for change to make their child's experience at school more inclusive of their needs.

Many different people, with a range of relationships to people with disability, have spoken out and persistently advocated for those who are vulnerable and changed the system. It is these informal advocacy efforts that are very powerful and can make great differences not just for the person concerned but to others that follow.

#### **b. Community based organisations**

Another form of individual advocacy is community based organisations that pay staff to advocate for individuals with disability in their local communities. Some individual advocacy organisation may have a particular area of expertise or eligibility criteria, such as housing or tenancy issues, health and ageing issues, children or adult only issues.

### **2. Citizen Advocacy**

Citizen advocacy is a community based movement that aims to recognise, promote and defend the rights, well being and interests of people with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities. It does so by finding and supporting caring, responsible citizens who make long-term voluntary commitment to make a positive difference in the life of a person who may be lonely, face difficult challenges, or be in "at risk" situations.

Each Citizen Advocacy relationship is unique. The citizen advocate may for example, offer his or her protégé friendship, new experiences and opportunities, spokespersonship and protection from abuse.

The Citizen Advocacy office carefully matches protégés and citizen advocates to ensure there is a good match between the interests and needs of the protégé and the abilities, resources and commitment of the citizen advocate. Citizen advocates are orientated, assisted to gain further knowledge and resources, supported and recruited by the Citizen Advocacy office.

### **3. Systems Advocacy**

This form of advocacy is primarily concerned with influencing and changing the system (legislation, policy and practices) in ways that will benefit people with a disability as a group within society. Systems advocates will encourage changes to the law, government and service policies and community attitudes. Usually systems advocacy do not do individual advocacy. To do so can cause conflict around the use of resources, focus and purpose.

### **4. Parent Group Advocacy**

Parent group advocacy is concerned with advocating on issues that affect people with a disability and their family. The focus is on the needs of the person with a disability, not the parents or family.

However, some parent group advocacy focuses on the needs of parents first. Whilst parents have substantial needs for support and resources, when we talk about parent group advocacy we mean advocacy by parent groups for people with a disability.

### **5. Self Advocacy**

Self advocacy is undertaken by a person or group who share the same characteristics or interests on behalf of the same person or group. Self advocacy can be a very powerful tool especially when advocating on systemic issues because it is difficult for others to argue with the person whose direct experience is being used to highlight inequity in the system.



## **How do you change people's minds through advocacy?**

Advocacy strategy and action can be broken down into five basic strategies that combine to make a successful long term advocacy campaign.

1. To Educate
2. To Reduce Emotional Distance
3. Building Relationships
4. Garnering Power
5. Applying Pressure

### **1. To Educate**

You are the expert in this field. You are the person with the lived experience; you can educate politicians, Ministers, people in the community about the reality of the particular issue you are lobbying about. You are also establishing your credibility and expertise which is a vital ingredient for long-term relationships with local members etc. Education is a twofold task:

#### **a. Facts and figures**

Know what you are talking about. Have the current data, facts and figures, available. Know what is being done by the various levels of government, state, federal and local councils. Find out what is going on overseas. Has this issue been tackled successfully internationally? If so get the facts and give them to whomever you are talking with, this may offer the person a simple and already workable solution.

#### **b. Personal Stories**

There is nothing more potent than personal stories. Using personal stories effectively to highlight a systemic issue is the key to a successful campaign. Personal stories should be used to show where and how the particular advocacy issue you are advocating for impacts on the daily lives of people.

Stories must be kept simple and to the point. Stories are illustrations of an issue and need to be relevant to the issue. This is particularly important when a group of families may be making representation.

## A Parent's Experience

An example of using facts combined with the personal experience is shown in the following story. This story comes from a parent who has been long associated with the Endeavour Foundation.

Some years ago my daughter was able to visit a residential service for a 'holiday' which served as respite for the family members. Using a residential service is not satisfactory for the permanent residents as the dynamics are continually changing. A decision was made by the service provider that respite would no longer be provided at the residential the need to provide more permanent accommodation was also urgent. The decision however left families with a dilemma: our source of respite had simply been removed with very little warning and no consultation. We were given alternatives to pursue.

Being a very active and determined person I set about systematically contacting all the options given. One option was to contact DIAL, the Disability information phone line. That call took me on a circuitous route after 34 phone calls. I did have a few contacts to chase. Very quickly it became obvious that many of the 'options' had conditions our daughter simply did not meet: specific disabilities, age limitations, geographic difficulties. Ultimately I tabulated all the contacts, the criteria for use, cost and the availability. The document ran to three pages of tightly tabulated material. I had done my homework. I had little joy! There was one option: a supported accommodation for pensioners. It sounded rosy but clearly its location was inappropriate for many families; the cost of taxi transport for clients to attend their usual day services would be prohibitive.

I armed myself with my information and went to visit my local State member who also happened to be the Minister responsible. It was a fortunate encounter as the Minister had knowledge of the supported accommodation facility that was offering respite and quickly informed me that the level of supervision was totally inadequate for the needs of my daughter: this meant there were no options at all. The Minister asked if the document I presented, the evidence, could be retained and an effort would be made to secure the funding to improve the situation. Having the written evidence following intensive research was vital; the matter, while emotional had a thorough factual basis. The Minister's electoral office later informed me that that afternoon time was spent in conversation, often heated, with the Treasurer, until there was agreement that the upcoming budget would include an initiative to improve the situation. That did happen; it was insufficient but there was recognition of the problem and progress was made.

Alison Semple

## **2. To Reduce Emotional Distance**

People who are in power can make decisions more easily that negatively impact on people if the emotional distance is great.

What do we mean by “emotional distance”? Emotional distance is how closely connected through experience, status, gender, race etc a person feels to another person. For instance, a middle aged man, white, middle class, that went to a private school is less inclined to make legislation, or write policy that will negatively impact on someone who he feels is the same as himself. The emotional distance is small.

On the other hand, the same middle aged man, white, middle class that went to a private school, may find it much easier to legislate or write policy that impacts negatively on a single mother of different race with children with disability who live in a lower socio-economic region. The emotional distance is great and the single mother is seen as the “other”.

Reducing emotional distance depends on your starting point – obvious isn’t it? It just means that you tailor your advocacy “pitch” and presentation to your audience. In essence you are “selling” your message.

If you are meeting with a Minister, then you would keep your message tight. You would have prepared and know exactly what you wanted to talk about. You have your stories figured out, and you will have the supporting facts and figures to back up your message. Dress should be as corporate as your wardrobe will allow. The Indian dhoti worked for Mahatma Ghandi, but that was only after he had been successful in a number of previous campaigns.

### 3. Building Relationships<sup>1</sup>

Building relationships with decision makers puts you in a good position to advocate for change. By getting to know your representatives - your local councillor, local state Member of Parliament and Federal Member - and building a reputation of credibility, you can open doors, now and for the future. Below are some ways to develop a good relationship with your elected representatives.

#### Tips for Building Relationships with Policy Makers

- **Invite your representatives** to events that relate to your cause. Show them that there will be thoughtful dialogue, and that neither they nor their parties will be verbally attacked.
- **Attend events** where your representative will be speaking.
- When you contact your representative about an issue that concerns you, **follow up later on the progress made or lack thereof.**
- **Read the local paper** and constituent brochures to find out what the representative is doing.
- **Engage in thoughtful dialogue with your MP**, and show that you want to help her do her job.
- **Avoid taking an adversarial tone** or engaging in adversarial actions, as this may compromise your ability to have an impact, both now and in the future.
- **Make sure that you say “thank you” or “well done”** when the representative does something that you like.

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in part from Van Geest, M, *How to form relationships with policy makers*, August 2008 available at web site: [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca)

#### **4. Garnering Power**

Power influences.

Adding power to your advocacy efforts can be achieved in a number of ways.

1. Having the numbers. Making sure that you have lots of people that know about your advocacy efforts that you can call supporters. These people can be called on to attend meetings, rallies etc.
2. Transfer of power by proximity. This can be achieved in various ways. Endeavour Foundation is a powerful organisation in Queensland and New South Wales. That power is transferred to you as an advocate. Other people of power can be sought to give support for your advocacy issue. Their power, by being part of your advocacy initiative, will be transferred to your efforts.

People in positions of power are also influenced by power. If you can state the number of supporters you have or the people associated with your advocacy then, you will have more power and therefore more influence.

## **5. Building Pressure**

Sometimes just having won the argument is not enough. Most politicians would agree the moral argument has been won that people with disability should experience the same life chances as other people in the community, but this doesn't mean that they are compelled to do anything about it.

Even with all your persuasive advocacy efforts, sometimes the minds of politicians may need just a little bit more pressure to actually move them to take action.

This can be done by building pressure through (a) media and (b) rallying support from public opinion.

### **a. Media**

As Advocacy Champions the more media coverage that accurately highlights the issues, the better. Stories about what is happening to people locally are very powerful. Following are some examples of local stories.

When speaking with media it helps to remember some of the different characteristics of media that will influence if they will pick up your story.

Television news, the visual media carries only a small number of stories each news bulletin and have segments on top stories (headlines), international events, politics, sport and weather. TV carries a smaller number of stories and requires strong visual images.

Radio is audio only and relies on the clarity and conciseness of the news reader (notwithstanding any live broadcasts). Radio News bulletins are generally every hour throughout the day on the hour. Radio newsrooms are generally staffed 5am-7pm, but are they are busiest in the minutes before the news hour and just after it. Some commercial/regional stations may have the news read from other locations so will not be localised.

Print publications can carry a large number of stories but with tight timeframes and few staff writing they tend to look for stories that are strongly worded have an element of controversy, tragedy or drama and an important aspect which may impact on the readers.

Across most media, timing is everything. When a major story breaks, news outlet will want a neighbour, an industry/issue spokesperson, witness or someone directly involved with the people or topic making news. This can be a fleeting but valuable opportunity to connect your story, where relevant, to an existing story in the media.

Also time of the day and day of the week are important in terms of how news room operate. Sundays and Mondays are generally the quietest days for news material (and January generally) so pitching your story for these days, ahead of time can improve success. In preparing information for local media, remember to avoid terms, acronyms and jargon that the media and the general public are not familiar with.

Events that require media attendance should be staged between 10 - 12 in the morning. Of course there are issues around people's privacy and gaining permission to identify people.

As much as Endeavour is a fine organisation the media is interested in the story, the issue, the local people and impact on readers, not our organisational details. So keep messages simple - what is the issue, who does it affect, and uses examples in plain language where possible.

As media deadlines are real and journalists are under time pressure to get what they need from you, seek assistance from Endeavour staff as early as you can.

For assistance please contact [corpcom@endeavour.com.au](mailto:corpcom@endeavour.com.au) or call 07 3908 7138.

Some examples of print media follow:





**Blacktown Sun**  
**27-Jul-2010**  
 Page: 19  
 General News  
 By: Nick Soon  
 Market: Sydney  
 Circulation: 56417  
 Type: Suburban  
 Size: 189.11 sq.cms  
 Frequency: -T-----

## Keen to get the job done

By Nick Soon

EMMA Breen, 41, thinks nothing of taking two buses and a train and travelling one-and-a-half hours to get to her Seven Hills place of employment.

In fact, she can't wait to get there each day – and that's been the case for the past 23 years.

The Auburn resident works with Endeavour Foundation Industries' Clean-Pac Services packing plant at Leabons Lane.

The plant employs about 100 people with various disabilities who pack pharmaceutical and veterinarian products.

Ms Breen said she enjoyed working as it helped her self-esteem.

She said her pay was also handy for social outings with the friends she had made at the plant.

Ms Breen is employed to clean the site's kitchen and lunch room from 8.30am to 3pm, Monday to Friday.

"I enjoy coming to work as it allows me to make friends and become a useful member of the community," she said.

"I wake up at about 6am to take a bus from near my house to Auburn railway station and then another bus to my workplace."

Ms Breen is supported by her 45-year-old mum



**Loves her work:** Emma and Kathy Breen during Clean-Pac's open day last week.  
**Picture:** Michael Szabath

Moreen and older sister, Kathy, who serves as one of the plant's Sydney area committee members.

The Seven Hills site was open to the public on Wednesday to raise awareness of the work of Endeavour Foundation Industries and its employees.

"The Seven Hills plant always has vacancies for people like Emma, and operates an evening shift to meet demands for its services," Kathy Breen said.

"Its motto, *No Bullies, No Worries*, makes it a safe workplace for them."

Business service manager Michael Carney said the plant provided full-time and part-time employment, training, personal development and social opportunities to people with a disability.

Endeavour Foundation Industries has three sites in Sydney – Seven Hills, Mt Druitt and Castle Hill – which it acquired from the insolvent Cumberland Industries, saving nearly 500 jobs.

For more information phone Mr Carney on 9621 6828.





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02-Jun-2010  
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Size: 273.26 sq.cms  
Frequency: --W-F--

## Rotary awards for Endeavour clients

THE Ayr Rotary Club continued its annual recognition of Endeavour clients last Thursday evening, as the Rotarians and their partners joined with the clients and their families for the presentation of their annual awards.

The presentations have been held at the Endeavour Farm on Groper Creek Road, Home Hill over many years.

However, this year, the popular event was held at the Endeavour facility in Wilmington Street, Ayr where the club provided a barbecue for the guests prior to the presentation of the annual awards.

Endeavour Foundation director, David Rawnsley of Townsville told the gathering part of their strategy was to re-engage with the area.

"This is exactly what we want to do," he said of the function.

He offered their thanks to everyone involved in the event, for which they all had one goal in mind.

Endeavour Industries manager Shaun McAullay was also pleased with the attendance at the function saying it highlighted the advantages for those coming through.

He presented the award for the most enthusiastic worker to Nicole

Lovell, in whom they were seeing changes in her work and lifestyle.

The productivity award was presented to Ethan Lazzarini, who was described as a "shining star".

The motivational award was presented to Paul Vatatuku, while Iky Oar was awarded the Achievement award in his absence.

Ayr Rotary Club president Jack Slaney said the event was one the club looked forward to every year.

"We are glad we can be of service to the group," he said.



Joining in the presentation of awards to Endeavour clients were (from left) Shaun McAullay (Endeavour Industries manager), David Rawnsley (Endeavour Foundation board director), Paul Vatatuku (motivational award), Ethan Lazzarini (productivity award), Nicole Lovett (enthusiasm award) and Ayr Rotary Club president Jack Slaney. Absent was achievement award winner Iky Oar.

**b. Public Opinion**

What is public opinion and why is it important to the systemic advocate?

Public opinion is what people think. Public opinion becomes powerful when what the majority of the people think differs from what the government is doing. Public opinion will often express its dissatisfaction with government in a number of ways. For instance, public rallies, changing voting patterns to vote a government out etc.

What does this mean for a systemic advocate?

If your activities can educate public opinion to reflect the changes you would like to achieve then your goals may be achieved by the action of a collective public opinion.

Public opinion is particularly powerful in the American context, for instance. Public opinion was attributed to leading to the US intervention in the internal conflict of the former Yugoslavia. In contrast, at the time when the internal conflict rose in Rwanda which led to the massacre of 800,000 people, the only news fed to the American public was the OJ Simpson murder. Public opinion about the atrocities in Rwanda was subdued by the OJ Simpson trial; US led international intervention did not take place until the news presented the story of what was happening in Rwanda.

# Workbook<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Reproduced from Sharma, R R (1997) *An Introduction to Advocacy* – Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA)

✓ **Data and Research**

Data and research are essential tools for giving the advocate the credibility when making their assertions and for finding existing solutions. In addition, good data itself can be the most persuasive argument.

What data can be used to best support your arguments?

✓ **Identifying Advocacy Audiences**

Once the issue and goals are selected, advocacy efforts must be directed to the people with decision-making power and, ideally, to the people who influence the decision makers such as staff, advisors, bureaucrats, the media and the public.

What are the names of the decision makers who can make your goal a reality?

Who and what influences these decision makers?

✓ **Developing and Delivering advocacy Messages**

Different audiences respond to different messages. For example, a politician may become motivated when she knows how many people in her district care about the problem. A Minister of a government department may take action when he is presented with detailed data on the prevalence of the problem.

What messages will get the selected audience to act on your behalf?

✓ **Building Coalitions**

Often, the power of advocacy is found in the numbers of people who support your goal. Especially in democratic countries, involving large numbers of people representing diverse interests can provide safety for advocacy as well as build political support. Even within an organisation, internal coalition building, such as involving people from different departments in developing a new program, can help build consensus for action.

Who else can you invite to join your cause?

Who else could be an ally?

✓ **Making Persuasive Presentations.**

Opportunities to influence key audiences are often limited. A politician may grant you one meeting to discuss your issue, or a minister may have only five minutes at a conference to speak with you. Careful and thorough preparation of convincing arguments and presentation style can turn these brief opportunities into successful advocacy.

If you have one chance to reach the decision maker, what do you want to say and how will you say it?



✓ **Evaluating Advocacy Efforts**

Being an effective advocate require continuous feedback and evaluations of your efforts.

How do you know if you have succeeded in reaching your advocacy objective?

How can your advocacy strategies be improved?

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*10 Core Components of an advocacy campaign*

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[www.communitycollegecentral.org/Advocacytoolkit/Shaping/corecomponents.html](http://www.communitycollegecentral.org/Advocacytoolkit/Shaping/corecomponents.html)

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