Advocacy 101: Making the Most of Your Meetings with Lawmakers

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What to Expect on Capitol Hill

- Who will I be meeting with?
- How do I run a successful meeting?
- How much knowledge with the staff member have about my issue?
- What type of information is helpful?
Crafting Messages that Resonate
(Or, the 5 “knows”)

#HillDay17
1. Know your audience: WHO

- Legislators
- Congressional staff
- Community stakeholders
- Other important advocacy members

Who are you talking to about mental health and addiction?
2. Know your audience: WHAT

- What do they care about?
- What are their goals?
- What do they want to accomplish?
- What are their pre-existing biases?
- What constraints might they have?
3. Know your audience: WHEN

• When will they be making decisions?
• When should you weigh in?
4. Know your ONE top goal

- Change to federal law?
- Revision of state regulations?
- Other?

“If you say three things, you say nothing.”
- President Bill Clinton
What makes a good “ask?”

- Specific
- Framed as a yes/no option
- Within the policymaker’s realm of influence
Do’s and Don’ts

**Do say**

“Please vote YES on H.R. 1, to support the growth and sustainability of Clubhouses in our district.”

**Don’t say**

“Please keep Clubhouses in mind when you vote on this bill.”
Hey, it’s ok...

Say, “Can we count on you to support ______?”
5. Know yourself

"How boring."
Figure out the human element

• Why must your problem be solved?
• What impact is it having on the community?
  – Can you quantify the impact?
• What **one story** can you tell as an example?
• How will your solution solve the problem?
Tips for Telling Your Story to Congress

1. Start with the human impact
2. Explain impact on their district
3. Have a clear ask
4. Show legislators how THEY can make a difference

AND...
- Be honest
- Be a good listener
- Ask for support, don’t demand
- Treat staff with respect
- Show appreciation
Most powerful person in the Free World...
Questions?

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