

# ADVOCACY GUIDE: RESOURCE 5

## Getting Advocacy Started: For Speakers

### **Advocacy is more than a presentation. It is deeply emotional, personally significant, and high stakes.**

While it is easy to be defensive or fearful, remember to still try and connect with the audience, educate them about something they may not understand, and help people empathize with what you feel. To manage this challenging context, preparation is important! Use these suggestions as you begin to outline your points. Note: These suggestions can take place in any order that works for you and should be used as a set of reminders, not a formula. Feel free to skip suggestions that do not work for you or the situation you are in—make it your own!

#### **Imagine the Ideal**

- 1) Identify a specific problem or need and reflect on why this problem exists. What personal, internal, and external barriers are at the root of the problem?
- 2) Write down what the ideal world would look like in great detail. How is it different than the current situation? How are lives improved?

#### **Make the Problem Universal**

- 1) Put yourself in your audience's shoes. Why would they not see this issue as a problem? What information are they missing? What do they typically care about?
- 2) Clearly outline the magnitude of the problem. Illustrate the extent of the issue with ideas or analogies the audience understands.

#### **Identify Examples**

- 1) Outline your most powerful arguments and then figure out what part your audience might not understand or believe at first.
- 2) Identify real-world examples that illustrate the issues your audience might not understand. Decide whether research or personal stories are better for this audience.

#### **Be Selective**

- 1) As you outline, remember that less is more. Select content that is most relevant to your central argument and keep your points concise.
- 2) Structure is important. Start by stating the problem, and progress to a possible solution and the ideal result. Choose examples wisely and consider your audience.

#### **Anticipate Push Back**

- 1) When you finish your outline, write a list of all the possible counterarguments, questions, and pushback the audience might say or might be thinking.
- 2) Draw an arrow from each item on your list and jot down a couple thoughts on what you would say in response to this pushback.

#### **Show You Care**

- 1) Remind yourself that emotions are powerful and advocate with feeling. Don't hide your emotions, but also don't let them overwhelm you so you can't speak.
- 2) Remind yourself that your points are worth saying. Come up with self-affirmations, like "My stories are more important than my fears."

