



1. Introduction

This workbook is a compilation from many sources that we hope will provide you with tools, tips and information that will support you as you speak out in your community and your province about physical activity.

As a member of the Saskatchewan *in motion* movement, you are already making a difference to our health and well-being. This is challenging, sometimes frustrating work. But always keep in mind the words of Margaret Mead, US anthropologist, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

You have power. Use it to speak out for physical activity.

2. What is Advocacy?

Definition:

The Advocacy Working Group uses the definition of advocacy from “Working Together 2” in which the term is described as “...the act of speaking or of disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct, or public policy and law.”

Beyond this definition, advocacy is a complex process and a difficult one to explain. Some have suggested that it is a continuum of activities that include, but are not limited to, research, public education and increasing awareness. We believe that it is more like a circle with different activities coming in and out of play at various times in the process. For example, research can lead to an information/awareness campaign that may result in the need for further research followed by the development of education materials. The order and range of advocacy activities employed will vary depending on the issue and the organization. Of course, the value, impact and essence of advocacy go far beyond the actual activity.

Advocacy Working Group: Advocacy: the Sound of Citizen's Voices.
www.voluntary-sector.ca/eng/publications/2002/position_paper

Why speak out?

We know:

- 66% of Canadian adults are not physically active enough to achieve health benefits.
- Our children are facing an obesity crisis.
- Only 10% of children and youth are meeting Canada's physical activity guidelines.
- This generation of children has a shorter life expectancy than their parents
- Physical activity has been engineered out of their lives

We have the research that confirms that increased levels of physical activity is pivotal to health and well-being in our communities. We know that initiatives at the community level supported by good policy at all levels of government will go a long way to address the physical inactivity epidemic. We know that key decision-makers are beginning to understand the importance of physical activity and are beginning to ask us what they can do. Speaking out for physical activity brings our key messages not only to those in power but also to the individual. If we speak out together with a loud voice, sharing our key messages, telling the stories of issues and successes and demanding action we are taking action on building a healthier more active community.

Resource: The Troublemaker's Teaparty

Your handbook, The Troublemaker's Teaparty, written by Charles Dobson from the City of Vancouver is the most applicable resource that we have found for speaking out for the physical activity movement.

It:

- Is meant to be used as a reference book and not to be read cover-to-cover.
- Is a guide to strategic thinking
- Answers basic questions of organizing ourselves:
 - -How to get others involved
 - -How to respect different views but work collaboratively
 - -How to decide what is important
 - -How we define actions that will achieve what is important
 - -How we find necessary time and resources
 - -How we can contribute modestly and still make a difference.

While it is all useful, the following chapters will probably be most helpful to you in **"Speaking Out"**.

#1: Community Organizing

A do-it-yourself guide to grassroots organizing. It focuses on bringing people together who share a common place, however the material also applies to organizing around an issue.

#6: Preventing grassroots wilt,

This chapter looks at the forces that undermine grassroots groups and active citizens and suggests practical ways to overcome these sources of "grassroots wilt".

#8: Direct Contact:

A great deal can be done by directly contacting those in power. People with a track record of getting things done do this all the time. They find out who is responsible, then pick up the phone and call them.

#9: Media Advocacy

Takes a close look at media advocacy. Earn rather than purchase media coverage.

#10 **Confrontation 101**

Reminds us of the elements of working smart while speaking out.

On-line version: www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/teaparty

Food for thought:

Mahatma Gandhi's Top Eight Methods for Converting an Opponent

Use these methods to convert opponents who control your group. Conversion refers to the process by which an opponent comes around to embrace your objectives.

1. Refrain from violence and hostility.

2. Attempt to obtain your opponent's trust – by: being truthful, being open about your intentions, using chivalry (for example, being kind if the other side experiences an unrelated difficulty), and making behavior inoffensive without compromising the issue at hand.

3. Refrain from humiliating an opponent.

4. Make visible sacrifices for one's cause.- Here it is best if the suffering of the aggrieved is made visible.

5. Carry on constructive work. - Address parts of the problem you can address, make improvements where you can and participate in activities that all people see as contributing to everyone's common welfare.

6. Maintain contact with an opponent. - This is absolutely necessary if conversion is to succeed.

7. Demonstrate trust in an opponent.

8. Develop empathy, good will, and patience toward an opponent. - This is the best you can do from your end. If you fail to convert an opponent it may be due to external factors beyond your control.

What is advocacy for you?

Jot down your thoughts on what advocacy for physical activity is for you.

3. Skill building for Advocacy

In this section you will actively work on building skills for effective advocacy. This will include:

- **The Five Basic Principles**
- **Getting your ideas across**
- **Getting good information from others**
- **Dealing with emotional behaviour**

The Basic Principles

These five basic principles are central to your effectiveness at connecting with people. Use these basic principles when:

- People need to work together more effectively
- You want to take action
- Stress is increasing
- You have a “sensitive” problem to deal with
- You want good results to continue
- You want people to be receptive to new ideas or feedback
- You need to break ‘bad news to an individual or a group.

Basic Principle #1: Focus on the situation, issue or behaviour, not on the person.

Defensive reactions are human but they don’t contribute to improving a situation or making a point. It’s crucial that you focus on *facts* and not on a person’s character or personality traits.

“Why don’t you care that obesity is an increasing issue with our children.”

“All you developers ever think about is money not whether we have an active, healthy community.”

Basic Principle #2: Maintain the self-confidence and enhance the self-esteem of others.

Maintaining the self-confidence and self-esteem of others is central to getting good results. Don’t miss any chance to give thanks for a job well done. Be shameless.

One approach:

To the Minister of Health(who is at your event giving opening remarks): Use the opportunity to bring champion on board, instead of giving standard “Thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule to come to our Walking Challenge.”

Another approach:

“Our *in motion* Team really appreciated the fact that you lead the Walking Challenge Saturday. Having the Minister come all the way from Regina for this underlines the fact that your Ministry understands the impact of a sedentary lifestyle and champions and physically active initiatives.

Basic Principle #3: Maintain constructive relationships with members of your Team, partners, media and supporters.

Poor relationships make very job more difficult. Healthy relationships enable you to focus your energies on getting the job done. You don't need to be "pals", but common courtesy and thoughtfulness go a long way.

To the administrative assistant for the Chief Medical Officer of Health: "We really appreciate your efforts in setting up this meeting about cuts to the health promotion budget. See you on the Trail".

Basic Principle #4: Take the initiative to make things better.

Coming up with ideas is at heart of a leader's job. You have the influence to make sure something happens.

"I was checking the *in motion* website yesterday and they have a new grant program. It seems that they will fund a survey that will tell us what the levels of physical activity are in Prince Albert. This is our chance to jump on some valid stats to support our advocacy work. What do you say we go for it!" Mary, with your skills you would be the ideal person to be the contact. Can you fit this in?"

Basic Principle #5: Lead by example.

Whether you know it or not your actions have enormous influence on people-even the so-called "little things" you do. It's absolutely true that actions speak louder than words. Your leadership in advocacy is needed to give people a positive model of how to:

- Have fun!
- Be open and clear about your motivation and passion for the issues
- Stay with agreed-on priorities
- Deal constructively with others
- Create a flexible, "we can do it" environment
- Deal with change and foster new ideas
- Use the basic principles with members on your Team and outside.

"You know what? We're not having fun here. It seems as if those bike paths will never happen, but hey!! We need to hold their feet to the fire. Let's meet at my place next week for a pot luck, go nuts, throw some ideas out and see what we can come up with."

Practice, Practice, Practice!

You will find the Basic Principles Speaking Out practice worksheet in the practice section at the end of the workbook. We will use them in the workshop and if the situation arises, refer to them and perhaps practice with your Action Team.

4. Building on the Basic Principles

Using key actions in these specific areas will improve the potential for successful interventions.

- **Getting your ideas across**
- **Getting good information from others**
- **Getting good information from others**
- **Dealing with emotional behaviour**

Getting your ideas across

Communicating clearly and convincingly is neither an inherited ability nor an elaborate art form; it is a learned skill developed through planning, practice and doing. This is essential for advocates. The following key actions and planning questions are helpful whether you are: doing an interview, developing a power point presentation, speaking to one person or a group, speaking up in a meeting or writing a media release.

Key actions:

1. State the purpose and main point of your message.

This helps capture the listener's attention and helps them remember the most important part of your message.

2. Present points to aid understanding.
 - Use simple language
 - Keep your explanation short so that you don't risk boring them.
 - Choose a logic that would be natural and familiar to your audience.
 - Make your story as colourful as possible: humour and examples wow them.
 - List your supporting points first then go back and fill in the detail. Visuals can be useful.

3. Check for understanding and reaction.

You won't know if you got your message across unless you check it out with the listener. Their input may surface some ideas or problem areas that you didn't know about. It's also respectful.

4. Handle reactions to what you've presented.

People question you because they don't understand or are uncertain of their position relative to the information you have just provided. Most often they aren't challenging you as a person. What they need is clarification.

How to do this?

- Use basic Principle #2: Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others. Validate the question. Thank them for asking, or comment that it was helpful.
- Listen carefully. Paraphrase to clarify understanding. Then, answer specifically. In advocacy work this may mean that you find a way to answer with your main message.

- Summarize your main point.
A short, simple restatement of your main message helps the listener remember and respond. It may also clarify any follow-up work.

Speaking Out Practice Exercise 2:

- Refer to practice section of workbook

Getting good information from others

Doing advocacy work often involves gathering intelligence. This involves developing a wicked network, building relationships with people who can get or give you information and always having your antenna up. Do you know someone who does this well?

Keep these tips in mind:

1. Focus on the information needed. “We hear that planning committee is going to be discussing bike paths at their next meeting.”
2. Use open-ended questions to expand the discussions. “How do you think we should...?”
3. Use closed-ended questions to prompt for specifics. “Do you have a date yet for the meeting?”
4. Encourage dialogue through eye contact and expression.
5. State your understanding of what you’re hearing. “So you’re thinking that it’s important that we have people present?”
6. Summarize and close the discussion. “Thanks for this. I’ll let you know who will attend.”

Dealing with emotional behaviour

Sometimes in our advocacy work situations can become heated whether on our Team or when speaking out. Good manners and civil society are not always in abundance. If you stumble on rude, bullying, angry or denigrating language or behaviors remember that you can determine whether the discussion can continue constructively. If the answer is no, then hang up, walk out, trash the e-mail. You will need some time to collect yourself, but you need to know that you didn’t let yourself be subject to abusive behaviour.

It’s going to happen so planning ahead is helpful. Think about:

- What specific kinds of emotional behaviour are you likely to encounter?
- How are you likely to react?
- How can you cope with your reactions and respond most effectively?

Tips:

1. Calmly acknowledge the emotional behaviour.
2. Describe the impact that the behaviour is having on you.
3. Determine if it’s possible to continue the discussion constructively.
4. Propose an approach for jointly refocusing on the issue.
5. If successful, then good. If not, exit politely and calmly.

Speaking Out Practice Exercise 4:

- In Practice Section

Winning Support from Others

Here are some key actions that may help when you looking for support for your work, especially when you are going beyond the usual suspects in your field.

1. Establish mutual involvement in the situation.
2. Explain how your work benefits others, the community and yourself.
3. Determine understanding and reactions.
4. Address concerns that the other person may have.
5. Ask for the specific support you need.
6. Agree on an action plan.

Speaking Out Practice Exercise 5:

- In Practice Section

5. It's Show Time!!

Now the fun really begins. This is your chance to practice planning and speaking out about physical activity.

Here's how it will work.

- Over lunch you will select a scenario.
- You will prepare a 10 minute interaction.
- You will deliver your work to a supportive panel.
- They will provide feedback.

The task:

You will be speaking out on your scenario to colleagues who will listen carefully, ask some questions and finally give you feedback on your intervention.

Your colleagues have reviewed the scenarios and have prepared some questions for you. Be bold, be proud and have fun!!



The scenarios:

1. Your *in motion* team has developed a highly successful winter evening indoor walking program in the high school. Attendance is consistently high and it is mostly volunteer effort that pulls it off. At an *in motion* team meeting one of the members says that she just heard that she discovered that the school district is proposing a 2/3rds cut to the budget that provides community access. Their priority will be providing facilities for sports teams. Your Team Leader has just received a call from the local TV station wanting to do an interview on the 6:00PM news. Prepare and do the interview.
2. There are two side-by-side-neighborhoods in your community that are not connected by any sort of road, trail, or path. The elementary school is in one of the neighbourhoods. The children in the other neighbourhood have a long walk that crosses a busy intersection to get to school, but aren't far enough to bus. So parents drive their kids to school every day. There has been talk of some sort of a path for connectivity for years but no action has been taken. Your *in motion* Team has decided to act, and has an initial meeting with the Mayor and director of planning next Wednesday. Prepare and deliver a short but punchy introduction to the issue.
3. Walking in your community in winter is next to impossible. The main streets get plowed for cars, but the snow just piles up on the sidewalks, creating treacherous conditions. Everyone complains about it but nothing changes. Last year Council cut the snow-clearing budget by 10%. Your *in motion* Team has decided that this will be an advocacy priority for this year. Prepare an action plan for advocacy. Who will be on your "stealth team" for this action, key messages, and communications strategy? You will present your plan to the committee for question and comment.
4. You've been working in the garden on a steamy summer afternoon. You remember that you promised to get your car washed. So you jump in, dash off...sweaty and grubby. While you are standing waiting for the car to go through someone says "Hi". It's your partner's old buddy, now the Chief Medical Officer of Health, waiting for his car. Your *in Motion* Team has been trying to meet with him for several weeks around being a key spokesperson for an Active Transportation campaign that you are planning, but you haven't been able to get in the door. And he's just paying his bill so he's almost on his way. What do you say? The committee looks forward to hearing all about it. Because this is a one-on-one situation each one of you will have a chance to try it out. Plan for about a 2-minute bite.

Scenario Planning Questions

1. What are the three-five key points that you want to make in your intervention?

2. What format will your intervention take?

3. Who will be your main spokesperson and why?

4. List key messages with supporting stories.

Some of these survival skills for advocacy might help.

- + Accentuate the positive
- + Emphasize your organization's accomplishments to the community
- + Plan for small wins
- + Present the issues in the way you want others to see them
- + Develop your own public identity
- + Check your facts
- + Keep it simple
- + Be passionate and persistent
- + Be prepared to compromise
- + Be opportunistic and creative
- + Stay your course
- + Look for the good in others
- + Keep your eyes on the prize
- + Makes issues local and relevant
- + Get broad based support from the start
- + Work within the experiences of your group members
- + Try to work outside the experiences of your opponents
- + Make your opponents play by their own rules
- + Tie your advocacy group's efforts to related events
- + Enjoy yourself!

Your feedback from the panel:



Speaking Out Exercises

- 1. Basic Principles**
- 2. Getting your ideas across**
- 3. Getting good information from others**
- 4. Dealing with emotional behaviour**
- 5. Winning support from others**

1. Basic Principles Exercises:

You will be assigned a Basic Principle to work on as a group. You have 10 minutes to respond to the questions, and prepare to share your responses with the larger group.

BP#1: Focus on the situation, issue or behaviour, not on the person.

To the Chair of the Planning Committee: “You politicians are all in bed with the developers. All you ever think about is money not whether we have an active, healthy community.”

- What are the elements in this comment that are contrary to your Basic Principle?

- What kind of a reaction do you think you will get from the speaker?

- Rephrase the comment so that it supports effective communication.

- Report back

BP #2: Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.

To the Mayor: “Thanks for coming to speak at our *in motion* Symposium maybe next time you could schedule in enough time to stay and participate in the discussion. Don’t you care about our children having a shorter life expectancy than their parents. ”

- What are the elements in this comment that are contrary to your Basic Principle?

- What kind of a reaction do you think you will get from the speaker?

- Rephrase the comment so that it supports effective communication.

2. Getting your ideas across:

Quick on your feet “Speaking Out” Exercise

You just received a call from the local radio station and they want you patch you in to a call-in show on Kids and Obesity in 5 minutes. You agree, but what will your message be?

Use these questions to help with planning your “Speaking Out” opportunity.

5. What are the purpose and main point of your message?
6. Who will you be speaking to? What is important to them?
7. What information will you use to support your main point?
8. What reactions might you expect to your message? How should you prepare to handle them?

Your message:

Purpose and main point:

What is important to the audience:

What is your supporting information?

What reactions could you get and how would you respond?

Report back.

3. Getting good information from others:

Quick on your feet “Speaking Out” Exercise

You hear that a decision is going to be made about how to use some surplus funds in this year’s recreation budget in a couple of days. Your trail trek challenge could certainly use extra support. What do you do?

Your approach:

4. Dealing with emotional behaviour: Quick on your feet “Speaking Out” Exercise:

After two months of scheduling issues, your *in motion* delegation is finally in a 20 minute meeting with the Chair of the School Board and the Director of Education. You are asking that the schools in the District become actively involved in your community’s *in motion* plan. Of particular concern is the lack of physical activity opportunities for the children both during and outside of school hours. The Chair’s cell rings and he leaves to answer it. The Director starts to tell you all the things that they are already doing and just as the Chair comes back in the door, he raises his voice and begins to let you know that they will not now or ever be involved in this...they have too much to do already. The Chair is uncomfortable but says he has to leave for another meeting.

What do you do?

5. Winning Support from Others:

Quick on your feet “Speaking Out” exercise

One of the key influencers in your community is the owner of the local car dealership. He has just returned from representing Saskatchewan at the Brier...and winning! Your *in motion* Team wants to have him come on board as a champion for your new walking/cycling initiative. So what do you say? Use the workbook for planning questions.

Describe what you will say. Remember to include any mutual benefits.

What concerns would he have?

Speaking Out Workshop: February 2008