



EDUCATION and ADVOCACY



**Coming Together as a System to Sell that
Behavioral Health Care IS Health Care**

Learning Objectives

- Develop and **communicate a concise message** for advocacy.
- Arrange and carry out **meetings with policymakers**.
- Work with the community, business, church groups, civic orgs., health care, the media to **advocate for mental health and addiction services**.



Advocacy/Advocate/Education:

- **Advocacy** is active support of an idea, issue or cause that directly affects people's lives.
- **An advocate** openly speaks out on issues of concern in order to educate decision makers about a specific issue on behalf of the people that are affected by the decision.
- **Education** is advocacy by providing the real facts to the advocate and decision makers.



Why Should You Advocate?

- As the government agency that plans, funds and monitors public mental health and alcohol and other drug addiction treatment services provided to the residents of each county, ADAMHS Boards **should takes advocacy efforts very seriously:**
 - Providers, stakeholders and partners.
- Be committed to:
 - **Combating the stigma** of seeking treatment for addiction and mental illness.
 - **Ensuring funding** for behavioral health programs & services.



Educate the Public & Public Officials

- Share prevention or new research **information**.
- Emphasize **statistics** that make the case for recovery.
- Create **opportunities** for the public, the media, AND key governmental officials to visit your program- educate them on what you do and how it benefits the community.



Using the Media to Your Advantage

In what ways can you use the media?

- To **market** your program with the public.
- To **educate** the public & policymakers.
- To get your message **across...tell your story**.
- To **advocate** for your cause.
- To **set the record straight**.



Market Your Program/Agency

- Announce **new projects/initiatives**.
- Take advantage of media interest for **free publicity**.
- Play up **partnerships and collaborations**.
- **Emphasize** basic services for growth of business via outreach.



Get Your Message Out

- **Define 3-4 primary goals. This is your message.**
- Mention those goals in every interview. Work them in more than once.
- When asked something you can't answer gracefully, ALWAYS fall back on your message. Listen to how politicians do it.

EX: That's not an area I can address, but what I do know is that XYZ Agency has saved thousands of lives and taxpayer dollars for our neighbors in this community.





Influencing Public Policy through Advocacy



Methods of Advocacy:

- Various methods of advocacy are used to **persuade decision makers** on a variety of issues such as laws and budget allocations:
 - **Consumer/client bus trips** to Columbus for rallies and legislative visits
 - **Providing testimony** during budget and legislative hearings
 - **Phone call/postcard/letter writing** campaigns
 - **Personal contact/visits with legislators**
 - **Advocacy Action Alerts** to engage the community:
 - E-mail Distribution List
 - Posting on Web site



Never Miss a Chance to Advocate

- **Visit** with your Senator & State Rep. in his/her office - **go to Columbus** to visit 1-2 times a year.
- Write **letters and e-mails** to legislators and the Governor. Copy the local media.
- Hold a **letter writing event**.
- Have Board approve a **resolution/proclamation**.
- **Invite** policymakers and media to your organization at every opportunity.
- Make sure they **talk** to clients & family members.



Other Means to Reach Out to the Community

- **Letters to the editor.**
- Ask local newspaper for a **guest column.**
- Make **PSAs** and ask local media for pro bono support or 2:1 match.
- Hold Open Houses, Ribbon-cuttings, groundbreaking, SWAP days, beauty days, KIDS days, fairs, carnivals.
- Involve **local celebs** as volunteers.



Involving the Community:

Legislative Updates/E-mail Action Alerts:

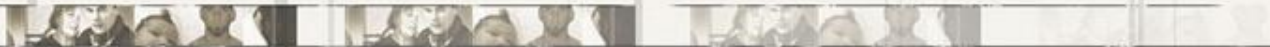
- An opportunity to **stay informed** and **get involved** by receiving the latest news and action alerts about local, state and federal legislation and other issues impacting behavioral health.
- Add Consumers, family members, providers and the public to the **e-mail distribution list**.



Involving the Community:

Newsletters:

- Don't underestimate the **power of a newsletter** as an advocacy tool
 - Short and concise
 - Timely topics
 - Low cost
 - Distribute electronically
 - Post on Web site



Involving the Community:

Other basics of advocacy:

- **Annual Reports:**
 - Accomplishments
 - Funding/Budget
 - People Served
- **Web site:**
 - Publications & Reports
 - Advocacy Action Agenda
 - Information on Legislation/Advocacy Action Alerts



More Advocacy Basics

- **Media Relations:**
 - Good relationships can help your advocacy efforts.
- **Staff Communication:**
 - Don't overlook your staff – they are the best grassroots advocates.



Image/logo is important in Advocacy

- On all your materials.
- ADAMHS Board emblem:
 - A stylistic “A”
 - An organic shape with its “feet” firmly planted, it can represent many images:
 - Mountain
 - Bridge
 - Umbrella
 - Stepping stones – each of which symbolize the many paths to recovery



Image/logo is important in Advocacy

Colors:

- Contemporary and fresh
- Each invoking a different emotion:
 - ✓ Yellow evokes positivity
 - ✓ Pink evokes innocence and health
 - ✓ Blue evokes authority, dignity, security and faithfulness
 - ✓ Purple evokes sophistication & spirituality
 - ✓ Green evokes tranquility, health, freshness
- The gender-neutral colors signify the variety of programs that the ADAMHS Board funds, as well as diversity in the population it serves.





A Community Advocacy Action Agenda



ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County Advocacy

- **Community Relations & Advocacy Committee:**
 - Meets every other month.
 - Oversees communication & advocacy efforts.
 - Sets the Advocacy Action Agenda.
- **Advocacy Action Agenda:**
 - Guides the Board's advocacy efforts for each Calendar Year.
 - Over-arching goal of promoting personal recovery from mental illness and dependency on alcohol and other drugs.
 - All messages to legislators, state agencies, policy makers, consumers, providers and the general public, focus on the items listed on the Advocacy Action Agenda.



Sample Advocacy Action Agenda Goals:

Funding:

- Support passage of the **Health and Human Services Issue 15** to ensure continued funding for behavioral health services.
- Support efforts to ensure that **limited Non-Medicaid dollars are used for the best and most needed services** to stay true to our goal of benefiting consumers and clients while providing greater efficiency and effectiveness.
- Support passage of **SB 15 to expand existing mental health insurance parity law to include all mental illnesses and create parity for substance abuse/addiction conditions.**
- Support passage of **Federal Health care that benefits consumers/Clients.**
- Support efforts to maintain the Board's role in reform of **Medicaid System for behavioral health..**



Sample Advocacy Action Agenda Goals:

System of Care:

- Support **passage of SB 22** to ensure that the problems of **prison overcrowding and cost-containment are addressed** while increasing community-based corrections, including **drug and mental health treatment**, so nonviolent prisoners can be diverted from going to jail, when appropriate, to a designated diversion and treatment point.
- Support efforts to **expand mental health and alcohol and other drug services to individuals returning to community after incarceration.**



Sample Advocacy Action Agenda Goals:

- Support passage of **HB 84 - Sean's Law** to ensure that health-trained personnel perform a medical, dental, and mental health screening including specific questions regarding the inmates' usage of addictive drugs and alcohol upon his or her arrival at any jail to avoid death caused by withdrawal.
- Support **suicide prevention and alcohol and other drug prevention/treatment awareness activities.**





My Perspective as a...

Consumer & Recovery Advocate





Behavioral Health Care IS Health Care

OF-1-MIND Campaign



OF-1-MIND

Education & Advocacy Campaign

**Working with Staff, Clients,
Volunteers, and the Media to Tell
the Behavioral Health Story**



OF-1-MIND Objectives

- To use OF-1-MIND as a driver of **awareness, education, commitment and action** from decision makers and community leaders.
- To **sustain and enhance** the profile of mental health and addiction treatment with legislators and community leaders as they develop policy and funding plans.
- To **build strategic alliances** outside the behavioral health field (law enforcement, child welfare, schools, hospitals, etc.) for advocacy purposes.



Behavioral Health Care IS Health Care

- Ohio's Community Behavioral Health System **exists to serve citizens** in need of alcohol, drug addiction and/or mental health services in the community, where individual needs are best met.
- There is an *increasing need* for community-based alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services.
- Unfortunately, this *increasing need* has been met with *decreasing financial support from the state*.
- In part, the **loss of resources** can be **directly tied to a lack of understanding** that behavioral health care is a vital part of overall health care.



Behavioral Health Care IS Health Care

- All too often people are **confused** and believe “behavioral health” means that people with an addiction and/or mental illness are acting badly or misbehaving.
- Many people **don’t understand** that **addiction and mental illness are diseases**, just like cancer or diabetes.
- While cancer and diabetes are diseases of the body, **mental illness and addiction are diseases of the brain**, often caused by imbalances in brain chemistry and genetics for some.



Behavioral Health Care IS Health Care

- In the last Ohio Budget, it was explained several times that: health care was held harmless from budget cuts,” yet, Community Mental Health experienced a 30% cuts and ODADAS took a 25% reduction in state funds.
- As Ohio moves forward in planning for health care reform and the next state budget, advocates need to help policymakers and the general public understand that treatment services for mental illness, alcoholism and addiction are indeed health care.



Behavioral Health Care IS Health Care

Advocacy for behavioral health is crucial to the individuals who live with these diseases and to the families, communities, and the state that must work and plan to ensure that Ohioans with mental illness and/or addiction have a continuum of care that leads to lasting recovery.

*Join the effort to ensure that
behavioral health care
is recognized as health care in Ohio.*



Take the First Step...

GET INVOLVED!

Visit OhioC4HC.org to download
Bandaid banners, labels, & stickers



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