

# Art of Policy Change



“How you paint  
your picture can  
mean the difference  
between success or  
failure”

# Learning Objectives

After completion of this session the participant will understand how to:

- ✦ Assess the political climate
- ✦ Understand the political process
- ✦ Identify and seize opportunities
- ✦ Prepare for success
- ✦ Develop strategies for and with priority populations
- ✦ Utilize 12 steps to effective communication with policy makers
- ✦ Apply techniques for effectively presenting demographic, statistical, programmatic, and scientific information to professional and lay audiences
- ✦ Apply effective methods for using media and community networks to communicate information
- ✦ Use advocacy for public health programs and resources

# Assessing the political climate

## Assessing the political climate

- ✦ What are the agendas and missions of all relevant individuals & organization?
- ✦ Identify who has the authority?
- ✦ Identify organizations that can undertake activities the health departments can not due to legal and/or political constraints.
- ✦ Should you provide funding to these partners?
- ✦ If yes, does the funding come with “strings” attached?
- ✦ Policy interventions must convince decision makers that the public perceives a proposed policy to be in the best interest of the community as a whole and especially of the individuals within the community.
- ✦ Policy makers do listen to the opinions of their constituents, especially at the local level.
- ✦ Opposing views and stakeholders are likely to challenge new or changing policies.

## Assessing social norms and political climate

✦ Create a worksheet for this

# Understanding the political process

# Understanding the political process

- ✦ The process of laying the groundwork for policy change can be as important as the policy itself.
- ✦ Policy makers want to do the right thing for public health, but it must be explained and promoted to them by their constituents.
- ✦ Policy makers listen to their constituents.
- ✦ Public/private partnerships and the ability to activate a range of state and local coalitions can provide strength.
- ✦ Speak cautiously about others, other programs, and other points of view to policy makers...never know who has loyalties.
- ✦ Anticipate making adjustments or compromises. “May lose the battle, but win the war.”

# Understanding the political process

✦ Create a worksheet for this

How to identify  
and seize  
opportunities

## How to identify and seize opportunities

✦ “Start where they are, not where we are.”

Joel Bradshaw, Public Policy Consultant

✦ Be opportunistic, flexible, know the political climate, and be able to respond quickly.

✦ Find the special interests of policy makers...searching for a champion.

✦ ASK, LISTEN, Respond.

Prepare  
for success

# Prepare for success

- ✦ Advocates must be prepared not only to propose and support policies, but also endure in the face of powerful opposition.
- ✦ Not just advocates, but the community must be involved and ready to support the policies.
- ✦ Don't "go it" alone. Educate and mobilize the community.
- ✦ Advocates must have:
  - clear concepts of the specific policy desired
  - the ability to present persuasive reasons for supporting the policy
  - messages and approaches tailored to specific individuals and population groups
  - a realistic strategic plan that pulls community resources together
    - well-planned process of community education and mobilization

# Strategies for and with priority populations

## Strategies for and with priority populations

- ✦ Seek common ground
- ✦ Develop a win-win attitude
- ✦ Shining a “spot light” on the opposition’s tactics can help advocates achieve policy goals.
- ✦ Effective “movements” involve a variety of population segments of a particular community.
- ✦ Tobacco has “used” youth effectively to change policy and public opinion.

12 steps to  
effective  
communication  
with policy makers

## 12 steps to effective communication with policy makers

✦ See handout

# Techniques for effectively presenting:

demographic, statistical, programmatic, and  
scientific information to professional  
and lay audiences

Techniques for effectively presenting:  
demographic, statistical, programmatic, and scientific information to professional  
and lay audiences

- ✦ Policy makers regularly rely on editorial pages to take the “pulse” of the community.
- ✦ Some educational efforts must be one-on-one with policy makers.
- ✦ Policy makers attention can be drawn through the use of the media.
- ✦ Avoid using public health “jargon” or “lingo”.

Effective methods for  
using media and  
community networks  
to communicate  
information

## Effective methods for using media and community networks to communicate information

- ✦ “If you don’t like the news, go out and make some of your own.” Scoop Nisker
- ✦ Create an overall advocacy plan/strategy and then develop a media plan/strategy
- ✦ Translate research findings into everyday language, use local examples, and “what is the bottom line.”
- ✦ Frame the issue and use science as the foundation.
- ✦ Develop a relationship with the media. Be patient and develop the relationship BEFORE you need them.
- ✦ Tell them thanks for covering such an important topic and using unbiased investigative reporting.
- ✦ Be aware of timing. Timing is everything!
- ✦ Pitch stories...not issues.
- ✦ Keep policy advocacy local and vocal.

Advocacy for  
public health  
programs and  
resources

## Advocacy for public health programs and resources

✦ Make gains where possible--small changes add up.

✦ Never give up...

If you are building a house and the nail breaks, do you stop building or do you change the nail? (Zimbabwean Proverb)

✦ Provide data that demonstrates effectiveness.

# Conclusion



Media Interventions

Program Services

Policy Advocacy

# Conclusion

✦ Think about what has taken place regarding tobacco in the last thirty years. Physical environments have changed--we now have smoke-free restaurants, airplanes, and workplaces. Social norms have also changed--what was once considered sophisticated is now largely viewed as an addiction.