Amplifying Your Message

ADVOCATING THROUGH TRADITIONAL MEDIA CHANNELS

MICHAEL HOLTZ, APR, MPRCA

APRIL 18, 2023
Who is this guy?

11-year cancer survivor

Passionate advocate for cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, family members.

NCCS CPAT

ACS CAN National Advocacy Team

Fight CRC 2023 National Ambassador

Public relations/media relations professional with 25+ years experience

Senior Communications Specialist for ORAU, a non-profit federal government contractor based in Oak Ridge, Tenn.
Objectives

1. Understand what media advocacy is
2. Understand how media advocacy works
3. Understand how to amplify your message
4. Learn tactics and tricks to put into practice
Why are we talking about media advocacy?

So all advocates can be prepared to amplify their message and share their stories with the media in and around NCCS CPAT Hill Day.
What is media advocacy?

Media advocacy is the strategic use of mass media – television, radio, newspaper and their digital counterparts – to advance public health priorities.

Media advocacy allows groups and individuals to tell their story in their own words to promote social change.
Media advocacy in context

Media advocacy takes individual health crises and translates them into social issues.

Media advocacy allows groups to work constructively through the media to change the context in which the individual health crisis occurs.
Do people still use mass media?

Americans get their news from a variety of sources, including digital platforms, social media, search and podcasts.

51% of American adults prefer to get their news from digital platforms.

Source: Pew Research Center, 2022
Mass media vs. social media

Digital news platforms (websites and apps) outperform search, social media and podcasts in terms of where people sometimes or often get their news.

(Source: Pew Research Center, 2022)
Decision-makers pay attention to the media

From local elected officials to members of Congress, all monitor the media.

Staffers collect media clips and circulate to staff on a regular basis.

Like phone calls, emails and meetings with elected, media clips help decision-makers keep abreast of issues being talked about “back home.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media advocacy does</th>
<th>Media advocacy does not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help you gain access to the media</td>
<td>Make lawmakers vote your way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow you to frame the debate on your</td>
<td>Make the public understand or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terms</td>
<td>appreciate your issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you get the attention of decision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>makers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help you raise public awareness of your</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning your messaging strategy

- What’s the problem, issue or policy you are highlighting
- Is there a solution? What is it?
- Who can make the solution possible? Whose support do you need to gain in order to make the solution happen?
- What do you need to do or say to get the attention of those who can make the solution happen?
What’s the policy, issue or problem we are highlighting?
The Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act

What’s the solution?
Legislation that focuses on coverage of cancer care planning and coordination; cancer survivor employment assistance grants; and adult cancer survivorship study.

Who can make the solution possible?
Every member of Congress

What do you need to do or say to get the attention of those who can make the solution possible?
Potentially, all the things we’ve talked about so far in your communities.
Planning to tell your story

- When advancing specific issues, policies or legislation, it’s important to talk about why it matters to you personally,

“I am an 11-year rectal cancer survivor. I am grateful for the care and treatment I received, but I know there is still much to be learned about late and long-term effects. An adult cancer survivorship study would provide important data and insights to help survivors and their health care providers make informed decisions about their care. By supporting this study, we can help ensure that future survivors have access to the best possible care.”
Tell your story quickly and concisely

- 30-SECOND SOUNDBYTE (70 WORDS)
- 60-SECOND SOUNDBYTE (140 WORDS)
- 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW (320 WORDS)
Storytelling worksheet

Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act
Telling Your Story: A Step-by-Step Worksheet

People have been telling stories since human beings first sat around campfires. We are hard-wired to take in new information through stories.

Statistics reach people in the head. Stories hit people in the heart. Sharing your personal experience is a powerful way to establish a connection and drive your listener to action. Your audience—e.g., medical officials, donors, the media, other survivors—may disagree with your facts or arguments, but they cannot argue with your unique personal experience.

The steps below are based on research in effective storytelling, but you should tailor them to your own circumstances.

1. I. My name is [name] from [place].
   if meeting with a Congress Member, identify yourself as living in their district.

2. My life changed when [describe your diagnosis or a loved one's].
   Example: I had to undergo multiple surgeries and rounds of chemotherapy, which took a physical and mental toll on me. Despite having a good relationship with my doctors, it was difficult to coordinate my care between them, leading to confusion and frustration.
   Example: As my father's primary caregiver when he was diagnosed with cancer, I had to navigate a complex health care system. I knew that I had to advocate for my father at every turn.

3. Fortunately, [describe the intervention you received].
   Example: I had a supportive watson that allowed me to take time off for treatment, but I knew my cancer survivorship struggle with maintaining employment during and after treatment. The bill's employment assistance grants will help survivors and their families receive assistance necessary to continue working and remain financially stable.
   Example: I had a supportive network of friends and family who helped me through the process. They helped by guiding me to appointments and taking care of my child, which I was in treatment. Without their help, I don't know how I would have managed.

4. It would have been easier if [describe the obstacle to quality care you faced, preferably one addressed by the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act].
   Example: My cancer care experience could have been better if I had access to cancer care planning and coordination services. Without these services, I struggled to coordinate my care between multiple doctors and often felt lost in the process.
   Example: It would have been easier if I had access to transportation and financial assistance. Instead, we had to rely on neighbors and friends to drive us to treatments. Sometimes, that means we had to miss appointments and delay treatment because no one was available to help.

5. I am not alone. There are 18.1 million Americans just like me.
   Example: Today, I am a cancer survivor who is passionate about helping other survivors access care and support they need. Others, just like me, would benefit from the bill's employment assistance grants. This targeted assistance can help survivors facing employment challenges access employment and financial stability.
   Example: Today, I am a cancer survivor who is grateful for the care and treatment I received, but I know there is still much to be learned about side and long-term effects. An adult cancer survivorship study would provide important data and insights to help survivors and their health care providers make informed decisions about their care. By supporting this study, we can help ensure that future survivors have access to the best possible care.
Examples from Veronika and Haley
Planning your messaging tactics

- News release
- Letter to the editor
- Op-ed
- Editorial board meeting
- Interviews (TV, radio, podcast)
- Media event / news conference
News release

- Powerful first paragraph

- Keep sentences and paragraphs short and use plain language

- Use quotes where possible – especially from you as an advocate. Again, why is this important to you

- Finish with a “tag” or boilerplate – “For more information about ... visit ... “

- End with ###, -30- or END
Letter to the editor

- Simplest and easiest way to communicate your opinion to the general public and decision makers.

- NCCS will have a “Swiss Cheese” LTE for you to use after CPAT Hill Day

- Check your local newspaper for submission guidelines
  - Only submit to one publication
  - Word count is generally 250-300 words or less
  - The editorial page editor will likely verify that you sent the letter (even if NCCS wrote it), so you’ll be required to include phone number, email address, home address, etc.
Op-ed

- Another relatively simple way to get your opinion in front of the general public and decision-makers.
  - Obtain guidelines (newspaper website, or reach out to editorial page editor)
  - Ask the editorial page editor if they would be interested in publishing an op-ed on your topic
  - Word count is longer than an op-ed – 700-800 words, but your newspaper may have different guidelines.
  - Localize. Why is this important to you? Use key statistics from your state, region, county, etc.
Call the editorial page editor and ask for a meeting, explaining your issue and why it’s important.

Prepare for the meeting: come armed with key facts, strong stories, etc. Is your member of Congress a co-sponsor, adamantly opposed, etc?

Present your issue. Typically, an editorial board meeting will involve the editorial page editor, the news editor and a reporter, but who and how many people is at the discretion of your contact.

Follow up. Send a thank you note to everyone who attended. If you do not see an editorial in a few days, call the editorial page editor to ask if they need additional information.
Arrange an appearance – call or email the TV station’s assignment editor, the producer of your favorite news or radio program, etc.

- TIP: most TV stations have a general news email box (i.e., newstips@wbir.com; newsroom@wate.com, etc.) that you can find on the station website. EVERYONE in the newsroom gets your email if you use this email box. Doesn’t guarantee you will get a response, but gives you something to follow up on.

- Be familiar with the show you want to appear on – hard news, lifestyle, etc. and prepare accordingly.

- Prepare for the interview – write out the most important things you want to get across. Feel free to hold your notes during the interview. No one expects you to memorize.
More interview tips

- Speak in a natural, audible tone
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- State your message
- Be concise
- Practice beforehand (record yourself)
- Avoid wearing solid black, white or anything with small patterns
- Look at the interviewer
- Sit up straight
- Remember you are always “on”
Shoutout to Sharon Rivera-Sanchez!!
Media events

- Prepare your agenda – who is speaking about what, when
- Location should be convenient for media
- Timing should be convenient for media (10 a.m. to 2 p.m. is best timeframe)
- Send media advisory several days to a week in advance; send again the day before; call the morning of.
- Have media materials (news release, fact sheet, etc.) ready for media who attend.
- Allow time for interviews following prepared remarks.
- Ask reporters if they need more information.
- Send thank you notes afterward!!
Rules of the road for working with media

- Just because you’re doing something, doesn’t mean they have to care (or give you part of their news hole or put you on air).
- Be kind to members of the media, always.
- Members of the media are busy. They may tell you “no.” That’s okay. You’ll get them next time.
- There’s always a next time.
Leverage your media clips

- Share them on social media
- Tag the media outlet and reporter
- Tag lawmakers
Forthcoming documents for advocates

- Storytelling worksheet
  - Designed to help you tell your story in the context of the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act
  - Use it to tell your story in short sound bites (30 seconds, 60 seconds, etc.)

- “Swiss Cheese” news release
  - Fill in the blanks with your information and a quote you created on the Storytelling Worksheet

- “Swiss Cheese” letter to the editor
  - Fill in the blanks
  - Be sure to include the names of your lawmakers -- “I met with (staff in the offices of) Sens. Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty and Rep. Tim Burchett.”
Your media plan for NCCS CPAT Hill Day

Before Hill Day
- Send the NCCS-prepared “Swiss Cheese” news release to your news outlets two weeks to 10 days before you leave for DC.

- Pitch the idea of an interview with media outlets about your role at Hill Day and why the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act is important to you.

- Use the Storytelling Worksheet to prepare for interviews

- Be open to the idea of being interviewed before you go, while you’re in DC, or when you get back – all are acceptable and effective.

After Hill Day
- Send letter to the editor discussing your trip to DC and that you met with your lawmakers to discuss the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act.
Thank you!

Michael Holtz, APR, MPRCA

Michael@michaelholtzonline.com
865-414-3191
Web: michaelholtzonline.com
IG: @michaelholtzonline
TW: @michaelholtz
FB: @mholtzonline
LI: @michaelholtzonline
Sources

APHA Media Advocacy Manual


* The sources cited above are great but also very dated. Podcasts, digital outlets/apps, and the current state of play in the newspaper business did not exist when these publications were created.