



Advocacy Grand Rounds

Introduction to Advocacy • Messaging & Framing

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Reshma Ramachandran, MD, MPP

- **Harness your personal experience as a physician.** We have a unique and privileged position in taking care of patients and bearing witness to parts of the healthcare system that many don't have access to. By sharing our stories, we can channel our frustration and anger around health injustice to raise awareness and push for better policies on our patients' behalf.
- **Tailor your "ask" to your audience.** How you frame a key message will vary depending on who you're targeting. If it's for the general public, no need for medical jargon - instead, you'll want to distill the message to how your "ask" will

impact them. If it's a policymaker, then you can jump more into the details and bring your expertise including how your "ask" might intersect with another key policy interest they have.

- **Anticipate the opposition.** Be sure to do your homework to determine what the arguments might be against your "ask" and prepare counterarguments to address them. When delivering your message, you can incorporate these to effectively and preemptively shut down the opposition.

Justin Mendoza, MPH

- **Advocacy Is a Team Sport** – In order to win the policies you want to win for your patients, you have to acknowledge your weaknesses, and look for a team of teams to help address them. Individual organizations and people cannot build a movement on their own. Try winning the Civil Rights Act without MLK, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, John Lewis, and SNCC (to name a few).
- **Data alone is not enough** – When you earn an advanced degree, you trust the science, you read the science, and you know the science. But when you are trying to win over the hearts, minds, and hands of people for social change, you have to build a narrative. Remember that Star Wars doesn't have any factual information in it, but is one of the most popular stories in the U.S., can you name any statistic that is as popular?
- **Be firm in your goals, flexible in your tactics** – It can be tempting to just hone in on one particular style of advocacy and become fantastic at it. In fact, that might even get you far as an advocate, or give you a distinct role to play in your movement. But in order to win – you have to recognize that any particular tactic will not work in all circumstances.



Joshua Sharfstein, MD

- Be accurate.
- Be respectful.
- Be direct.