Facing Addiction’s Guide to Community Organizing

PART 1: Community Organizing Basics
Introducing your Facing Addiction Trainer

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• Person in Long Term Recovery
• Unitarian Universalist
• Clean Water Action
• Labor Organizing
• Elections
• Recovery Voices Count
• Unite to Face Addiction
• NCADD-NJ Advocacy Program
Introducing your Facing Addiction Trainer

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• Person in Long Term Recovery
• Political Campaign Professional
• Foreign Exchange Student
• Youth Voter Engagement
• Proud Father
• Unite To Face Addiction
• Communications
We are all Facing Addiction in some way.
Who we are, and What we do

Facing Addiction Inc. is a national non-profit organization dedicated to finding solutions to the addiction crisis by unifying the voices of the over 45 million Americans and their families directly impacted by addiction.
Who we are, and What we do

Vision

Bring together the best resources in the field in order to reduce the human and social costs of addiction, every year, until this public health crisis is eliminated.

Mission

• Build a national constituency to give the millions affected by addiction a voice

• “Rebrand Addiction” to create the understanding, empathy, outrage and demand urgently needed to advance solutions

• Increase access to effective prevention, treatment and recovery programs

• Translate scientific innovation into useful tools and services

• Advocate for governments to implement evidence-based policies and regulatory practices to end addiction

• Widely share the proof of long-term recovery
History-making event on the National Mall
Joe Walsh, Steven Tyler, Sheryl Crow, The Fray and 45,000 others lent their names and voices to this movement.
“The strongest emotion I felt that day was pride,” @virtual_nadine tweeted about UNITEtoFaceAddiction.
We catalyzed 700+ substance use and recovery-focused organizations to amplify the national message.
Facing Addiction Action Plan

ACTION ITEM #1
Humanizing Addiction for Both the Afflicted and the Affected

ACTION ITEM #2
Suffering From Addiction is Not a Crime – Reforming Public Safety Responses

ACTION ITEM #3
Dramatic Expansion of Prevention, Screening and Early Intervention Programs

ACTION ITEM #4
Promoting Multiple Pathways of Recovery for Individuals and Their Families

ACTION ITEM #5
Mainstreaming Addiction Health Services
A STAGGERING SITUATION

Every 4 minutes, someone in the U.S. dies from drug or alcohol addiction

• Over 20 million Americans are suffering
• 23 million more are in recovery
• 1 in 3 households are personally impacted

The time to organize is NOW
Pilot Community Project

Working to reform the public response to the addiction crisis in your community via a grassroots-driven campaign strategy.

Facing Addiction will work with you and 14 other communities to:

• Secure increases in localized funding to adequately address the crisis

• Train advocates on proper organizational and advocacy techniques to reform their community’s response

• Invest time and resources in communication opportunities with elected officials and other policy makers

• Provide media guidance to garner press coverage to further highlight the solutions to the problem

• Develop political strategies and aid community stakeholders in the development of an overarching “campaign strategy”
Understanding the difference between Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

A **goal** is a broad primary outcome.

A **strategy** is the approach you take to achieve a goal.

A **tactic** is a tool you use in pursuing an objective associated with a **strategy**.
Community Pilot Project – Short Term

Discussion: What should the word “pilot” mean here?
Community Pilot Project – Long Term

For each community to have a “team” that will remain together long after the conclusion of this program to address addiction in their community.

Build something sustainable with core organizers.

Discussion: What will help sustain this project?

“Advocacy is about helping people you may never meet”
How can one person make a difference?

What does 21,000 tons of toxic waste have to do with community organizing?
How can one person can make a difference?

On May 1, 1969, Fred Rogers appeared before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee requesting funds to help support the growth of a new concept --- national public television.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKy7ljRr0AA
What type of leader are you?

• Leaders behind us
• Leaders beside us
• Leaders in front of us

“I spend half my time comforting the afflicted, and the other half afflicting the comfortable.”

-Wess Stafford
The power of individuals in the community

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead
Common characteristics of an organizer

- People person
- Willing to learn
- “Leader”
- Willing to compromise/Take steps towards goal
- Develop best strategies/actions
- Persistent/Sometimes a little annoying
- By example
- Passion and Commitment
- Creative
- Organized
- Strong work ethic
- Curious
- Tenacity
- Determination

Are there silent leaders?
Skills to sharpen as an organizer

• Confident Language and Tone
• Motivational
• Active Listening
• Humility
• Understanding of all sides
• Flexible in approach
• Strong Communication Skills (Writing, Speaking)
• Develops Messaging
• Delegating (Organizing yourself out of the job)
• Vocalizes for others
#1 Know Who you Are

- Know what drives you
- Know the issues you are passionate about
- Know your strengths/weaknesses
- Know your story can inspire others

*We all get involved in advocacy for a reason.*

What is your reason?
#2 Know Your Community

- Who are your Community Decision Makers?
- Who are your Community Leaders?
- Do they know about your issue?
- Are they supportive?
- Who are the people that know people?

*Who are the Community Decision Makers/Leaders in your community?*
Community Decision Makers/Community Leaders

- Chief of Police
- ER Directors/Hospital Workers
- First Responders
- Educators/Board of Education
- Mayor/Council
- State Representatives and Senators
- Prosecutors
- Criminal Justice System
- Law Enforcement
- Zoning Boards
- Media
- PTA
#3 Know what you have  Vs.  What you need

ASSETT MAPPING (Example: Facing Addiction Resource Hub)

• Make a list of all resources within your community
• Visit Facing Addiction’s resource Hub at [www.facingaddiction.org](http://www.facingaddiction.org)

**Examples**

*Recovery High School*

*Local Mayor understands the importance of prevention or recovery*

*Sympathetic Chief of Police*

**Make a list of things that are missing**

**Examples**

*Leadership of Educators*

*Recovery Community Center*

*Legislative Champion*
#4 Know what you want

• What is your message?

• Most effective way to deliver that message?

• Who is the message meant for, and who will realistically hear it?

• Is your message consistent?

• Are you willing to take small steps/compromise?
Ideal times to Organize in your Communities

• State Budget Season
• Recovery Month (September)
• Overdose Awareness Month/days (August)
• Alcohol Awareness Month (April)
• When your State Legislature is in session
• “Media Moments”
• Town Hall Meetings
• Election Cycles

Anytime!!!
Community Partners

Who are some common partners?

Who are some potential new partners?
Common Partners

• Organized Recovery Community

• Family Support Groups

• Prevention Groups

• Treatment Providers

• Public Health Organizations

• Social Justice/Non Profit Organizations
Potential New Partners

• Faith Based Groups

• Veterans

• LGBTQ Community

• Business Community

• Health Workers

• Criminal Justice (Corrections, Officers, Prosecutors, Judges)
Create Opportunities to Advocate
Organizing Community Events

• Picking a specific topic

• Meeting with community leaders

• Designing a program

• Building a forum format

• Identifying panelists & participants

• Building a crowd

• Making an “ASK” moving forward
GROUP EXERCISE #1: Community Organizing Solutions to a Local Issue

Local law enforcement is looking for ways to help individuals who have been administered with Narcan and want ideas on how to get people on a road to recovery.

What are some solutions you might provide with local likely and unlikely partners?

What is some messaging you could use to sell other community leaders? The public?

What Community Decision Makers (using titles) would make sense to put in a room to work towards this initiative?

Share some ideas of people you know locally that would be able to help you in this effort?
Key Elements of Social Change

POLICY/IDEA

DECISION MAKERS

GRASSROOTS

* Wellstone Action
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PART 2: Basics of Advocacy
Three Kinds of Service Activities

Direct service includes individuals working with or teaching other people.

Indirect Service are projects that include services that are beneficial to the whole community. Examples include cleaning up the community, building playgrounds, raising money for a cause.

Advocacy Service includes creating social change through government or grassroots action. People may work to change laws and regulations or inform politicians and community members about pertinent issues.
Direct Service, Indirect Service, or Advocacy Service?

Working with local elected officials to pass a law that creates more community gardens?

Cleaning up plots of land to make it easier to form community gardens?

Feeding those in need from your local garden?
Direct Service, Indirect Service, or Advocacy Service?

Peer to Peer Recovery Coach working with a Recoveree?

Talking to your legislator about a bill that you care about?

Organizing a clothes/food drive for homeless community.
Examples of Advocacy *

- Provide testimony at Senate and House Budget Committee meetings.
- Provide testimony on specific bills
- Department of Human Services Testimony
- Postcard and Letters to district offices.
- Legislative office Visits
- Reach out to US Senators and Congressman on key national issues regarding addiction issues. (Constituent Days)
- Host Educational and/or Community Forums/Town Hall Meetings
- Host Recovery month/Alcohol Awareness Month events
- Host Community Awareness days on Overdose Prevention
- Re-entry Resources
- County Resource Packets for family members.

*NCADD-NJ Training
Examples of Advocacy (continued)

- Work with schools, hospitals, and law enforcement on drug and alcoholism prevention and education.
- Expand the continuum of care for people in recovery through advocacy for peer to peer support centers and services.
- Elevate the voice for addiction solutions in your community.
- Organize Fun Recovery friendly events in communities.
- Health Care Enrollment and Education Events.
- Secure co sponsors for legislation.
- Narcan (NALOXONE) Expansion.
- Video testimonials/Social Media Stories (Facing Addiction in America series).
- Write Letters to the Editor.
Why reach out to your Legislators

• They represent YOU! Civic responsibility for both.

• They are not experts.

• You are more familiar with issues. They look to you.

• Highlight Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery issues that are important to you.

• You live in their district. You know your community.

• Not many people talk to their legislators so it is a good way to raise the profile of specific bills and issues.

• You have to put the bills you care about on their radar.
Most effective way to communicate with Elected Officials

• Face to Face in their legislative office.
• Personalized hand written letters
• Phone calls or typed letters
• Action Alerts and/or emails
Tips to Talking with your Elected Officials

Be personal.
Share your concerns about a piece of legislation by relating to your personal situation or experience with the issue, or use an example from your community or people you know. It is also worth mentioning that you live in his/her legislative district or are a registered voter.

Let them know you are part of an organizational effort.
Groups can get a lot done and most legislators pay more attention to strong organizations than they do one or two individuals. Let them know that you are part of an organized campaign that represents the every part of your community.

Be Prepared.
Know the basics of the legislation you are talking about; think about what points you want to make; think about opposing viewpoints and possible counters to them by re-stating any talking points of your issue and your personal story.

Be focused.
Stay on subject and don’t let the legislator change the subject. Be polite and firm
Tips to Talking with your Elected Officials

Always keep in mind you are building a relationship.
You need to establish a long-term relationship with the legislator. Even if you disagree on an issue, you may find that he/she will work with you on another issue later. This is a process and will build over time.

Work to get a commitment.
The goal is to enlist the legislator’s support, so be specific in your ask. Examples include “Will you vote for this bill in committee?” “Will you help us keep the stronger sections in the bill when it gets to the Senate floor?” Ask the question directly and try to get a direct answer! It is important to know the bill number and what committee it is in.

Be optimistic.
Legislators are quick to pick up the personal energy that goes with citizen advocacy efforts. You can be memorable and the legislator will be open to meeting with you more in the future.

Follow up promptly.
Send a thank you note and anything additional follow up information you promised to send. If you do not know an answer to one of their questions, that is ok. Just let them know you can find that information and send it to their staff.

Source NCADD-NJ Training
How a Bill becomes a Law

1. **Idea Developed** - A legislator decides to sponsor a bill, sometimes at the suggestion of a constituent, interest group, public official, or the Governor. The legislator may ask other legislators in the same House to join as co-sponsors.

2. **Bill Drafted** - At the legislator's direction, the Office of Legislative Services, a non-partisan agency of the Legislature, provides research and drafting assistance, and prepares the bill in proper technical form.

3. **Bill Introduced** - During a session, the legislator gives the bill to the Senate Secretary or House Clerk, who reads the bill's title aloud. This is known as the first reading. The bill is printed and released to the public.

4. **Committee Reference** - Senate President or House Speaker usually refers the bill to a committee for review, but may send the bill directly to the second reading in order to speed its consideration.

5. **Committee Action** - When scheduled by the chair, the committee considers the bill at a meeting open to the public. The committee may report the bill to the House as is, with amendments, or by a substitute bill. If not considered or reported, the bill remains in committee.
How a Bill becomes a Law (cont.)

6. **Second Reading** - When the bill is reported to the floor (or referred directly without committee review), its title is read aloud for the second reading. The bill is eligible for amendment on the floor. After the bill is given a third reading, the House must vote to return it to the second reading for any further amendments.

7. **Third Reading** - When scheduled by the President or Speaker, the bill is given a third reading and considered on the floor.

8. **House Vote** - The bill passes when approved by a majority of the authorized members and is sent to the other House. If a final vote is not taken, the bill may be considered at another time or may be returned to a committee by a vote of the House.

9. **Second House** - The bill is delivered to the second House where it goes through the same process. If the second House amends the bill, it is returned to the first House for a vote on the changes. A bill receives final legislative approval when it passes both Houses in identical form.

10. **Governor’s Action** - After final passage, the bill is sent to the Governor. The Governor may sign it, conditionally veto it (returning it for changes – only in some states) or veto it absolutely.

11. **Law** - A bill becomes law upon the Governor’s signature – in certain state’s, a bill may become a law if there is not action taken by the Governor within a specific time period.
Group Exercise # 2

Using the Tips to Talking with Elected Officials

• Role play a One on One constituent meeting with a local elected official (Mayor, Senator, City Council etc)

• Base the meeting on an issue most important to you

• Share why you and others are facing addiction

• Close the meeting with a simple ask (Support an initiative, ask for increased funding or resources, relay a need in the community etc)
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PART 3: Messaging Training
This section will contain:

• Why consistent messaging is important
• How to develop your message
• Words and phrases to use/avoid
• How to reduce the stigma associated around addiction
• Where to use the messaging
Why consistent messaging is important

• We all have individuals stories and expertise that can be highlighted to make the case towards progress on the issue being worked on.

• A consisted group message from advocates is more direct, less confusing, and better received. Develop talking points for all messengers to use in their individual stories.

• Create a healthy balance between the human interest of powerful stories and consistent message of your campaign.

• Use language that isn't just understood from by our own community. (more on this later)

• Consistent messaging plants seeds for steady progress and small victories to take steps toward your main agenda
How to develop your message

• Connect your story to the issue at hand
• Back up your story with facts and data
• Understand your audience – speak their language
• Know your audience – do some research before speaking
• Bring sense of urgency
• Focus more on solutions rather than problems
• Understand both positive and negative perceptions of addiction
• Don’t make assumptions

Your story is the most effective tool you have – so learn to use it effectively!!!
Words and Phrases to Avoid/Discuss

• Language that feeds the stigma (Exercise on Language)
• Acronyms
• 12 step slogans
• Words only understood by people who work “in the field” of addiction
Words and Phrases to Avoid/Discuss (continued)

The following is from William White’s “An essay on the Power of Language”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words/Phrases to Discuss/Abandon</th>
<th>Suggested Alternate Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>&gt; Substance Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addict/Alcoholic</td>
<td>&gt; Person in Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; “People first language”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Person experiencing Alcohol or Drug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>&gt; Recovery Support, Mutual Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Help</td>
<td>&gt; “People not yet in Recovery”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untreated Alcoholics/Addicts</td>
<td>&gt; “Value Language”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Consumer”</td>
<td>&gt; Language of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of Self Pity</td>
<td>&gt; Health Issue/Health Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment/Community</td>
<td>&gt; Recovery is a Reality/“Treatment worked for me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Disease”</td>
<td>&gt; Reoccurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Treatment Works” for me</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Relapse”</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
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Where to use the messaging

Social Media & Traditional Media
• Imprints, Shares, Likes, Twitter, Facebook groups (open and closed)
• Letters to the Editor
• Opinion Pieces
• Blog Posts
• Online Comments to Articles
• TV or Radio Interviews

Other Settings
• Speaking to community organizations
• Meeting with elected leaders
• In personal conversations – friends, family, neighbors, etc.
We’ve secured **91 million impressions** via earned media to date.
And 289 million social media impressions from the live event and online streaming.
Additional Language Resources

• ADDICTIONary – Recovery Research Institute & Facing Addiction
• Advocacy with Anonymity Pamphlet
• “Changing the Language of Addiction” – Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1/9/2017
• www.samhsa.gov
• www.williamwhitepapers.com
Help us build a national movement to forever change how we face addiction. Together, we can save lives – starting now.