



A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.
SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE.

Advocacy Tips

1. **Identify your issue.** You may have many areas of concern (i.e. access to treatments, early intervention), but it is best to stay focused by picking a single issue and moving forward with it.
2. **Develop your key messages.** You need to determine what is it you want to communicate about the issue that has been identified. Your key messages (2-3 in total) should be clear, compelling and concise.
3. **Know your core facts.** Your factual knowledge of both schizophrenia and SSC will help establish your credibility. While you don't need to know everything, being able to articulate a series of basic facts (i.e. schizophrenia affects approximately 300,000 Canadians) is essential.
4. **Practice your story.** Your personal story of schizophrenia will serve as a foundation piece for any advocacy effort. Write it out and practice telling it, covering the important points that you want to make in a concise manner.
5. **Build relationships.** Advocacy is grounded in asking decision-makers to do something that will assist in moving your issue forward. Look for opportunities to connect with those that have the ability to affect change on your behalf.
6. **Design your advocacy tools.** Your tools are the means of delivering your key messages (i.e. meetings, newsletters, web site, petitions). Use a combination of these tools to put your issue forward.
7. **Decide on your one 'ask'.** You need to ask the person to whom you are advocating to do something that will affect change. This 'ask' must be very focused, achievable and tangible.
8. **Believe that you can affect change.** You can do advocacy. If you believe that you can make a difference by standing up and saying something, then you've jumped the first hurdle and are well on your way.
9. **Start now.** There are many issues that face those affected by schizophrenia. By starting to work right away to address these challenges, we will affect change quicker and impact the lives of people sooner.
10. **Don't ever give up.** If you stop trying to bring about change, then change is left to chance. You have the power to affect the change you need. Your persistent determination and willingness to engage in advocacy will bring about success.