

CAPACITY BUILDING is a dynamic process, organizations, groups, and societies undertake to grow and optimize their programs, organizations, and communities by identifying challenges and leveraging new and existing resources to respond to those challenges. **ADVOCACY** brings groups together to promote solutions to those identified challenges by gathering and disseminating information, and by bringing awareness of the community and its needs to key decision-makers. Advocacy is an important component of sustainably building capacity, and may include community organizing, campaigning, creating organizational change, influencing, and lobbying. Advocacy built on coalitions and bi-partisanship has resulted in refugee-supportive legislation. It is important for refugee and torture treatment programs to continue to advocate for their issues of interest as the domestic refugee and asylee population in the US continues to grow.

KEY ELEMENTS OF ADVOCACY

- What are the objectives?
 - ⇒ Develop clear goals
 - ◆ Research internal and external environment
 - ◇ Consider internal resources
 - ◇ Search out potential collaborators and their resources
 - ◇ Consider opponents and their resources
 - ⇒ Set a realistic timeframe for accomplishing your goals
- Who is the audience?
 - ⇒ Those with the power to draft and enact policy change
 - ⇒ Those with the power to influence
- What is the message?
 - ⇒ Share accurate and reliable information
 - ◆ Use data and research to support your message
 - ◆ Include stories and statistics
 - ⇒ Avoid technical jargon
 - ⇒ Avoid over simplification
 - ⇒ Avoid over explanation
 - ⇒ Avoid too much detail
 - ⇒ Consider the terminology used by the target audience
 - ⇒ Consider the priorities of the target audience
- How do I deliver the message?
 - ⇒ Who is the appropriate person in my organization or network to deliver the message?
 - ◆ Speak with a unified voice
 - ⇒ Consider time sensitivity
 - ⇒ Who can I partner with to increase the effectiveness of delivering my message?
 - ◆ Organizations with goals aligned with mine (other refugee or trauma programs)
 - ◆ Organizations who can benefit from the policy change we are advocating for
 - ◆ Organizations or individuals who are passionate about our goals and cause
 - ⇒ Develop ongoing relationships with media contacts
- Evaluation
 - ⇒ Identify what does and doesn't work
 - ◆ Frame advocacy through an evaluation lens
 - ⇒ Consider developing or utilizing an advocacy capacity tool

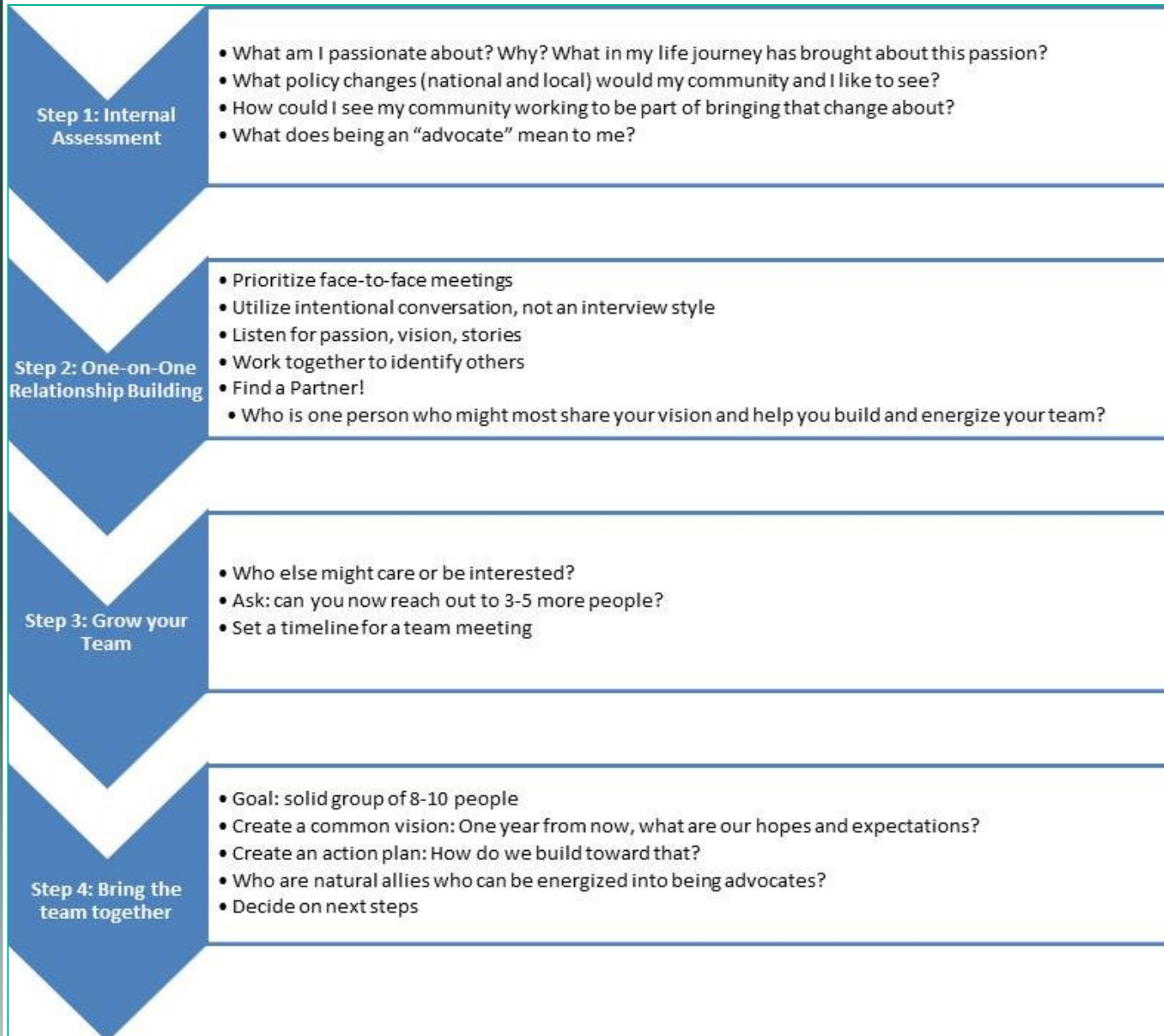
BUILDING A MOVEMENT



This information guide is based on research and a module of the same name presented by Melanie Nezer, JD, Vice President, Policy and Advocacy at Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and Ann Marie Winter, Chief Operating Officer, Specialized Programs and Policy at Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services at the National Symposium: Connecting Leaders, Impacting Communities & Sustaining Programs: Strengthening the National Torture Treatment Network on April 28, 2015.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZING

- What are we changing?
 - ⇒ How does our work for welcoming communities and refugee and immigrant rights win or create concrete improvements in people's lives?
- What are we building?
 - ⇒ How are we creating and sustaining teams of people who can take action together?



COALITION BUILDING

The success of advocacy campaigns is compounded when diverse, like-minded individuals and organizations work together towards common goals.

- Research and familiarize yourself with individuals and organizations before forming coalitions
- Coalitions can be permanent or temporary
- Coalitions can create protection
 - ⇒ Smaller organizations can build power by joining with other organizations
- Coalitions can pool resources
- Coalitions can create risks
 - ⇒ Potential controversy may arise

The [National Partnership for Community Training](#) and the [Florida Center for Survivors of Torture](#) are programs of Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services. This publication was funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. For more information on this document and for research purposes, contact (305) 275-1930 or partnehip@gcjfcs.org. NPCT is a training and technical assistance program which enhances awareness about the impact of political torture and teaches skills to respond appropriately using trauma-informed care principles. It is a partnership of the Florida Center for Survivors of Torture (FCST), the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma (HRPT) and the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture (PSOT).



ADVOCACY TOOLS

MEET WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS

- Critical to educating them about the vital role that refugees play in your communities
- Ideal group for such a meeting:
 - ⇒ Director of an agency or a case manager who knows the ins and outs of program work
 - ⇒ Refugee who can share a powerful story
 - ⇒ Faith leader
 - ⇒ Business leader
 - ⇒ Volunteer or respected community member
- Who you are. Why you care. What you want.
- Compelling. Concrete. Concise.

MEETINGS

- Make clear goals
- Stay positive
- Stay confident
- Follow up

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISIBILITY

- Events show community support
- Share photos with policy makers and encourage them to attend next time
 - Invite staffers and community partners
 - Make an event announcement to:
 - ⇒ Call a policymaker
 - ⇒ Sign up for refugee advocacy alerts
 - ⇒ Write or sign letters in support of refugees or thanking a policy maker
 - ⇒ Start or grow an advocacy team
 - Invite policy makers to your community events, such as
 - ⇒ Conducting citizenship oath
 - ⇒ Teaching a civics or ESL class
 - ⇒ Taking a photo with refugees
 - ⇒ Delivering opening remarks at refugee celebrations and events
 - ⇒ Attending or speaking at World Refugee Day

GRADUALLY BUILD CHAMPIONS

- Assess where each of your policy makers are
 - ⇒ Do they know who refugees are?
 - ⇒ Have they met a refugee?
 - ⇒ What are their misperceptions?
- Determine how to best engage each policy maker
 - ⇒ Who are the best messengers?
 - ⇒ What are the best messages?
 - ⇒ Start with an “easy ask”
 - ◆ meeting a refugee, attending an event, speaking at a ceremony
 - ⇒ Be ready for a “hard ask”
 - ◆ cosponsoring a bill, defending against anti-refugee sentiment, funding
- Serve as a resource for staff/ constituent referrals
- Attend community events
- Build a mutual relationship with staff and members of Congress

HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTING VIEWPOINTS OR PERSONALITIES

- Address differences
- Stay calm
- Use active listening skills
- Reframe negative statements into positive statements
- Refrain from debating details
- Stay on point

SAMPLE ADVOCACY CALENDAR

- Oct – Dec: ORR funding letters, meetings; civic engagement stories, events, media
- Jan – May: Team building, community education, expanding base
- June: World Refugee Day/UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture events
- July – Sept: Meetings with members of congress, letters, emails, calls

HISTORY OF THE TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF ACT

TVRA helps centers that treat torture survivors broaden their approaches to treatment and prevention and train mainstream providers.

- 1994: Senator Dave Durenberger (R-MN) introduces TVRA
- 1994-1995: TVRA is re-introduced in in the House by Congressmen Christopher Smith (R-NJ) and Tom Lantos (D-CA) and in the Senate by Senators Paul Wellstone (D-MN) and Arlen Specter (R-PA)
- 1995-1996:TVRA is introduced by the same House Members and by Senators Paul Wellstone (D-MN) and Rod Grams (R-MN)
- 1996-1997: Congress enacts TVRA
- 1998: President Clinton signs it into law
- 2000: Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) funds 16 torture treatment programs
- 2015: Reauthorization bill introduced in the House on June 24, 2015

ORR continues to play a prominent role in planning and disbursing grants from TVRA funds to torture treatment centers throughout the United States. 30 programs in 19 states are currently funded.