

**Action Canada**  
**for Sexual Health & Rights**



**Action Canada**  
**pour la santé & les droits sexuels**

# Advocacy in Action

**Presented by Insiya Mankani**

# AGENDA

- Presentation
- Breakout Session: *Thinking Like A...*
- Breakout Session Report Back
- Q&A



# OBJECTIVES

- Understand the difference between “behind-the-scenes” tactics (government relations) and public-facing initiatives (advocacy campaigns), and when to combine the two
- Learn about key decision makers at the provincial and territorial level to frame advocacy asks strategically
- Identify practical ways to engage elected officials or policymakers



# Section 1



# DEFINING ADVOCACY (FROM AN ACTION CANADA PERSPECTIVE)

Advocacy is about taking action to create change. Advocacy can be aimed at the state or government to enact law and policy change. It can also be used to transform social norms and foster supportive contexts for policy implementation.

## **Advocacy can be used to:**

- Influence decision makers
- Eliminate harmful and discriminatory laws and policies
- Mobilize towards the enactment of progressive, rights-based laws and policies
- Hold governments accountable to their human rights obligations
- Amplify voices that are often marginalized in public discourse
- Raise awareness of particular issues
- Strengthen connections within and among social movements



# NATIONAL x PROVINCIAL SRHR



# Canada Has Three Levels of Government

## FEDERAL

The Prime Minister heads the federal government based in Ottawa. It deals with national and international matters, such as:

- Mail
- Taxes
- Money
- Banking
- Shipping
- Railways
- Pipelines
- Telephones
- Criminal law
- Foreign affairs
- National defence
- Employment insurance
- Indigenous lands and rights

## PROVINCIAL OR TERRITORIAL

A Premier leads each province and territory. The provincial and territorial governments have the power to change their laws and manage their own public. They are in charge of:

- Colleges and universities
- Social services
- Municipal affairs
- Labour standards
- Provincial/territorial law and courts
- Provincial/territorial parks
- Provincial/territorial road maintenance
- Provincial/territorial taxes
- Provincial police (Ontario and Quebec)

## MUNICIPAL (CITY, TOWN, VILLAGE, COUNTY, OR REGION)

Mayors lead municipal governments. Municipal governments run cities, towns or districts (municipalities). They are in charge of things, such as:

- Parks
- Parking
- Libraries
- Roadways
- Local police
- Local land use
- Fire protection
- Public transportation
- Community water systems
- Local police
- Waste management

# Did you know that different provinces and territories use different titles for their elected representatives?

- British Columbia - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Alberta - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Manitoba - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Saskatchewan - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Ontario - Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)
- Quebec - Members of the National Assembly (MNA)
- New Brunswick - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Nova Scotia - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- PEI - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Newfoundland - Members of the House of Assembly (MHAs)
- Nunavut - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Yukon - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)
- Northwest Territories - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)



# Advocacy vs. Lobbying

- Advocacy is general education and public awareness efforts, such as running a public-facing advocacy campaign.
- Lobbying is direct engagement with policymakers to influence legislation or policy decisions. Lobbying is communicating, with public office holders, for payment with regard to: the making, developing or amending of federal legislative proposals, bills or resolutions, regulations, policies or programs; the awarding of federal grants, contributions or other financial benefits; and the awarding of a federal government contract (for consultant lobbyists only). In the case of consultant lobbyists, the federal Lobbying Act also defines lobbying as arranging a meeting between a public office holder.



# Environmental Scan and Partnerships

## Consider the following steps:

- Research existing campaigns and advocacy efforts in your region.
- Identify potential allies (other organizations, coalitions, unions, student groups, etc.)
- Ensure alignment in messaging and advocacy asks when working with partners. This can entail everyone signing onto one single campaign, or it can involve ensuring alignment across multiple campaigns.



# When and How to Pair Behind the Scenes Government Relations with Public-Facing Advocacy

## **Behind the scenes:**

Private meetings, policy recommendations, and advisory work.

## **Public-facing campaigns:**

Media advocacy, petitions, social media engagement, and protests.

## **When to combine both behind the scenes efforts and public facing campaigns:**

If private meetings stall, public pressure can increase urgency.



# Section 2



## Here's a breakdown of key decision makers and when to engage with them:

- **Premier and Cabinet Ministers**
- **Opposition Party Leaders and Critics**
- **Provincial and Territorial Party Offices**
- **Local Representatives (MLAs/MNAs/MPPs/MHAs)**



# What Policymakers Want to Hear

When engaging policymakers, it is essential to frame your advocacy ask in a way that aligns with their priorities and mandates.

Mandate Letters

Evidence-Based Advocacy

Public and Political Support



# How to Monitor Provincial Governments and Legislation

## Tracking Policy Changes

There are many ways for you to track policy changes, including:

- Signing up for government newsletters and party press releases.
- Setting up Google Alerts for key issues and policymakers.
- Using media monitoring tools like Meltwater to track news and legislative updates.

# How to Identify Your Advocacy Objective and Create Your Message

## How to Identify Your Advocacy Objective

Before engaging with policymakers, you must define your advocacy objective, which is what you want to change. Ask yourself:

| What specific policy, legislation, or funding change are you seeking?

| Who has the power to make this change?

| What is the clearest and most strategic way to frame your request?

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### What is an Advocacy Brief?

An advocacy brief is a document that summarizes why an issue is important, key facts and context, and recommendations on how to make the change you want to see happen. This is shared with people in governments, administrations, and/or media to educate them more about an issue and to encourage them to take up your advocacy recommendations.

### How to Write an Advocacy Brief: Template

- 1 Header**
  - Name of your organization or group.
  - Date the brief was written.
- 2 Title**
  - Consider a simple and memorable format like "What is the issue: What are you asking in this document" (e.g., "Let's Talk About It: Period: Achieving Menstrual Equity in Canada").
- 3 Introduction**
  - This is where you set the scene for your advocacy. It's a good space to answer questions like: What is the issue? Who is impacted? Why is it important?
  - It's a place to share statistics or stories that demonstrate why this is a priority issue that needs to change. Make sure to cite sources.
  - Consider creating a separate box where you summarize the most important 3-5 sentences about your issue, or bold key phrases or stats to give them impact.
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  - End on a Call to Action, which is typically a request for the reader to do something related to your issue.
  - The Call to Action in a brief should be specific to the audience who you are trying to connect with, so be sure to edit this section for different people and different solutions.
  - E.g., a Call to Action for the general public could be to sign a petition, while a Call to Action for a policy-maker could be to enact a particular piece of legislation.
- 6 Footer**
  - About Us section for your organization or group.
  - Contact Information.



# How to Create Your Message

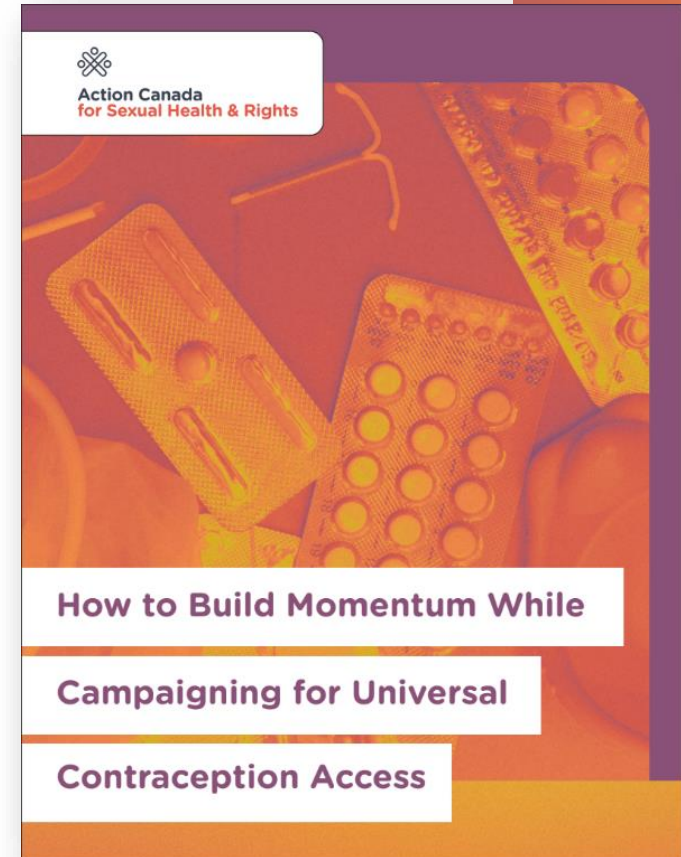
## Formula for Persuasive Messaging

1. Open with shared values to welcome people in across the political spectrum.

2. Introduce the problem clearly and simply.

3. Present the solution with a vision for change.

4. Conclude with a call to action.



# Key Engagement Windows

Advocating at the right time can increase your chances of success, as it gives you more leverage as an advocate and helps you to seize opportunities.

Key engagement windows for provincial and territorial include:

- Provincial and Territorial Elections
- Provincial and Territorial Budgets
- Government Strategies and Consultations
- Provincial-Territorial Ministers' Meetings
- Federal Funding and Committee Meetings



# Section 3



# How to Book a Meeting with an Elected Official or Policymaker:

## How to Find Contact Information

- Contact details for MLAs/MNAs/MPPs/MHAs and Ministers are usually available on government websites.
- Party websites typically also provide contact information relating to contacting a political party.
- Contact information for policymakers can sometimes be more difficult to find. You may sometimes need to contact a more general email for a department and hope that they will connect you with the more specialized unit. You can also ask your colleagues at other organizations if they have a direct email address for a policymaker at a certain government unit. When you do find policymaker emails, your organization should save them to keep this as institutional memory, even when you may experience staff turnover.



## Sample Email to Request a Meeting

**Subject:** Meeting Request – [Your Organization Name] on [Insert Topic]

Dear [Elected Official's Name],

I am [Your Name], [Your Position] at [Organization Name]. We advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights in [Province/Territory]. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss [specific policy issue].

We are available on [list dates and times] and can adjust to your availability. Please let us know if you would be open to this discussion.

[Insert 2 sentences on why this is particularly important right now]

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Organization]

## Exemple de courriel de demande de rencontre

**Objet :** Demande de rencontre – [nom de votre organisme] concernant [indiquez le sujet]

Bonjour [nom de l'élu-e],

Je suis [votre nom], [votre titre] chez [nom de votre organisme]. Nous travaillons et intervenons pour la santé et les droits sexuels et génésiques en/au [votre province ou territoire]. Nous apprécierions vous rencontrer pour discuter de [l'enjeu politique spécifique].

Des moments qui nous conviendraient sont [énumérez des dates et heures] et nous pouvons nous ajuster selon votre disponibilité. J'apprécierais que vous nous indiquiez si nous pouvons compter sur vous pour une telle discussion.

[Ajoutez deux phrases expliquant pourquoi ceci est particulièrement important en ce moment.]

Recevez mes salutations distinguées,

[votre nom]

[votre organisme]

# How to Prepare for a Meeting

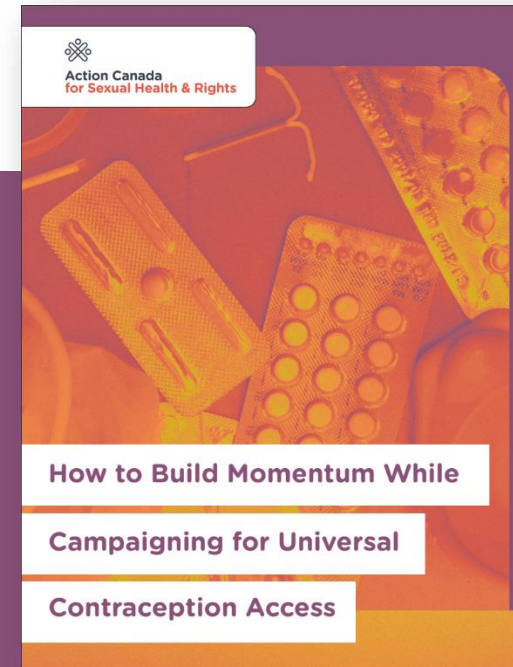
To make sure your efforts lead to the best outcome possible, adequately preparing yourself and your team for a meeting with a government official is crucial.

**Developing an Advocacy Brief**

**Preparing Your Elevator Pitch**

**Bring Constituents to Meetings**

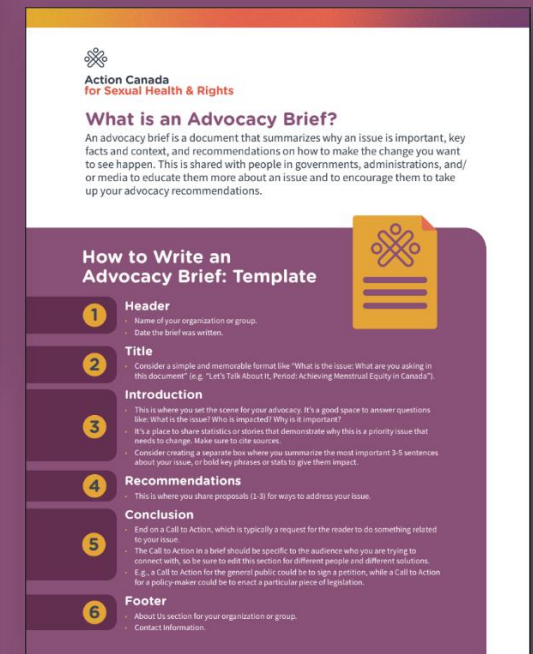
**Anticipating Questions and Rebuttals**



How to Build Momentum While

Campaigning for Universal

Contraception Access



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# Breakout Session



## Exercise: Thinking Like...

### Thinking like...

**An NDP Premier, a Liberal Minister of Health, and a Provincial Conservative strategist.**

1. Priorities: What are their top priorities?
2. Constraints: What's limiting their action?
3. Issue Area: How do they feel about your topic?
4. What keeps them up at night?



**Exercise: Policy Ask Mapping**



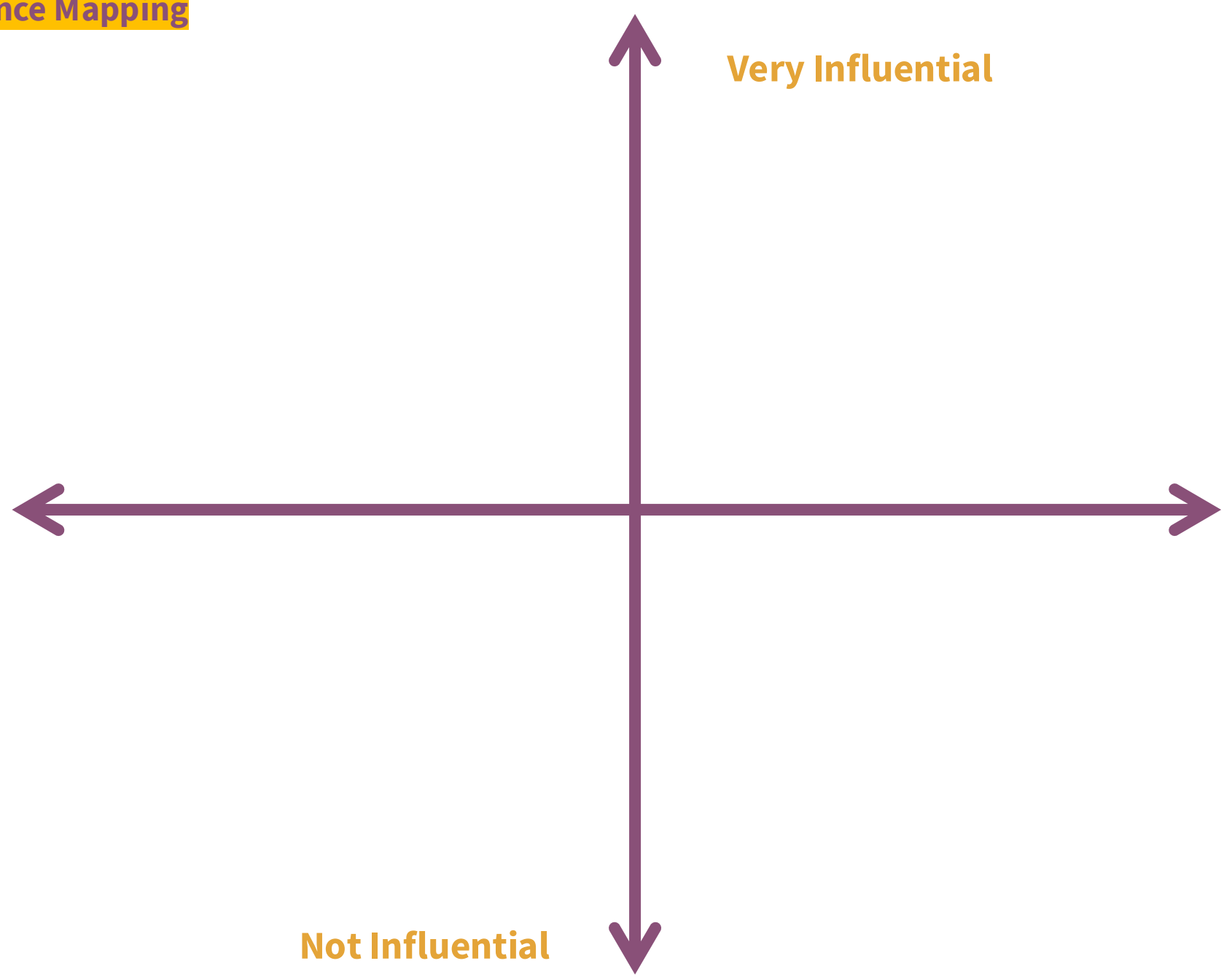
**Exercise: Influence Mapping**

**Very Influential**

**Opposed**

**Very Supportive**


**Not Influential**




# Conclusion




# SNEAK PEEK: NEW SRHR ADVOCACY TOOLS


 Action Canada  
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## Advocating for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights:

A Toolkit on Provincial  
and Territorial Lobbying  
and Advocacy in Canada

 Action Canada  
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## How to Build Momentum While Campaigning for Universal Contraception Access

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## Media Training Companion Resource

Prepared by Quinn Lazenby

### Key Components of a Good Story:

- Conflict
- Human Interest
- Locality/Proximity
- Celebrity/Prominence
- Novelty/Weirdness/Trendiness
- Timeliness
- Impact

### Tips for Crafting Key Messages:

Identify three main points:

- What is the issue?
- Why should people care?
- What do you want them to do?

HACC principles = Human, Accessible, Concise, Concrete

### Activity

Before your next interview practice doing a 30 second elevator pitch answering the question: **What do you do, and why is it important?**

**Structure:**

- Open with a human story or relatable example.
- Define the problem.
- End with why it matters or how the audience can help.

"Imagine someone you care about having to choose between paying for groceries and accessing contraception. Right now, contraception access depends on insurance coverage or what's in your bank account. We are fighting to make contraception free so that everyone has control over their health and future without financial barriers."



# How to Partner with Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights

Action Canada supports local sexual and reproductive health advocates with:

**POLICY EXPERTISE**

**TRAINING**

**CAPACITY BUILDING**

**CONNECTIONS TO NATIONAL SRHR  
NETWORKS AND ADJACENT NETWORKS**

To partner with Action Canada on a provincial or territorial policy issue, please email [info@actioncanadashr.org](mailto:info@actioncanadashr.org)

# Q&A





**Fill Out Our Workshop Survey!**

