

When delivering an advocacy message, you need to determine who will be the most credible source in the eyes of the target audience. Sometimes policy skills are important, but other times first-hand knowledge of the problem, technical expertise, or seniority within an organization matter more. Also, it can be effective to have two messengers who complement each another: one knowledgeable about the subject matter and the other knowledgeable about the target audience.¹

KEEP IN MIND

Reinforce messages. Usually, delivering a message once is not enough. Always have a strategy to reinforce your message, either yourself, or through others. When you resend your message, you can also use the opportunity to respond to any concerns expressed by your target audience.

Tips on choosing a messenger:²

- Messengers should be known and trusted by – or will appeal to – target audiences.
- Messengers should demonstrate knowledge and insight into the issue.
- Messengers should be a source whose opinion target audience will value.
- Messengers refrain from political comments unrelated to the issue.

Preparing a messenger is part of an advocate's responsibility. Talking points are a useful tool to support messengers, colleagues and partners in understanding how the message helps accomplish the goal, and ways to use the primary and secondary messages as well as to stay on message. Tools to enhance their message-sharing experience include practice sessions on how to address different audiences. Talking with government officials or community leaders is not the same as answering questions from journalists or appearing in a live interview. Consult with advocacy messengers to find out which audiences will make them most comfortable – and effective.³ (*For more information on how messengers should deliver advocacy messages, see Question 5 ahead*)

¹ Sprechmann S., Pelton E. (2001). *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines Promoting Policy Change*. CARE.

² Adapted from Sprechmann S., Pelton E., (2001). *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines Promoting Policy Change*. CARE.

³ UNICEF. (2010). *Advocacy Toolkit: A guide to influencing decisions that improve children's lives*. Available at: http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf.