

Using a Message Wheel to Keep Your Messaging on Track

A message wheel is a simple visual format for organizing the messages that are key to your issue. Your most important message – that one thing you always want to share – is placed in the middle of the wheel. Supporting statements – which would likely include the problem, solution, and one or two other key statements – are placed around the wheel like spokes. Points that explain or expound on your supporting statements are added under each heading.

You will want to use the central message every time you communicate about your issue, whether you are writing a letter to the editor or Op-Ed, speaking to a neighborhood group about your issue, answering questions about your cause, or being interviewed in the media. Sounds simple, right? When you are the one in control of the message, like writing a letter to the editor or preparing a presentation, it should be. You don't have to use every point every time. Just select the supporting messages that are most likely to resonate with your audience, add examples, stories, and descriptive language to paint the picture for the audience. Make it your own!

However, in situations where you are responding to questions, such as during an interview, following a presentation, or when meeting with a decision maker about your issue, making sure you are coming back to your central message can become a little more tricky. This is when the visual layout of the message wheel can be an especially helpful tool for you and your spokespeople. The message wheel helps show the connections between your

supporting messages and your central message. When you are asked a question, find that thread that can take you back to a point under a supporting statement and bridge to that. Once you have made it to your supporting statement, you can link back to your central message.

To use this tool most effectively, spend some time digging into it and thinking about examples from your school, your neighborhood, or your family that you could share to personalize your messages. When you are writing, use those examples to make your cause more relatable to others. When you are preparing for an interview, think about the arguments that those who disagree with your position might bring up and plan a response that can bring you back to your central message – and then practice your response.

By bringing the most important points for your issue into one place and using it, you'll be sure to keep your messaging on track.

Preemption: States Blocking Local Action that Promotes Health, Well-being, and Equity

One size doesn't always fit all when it comes to state laws.

- What works for [city/county] is not always what works for [town/other area of the state].
- Local governments exist to create laws that most accurately reflect the unique views, values, and needs of the people who live there.
- Proponents of states blocking local laws claim that a 'patchwork' of local laws throughout a state creates an unfair burden for businesses. But in reality, businesses are used to meeting different requirements under different local laws.

Local governments often know their residents best.

- More connected to the people in their communities
- More accountable to constituents
- Understand needs and values of their communities best
- When states block communities from passing their own laws, it can hurt the health and well-being of our families, friends, and neighbors.

Local governments are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of the people in their communities. They should be able to pass laws that are proven to promote good health, well-being, and equity.

Innovation happens at the local level.

- Good ideas often start locally.
- Example: local governments were the first to pass indoor smoke-free laws, but the ability of local governments to pass these kinds of laws is now at risk. Use a local example if possible.
- When states block communities from passing their own laws it weakens local governments' ability to innovate and enact laws that promote health and equity and improve people's lives.

States have a role to play in promoting health and equity.

- We have taken many positive steps to improve the health of people across [state].
- Cities, towns, and counties should continue to have the option to build on this progress and pass laws to help their communities and local businesses thrive.
- We want everyone to benefit from smart and effective policies.
- When states block local governments from passing laws, it can hurt communities most where the need is greatest.