

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.

Raise Your Hand. Support School Wellness.

Healthy, active children do better.

- Learn better and perform better academically
- Active children focus more, think more clearly, react to stress more calmly, behave better
- Healthy school environment helps set children up for a healthy future

Comprehensive local school wellness policies create healthier school environments.

- Updated nutrition standards for school meals and snacks
- Classroom celebrations and rewards
- Nutrition education
- Marketing of food and beverages
- Physical activity and physical education
- Standards should mirror or go beyond the USDA rules for local school wellness policies

Schools play a critical role in helping kids learn and practice healthy eating and physical activity habits.

Local wellness policies in schools are important for improving children's overall health and academic performance.

Parents and community members have a role to play in developing school wellness policies.

- Collaborative effort involving schools, parents, teachers, and other community members
- Most successful when parents and the community provide input and can easily access and understand the policies and implementation

Schools should be places that support the health and wellness of all children.

- Children spend many waking hours and eat up to half of daily calories at school; schools must help in cultivating healthy eating and physical activity habits and overall wellness
- All children deserve to go to a healthy school no matter where they live, what school they attend, or what grade they are in
- Local school wellness policies support healthy habits parents teach at home