

Raising Awareness



You have a cause that you care about, but how do you bring more attention to it? Here are some important tips to help you get the most out of your efforts!

Educate

- Facts add credibility and help convince people in the importance of your cause. Do not just tell people that something is important, but show it through, for example, citing how many people live with the condition and giving concrete examples of how it impacts daily life.

Connect Through Commonality

- People are more likely to become and stay engaged with an issue if they have a personal connection to it

- The most obvious connection is that they or a loved one are living with the disability in question, but connections can be made in less direct ways too.
- For example, a mother telling her story of raising a child with a disability can activate a maternal identity. Think of your audience and be mindful of how to connect with people in ways that help them identify with the issue.

Put A Face To The Issue

- Use photos puts a human face to numbers and stories, adding a greater human component that can more powerfully activate emotions and engage audiences
- Similarly, when you can, try to make a direct connection with someone in person or over the phone, rather than just online

Make It Clear Where Contributions Are Going

- People are more hesitant to make contributions to a cause when they lose sight of where these are going and how they are actually helping. Just as we want to build a connection between people, we also want to build a stronger connection between people, resources, and results.
- If an awareness campaign includes a fundraising component, attach specific value to specific items or services. An example of this would be 'By donating \$10, you will fund a package of arts and crafts supplies for a youth day camp' or '\$100 funds a day of camp for a youth with a disability'.

Spread The Word (About Spreading The Word)

- Each person you connect with has their own contacts, who have their own contacts, who have their own contacts, and so on. When one extra person shares a message, it is not simply one person seeing it—it can be tens, hundreds, or even thousands more people becoming aware of a cause.
- Do not merely give a fact, tell a story, or share something else; encourage your audience to share it themselves and make this as big a focus as anything else

- You should also make it as easy as possible for people to spread the word; things such as pre-made graphics to post to social media, scripts for people to copy if your awareness campaign involves reaching out to specific influencers, and conversation starter guides will help to get your message out and about.

Engage And Share

- Be interactive. It helps to build personal connections and a sense of community that encourages further participation. Make sure you respond to comments and shares.
- People like to be recognized when they make a contribution, whether of their time, money, skill, or all of the above. Be sure to acknowledge your supporters, even just with a thank you.
- Knowing where to share is also important. You can share with friends, family, colleagues, groups working on similar issues. There are certain places which can generally be counted on to share community news and initiatives. These include:
 - MLA or MP offices
 - Neighbourhood houses
 - Community centres
 - Post-secondary institution bulletins

Be Accessible

- If you are using Microsoft Word to prepare materials, try using the Document Accessibility Checker to check for accessibility issues that might limit how many people you can reach. This tool scans for elements that are missing descriptive text, elements that have no assigned order for adaptive technologies, slides that have no assigned titles, and other issues.

Good luck!

