

6 Core Principles of Social Change Advocacy

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: Violence is a tool that maintains the oppression that all women experience to varying degrees. Gender oppression intersects with other forms of oppression; they reinforce and perpetuate each other. Collective action within and across communities and identity groups is necessary to end oppression in all forms. Survivors who have experienced violence must be a primary force in the collective work to end violence and the system of gender oppression that it maintains.

DIRECTIONS

Work with a partner to brainstorm strategies and language for reflecting each principle in advocacy

1. Create an experience that is **liberating** vs. dominating.
2. Engage in **dialogue** vs. counseling or advising.
3. Recognize the **intersection and complexity** vs. single aspects or events.
4. Place **survivor's reality and needs** at the center vs. those of institutions.
5. Engage with **social networks, family, community** vs. isolated individuals.
6. Approach as a **social problem** vs. individual or psychological.

Engage in Dialogue

Relate as an equal, engaging in an exchange of knowledge. You know something, the survivor knows something; how does what you each know fit together?

Let go of...

- Limitations - what you normally do or don't do
- Any agenda - what you think the survivor should do
- What's available - menu of services

Understand Questions

Describe to me...
Tell me more about...
Help me understand...
I'm thinking that...
Why do you think...

Analyze Questions

What would happen if...
Would it be helpful if...
What if we did...
This is what might happen when...

We learn how to do our best advocacy when we listen to survivors

- We are not giving power to a victim, we are coming together to create power.
- Be conscious of your assumptions and operating theories.
- The advocate must be willing to learn from the survivor. Ask questions to learn more, not to confirm what you already think.
- You both bring knowledge to the conversation. Integrate your knowledge into the discussion in ways that are exploratory rather than lecturing.
- Don't let your knowledge overtake the dialogue; if you are listening, questioning, and exploring you will learn something new.
- Advocate from a position that reflects the survivor's concerns, understandings, and desires.

Notes: