

It's All About the Story: Creating Compelling Advocacy Campaigns.

Roseanne Scotti

State Director, New Jersey

Drug Policy Alliance

We are
the Drug
Policy
Alliance.

Creating Compelling Advocacy Campaigns

- “Many people think that communications is about expressing one’s own policy whereas it is essentially an effort to understand how people think and how they are going to react to what they are told. Too often activists import the tricks and the toolbox of communications without first changing their own attitude towards communications, i.e. moving from the expression of a policy towards a dialogue with the audience.”*

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- Cultural Cognition Project**
 - Frame issues and present information in ways that affirm rather than threaten people's values.
 - Have your position vouched for by diverse spokespeople because people are more willing to consider challenging information if it comes from someone who shares their values.

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Lessons from Drew Westen***

- Campaign is not debate on issues, it is getting people to feel what you feel
- Round off numbers, don't use decimals—it takes away from emotional appeal
- Turn numbers into people not vice versa— e.g. person rotting in prison for possession rather than number of people in prison
- Laundry list of facts lack: memorability and emotional resonance

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Lessons from Drew Westen***

- No more than three facts or points
- If it appeals to us as activists, it is probably the wrong message
- People do not want to (read: won't) hear our twelve point plans. Save those for legislative staff. Tell people a story.
- Repetition. Don't be afraid to repeat these messages verbatim – both in writing and when speaking. It may seem unnatural, but repetition is the most proven way of getting associations to stick.

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- Message discipline and message development
 - Who is your audience
 - What do they believe
 - What and who will they relate to
 - Develop a message that resonates

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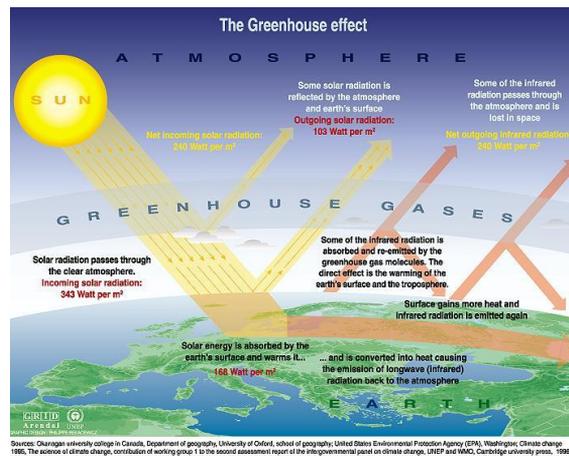
- Message
 - Clear
 - Compelling
 - Concise
 - Continual

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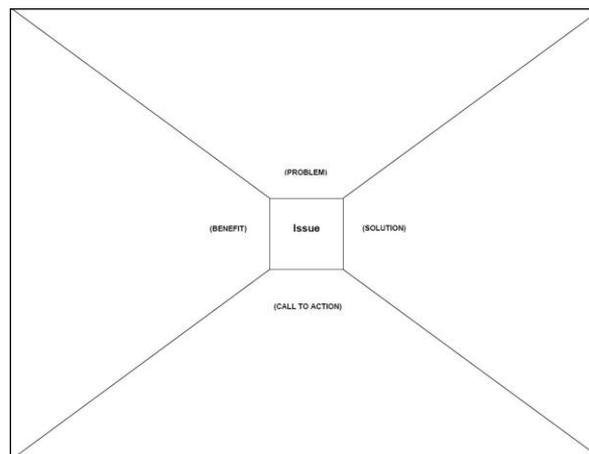


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Message Box

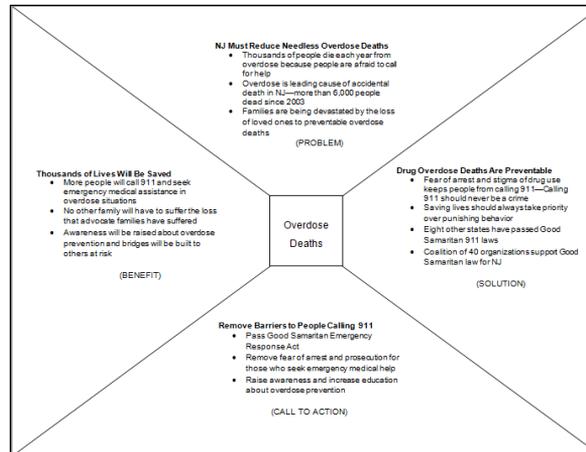


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Message Box



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- All messaging documents flow from the Message Box
 - Press releases
 - Ed board pitch letters
 - Legislative testimony
 - Action alert letters and other communications to legislators
 - Talking points
 - Letters to the editor
 - Fact sheets

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Fact Sheets—Executive Summary

Overdose Prevention Campaign

Good Samaritan Executive Summary



Drug Overdose is a Major Public Health Problem
Nationally, drug overdose fatalities more than doubled between 1999 and 2005. In New Jersey, overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death. Almost 6,000 people have died from drug overdoses in New Jersey since 2004. More than 700 people died from drug overdoses in New Jersey in 2009 alone.

Drug Overdose Deaths are Preventable
The majority of overdose victims do not actually die until one to three hours after they have taken a drug, and most of these deaths occur in the presence of others. This leaves a significant amount of time for witnesses to intervene and call for medical help. Unfortunately, lack of arrest and prosecution, as well as the stigma associated to drug use, prevent many from calling 911 and administering emergency medical assistance. If these barriers were removed, countless lives could be saved.

States Have Responded by Passing Good Samaritan Laws
Eleven states, Connecticut, New Mexico, New York, Washington, Illinois, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Rhode Island and Florida, as well as the District of Columbia, have enacted Good Samaritan laws which provide limited protection from arrest and prosecution for drug shoppers for people who call 911 in an overdose situation. In 2009, New Jersey recognized the importance of Good Samaritan policies when the legislature unanimously passed a similar law regarding underage drinking emergencies. New Jersey should build on this success by passing Senate Bill 611, Assembly Bill 576, a similar law for overdoses.

National and state-based organizations support Good Samaritan laws to prevent overdose deaths and increase access to emergency medical assistance. In 2008, the U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution calling for a comprehensive approach to overdose prevention, including the passage of Good Samaritan laws.

Calling 911 Should Never be a Crime
Because saving lives is more important than punishing behavior, and calling 911 should never be a crime, New Jersey should enact a Good Samaritan Law to encourage people to call 911 in the event of a drug overdose.

Conclusion
Hundreds of New Jersey residents die each year from drug overdoses. These deaths are preventable. New Jersey must implement a comprehensive, public health approach to prevent overdose deaths, starting with the enactment of Senate Bill 611/Assembly Bill 576, a Good Samaritan law to protect those who summon medical assistance for an overdose.

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Advocate Testimonials

Overdose Prevention Campaign

Patty DiKenzie
My Son's Story





My name is Patty DiKenzie and Tim from Thickwood. I was blessed with two children, Blake, who is 11 years old, and Katherine, who would have been 28 last April. So was an amazing son, brother and father - a talented and who unfortunately struggled with addiction. His tragedy has led me to see a critical need for overdose. His death, like so many others in New Jersey, could have been prevented if the people with whom he was using drugs had called 911 for help but they didn't, even help for fear of legal repercussions. Instead of helping to save a life by making emergency medical services, my son was left alone to die, without help he needed and deserved. That day now, and prosecution has led Blake, because someone was afraid to call 911.

I'm a cancer survivor - I am wearing my battle with my disease because it doesn't carry the stigma of addiction. What I do get for the cancer treatment I needed, my son did not get as those in society judge him as weak. But his battle with addiction, even after desperately seeking treatment. For years, my daughter and I tried to help get him drug treatment - treatment that he needed but couldn't afford or access. We were turned away from hospitals and rehab facilities, one after another, due to a lack of beds and underfunding. In June of 2010, we tried get him into rehab and our family was congested and hospitalized for the future. Much to our dismay, just 11 days into his program, he was involuntarily released because funding had run out. He returned in September, April 2011.

With treatment and proper treatment, I firmly believe that could have been his addiction and we will be his work at the time but not had this opportunity we had forever with his passing. The majority of overdose victims do not actually die and one to three hours after they have actually taken a drug, and most of these deaths occur in the presence of others. This leaves a significant amount of time for witnesses to intervene and call for medical help, but the fear of arrest and prosecution prevents many from making that call. These legal barriers should be removed, so that calling 911 is never a crime. Saving a life is far more important than punishing those who seek help.

In New Jersey, drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death. Almost 6,000 people have died from drug overdoses in New Jersey since 2004. One that could prevent overdose deaths like my son's passing is a "Good Samaritan Law," which would provide protection for those who call 911 in the event of a drug overdose and for overdose victims themselves.

It's been almost a year since Tim's passing and the loss I feel hasn't changed. Any parent who has lost a child knows the somber pain I experience, but realizing that my son's death could have been prevented is unbearable. I can think of no better way to honor my son's memory than to support Senate Bill 611/Assembly Bill 576. It is extremely important that we prevent future overdose deaths and protect other families like the grief that mine has endured.

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- Letters to the editor
 - “This bill aims to address the fear of arrest and prosecution, which prevents people from seeking assistance during a medical emergency. Drug overdose is the leading cause of death in New Jersey. Many deaths could be prevented if help was sought immediately.”

Patti DiRenzo, LTE Newark Star-Ledger
 - “By removing the fear of arrest and prosecution, this bill will encourage people to call for help in overdose emergencies and save countless lives.”

Liz Thompson, LTE Phila. Inquirer

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- Legislative Testimony
 - “Hundreds of New Jersey residents die each year from drug overdoses. These deaths are preventable. New Jersey must implement a comprehensive, public health strategy to prevent overdose deaths, starting with the enactment of Senate Bill 851. Because saving lives is more important than punishing behavior, and calling 911 should never be a crime, I urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 851.”

Roseanne Scotti, testimony before Senate Judiciary Committee

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- Press releases
 - Advocates are urging committee members to vote yes on this life-saving bill. “Calling 911 should never be a crime. Our current policies focus on punishment and drive people into the shadows and away from help,” says Roseanne Scotti, New Jersey State Director of the Drug Policy Alliance. “Saving lives should always take priority over punishing behavior. A Good Samaritan law will encourage people to get help.”

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- Press releases
 - Patty DiRenzo of Blackwood lost her son, Salvatore, to an overdose when he was only 26 years old. “Sal was an amazing son, brother and father—a beautiful soul who unfortunately struggled with addiction. His death, like so many others in New Jersey, could have been prevented if the people he was with had called 911 for help; but they didn’t, most likely for fear of arrest. Instead, Sal was left alone to die. I lost my son, and my grandson lost his Daddy, because someone was afraid to call 911. It’s extremely important that we prevent future overdose deaths and spare other families the grief that mine has endured.”

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- Editorials
 - “It’s so much more important to save the life of a son or daughter, mother or father, than it is to charge a fellow drug user with a relatively minor crime.” *Camden Courier-Post Editorial*
 - “Many individuals faced with a medical emergency stemming from drug use often hesitate to call for help or seek medical attention because of uncertainty or the fear of facing legal charges related to their own or the victim’s illicit drug use. This can be fatal. . . The Drug Policy Alliance-NJ is compiling a video record for people who have lost a loved one because of an overdose. Some of these stories recount how a son or daughter was lost to drugs because their friends froze, afraid to act.” *Trenton Times Editorial*

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- Editorials
 - “Many of those deaths likely could have been prevented, if only someone had summoned help. But too many people are afraid to act out of fear of arrest and prosecution for their own possession or use of drugs. . . The bill has support from public health groups, and individuals like Patty DiRenzo, whose 27-year-old son, Salvatore, struggled with addiction and died of an overdose. With hundreds of lives at stake, New Jersey law makers should remove any reason for hesitation in reporting a drug overdose.” *Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial*
 - “Saving a life must take precedence.” *Camden Courier-Post Editorial*

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- Press Quotes
 - “People get it: If someone’s dying, and if another person happens to be there, you want nothing to stand in the way of that person calling for help. Calling 911 should never be a crime.”
Roseanne Scotti, quoted in the Trenton Times
 - “Obviously the main point is that it’s more important to save a life than to punish behavior.”
Roseanne Scotti, quoted in the Courier-Post

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- Press Quotes
 - “Our current law encourages people to abandon those who are overdosing out of fear of arrest and prosecution,” said Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg.
Gloucester County Patch
 - “Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of accidental death in NJ and many of them could be prevented if those near the victim were not afraid to call 911. . . Hopefully this bill will remove people’s fears and end their hesitation in reaching out for emergency help to save someone’s life.”
Senator Joseph Vitale, bill sponsor, Gloucester County Patch

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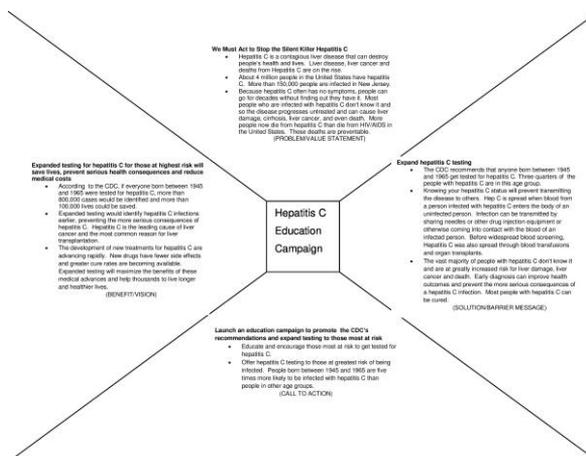


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Problem/Value Statement

We Must Act to Stop the Silent Killer Hepatitis C

- Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease can destroy people's health and lives. Liver disease, liver cancer and deaths from hepatitis C are on the rise.
- About 4 million people in the United States have hepatitis C. More than 150,000 people are infected in New Jersey.
- Because hepatitis C often has no symptoms, people can go for decades without finding out they have it. Most people who are infected with hepatitis C don't know it and so the disease progresses untreated and can cause liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death. More people now die from hepatitis C than die from HIV/AIDS in the United States. These deaths are preventable.

Solution/Barrier Message

Expand hepatitis C testing

- The CDC recommends that anyone born between 1945 and 1965 get tested for hepatitis C. Three quarters of the people with hepatitis C are in this age group.
- Knowing your hepatitis C status will prevent transmitting the disease to others. Hep C is spread when blood from a person infected with hepatitis C enters the body of an uninfected person. Infection can be transmitted by sharing needles or other drug injection equipment or otherwise coming into contact with the blood of an infected person. Before widespread blood screening, hepatitis C was also spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants.
- The vast majority of people with hepatitis C don't know it and are at greatly increased risk for liver damage, liver cancer and death. Early diagnosis can improve health outcomes and prevent the more serious consequences of a hepatitis C infection. Most people with hepatitis C can be cured.

Action

Launch an education campaign to promote the CDC's recommendations and expand testing to those most at risk

- Educate and encourage those most at risk to get tested for hepatitis C.
- Offer hepatitis C testing to those at greatest risk of being infected. People born between 1945 and 1965 are five times more likely to be infected with hepatitis C than people in other age groups.

Vision/Benefit

Expanded testing for hepatitis C for those at highest risk will save lives, prevent serious health consequences and reduce medical costs

- According to the CDC, if everyone born between 1945 and 1965 were tested for hepatitis C, more than 800,000 cases would be identified and more than 100,000 lives could be saved.
- Expanded testing would identify hepatitis C infections earlier, preventing the more serious consequences of hepatitis C. Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation.
- Options for hepatitis C treatment are advancing rapidly. New drugs with fewer side effects and greater cure rates are becoming available. Expanded testing will maximize the benefits of these medical advances and help thousands to live longer and healthier lives.



Creating Compelling Advocacy Campaigns--Endnotes

- **How to Communicate* (http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedfiles/KBS-FRB/05_Pictures_documents_and_external_sites/09_Publications/PUB_1624_How_to_Communicate.pdf)
- ***Cultural Cognition Project* (<http://www.culturalcognition.net/>)
- ****Drew Westen, The Political Brain; DPA Training*
- *****Adapted from a Presentation by Christine K. Jahnke, President, Positive Communications, Washington, DC* (Chris Jahnke Positive Communications <http://www.poscom.com/>)