

The Challenge that Is Citizen Advocacy

The Origin of the Citizen Advocacy Principles

When thinking about these principles, it is important to think about where they came from and why they are written in the CAPE manual in the way they are.

The first Program started around 1970 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Then others started from within the State of Nebraska and beyond. The belief then was that Programs needed to do the work as effectively as possible and part of ensuring that was by undergoing external evaluation.

If you have a service to highly valued people, then that service tends to be provided with the highest quality possible. People strive for that and external evaluation is part of achieving that i.e. training, workshops, rehearsals etc. The service will push to do things as effectively as they can, anticipating anything that might go wrong, having multiple safeguards in place etc. Examples of such services might be the secret service guarding the President or an airline.

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Continuing from the initiative of the early years, we have, in Citizen Advocacy, multiple processes that we use. CAPE is one of the most effective vehicles, where we push each other to higher quality, even maximum quality. CAPE is an evaluation against standards of best practice, not an evaluation against standards of minimal compliance or even acceptable compliance. No matter what you are doing, there will always be ways of doing it better and it is hard to see that within oneself because we all get into a groove about the way we do things. The idea of CAPE evaluations, and any other kind of evaluation, is to provide a vehicle of challenging and pushing so we consider ways of doing things better. This was part of thinking in the early years.

If we really value the people who get involved in the relationships then we want to do the work as effectively as possible. This is something that comes from Wolf's thinking and others who were involved in those early years. There was evaluation of those early Citizen Advocacy Programs and their start up efforts but there was no CAPE tool back then. That came out in 1976. They used PASS, as PASSING wasn't around at that time either, as the evaluation mechanism.

In doing those evaluations, things were identified that seemed to work as far as the way coordinators did their jobs. Things related to Program viability; Program structure, funding and governance; Program longevity and some fundamental principles (defining Citizen Advocacy) that if a Program followed those principles or strove to adhere to those principles the Program would be far more likely to make many good matches. If the Program did not adhere to those principles, the likelihood of many matches being made went down, the likelihood of good matches being made and being supported well went down and the likelihood of the Program surviving went down.

So these five defining principles of Citizen Advocacy came out of a number of evaluations done on Citizen Advocacy Programs. These are the things that work as guiding principles for a Program to be a genuine Citizen Advocacy Program, to remain as one, make many good matches and to endure for the long term. It is not like John O'Brien and Wolf Wolfensberger went of to a cabin for a weekend and said, "Let's come up with some rules and see if we can get people to follow them". The principles came from hard lessons in an early era when it was also difficult to do the work.

The CAPE manual therefore is a compilation of lessons learned in the evaluation of many Citizen Advocacy Programs. These were recorded and written into an evaluation mechanism identifying those aspects functioning that would make it more likely that many more good matches would be made for the long-term and also those things that undermine Citizen Advocacy effectiveness.

These are lessons learned from looking – not some "German's power-trip" (referring to Wolfensberger) or "rules from on high" – but lessons that continue to be valid today. There are examples where violation of these lessons resulted in the death of Programs. It is not, "this is what Wolf says" but "this is what works". If you want to make good use of the model, then they are guideposts for our operation, the structuring of our efforts and the decision-making for our Programs.

Advocate Independence (Primary Advocate Loyalty to Protégé)

In the CAPE manual it is represented as Advocate Independence and one expression of that is primary advocate loyalty to Protégé. Advocate loyalty to Protégé, in a sense, is what a good match is. That is our goal and perhaps that is what the principle should be called. It is the core of what it is we do. We want to initiate relationships with benefits to all but with a focus on the best interests of the Protégé.

Loyalty to Protégé is our goal; loyalty in a relationship sense; loyalty as far as identification with the person; loyalty expressed through action to protect a person from harm; loyalty expressed through commitment, respect, valuation and not devaluation.

What do we really mean when we talk about loyalty? How would this be expressed in the relationships of a Citizen Advocacy Program? This would make for great discussion topic.

When the Advocate is independent of conflicts of interest, it makes it more likely that the Advocate can identify and hold their primary loyalty to the Protégé. If we have divided loyalties it is harder to hold our focus on the one person. Advocate independence means things like, don't pay people, don't control people and say time after time that, "This is your relationship and it belongs to you. We are in a background support role and you don't have to report to me."

Advocates are not part of the service team. Look from the perspective of the Protégé and not from what someone else wants.

We all know situations where this is not true and where people have other loyalties. For example, staff people from one group home who are Advocates for people from another group home and the Citizen Advocacy coordinator gets approval from the CEO of the group homes about the matches that get made. Advocates in this situation are very largely not independent and have conflict of interest, so advocacy does not happen and therefore loyalty to Protégé is undermined.

Program Independence and Community Embeddedness

If the Program is independent then it means that the Program is in a better position to support Advocates to be independent. Independence also in terms of funding and Board composition.

A Citizen Advocacy Program needs a home like anything else but not with the human service system. A home that is separate.

Clarity of Staff Function

This is an easy one to say. All a Citizen Advocacy Program does is initiate and support relationships between people. We just focus on one thing. We specialize.

“Paid roles drive out unpaid roles” (Wolfensberger)

When you start mingling a paid service with Citizen Advocacy, the paid roles will drive out the unpaid ones. There are also image issues with this. If you have staff advocating for some people, then why should someone else do it for free especially if it is a difficult issue? It should be turned over to staff. There is the image problem with it that undermines advocate independence, advocate loyalty and advocate responsibility.

It is hard to preserve the effort if the two have mingled internally. It may be sustainable initially but over time the drift will be towards the paid roles. Citizen Advocacy is hard. If the time comes when a Citizen Advocacy Program is not recruiting many Advocates or any Advocates at all and they have a coordinator who would be a great ‘staff advocate’ (ie paid advocate), but who isn’t a match-maker or recruiter, then that Program will cross over to paid advocacy. This has happened here in Australia and in other places time and time again.

This principle is easy to say but hard to hold on to. A pressure here may be, “one stop shopping advocacy” where the external pressure blends with the internal desire of some Citizen Advocacy workers who are more comfortable doing it themselves than recruiting and trusting Citizen Advocates. “It is easier and you

can get more done faster". External pressure that fits with internal temptation that fits with the direction of the whole society. It is very tough.

It may be possible to have within the same administrative structure multiple advocacy components, but if Citizen Advocacy is going to endure and be effective within that, it needs to be well 'walled off' from other parts of the organization. This was actually one of the early visions of Citizen Advocacy.

Wolfensberger wrote a monograph about 'voluntary associations in the third stage' - a voluntary association that is exclusively focused on change agency broadly. In such, there might be an education component, an independent advocacy component, a systems advocacy component and a Citizen Advocacy component; all within the same overall administrative umbrella. Citizen Advocacy would be separate from the others so that there is no cross referral or undermining of match-making.

Balanced Orientation to Protégé Needs / Diversity of Advocate Roles

According to Wolfensberger, this is a principle of lesser importance. This principle is more related to a systemic change agency approach. This is a view not necessarily shared by all.

Getting involved with a wide array of people and supporting a wide array of relationships has positive effects in Citizen Advocacy. One is that the community sees a wide range of examples of relationships. If you are involved with a diversity of the kinds of relationships, you have experiences in your work where you see a wider range of situations in people's lives, where you see a wider range of people's needs and a wider range of examples of how Citizen Advocates have or might respond to people. This broadens our vision about who people are and what they need, what they are vulnerable to and how Citizen Advocates might respond. In broadening our vision, we are more likely to see the real need someone has, the real vulnerability and see the real possibility for how a Citizen Advocate might respond.

In seeing a wider range of possibilities and being able to tell those stories to others, it makes a Citizen Advocacy relationship real which in turn increases the probability that the relationships will be more relevant for both parties. A relevant relationship is part of a good match.

Positive Interpretations of People who are Devalued

Images have great power that shape how others think, how others respond. The messages about people in devalued status are most always negative – images that confirm the devaluation. Image messages about where people spend their time, who they associate with, what their activities are, the language that's used, personal appearance – image messages that say, "Those people really are less valuable. Those people do not belong with the rest of us".

The images around people in devalued status, most always, and largely unconsciously, communicate image messages that educate people to think that, "Those people are different, less valuable and less worthy".

This principle in Citizen Advocacy says that we want to surround people with positive images – images that convey positive messages about people. In Social Role Valorization it is often thought of in terms of image management. By association of oneself with particular images, one can communicate the messages they want to and put that message into people's minds, even if it is not true.

An example to highlight this is what the President of the USA does once or twice a year. He stands in front of a big tree and gives a speech about how they are really caring for the environment, when really they are undermining what few safeguards we have over our fragile environment. The image can often convey more than the reality. Politicians use image management all the time in order to shape a positive response from other people so they get voted for. Advertisers do this too. The images communicate messages.

We want to surround our Citizen Advocacy Program, the relationships supported and the people involved, with positive images – images that will shape a positive valuing response. They have an impact on the coordinators of the Program and the Citizen Advocates too. The subtle ways we communicate, not just with our words, has an impact on how other people will respond.

An example of a poor message is from a semi-Citizen Advocacy Program for people with mental illness whose brochure said, "You may be someone's best medicine". Instead of thinking about getting involved with another person, they were recruiting advocate-like people, to, in a sense, be a 'human pill'. Their relationship was to be therapeutic.

The whole imagery thing can be very unsettling. One of the lessons in SRV is that your unconscious assumptions/beliefs will get expressed somehow symbolically through images, even if you do not admit it to yourself.

Image management in a technical sense, in terms of office location, kinds of words used, people's appearance when they do the work and such things are all important considerations. But in a deeper sense, whether we interpret people positively or we interpret people in ways that are consistent with devaluation, it comes from our hearts. This is the relationship realm. You cannot trick people. As a coordinator, when you are out there having coffee with somebody, there is other communication going on. Have positive regard in our hearts for others because that positive regard will communicate. It is a technical issue but it is also an issue of the heart. Genuinely respecting people is part of what a good relationship is.

Comments from the floor

- There can be a danger in focusing too much on the technical measures and not placing enough emphasis on the power of the message of the relationship itself and the person who is in the relationship with the person with disability. There are many instances where people almost express surprise that anyone would want to know this person. But here is a typical, ordinary citizen, with some status in the community, who enters into that relationship. The power of that message in itself – regardless of what is done – is one of the most powerful messages that emerge out of our work. It is the fruit of our work - the relationships between people. Where the office is located and other technical things are much less important than that single message.

Technical image management is important but the fruit of all this is in the relationships. It is experienced by both parties and then it is experienced by others who observe the relationship. That is the essence of what we get to and that is what is most important. To really get there, the heart stuff has to be dealt with. As Citizen Advocacy coordinators, this is one of the chronic growth areas.

- All human endeavours tend to narrow. When something is going well we tend to say, "Let's do more of that". In the corporate world, this is how people make money and this is what makes sense. But with Citizen Advocacy, we have to keep pushing out to the broader areas.

Protégé Recruitment

Q. Why do we do Protégé Recruitment?

- If we did not recruit any people with disabilities we would not have any citizen advocacy matches.
- People with disabilities have needs that could be addressed by having a Citizen Advocate. I don't think anyone needs a Citizen Advocate. Citizen Advocacy is a program model for bringing relationships into people's lives. People have needs that might be addressed by a Citizen Advocate but they do not need a citizen advocate.
- There are lots of people who have great needs and huge vulnerabilities in their lives that a Citizen Advocate might address i.e. the need for a freely given relationship; sponsorship into community life; others pushing for some richness in their lives; protection from some imminent disaster; the long-term need for prepared protection because devaluation continues into the future – bad stuff will happen to people this year and in five years from now.

The dominant Citizen Advocacy principle that shapes the way in which we do Protégé Recruitment is 'Balanced Orientation to Protégé Needs / Diversity of Advocate Roles'.

The way we do the work in Protégé Recruitment, the way we think about people, the way we interact with people, the way we speak about people is all related to the principle of 'Positive interpretations of People with Disabilities' and this also has an impact. 'Clarity of Staff Function' has an impact too. We need to be very clear with people we recruit as Protégés, their family members and others involved (service providers) that we are a Citizen Advocacy Program. We are not going to be there to be someone's friend nor are we going to become their Citizen Advocate ourselves – this is an example of 'External Promotion of Advocate Independence'. We might say something like, "We are looking to recruit independent advocates who will be loyal to the person and who may challenge you and may disagree with you. Other times, they may work with you".

Program independence gives us the freedom as a Program to decide who we recruit as Protégés, what we see as people's needs and what kinds of relationships we initiate and support for people. Protégé recruitment leads to Citizen Advocate recruitment then to the other key activities.

"Protégé Recruitment is the engine that pulls the train of Citizen Advocacy activities." (Andy Baxter)

Who gets recruited as Protégés drives the direction of the rest of the train and that comes out of the 'Loyalty to Protégé' principle. If we are going to be loyal to the Protégé, in terms of how the office works, then the individual identity and needs of the Protégés is what is going to pull the train along and guide the direction of the other activities.

If you want to have diversity in the kinds of people and relationships involved in the Program, you need to have a diversity of Protégés. The reason to have diversity of Protégés on your Program makes it more likely that the matches will be more relevant to the individual people and that they will be good matches.

There is nothing in Citizen Advocacy that you can do to guarantee anything because the Citizen Advocates are independent. But you can operate the Program in ways that maximize the likelihood of relationships working for both parties and being relevant to both parties.

The main elements in Protégé Recruitment

- Developing a Protégé recruitment plan, as to who to recruit as Protégés, and following it.
- Finding the people. Coordinators working in ways to recruit people who have disabilities within the Program's 'target population' for who Citizen Advocates will be recruited.
- Getting to know those people by gathering information from spending time with the person and from other sources (hopefully never alone: with a co-worker or a Board member – two heads are more than twice as good as one). Finally developing the Protégé Profile or Protégé Portrait so that we have a clear picture as to who to recruit as a Citizen Advocate and what we are going to ask them to do.

If you want to have a diversity of people on your Program you need to look at who you are involved with currently; the range of relationships supported now (the CAPE manual will help with this); who are not involved; diversity of advocate roles, etc. What we are not supporting or not currently involved with become our priorities for the year ahead. The goal of all this is to get involved with people in diverse kinds of situations. This leads to a diversity of relationships which leads to many good matches; it all leads back to many good matches.

Comments from the floor

'Who are the people not in my life?' is a very important question to ask as it forces us to be conscious of those people who are not around us.

People come to us in many different ways and none is either right or wrong. Some people will come to you, while others are unlikely to be found unless you go find them because they cannot come to you. The key is in finding a diversity of people. Not when a Program is new, but over time through knowing your community and who is there. We should be looking to recruit Protégés in a range of living situations, working situations, degrees of disabilities, ages. Looking to find a full range of people over time.

There are lessons in this too. For example, it is not a good idea to recruit your first Protégé who is a convicted paedophile who has just been released from prison. This is not a good place to start as a Citizen Advocacy coordinator or Program. A time will come when a Program has sufficient maturity and sufficient standing to legitimately get involved with supporting people in more extreme situations. (i.e. a baby with severe disabilities or an unborn child with a genetic difficulty).

This is all about setting priorities and finding people. For example, over a number of years, finding Protégés in all fifteen advocacy role types as outlined in the CAPE manual and all age groups, provides a vehicle for pushing Citizen Advocacy Programs in terms of their planning and then in terms of their action. The plan should be developed by Board and staff members together, with the staff primarily to carry it out, but Board members with their connections will help.

Developing a Protégé profile or portrait

- Think about the Protégé in a deeper way – who is this person? Try to identify with the person as this is what we will be asking the Citizen Advocate to do? It may not be pleasant but it is necessary.
- Think about what this person's needs are. What kind of advocate role would be relevant to help address that person's needs and vulnerabilities?
- What kind of person would it take to fulfill these types of advocate roles for a person like this?
- What kind of person, as an advocate, would be a good match for the person and also their needs?

- What are some of the likely obstacles to the relationship beginning and progressing? If you predict these things in advance and the advocate says 'yes' then when the inevitable challenges come up they have already said that they can deal with this thus, making it more likely that the relationship will continue.
- Who do we know like this? Develop a list of names of who we know, who we know who knows somebody and who we might go to in our community?

What emerges out of this Protégé Recruitment process is a Protégé specific advocate recruitment plan. Doing an individual Protégé profile is acting on the 'loyalty' principle.

Comments from the floor

Citizen Advocacy is not a purely intellectual exercise. The feeling in the belly does count. Some people have great gifts as far as the insightfulness of their belly is concerned, but this does not mean the intellectual part or technical part is irrelevant. Both can achieve the desired outcome of maximizing the likelihood of many good matches being made.

Q. What about referrals?

We have to be very careful about what human service workers tell us. Referral is a business that is done within human services. A Citizen Advocacy Program might give the individual referred a call or go see them but it is made very clear that whether a Citizen Advocate is recruited for this person or not is the Program's decision because Citizen Advocacy is an independent Program. What we ask a Citizen Advocate to do and the kind of person we find to be the Citizen Advocate is up to us too. The Citizen Advocate may well do some advocating and there might be occasions when the Citizen Advocate disagrees. Citizen Advocacy Programs are not interested in creating chaos or fighting for the sake of a fight but Citizen Advocates may advocate and they are independent. Some people will then no longer want anything to do with the Citizen Advocacy Program while others may become 'snitches' or 'spies'.

Recruitment of Protégés is independent of the service workers because the people who needs would be best addressed by Citizen Advocates are often people who would never be referred. The people who are the most vulnerable with the greatest vulnerabilities, who have the greatest need for protection of some kind and who have the fewest opportunities for richness in their lives, they will not come to us. They will not be referred to us, so we will have to find them.

Q. How do we find those people?

Visiting someone already in a particular situation and observing others.

It should be remembered that we can find advocates for people who cannot give their consent. These are the people who are the most impaired. Some people, who have great need, will say they do not want an advocate.

Confidentiality is a tool of oppression. It protects people's privacy except from all the doctors, insurance companies and auditors. It is actually supposed to be about private medical information and not about what people's lives are like or what their names are.

Another strategy to find people is to find out who comes and goes from the private residence where some potential Protégés may be residing. Who is the kitchen cook? Who takes the garbage away? Who is the doctor? Who are the staff and who are friends of the staff? Approach these people -"I am interested...I'd like to know...This is what I do...Is there something you can tell me about the people that live in this place?

Q. What are some strategies for recruiting babies as Protégés?

A Board member with young children is working on her paediatrician and the nurse in the paediatrician's office to let us know if they hear of someone. A friend of a relative's daughter has a position where she comes in contact with young children. Contact is had with her every 2 months or so. She understands about what Citizen Advocacy does. We have a 'baby brochure' that explains how a Citizen Advocate may be helpful to a young child. Such people need to be identified who can 'burst past the confidentiality bubble' to help identify children. These are examples of approaches through connections in the community. Some are service system and some are personal. Program associations with the clergy could also know about this.

C. Recruitment of Protégés actively involving other people is as legitimate as a Program going out and finding people directly.

Both are fine ways. Different approaches to find different people. The main goal is to see many good matches being made where loyalty to Protégé is being adhered to. This is increased by a diversity of people and diversity in the kinds of relationships. Finding people is a step on the way to something else and ultimately towards a good match. Different approaches have their pros and cons. If you work always through agencies then there is an image issue (the Program gets to be seen as not independent) but it is a way to find some people. Different approaches for different people.

“Perversions come in mutually opposing polarities” (Wolfensberger)

In this context it means too much of anything is too much. Active or passive Protégé recruitment are just two strategies on the way to an activity (protégé recruitment), on the way towards a principle (diversity) which is on the way towards many good relationships. All of us could do better in terms of a wider array of approaches to find a wider array of people. There are costs and benefits to any approach you take. For example, going to find people directly is time consuming and some people will be able to be found better through connections.

A CAPE team may make the point that a Program's connections may be running the Program instead of the Program running the connections. This is a danger of relying on connections and services because the people we rely on to tell us about people will do so, not only when we want them to, but when they want too as well. This can escalate to undermine Program independence. There is an image issue with it also but the goal is to get involved with a diversity of people.

The burden with Citizen Advocacy is that every time you do something that is working well for you and you get comfortable with it, then you have done too much of it.

Q. Is there a hierarchy in Protégé recruitment styles?

There are costs and benefits in anything. Don't rely on any particular one. For anyone of us, workers or Programs at any particular time, there probably should be some priority on what we are doing because there is something that we are probably starting to do too much of. When do those 'contactors' become gate keepers too? It is a balance.

The Internal Relationship Review is a good place to look back and see what recruitment strategies were used that year. Active protégé recruitment has been blown out of proportion. When it was first discussed it was at a time when Citizen Advocacy Programs were relying too much on the soft or passive reliance of people coming to a Program (i.e. a referral from a human service) and there were a lot of people in coordinator roles who were not going to those places that make you uncomfortable in order to try find Protégés. There became a comfort-ability in the Protégé Recruitment being done.

With that comfort-ability there was not a diversity in matches or advocacy roles which is what Citizen Advocacy Programs strive to achieve over the long term. To have a diversity of advocacy roles, a Program will need to use a number of means to identify Protégés. There are a lot of people who have not been found. It is good to have a balance but be mindful that people who will tell us about people in our community can also become 'gatekeepers'.

C. The sole reliance on the use of networks (or any other single means) to recruit Protégés can create issues for a Program. A Program will always need to continue doing on-going outreach.

The better you do in any area the more problems come up and new problems too. In a way, this is one of the burdens of the work but in another way it is one of the great opportunities. Too many connections, who may well lead your Program to supporting a diversity of advocacy roles, will restrict some people from being found. Achievement can bring a different level of dilemma.

We want to encourage people to tell us but we don't want to rely on people telling us. It is a great dilemma. Over time people can be supported into other roles i.e. an advocate in a very stable relationship is willing to serve as a crisis advocate. You can start being too inward looking and spend all your time working within that network to the point where there are whole sections of the community that the Program has not talked to.

Ongoing outreach and broadening of that network is necessary. It is a decision and direction that we make as a Citizen Advocacy Program. A strategic plan question – are we going to continue with ongoing outreach or are we going to hold it in the corner of our community where it is working well? What is the balance with this? If Protégé Recruitment really is the engine that pulls us and we decide to have more networking and outreach, we will have to push ourselves for a more active effort. It is a fundamental decision for a Citizen Advocacy Program. Which is right and which is wrong? The decision regarding this is one that is made from within the Program. An evaluation would say, "This is a question for you". It belongs to the people in the Program and what they actually do.

The Challenge That /s Citizen Advocacy

Protégé Recruitment Continued

We often tell success stories about how we went about recruiting Protégés but many of us have made efforts that have been unsuccessful. You can never know what particular effort or tactic is going to lead to you finding the particular person that you are hoping to find. Persistence is absolutely necessary in this, as is being creative.

The level of risk in 'active' Protégé recruitment

(an example from the floor is given of a coordinator recruiting a Protégé from a shopping centre)

There is risk no matter what approach we take in Protégé recruitment i.e. risk that we will be offensive to somebody, that we will get it wrong, a Citizen Advocate will get involved and not do what we hoped or they will do what we hoped and we will get into trouble. Part of the deal in doing Citizen Advocacy work is that you will get into trouble sometimes and that is why Program independence and community embeddedness are important.

The state that your Program is in is important to consider in terms of the amount of risk you take. There are risks to the Program and to us personally but the greatest risk of all is to the person in devalued status. We will get it wrong or we will not always be sufficiently prepared, supported, experienced or stable as a person or a Program to meddle in an effective way in someone's life which is in some extreme circumstance. Our tendency is that we do not want to take risks, we like to be safe.

However, taking some risk makes sense but taking foolish risks doesn't. Gauging what is and what is not foolish might be aided by considering the following:

- The maturity of the Program and its standing in the community.
- The strength of its Board and the diversity of its funding.
- The experience and maturity of the people doing the work.
- The clarity of the support that they have from their Board members.
- The degree of vulnerability the person experiences.
- The degree of moral imperative (to get involved with somebody who is in a desperate situation even though you do not think that you are ready to).

These are value-laden decisions that Boards should make with their worker(s) present. Over-analysis can be a downside to this. A point comes where you just have to go do it and probably that point comes sooner than later. The essence of this is that we have to make matches and external support is great but there can be...

'The paralysis and over-analysis of analysis'

If you don't make matches and help people to get involved with one another it is merely 'intellectual masturbation' and that it is a waste of time.

If you only rely on Citizen Advocacy 'magic' (that is things unexpected happening and working well) you are in trouble. Being planful, thoughtful and working through people to do very targeted and specific outreach is part of it and being open to 'magic' is part of it too.

C. Waiting lists are problematic

(comments came from the floor of a Program with a waiting list of over twenty people)

Having large waiting lists are problems that people in Citizen Advocacy have encountered for years. This comes from the idea that there are so many people that could benefit from having a Citizen Advocate and it is so hard for us to say no to anybody. One strategy for dealing with that is to not have a waiting list, but have a working list. What any Citizen Advocacy Program does with a very large waiting list is a very, very hard question. In a sense, there has already been a promise made to those people that a Citizen Advocate will be found for them.

Twenty eight people are too many to hold in your heart and in your head. It might be that the Board assists the coordinators to decide who the first five or six people to find Citizen Advocates for are so that the coordinators have a clearer focus. Then the other people would need to be told that, "My Board said..." It can be easier for a coordinator who has difficulty saying "no" to say, "My Board told me to say no".

Make a firm promise to five or six people and really focus on finding the right people to be their Citizen Advocates. Tell the other people, "We haven't forgotten you but I can only do this for a few people at a time and my Board will help me decide who I should look for next".

Out of a list that big you may need to tell some that it may be several years before a Citizen Advocate is found. In addition to this, the coordinators should find some new Protégés themselves. With a waiting list that large it could be three years before any finding of Protégés is done by the Program.

Q. What could I say when people say they want friendship?

You cannot take away people's needs but you can say that we are only very small and we can only do so much. Everybody wants friends. The way Citizen Advocacy is structured with all the principles means that it relates more to the idea of advocacy and spokespersonship than it does to the idea of friendship.

One of the paths that a lot of Programs have gone down is to become 'Citizen Friendship' Programs. That is not a bad thing but it is also not Citizen Advocacy. One lesson from this is, 'You get what you ask for'. If friendship is what you ask from people you tend to get it and that is a fine and good thing (especially if it is the most pressing need in someone's life) but sometimes when people say they want a friend, it is apparent that what they actually need is for someone to get them out of a situation or get them medical care. They need strong advocacy, not friendship, maybe even for survival reasons.

CAPE is structured around a Citizen Advocacy model and is designed to promote spokespersonship and advocacy as part of the relationship and part of the asking process. It provides the standards for evaluation in Citizen Advocacy but it is also the structure of the model more importantly. There are decisions for the Board of any Citizen Advocacy Program to make about the approach and the model you take. But to make use of the Citizen Advocacy model requires an acceptance of the model as it is.

It is not that other things are not worthy. There is lots of other good work to do in the world but if you are going to make use of this model, it is structured in certain ways toward certain purposes. Increasing the likelihood of Citizen Advocates advocating is one example of the structural features of the model. If you are going to do something else, then that is fine too but it is something else. In that circumstance, CAPE is not a good thing to use – in a sense the evaluation becomes irrelevant.

C. Citizen Advocacy cannot be all things to all people.

There are times when Programs have to say “no”. If you don’t, then Programs end up with huge waiting lists that become a weight on that Program. The pressure of numbers decreases the likelihood of good matches. It is harder to resist that pressure and Programs can become consumed by it.

An example might be that when the pressure to take the most vulnerable people the following year comes, one strategy might be to take one or two people who are less vulnerable and who, if they had a Citizen Advocate, could ‘de-clientise themselves’. This approach lends to ensuring diversity.

Protégé Profiles / Portraits

Investing a lot of time and effort in Protégé profiles can cover up for a multitude of sins later on, in terms of how you do other aspects of the work because you have got engaged as deeply as you can with the identity of the person. If you are looking to initiate and support relevant relationships, then you have to do the best you can to work out who the person is, what their needs are, what their vulnerabilities are, what their opportunities are and what their challenges are so that the rest of the process is well informed. With this done, the rest of our work is likely to be well informed, rooted in the identity of the Protégé and much more loyal to the Protégé. This is a practice of the Program that is about loyalty to Protégé.

There are a number of ways to do a Protégé profile all with the goal being to have some clarity about who to approach as prospective Citizen Advocates, what you are going to say to them and what you are going to ask for. The strategies are quite diverse.

One strategy is to follow the process used in PASSING. Coordinators and a board member spend several hours (after we have gotten to know a person and got some of the basic facts of their situation) going through a step by step

process (so we don't start thinking about who might be the Citizen Advocate until we have clarity about the Protégés situation). The time taken may vary from two to four hours. At the end of the process there is a list of names of people to start with (who we either know or will know somebody we know), an initial question to ask, a short term role in which we want to invite a Citizen Advocate to assume, things to say about the longer term likelihood or possibilities in the Protégés life and a picture of the kind of person who would make a good Citizen Advocate.

We are looking for long term relationships. Most times there are two paths to talk to a prospective Citizen Advocate about. One is the path about, "This is what might be..." if things do go right, with the right kind of support, in a stable situation, the right decisions etc". It is also emphasized that bad things may well continue happening despite the Citizen Advocate role. Part of all Citizen Advocate roles over the long term is to try and minimize the occurrence of terrible things happening and maximize the positive things that might happen. We try to be predictive in this sense and talk about the things that might come up (or that are likely to) so the prospective Citizen Advocate hears our best thinking and understanding.

Coordinators do have things to share about the individual Protégés story and part of that is talking about the sorts of paths that might come.

Cec Lynes (Toronto, Canada) has done a lot of consulting with Programs in Georgia, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania to develop an image of the Protégé rather than a profile. This is a more artistic approach and not so analytical. Part of the reason behind this was that some people in Citizen Advocacy believe that SRV was becoming too dominant in Citizen Advocacy meaning we have a tendency to focus too much on people addressing needs therefore it becomes more of a service to address a need and less of a focus on the relationship.

"The needs to address assignment from coordinators" that can come out at the end of a Protégé profile underlines the likelihood that Citizen Advocates will identify with their Protégé and that they will see their relationship as one to fulfill the assignment for the coordinator instead of to identify with the person, understand the person and be motivated by the relationship. With this approach there is more of a 'building the image' of the person and more work by the coordinator to support the Citizen Advocate to develop that image after they meet instead of beforehand. This is another approach to doing profiles.

Another approach might be jotting down notes and compiling a summary of conclusions rather than having a sit-down meeting. It would be a more organic approach.

Problems with the Image Approach

The idea of people's needs have been corrupted in human service structures into people needing occupational therapy, speech therapy and other different

professional human service technology. This has obscured us from thinking that people need things like love, home, a reason to get out of bed in the mornings, security. The word 'need' has been robbed of some of its meaning in any kind of a human service.

This idea that there is some kind of warfare between the intellectual approach and an artistic approach seems bogus. Truth can come through the intellect approach as well as through the artistic or emotional.

If we are to support relationships that are independent, then we had better realize that the only time we can have any real active role with the relationship is before people meet and maybe a week or two after that. This means coordinators have to do their thinking in advance so that they are ready to lay it out for the prospective Citizen Advocate as best as they can before the Protégé and Citizen Advocate met. If you wait till after, you are interfering with the relationship.

Before there is any relationship a coordinator can say a lot and s/he is not interfering with an existing relationship because it does not exist yet. If a coordinator supports a Citizen Advocate to develop an image afterwards they are meddling in, and in some ways manipulating, the relationship. Another concern is that coordinators would be taking rational thinking out of the process too much.

"Pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the heart". (Peter Millier)

We need to tell the truth and it may be hard but a needs based approach is at least telling the truth. This is not to say that there cannot be discussion about the image of someone's future which is painting a picture of that person. The question here is what the coordinators role is in doing this and when should it happen?

Individualize, individualize, individualize.

Different approaches might be more helpful for different coordinators. Different approaches might also be helpful for initiating different kinds of relationships. An example might be one where there is a lot of conversation and identification prompted when a coordinator is looking for a longer term involvement that does not start with some kind of crisis action. The Citizen Advocate will work things out more on their own through knowing the Protégé. A gradual and more conversational process of engaging the Citizen Advocate might make better sense in some circumstances. In other circumstances, all has to be put on the table because the Citizen Advocate has to hit the ground running.

Different approaches to the seven key activities and thus broadening our arsenal of approaches might help us do better work in more diverse situations. This is not just concerned with achieving a diversity of people and relationships but this also has implications for things like the resource material used, the approach we make and maybe even the tone of our voice or stance taken when we are talking to the prospective Citizen Advocate.

Q. Is getting approval of parents important in some circumstances?

They do have authority over their children's lives and Citizen Advocates have to respect that and so do Citizen Advocacy coordinators. In circumstances where people only have staff people in their lives, one approach is to ask the staff people about the person and another approach is to not. Talking everything through with someone else who has also met the person is important. This is always a good idea no matter what approach you take. It is your decision about who else you get input from.

Sometimes we do what we think is right even if the person does not agree. This is an issue for the staff and Board if it is a value-laden decision.

Q. Before we gather information about a person (the Protégé) have we already made a promise to them that we will find them a Citizen Advocate?

This is another reason why Programs should have a working list and not a waiting list. Sometimes you have to qualify this by saying that it may take a long while but the promise is made and it is kept. You cannot make that promise until you have gathered all the information about the person. The Program then approves any action that is then taken.

One way to go about this is for the coordinators to make the decision about who is recruited a Citizen Advocate, taking into consideration the Program's priorities at that given time. If there is some question around a particular individual or situation then the 'supervision and support committee' will be involved in the decision making process. If it is a big question, then it will go to the whole Board.

The 'supervision and support committee' offers the advice around the appropriate action to take. They also check what is written in the Protégé profiles. They do not decide what is in there this is the coordinator's business to do that.

The more that we are prescriptive about the Protégé's situation and about what the relationship might become the less likely people will have to figure it all out on their own. We should try to maximize giving good information and good direction to prospective Citizen Advocates. Part of our role as coordinators is consciousness raising – thus we should help prospective Citizen Advocates think about things (some of which may never had occurred to them before) i.e. that it is really devaluation that is the problem and not disability.

On the other hand, the more that we are prescriptive, the more that we potentially undermine the Citizen Advocate and the Protégé identifying with one another and figuring it out together, or if it is concerning a more impaired person, the Citizen Advocate figuring it out on their own.

C. There are trade-offs, compromises and sell offs in Citizen Advocacy.

Trade off: There are two valid principles and you try to maximize them both while acknowledging that there is some tension.

Compromise: A deal is made

Sell off: You are in power and I will do whatever you want.

A trade off is what you would strive for. It is probably a different trade off in different kinds of situations.

Can you recruit a Citizen Advocate to help you find the prospective Protégé?

(an example was given from the floor where a CA Program learned of a child in a restrictive setting through a known source of the Program. Attempts made by the Program to learn more of the child's situation were blocked by the service system. This raised more concerns. The Program was not able to do a Protégé Profile but decided to proceed and recruit a Citizen Advocate based on a set of assumptions that the Program believed to be accurate relating to the child. The role of the Citizen Advocate was to get to the child and find out whether the assumptions were accurate and then to advocate for the child accordingly)

Maybe a Crisis Advocate would be the best way to go with a scenario like this. A Crisis Advocate who could possibly become a long-term Citizen Advocate. Coordinators would say to the prospective Citizen Advocate that the best approach in this situation is not one that is used typically in Citizen Advocacy (going to see the Protégé), instead, can you be the Citizen Advocate to get in there and find out what is going on and maybe to become the long-term Citizen Advocate and maybe not.

"Honesty, honesty, honesty" – recruit the Citizen Advocate openly and honestly consistent with what you (as coordinators) have come up with.

In this particular scenario, the coordinators would be communicating to the prospective Citizen Advocate that this is not the usual way that the work is done – normally there would be a very clear question to ask and role for the Citizen Advocate to take on - consequently there is a certain amount of uncomfortableness on the Programs behalf about doing it this way. This might be communicated in the following way, "What we are asking is will you let us be involved with you in meeting this person and in trying to work out what is happening for them? Are you open to the possibility of a long-term involvement and to us talking with you about it? We are worried about doing it this way because we want you to be the person who works it out but we also like to have a lot of influence over Citizen Advocates (particularly in the beginning). So can we make this arrangement?"

The coordinators will need to leave far more decision points open to that particular Citizen Advocate in the future. People cannot make decisions based on not having the information.

C. A Citizen Advocate's role in the short term (initially based on what the coordinators know of the Protégé and their situation) changes with the changing needs of the Protégé over the long term.

"Involvement in an action-structuring way" This means there is a certain set of questions in the short term and a different set in the long term. If we are looking to support long-term relationships, we need people to have a way to get involved with each other in the short-term, that is likely to be relevant for them and then in the longer term there will be another set questions.

Q. What are the dynamics of the relationship between Citizen Advocacy and SRV?

Some concerns are that the Citizen Advocacy movement will be subsumed by the SRV movement. Sometimes personalities get involved who disagree with each other and take steps in different directions.

"Citizen Advocacy is a program that embodies in a systematic way some of the SRV principles" (Peter Millier)

SRV is a theory, not a program. It is a theory that can be informed by Citizen Advocacy. We become involved with a far wider range of people in Citizen Advocacy than we ever see in PASSING workshops. The breath of the ways in which devaluation is expressed is more widely experienced in a Citizen Advocacy program. They are different things – a program model and a service theory that inform each other but dominance by one or the other does not make sense.

Q. How effective can a Match be if you are not doing all the work of getting to know the Protégé?

(Reference was made as part of this question to the importance of spending time with the Protégé, gathering information from those that know the person well, discussing the situation in depth involving others associated with the Program to determine the Protégé profile)

The job in Citizen Advocacy is to believe that the principles are sound guidelines and to try adhere to those principles and strive to do the work in a way that maximizes the likelihood of many good matches (were there is Citizen Advocate loyalty to Protégé) being made. The observation that comes out of all the evaluations that have happened over all these years is that there are ways we can do the work that will increase the likelihood of there being many good relationships. Doing the work much more effectively makes it more likely that relationships will begin, endure and that they will be relevant and meaningful for both parties. This increases the likelihood but there are no guarantees no matter how well you do the work. "Does anyone here have all matches that they want people to know about?"

There is another side to this too. Even if we fail to apply the model or fail to use sound practices or even fail to adhere to the principles that still sometimes glorious and wonderful things do happen between people. Sometimes they do!

John O'Brien (co-author of CAPE) was remembered as saying that one of the reasons why he really liked Citizen Advocacy was that even when people used the program model very poorly, they hardly ever did much harm and sometimes great good would still come. The harm we might do is that we introduce one more relationship that ends in a person's life. This is a bad thing to do and we

should try and avoid this from happening. It is a wound, but for someone who has had this experience to the extreme, it is almost a part of life. But sometimes you make poor introductions and wonderful things happen. Then there are other matches where you felt you had the right people, you had done all the right things and still it didn't happen!

C. Sometimes great advocacy happens despite the expertise of the coordinator.

You can look at the Citizen Advocacy principles (Clarity of Staff Function) and see that they are about all the things we are not supposed to do as a coordinator. It gives people a chance in the relationship in a way so that we do not muddle it up. What we are allowed to do is more likely to be supported.

Q. If a person has undergone significant wounding in relation to relationship breakdowns, do you take the risk?

"If I were a person in devalued status, I would take the risk that maybe this one would work" (Tom Doody)

We should not be light hearted with this as we are meddling in people's lives.

Q. Is involving a board member in the development of a Protégé profile a good idea?

A board member would not have spent the same amount of time as the coordinators with the Protégé but their involvement will make for a better profile. It is a developmental opportunity for Board members to understand how the work gets done – it's also a safeguard.

C. There is angst about the choice of words and language used in Citizen Advocacy.

Some of the language that we hear about a person should be noted in the file because it is part of the perception about that person, part of their label and connected directly to what others expect of them.

We should try and talk in regular people talk. When we start using human service talk, this language can be distancing because it is diagnostic and de-personalized. It can be confusing and it can distance us (and others) from the reality. Translating all this into words that describe what impairment actually is or what is going on in somebody's life is important. The purpose of language is to communicate.

Right down the reality – what their disabilities are - because this is part of what their life experiences are. We should try to do this in language that is going to foster identification with the Protégé. The identification that we as coordinators have is going to be translated and transferred through us in recruiting the Citizen Advocate and then in helping them to identify with the Protégé.

Regular people talk is standard – in meetings and in profiles. The use of words like ‘retarded’ and ‘crazy’ are used at North Quabbin Citizen Advocacy.

Intellectual disability is a term that is far more modern and has far less meaning in some ways. There are things we have changed as ‘politically correct’ service workers that may not have changed in our community. When we talk to people in our communities about being Citizen Advocates and use ‘people-first’ language instead of language that people understand, some people can think that we are not being serious with them.

Conversation should be had that is very respectful about people, emphasizes people's gifts and positive qualities and done in a language which is the language people use to communicate. The heart of what is happening to somebody is of far more significance than word choice that is politically correct. “Tell the truth with respect”

There are some words that have a deeply negative connotation that are not used in the general culture anymore (referring to the use of words like mongoloid, imbecile, idiot, lunatic) and using them is not a good idea.

Language is just one of the image-communicators that is connected to the principle of positive interpretations. The selection of the right words is of significance but the greater significance is getting to the reality of what someone's life is like, what their wounds are, what their vulnerabilities are. We have to use language to communicate but there are other things that communicate as well.

The deeper point is “What is really going on for people?” People are vulnerable. We have reformed service systems but we have not really changed the underlying nature of what they are doing i.e. still keeping people devalued and segregated. There are less ‘retarded’ people living in institutions these days but there are far more old people. There are less people with mental health disorders living in institutions these days but there are far more people in jail than there used to be.

The word that we choose or we don't choose is far less important than the deeper dynamic. What is in our hearts (as far as our genuine regard for people) is of greater significance (even image wise) than our word selection. At the core of Citizen Advocacy is that we have to make matches. Language has to communicate and it has to be done with a respectful heart.

