

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.

Water Access in Schools

Water plays an important role in maintaining a child's overall health.

- Water helps children's muscles, joints, and tissues.
- Water keeps kids' growing bodies hydrated.
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks can reduce children's risk of dental cavities.
- When water is not available, children tend to have more sugary drinks, like sports drinks, fruit-flavored drinks with added sugar, energy drinks and soda—all of which contain empty calories and are linked to chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes or heart disease.

Drinking water can help children learn better.

- Healthy, active children learn better, perform better academically and behave better.
- Drinking water can improve children's fine motor skills and visual attention, which helps with learning activities such as reading.

All kids, no matter where they live, should have access to water at no charge in school. Water is a basic human need—something kids cannot live without.

Many children don't drink enough water; providing access in school can increase the amount of water children drink.

- A national survey published in 2015 showed that more than half of school-aged children did not drink enough water.
- Water access in schools and consumption by students can vary by gender, race and ethnicity of students, socioeconomic status of students' families and geographic region.
- Black children are less likely to drink enough water compared to white children.
- Boys are less likely to drink enough water compared to girls.

Safe and appealing water should be available in schools at no charge for students.

- All schools should help students cultivate healthy habits, like drinking water.
- Children spend many of their waking hours at school and eat and drink up to half of their daily calories at schools.



American Heart Association.

American Heart Association.

Voices
for Healthy Kids