



WHY CONDUCT MEDIA ADVOCACY?

MEDIA ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

(PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN)

One day a Good Samaritan was walking along the riverbank and heard a person crying out for help. She looked up and saw a person drowning in the rushing waters. So the Good Samaritan jumped in, swam to the victim, and pulled him to the safety of the riverbank. She continued her walk and again came upon a person drowning in the river. She again jumped in and pulled the person ashore. This happened several more times until the Good Samaritan decided to take a walk upstream and find out why so many people were falling into the river.

Why is this parable important to those who serve our Nation's older adults? Similar to the Samaritan, we want to keep our seniors from falling into the river and having to be saved. We want to help them remain in their homes and communities and stay healthy and vibrant for as long as possible. We want to help all individuals prepare for their older years. By making thoughtful choices now, all older Americans can be healthier, more productive, and more financially secure well into their later lives.

Media advocacy can focus attention on these policy goals and keep them in the forefront of the public's attention. It allows us to promote public debate and generate support for changes in community norms and policies that will help older adults. Community attitudes and practices are shaped by the conversations that take place within families and among the social networks in our everyday lives. Public policies reflect community leaders' understanding of those attitudes and practices. The news media play a powerful role in shaping those dialogues and policy decisions.

In other words, media advocacy doesn't tell people what to think; it tells them what to think about. If people are thinking about the rights of older adults to remain healthy and engaged members of the community, then you have done your job.