

Building Your Activist Network

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Estimated time:	<p>75 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [15 minutes]: Activity #1 • [60 minutes]: Assignment <p>Depending on the time you have allotted for each group meeting, we suggest you engage in the group presentation and discussion portion of the “Assignment” in your second group convening.</p>
Group or individual activity:	Group
Ages:	11-18 years old
Grades:	Grades 6-12
Online / offline elements:	This learning experience contains links to online resources to help facilitate a group-based discussion, with an assignment that requires computers or mobile devices with Internet access.
Areas:	<p>Main area: Civic and Political Engagement</p> <p>Additional areas: Content Production, Identity Exploration and Formation, Information Literacy, Positive / Respectful Behavior</p>
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Learning Goal

Participants will learn how social networks can be leveraged to promote advocacy efforts. Participants will also learn how to develop online content to spread information about a cause of interest.

Materials

- [For educator] Computer with Internet access
- Projector and projection screen
- [For participants] Computers or mobile devices with Internet access

Resources

- Website: [How to Talk to a Decision Maker](#) - by Youth in Front
- Infographic: [The Many Faces of Influence](#) - by Traackr
- Video: [Nicholas Christakis TED Talk: The Hidden Influence of Social Networks](#) - by TED
- Video: [How Do I Get Adults on My Side?](#) - by Youth in Front

Activity #1: Using Human Social Networks for Advocacy

SAY:

- There is a famous phrase that says, “It isn’t what you know. It’s who you know.” While this isn’t 100% accurate (what you know is also incredibly important!), it’s a helpful reminder of the importance of networks.
- Whether you are looking for a job or trying to play sports at the next level, having a good network can allow you to make contacts who can help you achieve your goals. Advocacy efforts are no different. The bigger and better the network of people we know, the easier it will be to create change in our communities.

- From our family members and friends to our teachers and community leaders, we already know more people than we think, especially when we include friends of friends and extend our network beyond those closest to us. These individuals can be great resources for reaching our goals.
- There are many people we might not know yet who can help us achieve our goals. Social media and the Internet more broadly present other ways of meeting the kinds of individuals that might contribute skills or resources to our advocacy efforts.

[On a projection screen, show [The Hidden Influence of Social Networks](#) or a video example aligned with your / participants' local / regional context to showcase how people are connected through social networks and how we can benefit from these connections.]

ASK:

- How might information be spread effectively through your existing social networks?
- How can we use these connections to promote advocacy efforts?

SAY:

- In the following activity, you will create a shareable online resource that describes a cause that you care about. By sharing your advocacy efforts online, you can tell others about an issue you want to help address and potentially meet new people who may be able to assist your efforts!

Assignment

SAY:

- Create a shareable online resource (e.g., using Google Docs, a social media platform, a [WordPress blog](#), a website on [Neocities](#), a slide presentation using [Scratch](#), etc.) about an issue you care about, where you:
 1. Write an introduction explaining the cause and why you believe it's important.
 2. Provide links for several websites (e.g., an online article) dedicated to the issue.

3. List three people who post / share / tweet write about this area. (Optional: Consider writing a tweet to / connecting with each of these individuals and telling them about your cause and what you would like to achieve.)

[Give participants 30 minutes to complete the activity. Depending on the time allotted, in the current or the second group convening, ask participants to share their resources with the larger group and have a 15-minute discussion highlighting effective strategies.]