

Preparing for Safe Advocacy

To do advocacy work, we must feel safe and emotionally-regulated. In the Brave Movement, we consider ourselves all advocates. Specifically, we advocate for bold and ethical change with both governments and those in the private sector. Personal safety must be an individualized plan because what makes you feel safe won't necessarily work for someone else.

Advocacy can happen in many ways but always involves action and public support for a cause. This can mean speaking up, arguing for, supporting, or defending a cause, and or advocating for other people. These actions can be big or small and can happen in-person or online.

Defining your Capacity

Before you think about advocacy, it's important to think about your capacity. Capacity simply refers to what you can hold, store, or do.

Advocacy goals are usually never short-term outcomes. Many people in this space have been doing work on this issue for decades now. Because of this, we must constantly be asking ourselves and others guiding questions about whether we have the bandwidth to engage or not. When you as an individual are asked to engage in any type of advocacy engagement, whether in-person or online, consider use the following questions:

Do I have the emotional and physical bandwidth to engage this opportunity right now?

Do I have the realistic time to complete a task?

Am I in the right headspace to take this action?

Safety

As mentioned when doing advocacy work, safety is the most important thing for ourselves and others. We'll discuss safety from various perspectives, including:

- Personal safety – in the context of physical, emotional, and psychological safety
- Safety of others
- Safety of the actual advocacy work itself
- Online safety
- Organizational safety and risks and social risks

Stop & Act

Create a Safety Crisis plan. We recommend this guide from the Army of Survivors, which you can print and fill out – [found here](#).

Examples of Advocacy

We feel that our voices together will help to make private, public, and digital spaces safer for children.

Speaking out to members of a governmental agency or institution	Holding a meeting with a lawmaker or public official educate them	Creating a public campaign to broaden awareness, education, and support
Speaking to or writing for media outlets	Speaking with one other person, a neighbor, or a small group	Writing to elected officials
Participating in a podcast	Re-sharing or creating any social media posts related to advocacy efforts	Participating in research gatherings

Stop & Reflect

Some questions to help you understand your emotional bandwidth could be:

- Do you often feel overwhelmed by minor issues?
- Are you getting irritated by things or people that usually don't bother you?
- Do you feel extremely tired or drained most days?
- Is it hard to empathize with others or their problems?
- Do you frequently feel stressed or on edge?

If any of these answers spark some additional thought and recognition, that's okay and we're proud of you for being honest with yourself. Please remember that understanding your capacity will help you show up most authentically in this work.

The Brave Movement honors that if at any point you want to remove yourself from an opportunity, you have the right to do so. ***Just because you said “yes” at an earlier time doesn’t mean your answer still stands.***

Bonus Exercise

If you do feel you have emotional bandwidth, some additional questions can be asked to help gauge your capacity for an event or engagement including:

- How does this opportunity fit with the goals of the Brave Movement or your personal advocacy goals? How does it help our goal of ending childhood sexual violence?
- Is it a paid opportunity, or what benefits will you and the movement gain from attending?
- Does it suit your preferences?
- Do you feel comfortable with what's being asked, and was it made clearly and with enough notice for you to commit?
- How will the organizers handle sensitive information or personal experiences?
- Can anonymity be guaranteed if requested?
- Will media involvement be required? If so, can clear details, requests, and trauma-informed guidelines be provided to the media in advance?

“In every project, in every campaign, in every process that we’re engaging with a survivor or lived experience expert there needs to be constant opt-out options available. We need to go above and beyond normal consent asking.”

Jessica Airey, former Brave Europe Campaign Manager
