Advocacy Letters in Social Work

Social Work is a field that is often directly involved in activism, social welfare, and promoting social change. Advocacy letters are an effective tool in bringing attention to important social issues, fighting for clients’ rights, and supporting policy solutions. When writing these letters, being clear, professional, and succinct is key. **Audiences** of advocacy letters can vary depending on the issue being addressed but generally include individuals or organizations in positions of authority, such as elected officials and government agencies.

**Getting Started**

- Be clear, thorough, and concise.
  - Use logic and facts as the basis of your letter, rather than using emotional appeals.
- Conduct thorough research on your issue before you begin your letter.
  - Research the audience of your letter to better understand their position on your topic. This will help you construct a persuasive letter.
- The beginning of your letter will include the date, individual or organization’s name, and the address of the recipient.

**What to Include**

- Open with a hook that states the purpose of your letter and your position.
  - If you are writing an elected representative about a specific piece of legislation, include the bill number that you are referencing.
- Discuss your issue using facts and research, in order to persuade your reader that your issue and position is legitimate.
  - Talk about how the issue impacts your community (and/or client[s], if relevant).
- The next section of your letter should be dedicated to the action you want your recipient to take.
  - Your recipient is someone in a position of power, so how can they make a difference? What position do you want them to take on your issue?
  - In this section, it is appropriate to engage the reader in a personal or emotional way.

**Ending Your Letter**

- Close by politely requesting a response from the recipient.
  - Provide all contact information you feel comfortable giving out, in order to encourage a response.
- Provide your written signature (if possible), typed signature, and title.
Sources: