

**APHL  
Lab Director Transitions Guide  
Online Toolkit**

**[Headline]**

**Message Development Process**

*Advocate effectively with planned messaging*

Lab directors can apply this step-by-step message development process to multiple kinds of advocacy communications, from internal staff and leadership team memos to external statements to reporters or the general public.

**I. Analyze:**

- a. Get background on the problem or need that justifies advocacy.
- b. Evaluate opposition points and other vulnerabilities.
- c. Define target audiences.
- d. Establish objective.
- e. Brainstorm: List preliminary ideas of what you want to get across to people.
- f. Weed out material that is irrelevant, redundant, too complex or toxic.

**II. Construct:**

- a. **Summarize common themes into three- or four-line advocacy messages that are simple and clear.** (Remember category or simple topic references are not messages.)
- b. **Add support, proof points and message enhancers under top line messages.** Message enhancers include examples, anecdotes, one-liners, quotations, meaningful numbers, colorful words and contemporary references.
- c. **Add a middle theme that represents case being made.**
- d. **Conduct worse questions test, identify best answers and utilize ATM,** or Answer, Transition and Message.
  - i. Determine which questions can be answered by the message itself.
  - ii. Determine which questions require specific answers and note those answers.
  - iii. Determine which questions require diffusers and note the diffusers.

- e. **Review and refine.**
- f. **Practice aloud.**