At Toxics Action Center, we envision a world where everyone can breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live in healthy, sustainable communities. Since 1987, we have organized side-by-side with over 675 communities from across New England, helping them clean up and prevent toxic pollution in their neighborhoods. When dangerous industries are polluting our air and water, when toxic pesticides are threatening our children’s health, when unresponsive bureaucracies are slow to enforce our environmental laws, we are here to help citizens protect the health and safety of their communities.

Through our group consultations, conferences and events, expert referrals, networking opportunities, and information guides, Toxics Action Center will help you wage effective campaigns to protect the health and safety of your community.

Consultation sessions available for your group:
1. Campaign Planning
2. Group Building
3. Fundraising
4. Interpreting Test Results
5. Public Hearings
6. Message & Materials
7. Media Events
8. Community Votes
Message and Materials

Goal of Consultation: Develop a message for your campaign and a plan to create needed materials.

I. Principles of Developing Your Message and Materials

II. Steps to Developing Your Message and Materials
   1. Goals
   2. Target Audience
   3. Message and Practice
   4. Materials and Sample Fact Sheet
   5. Plan

III. Evaluation

Appendices
   Sample Petition
   Sample Endorsement Letter

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I. Principles of Developing Your Message and Materials

To win any campaign, a group must have an effective message as well as materials that repeat and support that message. In developing your message, always keep in mind the 4 Cs:

1. **Compelling**
   Tell your story in a way that people can relate to and that flows in a logical way. Talk about the problem, the solution, and the action. The most compelling stories have a hero, a villain, and victim and a real sense of urgency.

2. **Concise**
   While you might be fully engaged in this campaign, others in your community have limited time and interest and cannot always listen to a ten-minute presentation with all of the details. Make sure your message is simple, jargon-free and passes this test: if you told your story to your brother-in-law, he would easily understand it and be interested. You should be able to tell your story in 15-30 seconds.

3. **Consistent**
   When advertisers sell their product, they know that people need to hear or see their message nine times before it sinks in. Saying it once is not enough. Instead, you must say the same thing so that people hear it or see it nine times. In addition, every person in the group needs to be saying the same thing.

4. **Control the Message**
   Stay within the basic framework of your concise and compelling message. Frame the debate and control the message. When asked a question on a subject that is not part of your key message, such as job loss or economic impacts, always answer the question within the framework of your main message.
II. Steps to Developing Your Message and Materials

Step 1: Goals

Campaign Goals:

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Target Decision-Maker:

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Strategy:

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Step 2: Target Audience

Determine your target audience: Who do you need to reach to influence your decision-maker? Who must be moved into action in order to attain your goals? Always keep the decision-maker(s) of your campaign in mind.

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Step 3: Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words That Help Your Cause (Words to Use)</th>
<th>Words That Hurt Your Cause (Words to Avoid)</th>
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</thead>
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Effective messages tell a good story and motivate people to get involved. The key parts of any good campaign message are: problem, solution and action.

**Problem**: Paint a picture of the threat.

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**Solution**: Paint a picture of what you want to happen / your ideal outcome.

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**Action**: Getting from the problem to the solution. Include urgency.

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Message

Condense the problem, solution and action into a compelling and concise message that you can repeat to elected officials, public and the media.

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Practice Delivering Your Message

1. Talk to Your Neighbor About the Campaign
   Be concise but also personal and conversational, sharing your experience where possible. What are you working on? What is the problem?

2. Respond to a Reporter’s Questions:
   “Won’t your solution cost taxpayers a lot of money?”
   “What can people do to get involved in your campaign?”
   “Won’t your solution cause a loss of jobs?”
   “Why should people care about this issue?”
   “Industry says this is not a problem. How do you respond?”
Slogan

Create a slogan that you can use for stickers, fact sheets, and other materials.

Visuals that Complement Your Message.

What are some visuals that go with our message? What do you want people to envision when they think about this campaign?
Step 4: Materials And Sample Fact Sheet

What materials do you need for your campaign? Check all that apply.

- One-page Fact Sheet
- Question and Answer or FAQs Sheet
- Event Flier/Poster
- Petition
- Endorsement Letter
- Window Sign
- Website, Blog, Social Networking
- Buttons/Sticker
- Other: Mailbox Sign, Door Hanger, Bumper Sticker, Lawn Sign, T-Shirts, Hats
- Other: ____________________________________________
- Other: ____________________________________________
A well-designed fact sheet doesn’t need fancy graphics and layout. A good fact sheet is defined by its concise, compelling message, judicious use of facts and clean design.

## Dump the Dump

Toxic ash from coal burning power plants is currently being dumped at the old rock quarry on Copicut Rd. Coal ash poses a threat to our health and drinking water.

### Coal Ash Is Toxic

Toxic coal ash contains hazardous pollutants, such as mercury, arsenic, and chromium. These pollutants are known to cause cancer, developmental damage in infants and children and other health problems.

### The Dump Threatens Our Water

The dump is located directly above a local drinking water aquifer. There are no plans to line the dump or monitor the contamination. In 1998 alone, 500 thousand tons of coal ash were hauled into Freetown.

### Our Safety Is At Risk

Due to a loophole in state law, the dump does not have to go through proper evaluation to determine site suitability or to require the dump operators to take all the necessary steps to protect our health or the environment.

## Our Kids Deserve Clean Drinking Water

### Stop Dumping In Freetown

Coal ash should not be dumped in unlined dirt pits above our drinking water.

### Contain Existing Dump

Landfills leak, so the existing dump must be safely contained to protect Freetown’s Health.

### Line Landfills

The waste product should be disposed of properly in lined landfills that can better protect public health and the environment.

## Board of Health: Stop Dumping Coal Ash Now

### What You Can Do:

Call the Board of Health and urge them to stop dumping in Freetown and protect our health. Call 781-345-1761 and ask to speak to the chairman of the Board of Health.

### For More information:

Call Concerned Citizens of Freetown. Ask for Meredith: 781-555-1212
Fact Sheet Template

**Slogan**

**Problem:** In 1-2 sentences, describe your problem using who, what, where, when and why. Use two or three facts to describe the problem.

- **First Fact**  
  One sentence describing the point in detail.

- **Second Fact**  
  One sentence describing the point in detail.

- **Third Fact**  
  One sentence describing the point in detail.

**Solution:** Describe the solution in two to four words. Bullet points to further clarify

- **First Demand**  
  One sentence describing the demand.

- **Second Demand**  
  One sentence describing the demand.

- **Third Demand**  
  One sentence describing the demand.

**Action:** What should the decision-maker do to bring about the solution. You can also include an action directed at the public such as making a call or writing a letter.

**For More Information:** Always include the name of your group, a phone number, an e-mail address and your website.
# Draft Fact Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Graphic</th>
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<td><strong>Problem Statement</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Points to support the problem.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Solution Statement</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Points to Support the solution.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
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</table>

*For more information:*
## Step 5: Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials to Produce</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Draft (Date Due)</th>
<th>Finalize (Date Due)</th>
<th>Copy (Who, Date Due, &amp; #)</th>
<th>Distribute (When &amp; To Whom)</th>
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III. Evaluation

Take a few minutes to evaluate your message and materials.

☐ Is your message compelling?

☐ Is your message concise? Are your materials simple and concise?

☐ Do you know the opposition’s message?

☐ Do your materials consistently repeat the same key message?

☐ Do you have resources to print your materials?

☐ Do you have a good plan for generating the materials needed to influence your target audience and ultimately influence your decision-maker?

☐ Does your group need to do additional consultation sessions for garnering media attention, interpreting test results, fundraising, group building, winning a community vote, or preparing for an upcoming hearing?
Appendices

Sample Petition

Name (Print)

Address, City, Zip

Telephone

Email Address

Will you volunteer?

Dear Freetown Board of Health:

We, the undersigned, support Concerned Citizens of Freetown in opposition to the continued dumping of toxic coal ash on Copicut Road in Freetown. Coal ash is very toxic and hazardous to our health, especially our children. The dumping is taking place above an aquifer and near a residential neighborhood. Please stop this dangerous activity and vote to end the dumping.

Dump the Coal Ash Dump
Sample Endorsement Letter

Dump the Coal Ash Dump

We, the undersigned businesses, oppose the continued dumping of toxic coal ash on Copicut Road in Freetown. Coal ash is very toxic and hazardous to our health, especially our children. The dumping is taking place above an aquifer and near a residential neighborhood.

We want to do business in a safe and healthy community.

We urge the Freetown Board of Health to:

- Stop dumping in Freetown
- Contain the Existing Dump
- Line Landfills

Business: __________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________

City, State: _________________________________________

Contact name: ______________________________________

Phone: _____________________________________________

Email: _____________________________________________

Please return this form to Meredith Small with the Concerned Citizens of Freetown, 85 Center Street, Freetown MA 02702, stopthedump@gmail.com, or call 781-555-1212.
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