

ADVOCACY 101

What is Advocacy?

Tips and tricks to becoming a
successful advocate

Overview

- Introduction
- What is advocacy?
- Are you an advocate?
- Advocacy and Lupus
- The Advocacy Plan
- Summary
- Questions

Introduction

- I'm Thomas Simpson
- Chair of the Advocacy Committee of Lupus Canada
- I am a passionate advocate for creating a more equitable society
- Favourite quote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."



What is Advocacy?

- What do you think advocacy is?
- Share in the comments section.

What is Advocacy?

- As we have seen, there are many different definitions of advocacy.
- Advocacy is not a science.
- You don't have to know influential decision-makers or high-powered executives.
- Advocacy is all about raising awareness (**influence**) to an issue and working together to make a positive **change**.

What is Advocacy?

- Example 1: A corporation is educating the public on the importance of having more women in leadership roles. Is this advocacy?
- Example 2: A grassroots organization is seeking changes to a government support program to change the eligibility criteria. Is this advocacy?
- Example 3: Jill is not happy with her lupus care from her doctor. She is asking for a second opinion. Is this advocacy?
- Which one of these examples are advocacy? Comment in the chat.

What is Advocacy?

- The answer: **they are all different types of advocacy!**
- There are several types of advocacy:
 - Third Party
 - Systemic
 - Individual or self-advocacy
- Today we will focus on **self-advocacy.**

Are you an Advocate?

- Do you consider yourself an advocate?
- Without realizing, you probably are a good advocate for yourself and you don't even realize.
- You probably advocate for yourself everyday – asking for more information, seeking accommodations, making requests to fit your needs.

Advocacy and Lupus

- The unpredictable “flares” of lupus can severely affect many aspects of daily life.
- While you might rely on family, friends, the medical system or government for help, this can be frustrating.
- Advocacy is all about **self-empowerment!**
- It is the conviction that every person has the right to be heard, the right to understand, the right to decide, the right to that “level playing field”.

Advocacy and Lupus

- Why might a person with lupus need to advocate?
- Share in the comments section.

Advocacy and Lupus

- More flexibility and support at work.
- Better help and attention from your doctor or specialist.
- Need support from government programs (EI, CPP-D, ODSP).
- The list goes on.

The Advocacy Plan

- It's always important to have a plan in place, to make sure you've got your ducks in a row.
- Remember, advocacy is about influencing others to make a positive change.
- Advocacy is not complaining.
- Advocacy is solution-oriented.

The Advocacy Plan

1. Define the problem – simply and specifically
2. List possible solutions
3. Collect information for each option
4. Consider the options and decide
5. Consider further action
6. Take action

Tip #1: Keep details of everything you do and every conversation you have. These notes will come in handy. Stay organized!

The Advocacy Plan

- **Define the problem – simply and specifically.**
- Sometimes the problem you have might be clear to you.
- Often, the problems or challenges that individuals are advocating to change are complex and multifaceted.
- By clarifying the problem, you make your argument easier and more time can be used to discuss solutions rather than explaining the problem.

Tip #2: Stay away from jargon and principles. Assume that the person who you are speaking too has never heard of your issue before.

The Advocacy Plan

- **List possible solutions.**
- It is easiest to advocate for yourself when you are armed with potential solutions.
- Collaborating and working together with governments and organizations can produce solutions, but this takes time.
- Often those advocating need changes made quickly. Coming to the table with possible solutions indicates that you are ready to work now.

Tip #3: Try to come up with multiple solutions. Most options to resolve your issue will enable a more timely resolution and collaboration, than one stubborn solution.

The Advocacy Plan

- **Collect information for each option.**
- Remember, the more you know, the better you can advocate.
- By having all the information ready at your arsenal, you can challenge institutions that may not want to help.
- Often, government may not see your problem as their problem. By having information at hand, it is easier to persuade people to your cause.

Tip #4: While your problem may be close to your chest and personal, your solutions should be built on solid research and evidence.

The Advocacy Plan

- **Consider the options and decide.**
- After listing all your solutions and gathering the relevant information, you may find that one of your solutions is not feasible.
- This is okay.
- By having several possible solutions, you can pick the best ones that will help you achieve your goal.

Tip #5: It is okay to go back to the drawing board. Bounce your ideas off a family member or friend, who doesn't know much about the issue.

The Advocacy Plan

- **Consider further action.**
- This is the tricky part.
- How do you take your issue and solutions and where do you go? Who do you talk too? What is the best approach?
- This can be stressful and cause anxiety.
- With some practice and determination, you'll be successful in no time.

Tip #6: Remember, Lupus Canada is here to help! If you are stuck and have no idea where to go next, we can provide advice and guidance.

The Advocacy Plan

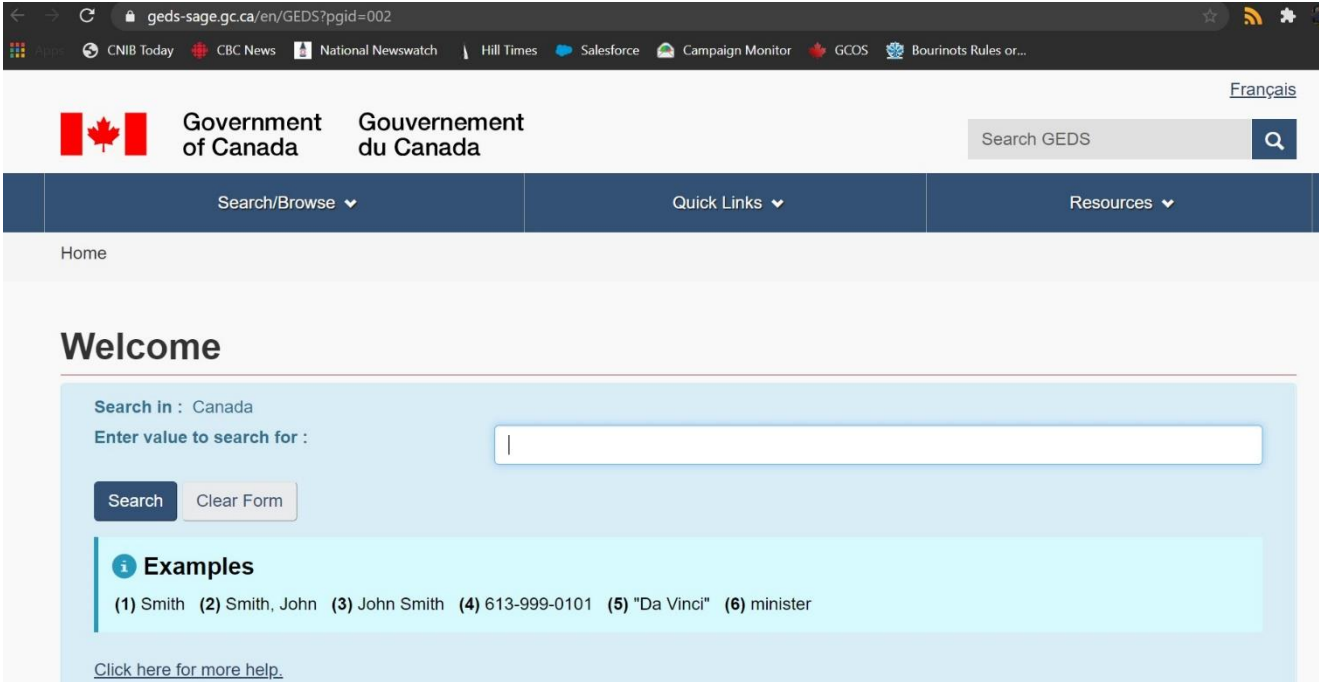
- **Consider further action.**
- Start by finding the proper audience.
- Governments are becoming much more accountable and transparent.
- If you don't know where to go, checking out a government website. Often, they will have a directory where you can find a chain of command within the government.
- Unfortunately for private corporations and services you may have to call a generic number and be bounced around before you find the appropriate authority for your problem.

The Advocacy Plan

- **Consider further action with Government.**
- Government is big, hairy and complex – regardless of what level.
- Each level of government administers a different responsibility, as defined by Canada’s Constitution.
- Check out Lupus Canada’s simple guide to Where to Go and Divisions of Power
(<https://lupuscanada.org/get-involved/advocate/where-to-go-division-of-power-in-canada/>)

The Advocacy Plan

- **Government of Canada Electronic Directory**
- **Google: GEDS**



The screenshot shows the Government of Canada Electronic Directory (GEDS) search page. The browser address bar displays `geds-sage.gc.ca/en/GEDS?pgid=002`. The page header includes the Government of Canada logo and the text "Government of Canada" and "Gouvernement du Canada". A search bar labeled "Search GEDS" is visible. Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "Search/Browse", "Quick Links", and "Resources". The main content area features a "Welcome" section with a search form. The search form includes a dropdown menu set to "Canada", a text input field with the placeholder "Enter value to search for:", and "Search" and "Clear Form" buttons. Below the search form, there is an "Examples" section with a list of search terms: (1) Smith (2) Smith, John (3) John Smith (4) 613-999-0101 (5) "Da Vinci" (6) minister. A link for "Click here for more help." is located at the bottom of the search form.

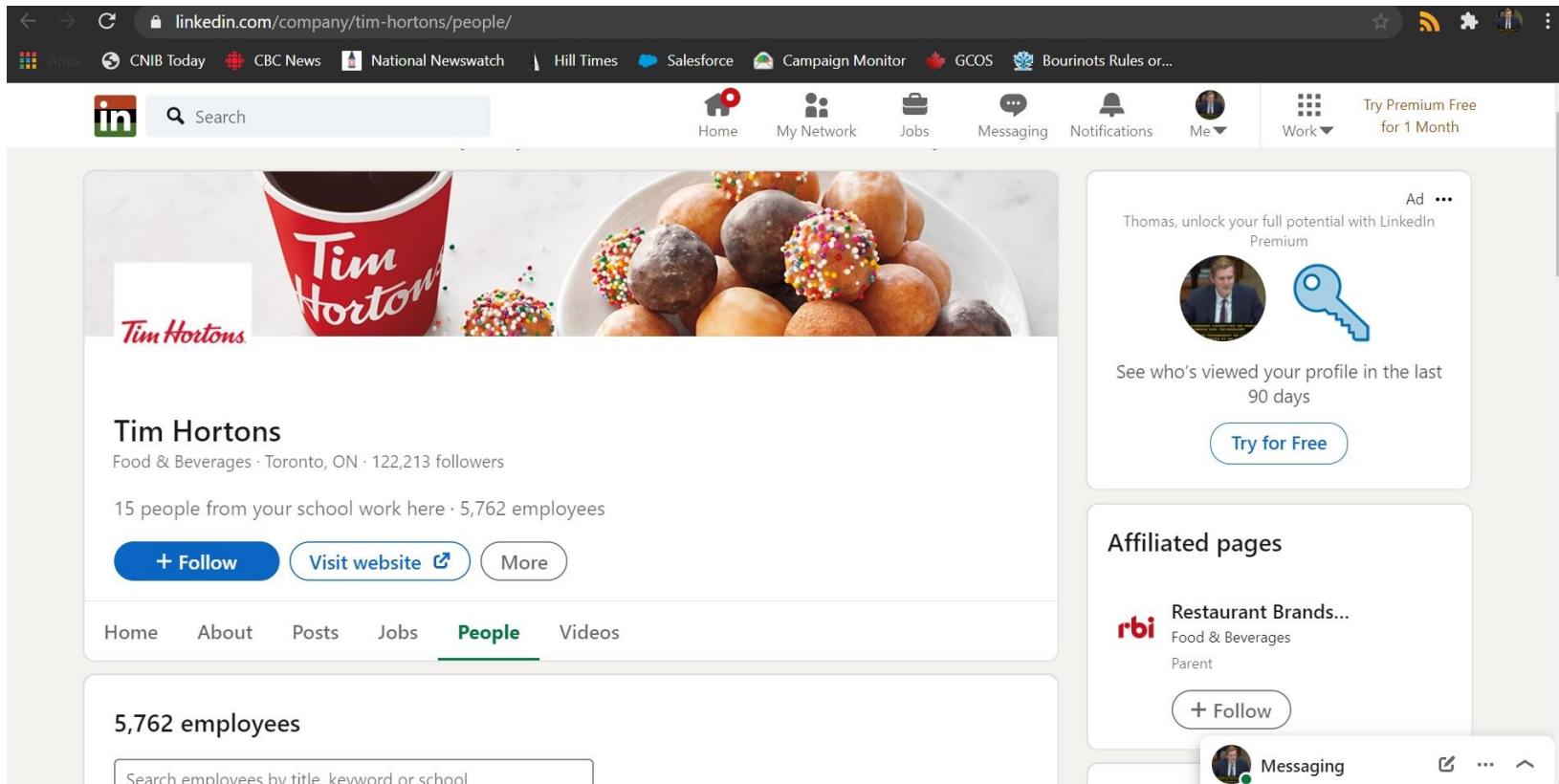
The Advocacy Plan

Provincial Government Directories

- BC Government Directory (<https://dir.gov.bc.ca/>)
- Alberta: Government Staff Directory (<https://www.alberta.ca/staff-directory.cfm>)
- Saskatchewan Government Directory (<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/directory>)
- Manitoba: Contact Government (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/contact/index.html>)
- Ontario: Employee and Organization Info Directory InfoGo (<http://www.infogo.gov.on.ca/infogo/home.html>)
- Quebec (<http://www.gouv.qc.ca/portail/quebec/pgs/commun/?lang=en>)
- New Brunswick: Contacts Directory (<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/contacts.html>)
- Nova Scotia: Employee Contact Directory Search (<https://novascotia.ca/psc/geds/>)
- Prince Edward Island: Employee Directory (<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/phone>)
- Newfoundland and Labrador: Telephone Directory (<https://telephonedirectory.gov.nl.ca/>)

The Advocacy Plan

- **LinkedIn is your best friend!**



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile page for Tim Hortons. The browser address bar displays the URL `linkedin.com/company/tim-hortons/people/`. The page header includes navigation icons for Home, My Network, Jobs, Messaging, Notifications, and Me, along with a search bar and a 'Try Premium Free for 1 Month' button. The main content area features a banner image of a Tim Hortons coffee cup and donuts. Below the banner, the company name 'Tim Hortons' is displayed, followed by the industry 'Food & Beverages', location 'Toronto, ON', and '122,213 followers'. It also indicates '15 people from your school work here' and '5,762 employees'. Navigation buttons for '+ Follow', 'Visit website', and 'More' are visible. The bottom navigation bar includes tabs for Home, About, Posts, Jobs, **People**, and Videos. A search bar for employees is located at the bottom left.

The Advocacy Plan

- **Consider further action.**
- Once you've found the right person to go to, next you'll want to determine your approach.
- Determine the following:
 - What should I say to ensure that I my problem is simple and specific and capture all the relevant information?
 - What is my best argument?
 - Should you request a meeting with the relevant authority?
 - Should you write a letter to an organization?
 - Should I involve a political figure to move this forward?

Tip #7: Keep it simple! Explain the issue. Explain why it is important. Explain what can be done.

The Advocacy Plan

- **Take action!**
- You've considered the steps you need to take, now go forth and make it so.
- It can be daunting to get to this point and go forward.
- Hit send on that email. Make that call.
- You are ready to advocate!

Summary

- Any one can advocate when they feel empowered.
- Take it step-by-step and stay organized.
- Remember, advocating without solutions is just complaining.
- Keep it simple.
- It's okay to take a break. Self-advocacy can be tiring. It's okay if you don't have a spoon to advocate today.
- Lupus Canada is here to help.

Questions?

- You have questions? I have answers!
- Reach out at info@lupuscanada.org with the subject line “**Advocacy Question**”.