

PSYCHOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY

**An Advocacy Guide
for Psychologists**





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Introduction

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), through the collaboration of its Scientific Affairs, Professional Affairs and Public Information Committees, is pleased to provide you with *Psychology and Public Policy: An Advocacy Guide for Psychologists*. This guide is designed to encourage you toward greater political participation. Taking part in the political life of our country is a right and a privilege seldom exercised by most Canadians. The actions of the various levels of government in Canada have a profound effect on the personal and professional lives of us all. It is our hope that you will use this Guide to develop and maintain contact with your elected officials as a citizen and an advocate for psychological science and practice. The guide will show you how to do this — in a way that will not require you to learn all the subtleties of public policy-making or make it your full-time job. CPA maintains a vigorous and effective science and practice advocacy program, and your direct contact with your legislature and with Parliament as a constituent is a vital component of that program. Your special training and expertise uniquely qualify you to contribute to the development of public policy and to reshaping political attitudes for the benefit of the science and practice of psychology.

We hope that you will use the information in this Guide to support our shared goals. It is important that you coordinate your grassroots activities with our office to assure maximum effectiveness and complementary legislative strategies. You may also wish to consult CPA's *Working with the Media: A Guide for Psychologists*. It is a user-friendly and rich resource of complementary information. Please contact us and work with us to enhance support for psychology.

Janel G. Gauthier, Ph.D.
President (1996-1997, 1997-1998)

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Executive Director



Why Advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of informing and assisting decision makers. Only with good information can good decisions be made. Psychology has excellent information to add to the public policy debates in Canada. It is the responsibility of each psychologist and organizations such as the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), the Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programmes (CCPPP), the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology (CRHSPP), the Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour, and Cognitive Science (CSBBCS), the Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology (CCDP), the Canadian Association of School Psychologists (CASP), and the Council of Provincial Associations of Psychologists (CPAP), and provincial/territorial psychology associations to become an active and assertive part of the advocacy enterprise.

Grassroots lobbying is essential. It makes the issues relevant to each politician in their home constituency. Parliamentarians carry the message back to the caucus. If many Members are hearing the same message, this influences the inner circle of decision makers and the Cabinet.

Powerful interest groups have long had the ear of governments. They regularly deliver their messages personally in the constituencies and in the legislatures of the nation.

Psychology's voice and influence is growing. It needs to be stronger. That is why Psychology needs your help. It is essential that we continue to improve the discipline's participation in public policy development for the benefit of society and the advancement of the discipline.

The purposes of advocacy include:

- Influencing health, science, and social policy funding and decision making concerning the science and the practice of psychology;
- Informing politicians, their staff and the bureaucracy about psychological research and practice and their relevance to government policy and Canadian society;
- Establishing liaison with other organizations of researchers and practitioners within psychology and other disciplines and professions; and
- Informing psychologists and supporting them as science and practice advocates.

Your Participation is Critical

The number of psychologists in Canada has reached a significant critical threshold. If each psychologist contacted his or her Member of Parliament and provincial legislator twice a year by letter, telephone, fax, e-mail, or in person, the impact would be dramatic. This would result in over 40,000 contacts per year for an individual commitment of between thirty minutes and three hours.

Politicians and governments need our information. They work for us. They will respond and the cumulative effect over time will be significant.

Together We Stand – Divided We Are Less Effective

The science and practice of psychology fit together like a hand in a glove. One is much diminished without the other. Advocacy means promoting the discipline: promoting science, promoting practice and using science to



promote practice and practice to promote science.

Science and practice are affected by federal, provincial and regional/municipal levels of government. Effective advocacy means combining resources to address regional, provincial and federal issues as well as using federal policy debates to affect provincial decisions and vice-versa.

The Time Is Always Now

It is always time for advocacy. Without effective dialogue, policy decisions are taken without psychology's input. This hurts society and the discipline.

Canadian research, university funding, health, employment, education, welfare, student debt, environmental policy, foreign policy and safe communities are just a few of the important issues of the day.

Getting Involved

Lobbying is often perceived as intimidating but it doesn't need to be. The purpose of *Psychology and Public Policy: An Advocacy Guide for Psychologists* is to make the process as simple and painless as possible. Remember that social science research demonstrates that the quality of the interaction and the simplicity of the message are critical factors.

Ensure psychology is on the political agenda in your riding, and ultimately on the national stage, by taking an active role in election and nomination campaigns. During election campaigns, you can raise psychology related issues at public debates, work for a candidate who shares your views or run for office and give psychology a strong voice.

Advocacy is not an all or nothing experience. As is true of most relationships, it benefits from the number, frequency, quality and longevity of the contacts.

You will find this manual to be self-explanatory. More information is available from the CPA Head Office and from each provincial psychological association.



CPA Advocacy on Behalf of Psychology

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has as its mandate «*Advancing Psychology for All*». In order to fulfill this mandate, CPA undertakes a wide range of activities which include the dissemination of psychological knowledge, lobbying in support of research, teaching and practice, accreditation, the annual convention and ongoing interaction with other psychological and nonpsychological organizations.

CPA advocates on behalf of psychological science and practice at the federal level because programmes developed by the Government of Canada affect every CPA member and every Canadian in every province and territory.

For example, the federal government plays a pivotal role in determining the type, direction and level of funding for psychological research in Canada. Programmes such as the Canadian Health and Social Transfer, the granting councils, the National Centres of Excellence and the research foundations (e.g., Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation) are essential components of the Canadian scientific enterprise.

Although health care is a provincial responsibility, the contribution of the federal government is a significant factor. The Canada Health Act and the federal role in health influences how health care services will be delivered, the relative balance between private and public funding, the range of services psychologists can offer and service delivery for specific groups such as refugees, First Nations, the military, the criminal justice system and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

CPA is increasingly consulted by government to offer advice in sensitive policy areas that affect the ways in which psychologists do their work. For example, CPA has input into such diverse areas as tax policy (i.e., Registered Retirement Savings Plan legislation and psychologists as assessors of disability for the Disability Tax Credit), criminal justice matters (assessment and treatment), animal research, Department of Health research, health policy, and government information systems (Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information), etc.

CPA meets regularly with members of parliament and their staff, Cabinet Ministers and government officials. Frequent visits to special and standing committees of the House of Commons provide opportunities to represent psychology.

CPA has a long history of being in the centre of the lobbying activity. To enhance effectiveness, CPA works to establish and maintain advocacy relationships and networks. On practice issues, the Health Action Lobby has proven to be a most effective coalition focused on the federal role and federal funding of health and health care. For science, the Canadian Consortium for Research has been responsible for positively influencing several important federal policy initiatives. CPA is a member of the steering committees of each of these groups. CPA is also the largest member association of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada. The Association is also a founding member of the Network for the Advancement Health Services Research.

The federal government has a history of supporting health, universities, and science and technology but the behavioural and social sciences have to struggle for an appropriate share of the resources. The competition for federal funds is fierce and the CPA science and practice advocacy programme makes the ongoing case for psychology to government (e.g., Correctional Service Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Industry Canada, National Health Research and Development Programme, Medical Research Council,



Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council).

On behalf of science and practice, CPA:

- Actively advocates on behalf of the science and practice of psychology for increased federal support of psychological research and health services, and develops opportunities to present testimony before House of Commons and Senate Standing and Legislative Committees.
- Sponsors visits and meetings with key government decision makers to give them a clearer idea of what psychological research and practice are, how they are conducted, and why they are important. Lobbying activities to familiarize Parliament Hill with psychology have included a focus on learning and literacy, safe communities, tobacco, abuse of children and rehabilitation.
- Sponsors brief tutorials for government staff on policy-relevant psychological research and practice issues. Parliament Hill briefings have highlighted research developments and practice in the areas of health and behaviour, aging, substance abuse, cognition and brain function.
- Increases the number of psychologists involved in federal science and programme policy development by making CPA members available to Parliament Hill to testify before parliamentary committees and to meet with legislators.
- Develops public policy agendas by working closely with government research and programme agencies.
- Nominates eminent psychologists for appointments to research councils and national science and programme advisory committees.
- Brings top leaders of federal agencies and Parliament together with CPA science and practice leaders to strengthen our partnerships and tackle critical issues of concern to psychologists and government.



How Parliament Works

Understanding the Legislative Process¹

To be an important part of the advocacy effort on behalf of psychology does not require an extensive knowledge of the parliamentary process. However, the following is provided as background information. It is a description of the federal system. The provincial legislatures are quite similar.

The Parliament of Canada consists of the Queen, represented by the Governor General, the appointed Senate, and the elected House of Commons.

The major focus of Parliament is the development, passage and execution of pieces of legislation. Lobbying is effective at any of these stages.

Laws begin as policy debates and take official form as **bills** to be debated and voted on by the politicians. Once law, Governments then execute the laws through government departments, regulations, colleges, mandated services (police), etc.

The House of Commons is the major law-making body. Bills from the House of Commons are numbered from C-1 to C-XXX. Any Member of Parliament (MP) can introduce a bill.

Politicians need information in order to make good decisions. They are influenced by information that comes from committees, constituents, experts, political staff, polls, the political party platforms and the bureaucracy. Psychologists fill many of these roles and each of us is a constituent.

Stages of a Bill

Most bills are first considered by the House of Commons and normally pass through the following steps:

Introduction. A written notice of introduction, by motion, puts a bill on the Parliamentary agenda.

First Reading. The bill is read for the first time without debate and printed. First reading of a bill introduces the content of a bill to the Members of Parliament.

Second Reading. This is the most important stage in the passage of a bill for Parliamentarians. For lobbyists, this is not the case as other stages provide more opportunity for meaningful input. The principle and the object of the bill are debated and either accepted or rejected. The clauses of the bill are not discussed in detail at this stage.

Committee Stage. Accepted bills are referred to a committee of Parliamentarians for review. The text is studied clause by clause. The committee may receive testimony from outside witnesses on technical matters and, generally, may make amendments to any part of a bill before ordering that the bill be reported to the House of Commons.

Report Stage. The House reviews bills by considering amendments. The report stage is primarily an opportunity for Members who did not sit on the committee to have their proposed amendments considered before approval by the



House. Additional amendments to the bill may be moved, debated and voted on.

Third Reading. This is the last stage in the House of Commons. The bill is debated a final time and voted on. Only friendly amendments are considered. The bill may be referred back to committee for further amendment or reconsideration.

Message. After a bill is passed by the House of Commons, a message is sent to the Senate requesting that the bill be passed. Senate procedure is similar to that of the House of Commons but the Senate can only delay passage or suggest changes to the House. There is often an opportunity for input at this stage.

Royal Assent. The bill must be signed by the Governor General or a deputy to become law. The Royal Assent is given to a bill when it has been passed in exactly the same form by the two Houses.

Provincial legislatures operate similarly. Although there are differences such as the absence of a Senate, the process is generally the same.

Parliamentary Committees That Affect Psychological Research, Educations, and Practice

The Standing and Legislative Committees of interest to psychology include the Standing Committee on Health; the Standing Committee on Finance; the Standing Committee on Industry; the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights; the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade; and the Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access. These Committees make recommendations to Parliament and to the Government (the party that is in power) about how to share funds amongst diverse programmes (health, education, social welfare, criminal justice, research, etc.).

To find out about provincial standing committees, call your provincial elected official.

Activities and Responsibilities of Parliamentarians

Here is how one former MP and Minister of Justice and former member of the Federal Court of Appeal, the late Mark MacGuigan, as a freshman backbencher described his responsibilities (extracted from *Politics in Canada: Culture, Institutions, Behaviour and Public Policy* (3rd ed.) (1995) by Robert J. Jackson and Doreen Jackson, pp. 350-353):

"... at least three half-days each week in the House to ensure that a quorum was always maintained; attendance at major debates and divisions; attendance at Question Period "for both excitement and information"; membership in two standing committees and, later, the Chairship of the Special Committee on Statutory Instruments; caucus meetings for three hours each Wednesday morning and caucus committee meetings in lunch and dinner breaks; twice-weekly French classes, "being determined to become bilingual"; a one thousand mile round trip each weekend to constituency and home in Windsor; approximately 200 public functions and 200 visits to the homes of constituents in each year; and a large volume of constituency business (some 5500 cases a year) which arrived by mail and by telephone."

Former MP Sean O'Sullivan, the youngest Canadian ever elected to the House of Commons, discusses his activities as follows (extracted from *Exercising Power, Government of Canada: The Backbencher - A Case Study* (1966) by Donald A. Hurst, pp. 70-71):

"... my day can be a full one, starting in the morning with committee meetings that last for ninety minutes. Once a week my party members gather together as a caucus. The House meets at two o'clock in the afternoon, except on Friday when we meet at eleven o'clock. Then, there are more committee meetings in the afternoon and at night."



"My foremost responsibility as a Member of Parliament is to the people who elected me. Although I do have responsibilities to my party and to the maintenance of Parliament, my foremost responsibility is to be a spokesman for my constituents. They're the people who sent me to Ottawa and I have to get back to my riding as often as I can to hear their problems and views, even if I don't agree with them."

"I am also called on often to make speeches just because I am a Member of Parliament. This includes addresses at such places as school assemblies or church gatherings. People do want to see their Member of Parliament. They don't want just to read about me or any other Member; they want to be able to talk with us."

"Most of all I welcome the chance to exchange views with young people because after all, the policies made by the government today will help to determine the type of country in which they will be living and raising their families."

Recent changes have permitted MPs to work more effectively. Standing Committees allow them to have more say in policy formulation. Some say MPs could take more advantage of the opportunities to introduce legislation and initiate criticism of the government. There is more and more pressure for MPs to act as intermediaries and their role is more rewarding than policy-making with its commitment to pursue a long-term goal.

It is important to remember that opposition critics and each party's caucus play very important roles in Parliament. Keep them informed. Request that your MP supply his or her party with psychology's position on issues. Remember, the caucus is an important decision making body and today's opposition party might be tomorrow's Government.

¹ This section used as its main source *Précis on Procedure* (5th ed.) published by the Table Research Branch of the House of Commons in 1996. The document can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>.



How to Communicate Effectively with Members of Parliament

Identifying and Locating Your Member of Parliament

The first step in effective communication with the House of Commons is determining the right person to contact. It is generally most effective to contact your own Member of Parliament - the woman or man who represents your electoral riding. As your elected official, this is the person who represents you and who must be sensitive to your views. Members of Parliament (MPs) maintain both an Ottawa office and a local office located back home. You can identify and locate your MP by looking in the blue pages of your telephone book.

There may be occasions, however, when it will be appropriate and helpful to contact other MPs. For example, when the Chair of a Parliamentary Committee wishes to monitor broad public opinion at a critical point in the legislative process, or when you have special expertise in a specific area in which a Parliamentary Committee is developing policy, your communication with them can be important. Contact CPA if you are interested in developing communications beyond your own MP.

Once you know whom to contact, you can obtain his or her Ottawa office telephone number, or be connected with the Ottawa office directly, by calling the Canadian Government Public Information Office at (613) 992-4793. The Ottawa offices can give you addresses and telephone numbers for local riding offices, government departments, Ministers of the Crown, etc. You also can find this information on the Internet at: <http://www.canada.gc.ca>.

Understanding the Role of House of Commons Staff

The bureaucracy carries on the business of government. Government officials remain as political parties are voted in and out of office. Bureaucrats are very influential in the development and implementation of laws and public policy. Effective relations with the civil service are very important.

Whether calling, writing, or visiting a House of Commons office, it is important to understand the role of your MP's staff members. Most MP's offices will have an assistant, handling your area of interest. Each Parliamentarian relies heavily on his or her staff to be knowledgeable and informed on the issues. Because the information and advice they provide is often critical in shaping the MP's opinion on an issue, any time spent discussing your views with them will be a good investment.

In addition to the staff members in the MP's personal office, the committees of Parliament also have professional staff members. These staff members are often more focused in their responsibilities. While a personal staff member usually has multiple subject areas of responsibility (e.g., covering science, defence, budget, environmental, and health issues), a committee staff member is often able to specialize in a small number of areas and to acquire expertise in them. These staff members work for the MP who chairs the committee or the vice-chair.

Staff members in MPs' personal riding offices serve still a different function. These staff members take care of the lawmaker's appointments and appearances in the riding. They also serve as caseworkers who help to resolve the problems of the riding's citizens as they relate to federal programs. For example, a riding office member can help determine why a Canadian Pension Plan recipient's cheque is late. Usually members of the riding office staff are not involved in issues of public policy-making. They are, however,



trusted sources of information and have frequent contact with the politician.

Write a Letter

House of Commons offices in Ottawa receive hundreds of letters from constituents each day. These guidelines will improve the effectiveness of your letter (*for models of letters, please refer to Appendix A*).

When addressing correspondence, this is the proper style:

Either	or
<p>Ms Jane Smith, MP House of Commons Parliament Buildings Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6</p> <p>Dear Member of Parliament:</p>	<p>The Honorable John Jones, PC, MP Minister of _____ House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6</p> <p>Dear Minister:</p>

Be direct. State the subject of your letter clearly, keep it brief and address only one issue in each letter.

Be accurate. Beware of false or misleading information. Always double-check if you are not sure.

Be informative. State your own views, support them with your expert knowledge, and cite the bill number (Bill C-###) of relevant legislation, if appropriate. Your personally written letter is more highly regarded than pre-printed materials or postcards.

Be courteous. NEVER THREATEN your MP. Keep in mind that there may be other issues where psychology will lobby this MP. A cordial relationship keeps the door open.

Be constructive. Rely on the facts and avoid emotional arguments, threats of political influence, or demands.

Personalize your message. Cite examples from your own experience to support your position. Give personal examples of how the issue will impact your community.

Be political. Explain the hometown relevance of this issue. Use your institution’s stationery, if authorized.

Be discriminating. Write only on the issues that are very important to you and avoid the risk of diluting your effectiveness.

Be inquiring. Ask for the MP’s view on the subject and how she or he intends to vote on relevant legislation. Expect a reply, even if it’s only a form letter.

Be available. Offer additional information if needed and make sure your MP knows how to reach you.

Be appreciative. Remember to say "thanks" when it is deserved. Follow the issue after you write and send a letter of thanks if your MP votes your way.



Remember, no postage is required to mail a letter to your MP in Canada. Furthermore, since a fax gets more attention, faster, send it also by fax.

Follow-up Your Letter

MPs' offices receive hundreds of pieces of mail every day, which means it can take a week or more to research properly the issue and to answer your letter. If you don't hear from them after three or four weeks, however, follow up with a phone call, or with another letter which references the first one.

- If the reply you receive asks specific questions about the issue, make sure you respond with the answers. If you need help, call the CPA Head Office (1-888-472-0657).
- If your representative votes or takes a public stand that reflects your position, send a thank-you. It's just as important to let your representatives know you support a position as it is to let them know you oppose one.
- Make sure you send copies of all your correspondence with elected officials to the address of the CPA Head Office. This allows us to track grassroots communications and determine where we might need to get more people involved.

The CPA Head Office may specifically request that you write follow-up letters to your representatives to let them know you are monitoring their positions.

Write a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Newspaper

The guidelines for writing an effective letter to the editor of a local newspaper are the same as those for effective letter writing to your MP. In fact, you can send the editor a copy of your letter to your MP.

Ask for Help

Ask friends, colleagues and relevant organizations to contact the MP as well.

Make a Telephone Call

When time is short or an issue is very pressing, you may be asked or you may want to communicate with an elected official by telephone.

The guidelines for making an effective telephone call to an MP's office are similar to those for effective letter writing, with a few additions. Remember, you can reach your MP's Ottawa office by dialling the Canadian Government Public Information Office at (613) 992-4793, giving the name of your MP, and asking to be connected with her or his office.

When preparing for a telephone call, start at the beginning, just like you would in a letter, remembering that the person you talk to may have just gotten off the telephone with another constituent who had a very different concern. Be prepared with facts and information at your fingertips and a clear idea of what you want your telephone call to achieve.

Before placing a call, make sure:

- You have a clear idea of the message you want to communicate. Write the main points down and, if



needed, refer to them when you make your call. If you know the bill numbers, reference them in your call.

- Your facts and arguments are organized in a clear, coherent manner. You will have only a few minutes to make them.
- You can state exactly what action you want taken on the issue.

You can ask to speak to your MP, but don't be disappointed if he or she is not available. Next ask to speak with the assistant who handles the subject of your interest. Remember, this is often just as effective. If neither the MP nor the relevant staff members are available, you can ask for a return call or leave a brief message, such as, "My name is Dr. Jane Jones and I am a professor of psychology at the University of Hometown. I am calling to ask for the MP's support on...". Be prepared to give your address or telephone number in case the MP wants to respond.

Be persistent but courteous. You may have to call back several times before you get through to either the staff person or the MP. Don't be discouraged – no one is trying to avoid you. Just remember MPs get many calls each day – keep trying.

Arrange One-on-One Meetings

The single most effective way to communicate your message to an elected official is through a face-to-face meeting, but it may be with an assistant, not the MP. Most assistants are experts in their areas, and MPs depend heavily on their expertise to help keep them informed. The assistant can give you an idea of where the MP stands on the issue, let you know what additional information might be needed and tell you what action the MP might be able to take.

The rule for one-on-one meetings with an assistant or the MP is to plan ahead: know your facts, know your MP, and know the arguments the opposition will be using against your position.

Scheduling a Meeting

Such a meeting can take place in the MP's Ottawa office or in the MP's riding office. If you know your MP is going to be home for a Parliamentary recess, take advantage of this time by planning a meeting in the riding. It is usually much easier to schedule a personal appointment with an MP (even one who is a Cabinet Minister) in her or his constituency office than in their Ottawa office. Virtually all MPs have regular constituency office appointment hours. Otherwise, you may call the CPA Head Office staff who are always willing to work with you to set up such a meeting when you are in Ottawa.

Contact your MP's Appointment Secretary, state your affiliations and the subject you wish to discuss, and ask for 15 to 20 minutes of your MP's time. If it is clear that the MP is unable to meet with you, then a very good substitute is a meeting with the assistant in charge of the issue area you are interested in discussing. **DO NOT FEEL DISCOURAGED IF YOU CANNOT MEET WITH YOUR MP.** In fact, public officials have demanding schedules and depend on their assistants to research issues and report on constituent concerns. Call to confirm your meeting a few days before it is scheduled to occur.

Once the Meeting is Scheduled

Do your homework. Learn as much as you can about the MP's record as it relates to your issue. Be prepared to talk *in detail* and directly about the issue you wish to discuss. Know the opposing arguments as well as those in favour of your view. Have your information ready in a digestible, concise form, just as you



would when writing a letter or making a telephone call. Have personal stories ready - case studies that illustrate the human side of what you're talking about. Be able to answer specific questions on how the issue affects you, your community, the province or the country in general.

Contact the CPA Head Office to help you research the issue. They can help you find out about the MP's record on the issue - public statements, legislation, etc. It's much better to know if the legislator doesn't support your position *before* you go in than to find out during the meeting. In addition, the CPA Head Office can help you find out how the issue has played in the press - articles, op-eds, editorial statements on local television, etc. If the press coverage has been favourable to your point of view, get copies to distribute during your meeting. CPA also works with other organizations (e.g., CCDP, CPAP, CRHSPP, CSBBCS) to help acquire material relevant to the expertise of these organizations.

Supply fact sheets. It's important when you go that you leave something (e.g., a one-page synopsis describing the issue in bullet form) with the assistant or the MP. The CPA Head Office can help you with fact sheets, studies or position papers that help explain the issue succinctly.

During the Meeting

Be on time. But don't be surprised if they are not. Parliamentary schedules are hectic and being a visitor to Parliament Hill often requires patience and flexibility.

Establish ties. Introduce yourself, convey information about your affiliations, and exchange pleasantries briefly. Make a point of introducing yourself to and learning the names of key staff with whom you may also meet, including the MP's secretary or riding office manager. They may be especially helpful in the future.

Don't waste time. Get right to the issue you wish to discuss. Don't get bogged down in small talk. You will have a precious few minutes with the MP, and you have a purpose for the meeting.

Be inquiring. Ask your MP if he or she is familiar with your issue. If the answer is negative, take the opportunity to inform him or her. If the answer is positive, ask him or her to state his or her position. If he or she is unable to do so, then say you will check back later.

Be assertive. Know what you want in advance and ask for it.

Be respectful. Be tolerant of differing views and keep the dialogue open. State your points clearly and firmly, but *don't argue*. Never speak badly of other legislators or organizations. Always be polite but don't let politeness make you timid.

Be responsive. Try to answer questions. When you can't, offer to get back to your MP with the information. It is much more important for you to provide accurate information than to give an answer which may be incorrect. If you aren't sure of the answer to a question, give the CPA Head Office a call when you get home. Ask us for help in getting the necessary information and don't forget to send it on to the MP.

Be appreciative. Always end the meeting on a courteous note. Thank him or her for the time spent with you and leave promptly. Follow up with a thank-you letter, capitalizing on the opportunity to restate your points.

Invite Your MP to Visit



Would it surprise you to know that your MP might be interested in visiting your research or practice site? Sometimes the most convincing case is the one seen first hand. If your research or programme is federally funded, then a visit from your MP is a natural. Such visits keep lawmakers in touch with the interests and needs of their constituents, inform them about less familiar subject areas, and provide you with an opportunity to strengthen your relationship with the MP. Especially attractive to an MP is the opportunity to meet a great number of concerned and involved constituents during a "Riding Work Period" when the House of Commons stands in recess. Of course, the initiative to arrange such a visit will have to come from you.

Appearances or site visits by public officials are exciting but they require planning. Here are a few tips:

- Arrange and coordinate the event with the staff scheduler from the MP's office. Send a written request with all of the appropriate details, such as time, place, duration of the visit, number of attendees and other guests, activities planned, etc. If you are inviting your Member of Parliament to a CPA sponsored event, you should coordinate the invitation with the CPA Head Office. We can also provide valuable advice if you are inviting them to your research or practice site.
- You may wish to have members of the local press attend the visit. Contact your institution's public relations office or press office for professional help. Be sure your lawmaker's press secretary is informed before members of the press are invited. It is important to target the right reporters to invite to the event. In this case, it could be a political reporter who covers the lawmaker or it could be a science or health reporter, or all three. Your public relations or press office can invite them by sending a "media advisory" (a one-page announcement with basic information) or by sending a press release, following up with a telephone call two days before the event. You might consider having your institution's photographer on hand and using a photograph of your MP in her or his newsletter. The CPA Head office can help with questions you might have about inviting the press. The CPA's *Working with the Media : A Guide for Psychologists* is a valuable resource.
- Notify anyone who will be affected by the visit, such as colleagues in your department and the university administration, well in advance, and again the day before the event.
- Provide the MP's office with precise and detailed directions to the event and designate a contact person who will be available as a liaison in advance of the event.
- Meet the MP before the event, allow time for introductions, and provide a briefing on the itinerary and a time schedule for the event. Discuss important factors surrounding the visit, for example, how many scientists or practitioners are in the facility, or the amount and source of federal funds received.
- Introduce your guest. Give a brief explanation of why he or she is visiting, and announce whether or not there will be a question and answer session.
- Follow up on any commitments made to the MP at the event. Coordinate with the MP's press secretary on the details of a press release, if called for.
- Don't forget to send a thank you note, possibly containing photographs taken during the event, as well as press clippings or news coverage generated by the event. Send information and photos to the CPA Head Office for inclusion in *Psynopsis*.

Build Relationships With Elected Officials

Good politics depend on ongoing ties with both your MP and their staff.

One of the most effective ways to keep in touch is to get to know staff in your MP's personal riding office. Riding offices are always looking for activities for the MP while he or she is in the Riding - they generally welcome suggestions for events, especially if there is some press potential. For example, say psychologists in your province want to promote the *pro-bono* services psychologists are donating to disaster relief



services. Contact the local office of your MP, tell them what you are doing, and invite the MP to be a part of the press conference you are holding to announce it. The riding director can then call the Ottawa office to suggest your press conference might be a good event for the MP to attend.

There are a wide variety of ways to interact with your elected officials:

- arrange a lunch, dinner meeting or reception in honour of a particular MP;
- invite representatives to speak at psychological association conferences or meetings;
- recognize your representative's activities on behalf of psychology in your psychology association newsletter;
- award a particularly responsive legislator with a certificate or plaque;
- identify certain press venues that are appropriate vehicles for interacting with your legislators.

Form Coalitions

Coalitions are an integral part of successful grassroots campaigns. They help us extend our reach and broaden our message. Strong coalitions are made up of individuals or groups with similar interests. As a general rule, those groups with which psychologists regularly do business are the natural place to look for potential coalition partners. Health care groups, civic organizations, issue-oriented groups like associations of retired persons or alliances for the mentally ill, children's groups, community mental health centres, community action groups, consumer interest groups, educators, business and industry organizations - all these are natural allies for many of psychology's issues.

If you have any contacts within these groups that you think would be open to coalition building, contact the CPA Head Office. You will receive some help to determine whether or not that organization is an appropriate partner given the CPA overall legislative agenda. Once that has been determined, you can work on building the relationship.



Appendix A. Model Letters

Letter from a Practitioner to an Editor

The Psychological Factor

A March 21 article on health care and cost containment failed to point out that one of the major factors that has increased the cost of health care over the years has been the lack of available publicly funded psychological services. Such services could significantly decrease the overall cost of medical care if readily available.

Several studies have shown that up to 50 percent of all physician visits are made by individuals who have some type of psychological problem or whose physical problem has a substantial psychological component.

If practitioners had publicly funded comprehensive psychological services to which to refer the patient, this could significantly decrease the number of visits to the family physician, decrease the cost of overall health care, and reduce human suffering.

A comprehensive study reported in the *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* showed that overall medical costs were reduced by 10 percent to 33 percent when psychological treatments were provided.

The stigma that was so long associated with psychological care has receded. Availability of publicly funded psychological services becomes of prime importance under any type of comprehensive health plan.

Name M. Surname
Registered Psychologist
Hometown

Letter from a University Professor to an Editor

Universities and Society

As a professor of Psychology at Hometown University, I was very interested in your recent article concerning funding for science which appeared in your Saturday, January 6 edition. In that article, the author, staff reporter Dirty Rotten Guy, argued that the government spends too much money on universities and that a better use of the money would be for professors to spend more time teaching and less time "on other things".

Universities are mandated to do a number of things. One of their primary duties is to teach inquisitive undergraduate minds and to nurture budding scholars and scientists. Canadian universities do this very well when compared to the rest of the world. Students learn best about specific subjects when they have the opportunity to learn from those who actually do the research, who are up to date and who can help them participate. We all learn best by doing.

Research helps Canada stay modern and strong in comparison to its global partners. Research helps us make Canadian society better. My research, for example, has helped children with learning difficulties succeed in school. We have developed a method for assessing reading and speaking problems by examining how the brain works. Other colleagues have taken this research and developed ways of helping parents, teachers and psychologists improve children's learning. Many of my students have directly helped in this important work.

There are many examples at Hometown University of the importance of research to students and to society. We need to support these



efforts to ensure we have excellent graduates, a better economy and a strong society.

Name M. Surname

Professor
Hometown

Letter from a Graduate Student to a Member of Parliament

Name M. Surname, M.A.
Psychology Department
Hometown University
Hometown, Province, Postal Code

Today's Date
Mr. Name Surname, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear Member of Parliament:

As a university graduate student in Hometown University's Department of Psychology, I am writing to urge your support for the document "*Toward an Innovative Society*" published jointly by the Canadian Consortium for Research, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada, and the Canadian Federation of Students. This document addresses some of the crucial financial issues facing students in Canada today.

Student undergraduate debt is rising. Many students graduate with loans totalling twenty to thirty thousand dollars. This scares away many students from impoverished backgrounds, makes holding at least one part-time job a must and puts an unfair burden on poorer students when they graduate. Financially advantaged students do not have these concerns.

Graduate studies are becoming harder to attain as well. Students with high debt loads are less inclined to go on to graduate school. Reduced funding for the federal granting councils means less money for departments such as mine to support students.

This issue greatly concerns the young people of Canada today. We students see a bleaker future due to these recent federal government initiatives to reduce funding to the provinces for education. If continued, there will be one Canada for the rich and one Canada for the poor. The gap between the financially advantaged and the financially disadvantaged will widen.

I urge you to seriously consider the proposals on student support and research set forth in the document entitled "*Towards an Innovative Society*" which I have enclosed. I hope you will champion these issues with your colleagues in Caucus and in your other activities as a Parliamentarian. I look forward to hearing your comments.

Sincerely,

Name M. Surname, M.A.
Psychology Graduate Student

Cc : Canadian Psychological Association
Canadian Federation of Students
Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programs
Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology



Letter from a University Professor to a Member of Parliament

Name M. Surname, Ph.D.
Psychology Department
Hometown University
Hometown, Province, Postal Code

Today's Date

The Honourable Name M. Surname, PC, MP
Minister of _____
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Dear Minister:

I am a research psychologist and a constituent, and I am writing to urge you to support the document "*Towards an Innovative Society*" published by the Canadian Consortium for Research. This document sets forward a realistic plan to strengthen Canadian research in all areas including psychology.

I do research here at Hometown University designed to learn more about memory. This research helps us better understand human memory and can be applied to help health care workers diagnose and treat head injuries, educators to assist children with learning difficulties and computer engineers to develop the next generation of artificial intelligence.

The research infrastructure in Canada is deteriorating and investment in research and development is falling further behind our industrialized partners due to a lack of federal funding. This will only hurt Canada's long-term economic competitiveness.

I believe, as do my colleagues in the Canadian Psychological Association and the Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology, that the document authored by the Canadian Consortium for Research, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada, and the Canadian Federation of Students offers realistic solutions that are fiscally responsible.

I urge you to become an advocate for the proposals contained in the document "*Towards an Innovative Society*" which will help support Canada's research enterprise. A copy from the Canadian Psychological Association will be arriving at your office in the very near future. Please speak positively about the issues in Caucus and as you execute your parliamentary duties. I look forward to hearing your comments on this issue and appreciate any support you can give our nation's research.

Sincerely,

Name M. Surname, Ph.D.
Professor

Cc: Canadian Psychological Association
Canadian Consortium for Research
Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour and Cognitive Sciences
Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology

Letter from a Practitioner to a Member of Parliament

Name M. Surname, Ph.D.
Psychology Department
Hometown Children's Hospital



Hometown, Province, Postal Code

Today's Date

Ms. Name M. Surname, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear Member of Parliament:

As a psychologist and a constituent, I am writing to urge you to support the Health Action Lobby's (HEAL) Report of November 1998 to the Standing Committee on Finance. The Canadian health care system is under tremendous stress. Canadians value their health care system more than any other social or government program and they do not want to see it seriously damaged.

I work part-time for the Department of Psychology at Hometown Hospital and I also have a private practice in Besidetown. I see patients on a daily basis who have to wait long periods of time to see psychologists and other health care providers and who are worried about their health and the health system. This stress puts undue worry on the backs of the most vulnerable, the very ill, the young, the aged, and the poor.

Canada has a health system that is world class. We are in danger of losing it unless action is taken quickly. I believe as do my colleagues at the Canadian Psychological Association, the Council of Provincial Associations of Psychologists and the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, that the proposals put forward by the Health Action Lobby are both feasible and responsible.

I would like to congratulate your Government on your decision during the last federal election to eliminate cuts to the health care system. This was an encouraging and important first step.

I urge you to support the HEAL report of November 1998 to the Standing Committee on Finance which is being forwarded to you under separate cover by the Canadian Psychological Association. I look forward to hearing your comments on this issue and greatly appreciate any support you can offer through discussions in Caucus and through your work as a parliamentarian.

Sincerely,

Name M. Surname, Ph.D.
Psychologist

Cc: Canadian Psychological Association
Council of Provincial Associations of Psychologists
Canadian Association of School Psychologists
Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology
Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology



Appendix B. Glossary

Terms You Need to Know (not all of which appear in this document)

Act of Parliament: A bill which has been passed by both the House of Commons and the Senate, has received Royal Assent and has been proclaimed. Unless a provision of the Act specifies otherwise, the Act comes into force on the date of Royal Assent.

Adjournment: Termination by the House of its own sitting for any period of time within a session.

Amendment: An alteration proposed to a motion, a stage or clause of a bill, or to a committee report.

Appropriation: A sum of money allocated by Parliament for a specific purpose outlined in the Government's spending estimates.

Assistant: The Member of Parliament's political staff person.

Backbencher: A Member who is not a minister of the Crown, a Parliamentary Secretary, a House Leader, a Whip, or an Opposition critic.

Bill: A proposed law submitted to Parliament for its approval.

Budget: The Government's statement of its fiscal, economic and social policies. It is usually presented once a year, although there is no requirement for an annual presentation.

Business of supply: The process by which the Government submits its projected annual expenditures for parliamentary approval.

Business of ways and means: The process by which the Government obtains the necessary resources to meet its expenses. It has two essential elements: the presentation of the budget and the motions which lead to the introduction of tax bills.

Cabinet. The executive of the Government, consisting of those Members and Senators appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Chairperson: Member of the governing party who presides over the work of a committee.

Clause: A division of a bill consisting of an individual sentence or statement. Once a bill becomes law, its clauses are referred to as sections.

Closure: A procedure forbidding further adjournment of debate on any motion or on any stage of a bill and requiring that the motion come to a vote at the end of the sitting in which it is invoked.

Committee Report: A committee's written statement about a given piece of legislation or public policy. Committee reports are especially important because they often contain implementing and



enforcing language for the legislation.

Concurrence (in a report): Agreement with a committee report, including the conclusions or recommendations it contains.

Department of Finance Canada: Primarily responsible for providing the Government of Canada with analysis and advice on the broad economic and financial affairs of Canada and with developing tax policy, fiscal policy and the Government of Canada's annual budget.

Department of Justice Canada: Supports the Minister of Justice in working to ensure that Canada is a just and law-abiding society with an accessible, efficient and fair system of justice. It also provides legal services and counsel to the government and to client departments and agencies.

Deputy minister: The public servant, reporting directly to the minister, who is the permanent administrative head of a Government department and responsible for its day-to-day management.

Fiscal Year: The financial operating year of the Federal Government, beginning April 1st and ending March 31st of the next calendar year.

Government House Leader: The Government Member responsible for managing the Government's business in the House.

Health Canada: Primarily responsible for advising the Government of Canada on health and health care issues and for health promotion, food and drug safety, aboriginal health, etc.

Health Promotion and Programs: See National Health Research and Development Program.

House Leader: The Member of a party responsible for its management in the House.

House of Commons: The major federal law-making body. Members are elected to represent ridings in a Parliament which last for a maximum of five years.

Joint committee: A committee made up of a proportionate number of members of both the House of Commons and the Senate. It may be either a standing or a special committee.

Legislative committee: A committee created under the Standing Orders on an *ad hoc* basis to study a bill in detail either before or after second reading.

Medical Research Council of Canada (MRC): The major federal agency responsible for funding health research in Canada including psychology. It also has a major role in supporting research training of health scientists, acts as an advisor on health research and is responsible to the federal Minister of Health.

National Health Research and Development Program (NHRDP): Funds national health research and program initiatives which advance the understanding of, and effective response to, national health issues which fall within the purview of Health Canada.

National Research Council Canada (NRC): The principal science and technology research agency



of the Government of Canada. NRC performs and supports research across the country, and helps thousands of clients every year through the Canadian Institute for Scientific and Technical Information, the Industrial Research Assistance Programs, and the Canadian Technology Network.

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC): The major federal agency responsible for the funding of basic university research and training in the natural sciences and engineering. It funds brain, behaviour and cognitive science research by psychologists. It has a major role in supporting research training of natural scientists and engineers, acts as an advisor, and is responsible to the Minister of Industry.

Opposition Leader: Leader of the main minority party in either the House or the Senate.

Order in Council: An order issued by the Governor in Council (the Cabinet), either on the basis of authority delegated by legislation or by virtue of the prerogative powers of the Crown. It may deal, among other matters, with the administration of the government, appointments to office or the disallowance or reservation of legislation.

Orders of the Day: Items of business placed on the agenda of the House.

Order Paper: The official agenda of the House of Commons, published for each sitting day, listing all items that may be brought forward on that particular day.

Parliament: is made up of one or more sessions which begin with a Speech from the Throne and end by prorogation or dissolution. A Parliament cannot exist for more than five years.

Parliament of Canada: The legislative branch of Government, composed of the Sovereign (represented by the Governor General), the appointed Senate, and the elected House of Commons.

Prorogation: The ceremonial ending of a parliamentary session, which abolishes all pending business and halts all committee work.

Put the question: To put the motion before the House to a vote. At this stage no further debate or amendment is possible.

Recess: The period between prorogation and the beginning of a new session. Often loosely used to refer to a long adjournment.

Resolution: A formal statement of a decision or opinion by the House of Commons or the Senate.

Royal Assent: The approval, by a representative of the Crown, of a bill passed by the House and the Senate, making it into an Act of Parliament.

Secretariat for Science, Research and Development : Federal government support office that conducts research, primarily at the request of committee chairpersons, on the impact of new or changing technology on people's lives and on society.

Senate: The Upper House of the Canadian Parliament. It considers legislative proposals after they have been approved by the House of Commons. The Senate also initiates legislation, but any bills



concerning taxation or the expenditure of public money must originate in the Commons.

Session: One of the fundamental periods into which a Parliament is divided, usually consisting of a number of separate sittings. Sessions are begun by a Speech from the Throne and are ended by prorogation.

Sitting: A meeting of the House of Commons. A sitting may last for only a matter of minutes or may extend over several calendar days.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC): The major federal agency responsible for the funding of university research and training in the social sciences and humanities. It funds social science research by psychologists. It has a major role in supporting research training of social scientists and humanists, it acts as an advisor and is responsible to the Minister of Industry.

Speaker of the House of Commons: The presiding Member of Parliament in the House of Commons. The Speaker is elected by the House.

Speaker of the Senate: The Senator officially presiding over the Senate. The Speaker is appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Standing committee: Appointed for the life of a Parliament to deal with subjects of continuing concern to the House.

Supply: See 'business of supply'.

Table: To place a document before the House or a committee for consideration or consultation.

Unanimous Consent: The consent of all Members present, required when the House wishes to set aside its rules or usual practices without notice.

Ways and means: See 'business of ways and means'.

Whip: A Member charged with keeping other Members of the same party informed concerning House business and ensuring their attendance in the House, especially when a vote is anticipated.

National Non-Governmental Organizations You Need to Know

Canadian Association of School Psychologists (CASP): Is an incorporated professional association which represents the concerns and interests of school psychologists across Canada.

Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR): Consists of scientific and educational societies that represent an estimated 50,000 researchers and 400,000 students in universities, government laboratories, and private sector research centres across Canada. It is the largest organization in Canada whose primary concerns are the funding of research in all sectors and the support of post-



secondary education.

Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programs (CCPPP): Is an organization that represents Canadian university psychology academic programs and psychology internship programs that train clinical, counseling and clinical neuropsychologists as well as applied psychologists in other substantive professional areas.

Canadian Psychological Association (CPA): Is Canada's largest association of psychologists. Since its founding in 1939, CPA has been working for the advancement of the education, science and practice in psychology as a mean of promoting human welfare.

Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology (CRHSPP): Identifies psychologists who meet nationally established standards of training and experience in health service provision.

Canadian Society of Brain, Behaviour and Cognitive Science (CSBBCS): Is a national organization of psychologists whose primary function is to advance Canadian research in experimental psychology, behavioural and cognitive neuroscience.

Council of Canadian Departments of Psychology (CCDP): Is an organization that represents Canadian university departments of psychology.

Council of Provincial Associations of Psychologists (CPAP): Is the alliance of duly constituted provincial or territorial associations of psychologists, provincial or territorial regulatory bodies.

Health Action Lobby (HEAL): Is a coalition of national health and consumer organizations dedicated to protecting and strengthening Canada's health system. It represents more than half a million providers and consumers of health care.

Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada (HSSFC): Is a federation of learned societies, universities and colleges that advocate for the humanities and social sciences. It currently represents over 24,000 scholars and graduates active in the study of humanities and social sciences.

Network for the Advancement of Health Services Research (NAHSR): Is a coalition of national health organizations dedicated to the promotion of behavioural and social science research in health and health care.