

From Passion to Advocacy: Finding Your Voice with LifeBridge Nebraska



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Did you know that many laws, regulations, policies, programs, and nonprofits grew out of a single person's passion – often sparked by a desire to advocate for change? Whether it's a big "P" policy, like state or

federal laws, or a little "p" policy at the community or workplace level, many initiatives start with a single idea. That idea might arise from a personal tragedy or simply the need to improve a situation for others.

Take MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), a nonprofit many are familiar with. MADD was founded in 1980 by Candace Lightner after her daughter was killed by an impaired motorist. Since then, MADD has helped enact over 1,000 local and national laws, saving countless lives and preventing millions of injuries. This is just one example of turning personal grief and tragedy into societal good. There are hundreds of thousands of nonprofits that have followed similar paths, some even predating MADD. So, I ask you – what's troubling you?

At LifeBridge Nebraska, our coaches have a unique role in the advocacy landscape, though not always in the way you might expect. Before there is a nonprofit, before there are big "P" or little "p" policies, there is often a moment – a spark-where an idea, a frustration, or even grief takes hold. It's in these moments that a physician might need a safe space to process thoughts and feelings and have a confidential conversation. That's where LifeBridge comes in.

Sometimes, it's about finding your personal agency or discovering your voice. Other times, it's about sorting through a problem to determine if it's an issue you want to tackle. We offer a confidential space to explore these questions without taking sides or pushing an agenda. Our

role is to guide you through the process of self-discovery, helping you understand how advocacy – big or small – might fit into your life.

Advocacy isn't always about championing a personal cause; often, it's seeing a problem that needs fixing and diving in to make a difference for others. This can often be a rewarding experience. As physicians, we witness both the best and worst of humanity. Combining our expertise, personal stories, and facts can create a compelling for change. Will it always succeed? No. Will it sometimes take years of persistence? Absolutely.

Consider the journey to achieve Smoke-Free Nebraska. It took a dedicated coalition two decades to get legislation to the governor's desk. I was fortunate to be the Chief Medical Officer at Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, who did the final bit of advocating and stood by Governor Dave Heineman as he signed it into law. My team then developed and rolled out the necessary regulations over the following year. While I was there at the end, the reality is that countless advocates invested years of effort to make it happen. I was just lucky enough to be there at the end. Sometimes, you'll be there for the beginning, other times, you can come in at the end of a project and breathe new life into it and be a lucky one to see it through.

Change takes time. You never know what argument, story, map, data point, or shift in public or institutional opinion will tip the balance to change a policy, big "P" or little "p". The path to change is rarely straightforward.

So, do you want a coach to work through an issue, find your cause, or discover your voice? Sometimes, it's as simple as finding the courage to speak up. At LifeBridge Nebraska, we're here to help you find the right words, build your confidence, and shape your message. Whether



you want to turn a difficult experience into a force for good or just need someone to talk to, LifeBridge is here for our fellow physicians.

To get connected with a peer coach, call the confidential line at 1-888-569-2036 or contact Lindsey Hanlon at 402-413-2060 or lindseyh@nebmed.org. □



Are you a physician looking for coaching?



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