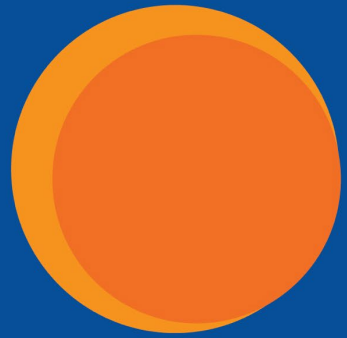


The ANCOR logo features the word "ANCOR" in a white, sans-serif font. Above the letter "A" is a white arc with a small dot at its peak, resembling a stylized wave or a compass arc.

ANCOR

A graphic of stylized waves in various shades of blue and teal, with white outlines, filling the lower portion of the dark blue background.

OCEANS OF
OPPORTUNITY

ANCOR CONNECT '25

APRIL 7-9
SAN DIEGO, CA

#ANCORConnect25

Elevate Your Advocacy:

The Roles of a Disability Services Advocate

Noah Block

Advocacy Manager

ANCOR

Scenario

#ANCORConnect25

In a mid-sized town, the city council has voted to permanently close one of the town's fire stations, citing budget constraints and staffing challenges. The decision was made with minimal public input and has sparked frustration from residents, especially those living in surrounding neighborhoods that include mobile home parks, older apartment buildings, and senior housing. The fire station has served as a critical part of the town's emergency response system, and many fear the closure will result in longer response times and increased risk in emergencies. City officials insist the closure is necessary for financial sustainability.

Group 1

The fire station may be closing, but people still need to feel safe. Let's organize volunteers to help distribute fire safety kits, educate neighbors on emergency preparedness, and make sure the most vulnerable residents—like seniors and those without transportation—know how to get help quickly if they need it.

Group 3

This is about how we value public safety in different neighborhoods. Let's gather community members, build a coalition, and develop a strategy to demand investment in public safety infrastructure. We'll identify local leaders, build relationships with unions and neighborhood groups, and push for a people-powered plan to ensure emergency services for all."

Group 2

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We need to go through the proper channels. Let's request budget transparency, organize public testimony at city council meetings, and propose alternatives to full closure—like rotating staffing or shared regional services. We can also raise awareness through local media and direct communication with decision-makers.

Group 4

"Closing a fire station in a vulnerable area is reckless. We need to take a bold stand. Let's stage a peaceful protest outside city hall or organize a visual demonstration—like forming a human chain around the station to show what's at stake. We need to send a clear message that safety is non-negotiable."

Questions for Breakout Groups

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1. Why did you choose this group?
2. What do you think about the others?
3. What tensions might arise from different groups?
4. How is **your role** critical in making social change happen?

Group 1: Helper

Assists people in ways that affirm their dignity and respect, share skills and bring clients into decision making roles, educates about the larger social system, encourages experiments in service delivery which support liberation.

Group 3: Organizer

Believes in people power: builds mass-based grassroots groups, nurtures growth of natural leaders, chooses strategies for long-term movement, uses training to build skills, democratize decisions, diversify and broaden organization and coalitions, promotes alternatives and paradigm shifts

Group 2: Advocate

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Uses mainstream institutions like courts, city hall, legislatures to get new goals and values adopted, uses lobbying, lawsuits, elite networking/coalition building, for clearly stated demands often backed by research.

Group 4: Rebel

Protests: says no to violations of positive values, employs nonviolent direct action and attitude, including civil disobedience, targets power-holders and institutions, puts problems and policies in public spotlight, uses strategy as well as tactics, does work that is courageous, shows in behavior and moral superiority of movement values



Questions for Breakout Groups

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1. What do you value about the other roles?
2. Can you think of times in your professional work that these roles have shown up?
3. When can your role be effective, when can it be ineffective?



Effective and Ineffective Strategies

Courtesy of Training for Change



Group 1: Helper

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Effective

- Assists people in ways that affirm their dignity and respect
- Shares skills and brings clients into decision making roles
- Educates about the larger social system
- Encourages experiments in service delivery which support

Ineffective

- Believes charity can handle social problems, or that helping individuals can change social structures
- Focuses on casualties and refuses to see who benefits from victimization
- Provides services like job training which simply give some people a competitive edge over other people, without challenging the scarcity which gives rise to competition

Group 2: Advocate

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Effective

- Uses mainstream institutions like courts, city hall, and legislatures to get new goals and values adopted
- Uses lobbying, lawsuits, elite networking, and coalition building for clearly-stated demands, often backed by research
- Monitors successes to make sure they are implemented

Ineffective

- “Realistic politics” promotes minor reforms acceptable to power-holders
- Promotes domination by top-down professional advocacy groups
- More concerned with organization’s status than the goal of their social movement
- Identifies more with power holders than with grassroots
- Does not like paradigm shifts

Group 3: Organizer

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Effective

- Believes in people power; builds mass-based grassroots groups and networks
- Nurtures growth in natural leaders
- Chooses strategies for long-term movement development rather than focusing only on immediate demands
- Uses training to build skills, democratize decision, diversity and broaden organization and coalitions
- Promotes alternatives and paradigm shifts

Ineffective

- Has tunnel vision: advocates single approach while opposing those doing all others
- Promotes patriarchal leadership styles
- Promotes only minor reform
- Stifles emergence of diversity and ignores needs of activist
- Promotes visions of perfection cut off from practical political and social change

Group 4: Rebel

Effective

- Protests: says “no!” to violations of widely held positive values
- Employs nonviolent direct action and attitude, including civil disobedience
- Targets power holders and institutions
- Puts problems and policies in public spotlight
- Uses strategy as well as tactics
- Does work that is courageous, exciting, risky
- Shows in behavior the moral superiority of movement values

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Ineffective

- Promotes anti-leadership, anti-organization rules and structures
- Attached to an identity as lonely voice on society’s fringe
- Uses tactics without realistic strategy
- Has victim attitude, behavior: Angry, judgmental, dogmatic
- Uses rhetoric of self-righteousness, absolute truth, moral superiority
- Can be strident; personal upset more important than movement’s needs

Thank You!



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