

Role Play Guide for Mock Legislative Visits

Legislators

Your mission is to facilitate a mock visit with a state senator and/or representative. You may do this by assuming the role of the legislator or legislative aides and posing questions to the psychologists in your group based around the main points of each bill. You may step out of your role as a legislator if necessary to help the psychologists in your group identify the most convincing examples from their practice that illustrate these main points.

If time permits, you can try different approaches to the meeting, by playing the role of a legislator who is a solid supporter of the legislation, one who is “on the fence” and one who is opposed to the legislation. Alternately, you can combine these persons into one by asking a range of questions, easy, moderately tough, and difficult.

Constituents

Your mission is to show your appreciation to legislators who support the legislation, and for those who do not support it to convince them of its benefit to the public health. Be prepared to answer questions about your profession. Some legislators may not know the difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist.

A Model Meeting

Role of Constituents:

- ❶ Try to limit the meeting to approximately 15 - 20 minutes, or the scheduled time.
- ❷ Greet the legislator and explain that you are a constituent. Indicate your residence and remember that constituency can be established by your office location, or the residences of the patients you treat.
- ❸ Hand the legislator your business card so that he/she may refer to it during the meeting if necessary, or contact you in the future as a resource on health care issues.
- ❹ One psychologist should state the purpose of the meeting in one or two sentences. For example: “Senator/Representative, we would like to talk to you about amending the licensing law for psychologists.”
- ❺ Make the major points presented on the fact sheets. **It helps if you tell a story related to the issue.** The legislator will probably respond with some questions.
- ❻ Thank the legislator for his or her time, offer the drop-off packet, offer to be a resource in the future, and offer to find out answers to any questions posed by the legislator that you were unable to answer.