

creating a welcoming environment for newcomers

Advocacy is new for a lot of people who come to Results meetings for the first time. It can be intimidating to learn about an issue/campaign that is new to you and then sticking your neck out by advocating to a person in power or writing a letter that can be seen in a newspaper is no small thing. Add a whole bunch of new people they meet at a Results meeting and the whole situation can be overwhelming, enough to not return. What can group members do to ease newcomers in and make them feel welcome, capable and confident in taking action and returning?

tips to welcome new members

- **Introduce them to Results.** At the start of the meeting, give a brief three-minute overview about Results. While a key transformative aspect of Results is actually taking action, offer newcomers “a pass” doing it their first meeting. Instead have an assigned volunteer take newcomers aside while others are taking action to answer questions informally. Use the time to share a little bit about each other and motivations for being there. If still time to join the others in taking action, invite newcomers to do so or simply continue the conversation.
- **Get to know them.** The introduction questions offered in the Sample Education and Action meeting preparation and agenda document (to come) are useful in creating “going deep” to create a common ground for being at the meeting, helping people get to know each other and building a personal bond.
- **Be friendly.** Model and remind group members to warmly welcome newcomers by physically going to them, shaking hands and introducing oneself during the social time at the start of a meeting.
- **Be clear.** For the benefit of all, avoid the use of jargon and acronyms. Pause to explain the history of Results in taking action of the priority campaign that month. Encourage everyone to ask questions about the campaign or action technique.
- **Be encouraging.** During the end of the meeting when individuals commit to dates for completing actions, encourage newcomers but acknowledge that this is optional.
- **Follow-up.** Assign one person to follow up after the meeting via phone or email with each newcomer. Be sure to acknowledge a contribution they brought to the meeting or could bring, based on what was learned about them.

- **Last but not least.** Remember that every time there is a new group member, that means you have a NEW group. Make sure that you revisit ways of working and ensuring that everyone is comfortable. Including the newcomers in the decisions and processes will help retain them.

Updated: January 2020