



## Prevention Justice Partnership

### What's Your Rap?

The strength of a grassroots campaign is defined by the level of support you can generate from your community. An effective pitch of your issue — the rap — is the first step in developing that support. A good rap can open the door to meaningful collaborations, the foundation of a successful campaign. Here are some useful tips on making and using your rap:

**1. Write it down** - having a written record of the rap can help keep everyone doing outreach on the same page, encourage and enable less experience members of your group to participate, and keep you focused on the issue at hand. Periodic group revisions of the rap will allow you to reflect on people's responses and improve your message.

**2. Keep it brief** - ideally, you should be able to convey your message in 30 seconds or less. Even if your issue is complicated, keep your rap refined to key elements and distribute any background information after your initial contact.

#### Key Elements of a good Rap:

- Introduce yourself and your group
- Describe the problem and the campaign
- Provide a reason why his/her involvement is important
- Propose a concrete action step (sign a letter, come to a meeting)
- Ask for a commitment

**3. Wear their shoes** - people will look at an issue from different perspectives. Your job as an organizer is to anticipate what will resonate with different target audiences. A service provider's reason to get involved with your campaign might be different from a client's reason. Having variously targeted "reason statements" may help improve the response to your rap. The key is to engage the person by demonstrating you are interested and value their perspective.

**4. Check your attitude** - your enthusiasm about the campaign sends a signal to the people you are trying to reach. Take breaks between calls and always start fresh. Learn from disagreements you might encounter, and don't take rejections personally.

**5. Keep track and follow-up** - send follow-up information and make reminder calls. Keep a log of your contacts, because you will likely need their support again in the future. Be ready to participate in your allies' projects and campaigns in kind. On-going reciprocal relationships are what give you the power as a grassroots organizer.