



# How to Have a Persuasive Conversation

Persuasion is not about manipulation or coercion but about influencing others respectfully and ethically. Building trust, fostering understanding, and finding common ground can create mutually beneficial outcomes. Having persuasive conversations involves understanding your audience, crafting your message effectively, and employing various communication techniques to influence their perspective.

If you think you might encounter resistance to implementing Protein for All in your court, spend some time preparing to talk with the authority figures you need approval from. Working through the Toolkit and Work Plan activity will help you prepare. This worksheet highlights specific steps and shares some helpful approaches.

The point of this activity isn't to write a speech to read to someone but to get clear in your own mind about how you want to approach the conversation or to share with a team so that you're all providing a similar message. It will, however, provide you with good material to draw from if you are writing an email or newsletter article.

## Part 1: Preparing for a Persuasive Conversation

**1. Know your audience:** A Protein for All program has many benefits. To name a few:

- increased social justice
- believing that everyone should get a chance to be at their best, even on their worst days
- concerns about primary and secondary trauma
- recognizing the time (and therefore money) that can be saved by having more efficient and effective interactions in the court

Understand who you are speaking to. What are their values, beliefs, concerns, and motivations? Tailor your message to focus on the benefits of Protein for All that you think will resonate the most with them.

*List benefits specific to your court so you have a ready list to pull from when you speak with or send emails to authority figures in your court.*



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**2. Clarify your objective:** Get specific about what you want to achieve from the conversation. Whether it's gaining support, inspiring action, or changing someone's opinion, having a clear objective will help guide your approach.

*Write out your objective here. Remember that you will likely have different objectives for conversations with different people. For example, inviting a colleague to be a Protein for All team member has a different goal than seeking approval to provide food in the court lobby. Use the SMARTIE Goals activity if you need help with this step.*

**3. Structure your discussion and prepare to address resistance:** Organize your points logically, starting with what you believe a Protein for All program will do for your court, who it will help, and how you propose implementing it. Try to anticipate possible objections or concerns and address them before they get raised. Acknowledging potential barriers up front and offering solutions shows you've thought through how your court can implement Protein for All. Use evidence, examples, and anecdotes to support your points. Pay attention to the responses and reactions of the other person. Be open to feedback and be willing to adapt your approach if necessary. Effective persuasion often involves a dialogue rather than a monologue.

*What are some objections that you think might come up? What are some solutions? Write some bullet points about the examples or stories you want to share that you think will dispel concerns and resonate the most with the people you'll be speaking with. If you're preparing to talk with several people, jot their names down next to different points so it's easy to review before you talk with them.*



## Part 2: Put Your Planning to Work for You

**1. Establish rapport:** Establishing rapport is a good way to start a conversation. You can do this by finding common ground, active listening, and showing empathy. As you start to understand them better, you'll likely hear clues as to which benefits of a Protein for All program they're most likely to resonate with. Most importantly, have a Lizard Brain Treat before starting a conversation with someone so you can think with your curious, responsive brain!

*What questions can you ask early in the conversation to engage them more?*

**2. Use persuasive language:** Choose your words carefully to evoke emotion and convey your message effectively. Positive language, vivid imagery, and compelling storytelling can be powerful tools: reference examples or testimonials from others who share your viewpoint or have benefited from it. People are often influenced by what others similar to them are doing or believing. Emotional appeals can be highly persuasive. Connect with your audience on an emotional level by tapping into their values, desires, fears, or aspirations.

*Lean on the work you did to prepare. Do they know [people at] a court that already has a Protein for All program? Which stories do you think might convey the important impact Protein for All has?*

**3. Demonstrate credibility:** Establish yourself as a credible source by sharing how you learned about Protein for All and offer to share resources from the toolkit (including videos from Dr. Kristen Allott). Showing that Protein for All is a state-wide program can increase trust and make your ideas more convincing.

*Be ready to offer links to relevant resources, make introductions, invite them to an upcoming training... Jot down some ideas of resources to share or people to introduce them to.*



**4. Encourage action:** Clearly articulate what you want the other person to do as a result of the conversation. Provide clear instructions or next steps to make it easy for them to take the desired action.

*Review your goals right before having the conversation. Write down your high-level objectives or some keywords here.*

**5. Follow up:** Follow up with any additional information or support as needed after the conversation. If you say you will do something (for example, provide links to resources, make an introduction, schedule another meeting), prioritize getting it done or let them know when they can expect to hear from you again. Following through on your commitments is critical to reinforce your message and nurture the relationship.

*Bring a notebook or have an app open to jot down anything you say you'll do after the conversation. This shows that you're organized and fully intend to follow through. What else can you bring with you or have prepared to make yourself feel ready for the conversation?*

