

Volunteer Toolkit: Hosting a House Party Spring 2022

Thank you so much for agreeing to host a house party in support of abortion access this spring! This toolkit is meant to help you prep, execute, and wrap up your party! In it, you will find step-by-step guidance and resources and you should also consider your PP organizers as a strong resource!

Preparing for Your Event

[This teach-In toolkit](#) has additional resources and guidance for planning an event.

1. Decide your date and location

- a. It's recommended to choose a date that is 3-4 weeks out, to give you and your participants time to prepare.
- b. You may want to consider a weekend if most of your attendees work Monday-Friday. In the morning you could host a brunch or mid afternoon could be a light dessert event. If the weekend doesn't work, consider a happy hour during the week.
 - i. You don't have to provide all of the food or drinks! Work with your local affiliate to see if support is available or ask people to bring something to share or BYOB/BYOF
- c. As for a location, you might consider your own residence, a local park, or your local PP office! You want to choose something that is familiar, accessible and comfortable to your guests.
 - i. Not comfortable doing this in person right now? Opt for a Zoom meeting and consider inviting your larger network of friends and family in other states! Your PP organizer can help!

2. Choose your audience

- a. The size of your party will likely be dependent on how many people your venue can hold.
- b. You should think of people who are interested in social justice, supportive of reproductive rights already, or who may be unsure about how they feel about abortion access, but more education would move them to being supportive.
- c. To help you think about groups of people you know, [use this resource](#).

3. Assign roles

- a. Host
 - i. This should be you since it's your event! Being host means that you will secure the venue, invite the guests, move the agenda forward and answer general questions about the event! You will also be liaising with your PP organizer before and after the event.
- b. Helper
 - i. You may find it helpful to have a helper during the event. To help catch people up if they're late, refill items, answer logistical questions if someone needs help locating water, restroom, etc. During the CTA section, they should also help secure commitments by helping people think through their networks and draft messages.
 - ii. The helper can also take pictures during the event

4. Invite your audience

- a. To invite your guests, you should reach out to them in the medium you usually chat! That may be text, a phone call, Facebook, or Instagram! It's recommended to reach out 2-3 weeks before the event in order to give attendees ample time to plan.
 - b. You should keep a list of who you've invited, how, and [what their RSVP status is](#).**
 - c. If it's helpful, you may consider setting up a private Facebook event to share logistics, help remind your guests about the event, and for you to keep track of who's coming and who isn't.
- 5. Develop your story of self**
- a. Storytelling is a powerful tool to connect with people on shared values and to understand the urgency of taking action now. You should open your event with sharing your story about:
 - i. Your own abortion
 - ii. Helping someone you love get an abortion
 - iii. Your journey to support abortion loudly and proudly
 - b. Work with your local PP organizer to craft your own story or [use this resource](#).
- 6. Learn what's at stake for abortion in your state**
- a. Connect with your PP organizer about the impact JWHO v Dobbs will have on your state and learn the facts so you can really set the stage for your guests about the importance of fighting for abortion access, right now, in your state
 - i. [Abortion Policy in the Absence of Roe - Guttmacher](#)
 - b. You may also want to refresh on what abortion access currently looks like in your state.
 - i. [State Policy Tracker - Guttmacher](#)
 - ii. [Who Has Abortions - Guttmacher](#)
 - iii. [Overview on State Laws - Guttmacher](#)
- 7. Confirm attendees**
- a. Do this the day before and right before your event
 - i. Send a reminder email
 - ii. Reach out via text, facebook, instagram - however you first invited them!
- 8. Prep Materials**
- a. **Here are some recommended materials for a successful party:**
 - i. Sign In Sheet (reach out to your local PP organizer)
 - ii. Pens
 - iii. Paper, in case people want to take notes
 - iv. Food
 - v. Drinks
 - vi. Cups
 - vii. Napkins
 - viii. Plates/bowls
 - ix. Your PP organizer may have some cool PP swag to give you too!

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During

Below is a suggested agenda. It is set for 60 minutes, but you can make the event longer if you think your guests would be open to that. For an extended agenda, it's recommended to add time to the discussion section.

Don't forget to take pictures or screenshots during the event!

10 minutes: Welcome!

- This is time for your guests to arrive, grab food, and chit chat with one another

5 mins: Set the Tone

- Gather the group together and thank everyone for coming to talk about abortion and the upcoming Supreme Court Case
- Review the community agreements below and see if the group has any questions
 - We want to create a community that is respectful and safe! To help, here are a few agreements that all attendees should agree to follow:
 - The platinum rule
 - Treat people how they ask to be treated
 - Assume best intentions, but acknowledge the impact of your words and actions
 - Las Vegas rules
 - What's said here, stays here
 - What's learned here, leaves here
 - One mic
 - When someone is speaking, don't interrupt them!

5 mins: Set the Purpose

- Tell everyone about why the fight for reproductive rights is personal to you by:
 - Sharing your own abortion story***
 - Sharing about a time you helped a loved one get an abortion***
 - Sharing how you joined the reproductive rights movement***
- Inform them about the upcoming Supreme Court Case: [Jackson Women's Health Organization](#) and talk about what it could mean for your state.
 - In the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, the state of Mississippi has asked the Supreme Court to uphold its unconstitutional abortion ban at 15 weeks of pregnancy AND outright overrule Roe v. Wade.
 - Roe v. Wade is the Supreme Court decision that established our right to safe, legal abortion in 1973. That constitutional right to abortion — which has been guaranteed for nearly 50 years — hangs in the balance now.
 - The Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization could dismantle or overturn Roe v. Wade and threaten legal access to abortion across the country. If the Supreme Court decides to reverse nearly 50 years of precedent, it could affect 36 million women of

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reproductive age and even more people who can become pregnant but don't identify as women.

- Work with your local organizer to understand the impact the case will have on your state

30 mins: Open Discussion

- Shift to an open discussion by asking the group if they knew about the upcoming Supreme Court case and what it meant for abortion access.
- Let the discussion flow naturally and asking probing questions to continue the conversation as needed:
 - When did you first care about abortion access?
 - What do you think led us to this moment of being at risk of losing Roe v Wade again?
 - How comfortable to you feel about talking about abortion? Why do you think it is challenging for some people?
 - What is your experience with abortion? Have you had one or do you know someone who has? How has that shaped your activism?
 - How has your view of abortion changed overtime?
 - What are your fears about the loss of abortion access in [STATE]?

10 mins: Call to Action!

- As the discussion comes to a close, you will want to make your call to action before the event ends.
- Thank everyone for coming and engaging in a trustful and deep conversation about abortion, but as they know the work can't stop at the end of this party. Ask them to:
 - 1) commit to turn out in support of abortion on the day the Supreme Court announces their decision in *JWHO v Dobbs*, which is anticipated to be the end of June.
 - By texting "ACCESS" to 22422 they will receive
 - 2) Send the invite to 3 friends who aren't in the room! To help your group think about groups of people they know, [use this resource](#) to create a list of people to reach out to.
- Give them a few minutes to complete the action before thanking them and ending the event

After Your Event

1. Follow up and thank attendees

- a. Reach out to everyone who came to your party and thank them for coming and having a great conversation! In your follow up, check in to see what they're hearing from the friends they reached out to about attending decision day events
- b. Be sure to send a huge thank you to your helper if you had one!

2. Get in touch with your organizer to let them know how it went

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- a. Reach out to your PP organizer to debrief the event. Share pictures of the event and discuss:
 - i. Who all attended the event (this is where your sign in sheet is really helpful!)
 - ii. How the conversation went
 1. Lift up common themes or questions from the group
 - iii. How many people signed up to attend decision day actions and how many others the invite was sent to
 - iv. The support provided by the organizer. What helped and what additional support could be provided in the future.
 - v. Be sure to ask your organizer what you can do next!

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Appendix A

Instructions: Think of at least **20 people** you know personally that you could ask to take this action. That number may need to adjust based on how big your venue is, but this should help you think about potential groups of people to include in your invites.

My Friends

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

e.g. Facebook friends

My Family

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

e.g. nieces/nephews,

Groups I'm Part Of

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

e.g. church, PTA

People I See Regularly

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

e.g. barber, dog walker

People I Work With

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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Appendix C - Writing your Story of Self

There are some key questions you need to answer as you consider the choices you have made in your life and the path you have taken that brought you to this point in time as a reproductive health advocate. Once you identify the specific *relevant* choice, dig deeper by answering the following questions.

Challenge: Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?

Choice: Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage (or not)? Where did you get the hope (or not)? Did your parents life stories teach you in any way how to act in that moment? How did it feel?

Outcome: How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?

Ask: What will you ask others to do? How can they join your movement? How can they be more involved in your story?

A word about challenge. Sometimes people see the word challenge and think it means describing the worst misfortunes of our lives. Sometimes those are the moments that most shaped us. But keep in mind that a struggle might also be one of your own choosing – a high mountain you decided to climb as much as a valley you managed to climb out of. Many things may have been a challenge to you and can be the source of a good story to inspire others.

Sample story: My name is _____. I am from _____ and I'm here today to talk about why I think abortion access is important, essential, and necessary. This past year I was in love, but this love was not good for me. We were friends for years before we started dating, always talking late at night on the phone, telling each other our deepest secrets, laughing and joking together. I lived across the country from him but the pandemic moved me back home, where he was. And throughout the years we had always been curious about what it would be like together, we finally had the chance to try it out. But, he wasn't over his ex, and he didn't treat me the way a partner should. One night he left me alone outside in my car at 2am as he went inside and closed the door on me, and effectively, our relationship. I was broken. I think most of us have been here. The breakup took quite the toll on my mental health and my body. I couldn't eat, and if I did I couldn't hold it down. This was not a normal stress response for me, so I thought it may be something else. I grabbed a pregnancy test and took it alone in my friend's bathroom. I didn't tell anyone about it. The minutes waiting for the result were excruciating, but I decided that I did not want to be a parent. And having a child would not make this person love me. If I was pregnant, I would have an abortion. I looked down at the test, full of anxiety and saw the result. Negative. I sighed with relief. I wouldn't have to go through the process of navigating the already archaic barriers

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that exist to abortion. I'm lucky, I was able to move back to the place I love, get back to my friends and my job. I was finally entirely free from that relationship. But so many people look down at that test and see it is positive. So many people have to face waiting periods, travel hundreds of miles to a health center, and have to pay a lot of money for their service. That is why I show up and advocate for people who can get pregnant everywhere. Now, we are being faced with extreme bans across the country, one being heard here in ____. It is immoral, inexcusable, and wrong to place barriers on essential health care. I think about all of the people who will have to carry their pregnancies to term because their state does not care about the welfare and autonomy of pregnant people. I am demanding our state legislature do not pass such an immoral ban to abortion.

Green = denotes the introduction

Yellow = denotes the context and relativity with the audience. How can people relate to your situation?

Pink = denotes the **challenge**. Here, the challenge is being faced with a toxic relationship and having a pregnancy scare.

Blue = denotes the **strategic choice**. Here, the choice is taking a pregnancy test

Purple = denotes the **outcome**. Here, it is advocating for other pregnant people.

Orange = denotes the call to action/**ask**. What should be done about this? Here, it is telling the state legislature to not pass the ban.

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WORKSHEET

DEVELOPING YOUR STORY OF SELF

Before you decide what part of your story to tell, think about these questions:

- o What will I be calling on others to do?
- o What values move me to take action and might also inspire others to similar action?
- o What stories can I tell from my own life about specific people or events that would show (rather than tell) how I learned or acted on those values?

What are the experiences in your life that have shaped the values that call you to leadership in this campaign?

FAMILY CHILDHOOD	& LIFE CHOICES	ORGANIZING EXPERIENCES
Parents/Family	School	First Experience of organizing
Growing Up	Career	Connection to key books or people
Your Community	Partner/Family	Role Models
Role Models	Hobbies/Interests/Talents	
School	Faith	
Your culture/heritage	Health care decisions (birth control, abortion, STI testing/treatment, cancer screening, gender affirming care)	

Think about the challenge, choice and outcome in your story. The outcome might be what you learned, in addition to what happened. A story doesn't have to be dramatic to be effective.

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CHALLENGE	CHOICE	OUTCOME

Write your story here:

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Coaching Tips and Tricks

Remember to balance both positive and constructive critical feedback. The purpose of coaching is to listen to the way stories are told and think of ways that the storytelling could be improved. Consider finding a partner to practice your story with and use these tips to help each other out.

DON'T simply offer vague “feel good” comments. (“That was a really great story!”)

DO coach each other on the following points:

- **THE CHALLENGE:** What were the specific challenges the storyteller faced? Did the storyteller paint a vivid picture of those challenges?

“When you described _____, I got a clear picture of the challenge.”

“I understood the challenge to be _____. Is that what you intended?”

- **THE CHOICE:** Was there a clear choice that was made in response to each challenge? How did the choice make you feel? (Hopeful? Angry?)

“To me, the choice you made was _____, and it made me feel _____.”

“It would be helpful if you focused on the moment you made a choice.”

- **THE OUTCOME:** What was the specific outcome that resulted from each choice? What does that outcome teach us?

“I understood the outcome was _____, and it teaches me _____. But how does it relate to your work now?”

- **THE VALUES:** Could you identify what this person’s values are and where they came from? How? How did the story make you feel?

“Your story made me feel _____ because _____.”

“It’s clear from your story that you value _____; but it could be even clearer if you told a story about where that value comes from.”

- **DETAILS:** Were there sections of the story that had especially good details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions of the moment)?

“The image of _____ really helped me identify with what you were feeling.”

“Try telling more details about _____ so we can imagine what you were experiencing.”

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PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

BE YOUR BEST SELF ON STAGE

The structure of your speech:

1. Introduce yourself
 - a. Only disclose things you are comfortable living online or in media forever
2. Share your story
 - a. Challenge ex. “I wasn’t taught proper sex education”
 - b. Choice ex. “I decided to learn about sex ed and abortion rights”
 - c. Outcome “Now I’m here today to share that abortion access is important for everyone”
3. Close
 - a. Share a key point as to why you believe OK deserves access to abortion

Important Reminders

- Only share information you are comfortable with being public
- Only share what you are ready to share! No need to speak about things you are not healed from yet
- Have a support system - let a trusted person know you will be participating
- Don’t record and post anyone else’s story without their permission
- Try not to identify anyone by name in your story

8 Qualities of a Brilliant Public Speaker

- Confident
 - Your story is your own! Sound true to you and do it boldly.
- Aware
 - Look at your surroundings. Talk with your audience, not at them.
- Empathetic
 - Understand there may be people who have been in similar situations as you. Match the tone of the room.
- Fresh/Interesting
 - Take pauses, fluctuate your voice, change your tone as appropriate.
- Authentic (Keeping it Real)
 - Do not try to be someone you are not!

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- Inspiring
 - Lean in on the ask. Make demands. Inspire others and motivate them to create change.
- Fearless
 - Public speaking is not easy! Do what you need to do to feel comfortable in front of a crowd- like pretending they aren't there.
- Balance
 - Be inspiring while also being true to the feel of the room and to your story.

Tools of the trade

- Slow Down! People tend to speak quickly on stage.
- Short and Sweet - keep it around 3 minutes (500 words written)
- Over enunciate (eat your words) - sometimes words get lost if you say them too quickly
- Project but gauge the mic
- It's okay to be nervous.
- Lean on your support person
- Breathe!
- Channel your inner diva

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