

# The Evaluation Instrument: CAPE

by Wayne Eliuk and Carolyn Wheeler

Since the conceptualization of Citizen Advocacy by Wolf Wolfensberger in 1966, this relatively new helping form has emerged in the form of over 200 citizen advocacy offices in the United States, Canada, Australia and England. Historically, many citizen advocacy programs have evolved their own particular variation of Citizen Advocacy, whereby the original conceptualization was often misinterpreted and inappropriately implemented. As a result, some form or technique was needed to measure a citizen advocacy program's adherence to essential citizen advocacy principles and practices.

Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation (CAPE) by John O'Brien and Wolf Wolfensberger, was designed to meet the need for an instrument which would provide a standard against which programs calling themselves Citizen Advocacy could be measured. The instrument takes the form of operationalizing all of the essential, and some of the more desirable, specific components of the citizen advocacy concept into observable and measurable variables. In effect, CAPE constitutes a partial blueprint for implementing Citizen Advocacy.

CAPE was developed over a period of several years and several versions. The first edition was edited by John O'Brien and Wolf Wolfensberger. The first edition was printed in 1979 by the Canadian National Institute on Mental Retardation (NIMR) which is now called the G. Allan Roehrer Institute on Mental Retardation. The second and current edition is called the Syracuse Test Edition, and has been published by the Person to Person: Citizen Advocacy office in Syracuse, in conjunction with the Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership and Change Agency, directed by Wolf Wolfensberger.

CAPE consists of 36 ratings, divided into three categories designated as follows:

- 1) Adherence to Citizen Advocacy Principles
- 2) Citizen Advocacy Office Effectiveness
- 3) Program Continuity and Stability

The Adherence to Citizen Advocacy Principles cluster consists of twenty ratings that are sub-grouped under the following headings: Advocate Independence, Program Independence, Clarity of Staff Function, Balanced Orientation to Protégé Needs, and Positive Interpretations of Handicapped People.

The Citizen Advocacy Office Effectiveness cluster consists of ten ratings, which measure seven key activities and the balancing of these activities. This rating cluster also looks at the sufficiency of the citizen advocacy staff in relationship to the demands of their job(s). These ratings are as follows: Vision and Creativity of Protégé Recruitment, Advocate Recruitment, Advocate Orientation, Advocate-protégé Matching, Follow-up and Support to Relationships, Ongoing Training, Advocate Associate Emphasis, Balance of Key Citizen Advocacy Activities, Encouragement of Advocate Involvement with Voluntary Associations, and Sufficiency of Citizen Advocacy Staff.

The Program Continuity and Stability cluster consists of six ratings, which are sub-grouped under the two headings of community leadership involvement and funding issues.

Each of the 36 ratings consists of an explanation of the nature of the rating, including why the rating is in CAPE. The rating describes what evidence must be collected to make a rating assignment, and spells out a range of either four or five levels of quality. The rating levels are statements that describe levels of performance that range from the lowest level ("major deficiencies in complying with the principle of the ratings"), through intermediate levels, to the highest level of "distinctly positive implementation of the principle presented by the rating."

Though easily readable and relatively straightforward, CAPE is not designed or intended for use by individuals acting alone. CAPE is intended to be used for evaluations by a team of at least three "raters" who are reasonably sophisticated regarding citizen advocacy principles and who have had previous CAPE or other similar experiences on evaluation teams. There is usually one or two team members who are new to Citizen Advocacy and to CAPE, which provides an excellent means of training in Citizen Advocacy. However, it is important that at least three people on a team have a strong background in Citizen Advocacy.

The general format for CAPE evaluations is somewhat standardized. Before the evaluation begins, team members review representative documentation and study the CAPE manual. During the assessment, the team members interview individuals who represent every aspect of the Citizen Advocacy program, including staff, board members, advocates, protégés, and other community members who are interested and supportive of the endeavor. The files and office documents are usually reviewed at the office. Once the relevant information has been collected, the team meets as a whole and conducts what is called "conciliation." The conciliation process is guided by a team leader who leads the team's analysis of each rating. This requires an extensive sharing of the relevant information, then comparing the evidence to the criteria of the ratings, and then selecting the rating level that most accurately characterizes the performance of the citizen advocacy program. The analysis continues until the team reaches a consensus as to the level of performance for each rating.

Besides measuring the citizen advocacy office on the 36 rating criteria of CAPE, a team also engages in an analysis of issues, especially those considered to be "overriding" or "major issues." Such issues are those which exceed the parameters of the specific CAPE ratings, or conceivably even CAPE itself.

All CAPE evaluations adhere to two crucial guidelines. The first is called the "what, not why rule." Evidence is always considered in terms of what the particular citizen advocacy office is actually doing. The countless "why's" regarding program practice

are deemed irrelevant when assigning rating levels, even though they must be acknowledged by the team and understood in the context of the overall program. However, when a team is working towards consensus on individual ratings, they only consider the reality of prevailing practices.

The second major guideline is that the fundamental perspective upon which CAPE hinges is the welfare of individual protégés. While advocates and the community commonly derive all sorts of benefits from Citizen Advocacy, the most immediate goal of the match should be the benefit to the protégé. Evaluation teams are not evaluating relationships per se but rather the efforts and structures of the program to promote advocate identification and action on behalf of protégé.

Once a team has completed its analysis, it prepares its recommendations and feedback. Sometimes feedback is only given in an oral presentation, but usually there is a written report as well. CAPE evaluations are demanding both on the program being assessed and on team members. A great deal of preparation needs to occur to insure that the evaluation will go smoothly, and that the team is able to gather sufficient information to use the CAPE instrument. Team members work hard and often under challenging circumstances, as they frequently have to shift gears mentally, work together in sub-teams with people they do not know well, and find their way around a community (sometimes back roads and country places!) with novel directions. However, CAPE team members need not be "professionals" but rather people with a strong commitment to Citizen Advocacy and a willingness to engage in the evaluation process and demands. The outcome is invariably a valuable learning experience for both the program being evaluated and those who participate in the evaluation process.

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*The contents of the CAPE manual are listed on page 15.*



## Contents of Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation (CAPE):

Adherence to Citizen Advocacy Principles	Citizen Advocacy Office Effectiveness
<p><b>Advocate Independence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpaid roles</li> <li>• Loyalty to protégés                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citizen Advocacy office promotion of advocate loyalty to protégés                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal promotion</li> <li>- External promotion</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Advocate practice</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Program Independence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent administration and location                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citizen Advocacy program separation from direct service</li> <li>* Independent office location</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Independence of funding sources</li> </ul> <p><b>Clarity of Staff Function</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus of staff role definition</li> <li>• Staff independence from other advocacy forms</li> <li>• Ties to the citizen advocacy movement</li> </ul> <p><b>Balanced Orientation to Protégé Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protégé characteristics                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Protégé age</li> <li>* Protégé capacity for relationship reciprocity</li> <li>* Protégé need for spokespersonship to defend human and legal rights</li> <li>* Need for long term relationships</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Diversity of advocacy roles                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Diversity of current roles</li> <li>* Balance of current and planned advocacy relationships</li> <li>* Availability of crisis advocates</li> <li>* Involvement of youth advocates</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Avoiding social overprotection</li> </ul> <p><b>Positive Interpretations and Positive Imagery</b></p>	<p><b>Program Continuity and Stability</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision and creativity of protégé recruitment</li> <li>• Advocate recruitment</li> <li>• Advocate orientation</li> <li>• Advocate-protégé matching</li> <li>• Follow-up and support to relationships</li> <li>• Ongoing training</li> <li>• Advocate associates emphasis</li> <li>• Balance of key Citizen Advocacy office activities</li> <li>• Encouragement of advocate involvement in voluntary associations</li> <li>• Sufficiency of Citizen Advocacy office staff</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community leadership involvement                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Feasible governance and guidance structures</li> <li>* Composition of governance and guidance bodies</li> <li>* Level of leadership involvement</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fund-related issues                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Long term funding potential</li> <li>* Local funding participation</li> <li>* Program legitimization</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>From <i>Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation (CAPE)</i>, O'Brien and Wolfensberger, 1979.</p> <p>The CAPE manual costs \$7.50 plus postage and handling, and may be purchased by contacting:</p> <p>Person to Person: Citizen Advocacy          650 James Street          Syracuse, NY 13202          (315) 472-9190</p>