

## **MODULE 6 – CHOOSING A POLICY VOICE**

*Professors: Bruce Lubotsky Levin, DrPH, MPH & Ardis Hanson, PhD*

Choosing a policy voice. It is really important to remember that in the policy-making process, participants negotiate roles, create social order, develop knowledge, and elicit values. Individuals may speak for themselves, for another, or for a larger other such as an agency, a legislature, a division, or a policymaker. We see this when an individual is selected to represent an organization, such as the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, or when his or her status creates expert standing, such as being the chair of a Senate subcommittee or the editor of a seminal federal policy document, such as the President's new Freedom Commission Report entitled "Achieving the Promise." You can also speak as a researcher, a policymaker, an advocate, a family member, a private citizen, or in any number of other roles. Depending upon your audience, your message, and your intent to affect changes, one of these roles may be better than another, or more persuasive than another. Choosing your policy voice is important in establishing your identity within the world of policy and to your audience, so choose wisely.