

YOUR ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

HOW TO **TABLE AN EVENT** **WITH DIGNITY**

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Indoors or out, the overall objective of tabling is to make contact with new people who are interested in death with dignity, personally connect with them, and make certain they have a way to reach you once they leave your table.

The movement for end-of-life liberty is a popular one, with three out of four people in support, and connecting face-to-face is still the most powerful and effective means for grassroots organizing. Event tabling can be a fun, socially engaging way to raise awareness, increase grassroots support, add to your mailing list, and meet like-minded others.



Maine Death with Dignity's signature gathering tent at Northern Solstice Alpaca Farm across from Common Ground Country Fair grounds, fall 2018

You will:

- Hear moving stories.
- Meet people with whom you'll want to follow up.
- Connect with other organizations who may or may not be allies.
- Potentially encounter some opposition. (Don't let this worry you.)

Event organizers usually have and communicate tabling guidelines, such as check-in time, what you can or cannot do at your table, and so forth. It's important to comply and to ask questions if you are unsure about anything.

TABLING TIPS

- A compelling table looks inviting, isn't cluttered, and holds basic takeaways people can easily carry with them as they leave.
- Tabling is best if you can freely move about in front to greet people who approach.
- A friendly person or two moving about chatting and greeting will draw people in.
- Tabling is *fun* (and *extra* fun when more than one person is present).
- Tabling can be tiring. Be sure to take care of yourself by moving around the venue, eating, and hydrating appropriately.
- Whether indoors or out, keep things simple for hassle-free set up, display, take-down, and pack-up.
- Keep track of and follow-up on any commitments you make with people you meet.
- Make sure all volunteers helping with your event are familiar with your organization's communications and messaging protocol.

PLACES TO TABLE

- Healthcare Decision Day and other healthcare events
- Senior citizen events

- Fairs, festivals, parades, etc.
- Farmer's markets and other outdoor venues that allow booth set-up
- Notice where other social activism groups also table: conventions, educational gatherings, etc.

TABLING ESSENTIALS: A MINIMALIST APPROACH

Event organizers usually have and communicate tabling guidelines, like when to check-in, what time to set up, and so forth. Be sure to observe all guidelines and have enough of these essentials so you won't run out:

- Information sheet hand-out (no more than one single-sided page containing basic facts about death with dignity laws in general and/or your state-specific bill or law).
- Sign-up sheet w/ clipboard (minimally ask for first name, last name, email address, and zip code). Someone standing by with a smartphone or tablet to sign people up directly on your website is also useful.
- Business card or pocket card with organization's contact information so people can email, call, and find your website.
- Well-designed brochure or rack card with basic information about your organization, the state bill or law, and organization contact information.

Indoor Tabling Venue **Tabling essentials plus:**

- Banner with logo set up either above and behind the table, or hanging from the front, or both. Having a banner above and behind lets people see it across a crowd. Keep a heavy-duty cardboard tube to store banners in.
- Tablecloth (some venues will have table covered, but it's good to have your own table dressing to liven things up a little).
- Extra ink pens (nice for give-away if imprinted).
- Candy dish. This is always a hit. Life Savers™ are fun to have at a table with 'death' information and a candy dish usually prompts people to stop in.
- Optional, depending on budget: Give-away item (sticker, bookmark, magnet, campaign button, or just about anything inexpensive to take away).

Outdoor Tabling Venue **Tabling essentials, indoor items, plus:**

If attending outdoor events, the event organizers will indicate how much space you will have. Usually, it's what you can fit in a 10' x 10' or 12' x 12' space. Some venues will supply tables, but it may be easier to decline those and have your own for a consistent set up.

In the Maine image (page 1), two foldable 2' x 4' tables are butted together. Holes were drilled in the fronts to affix a large-

head screw (which stays in place), making front banner (1.5' x 3') set-up hassle-free with small bungee cords. Tables fold flat to 2' x 2' and easily fit behind the seat of a compact car.

Plan for any weather scenario if outdoors. In high winds, take canopy fabric down, leaving frame up if it looks like wind will clear. Canopy tents become kites in high wind conditions, despite concrete blocks. Leaving canopy fabric on will damage your frame in high winds.

Recommended:

- 10' x 10' Coleman heavy-duty canopy. Sides are separate; nice to have rain or shine.
- Folding chairs (one or two maximum, otherwise too crowded).
- A variety of banners to span back, top, and tables, depending on the effect you want. The Maine image shows 1.5' x 3' (table fronts), 1' x 8' (above), and 3' x 6' ft (back), all fixed with a simple bungee set-up. Purchasing printed ones online is relatively inexpensive, but you can make your own.
- Multiple bungees. Practice your set up and have only what you need, with a couple of spares in case they break.
- A spool of nylon cord (for tie-downs and other needs).
- Heavy bricks to hold papers down if windy, 4 heavy cinder building blocks to anchor tent if windy. Don't bother

with the pegs that come with the tent, you might be on concrete or bedrock.

- NO tablecloth (too hard in wind and rain and difficult to keep it looking nice).
- A way to cover things up if it starts raining (clear shower curtain with clips works).
- Comfort items (food, water, sunscreen, and so forth).

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These tips and ideas should help you plan and execute an enjoyable, informative tabling event. Have fun and be creative. Within two or three events, you'll develop a process that works well and can be easily repeated for any venue.