

How to Advocate for ... SPAW

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What advice would you give individuals just starting their graduate career on how to advocate for SPAW?

Partner with your practicum supervisor to see if you can talk more about their school psych position and why they decided to become a school psych. There also may be opportunities to talk with other school psychs in the district or building who are in different roles - talking to these people may help you to understand the different kinds of roles and leadership positions that school psychs can have. Additionally, there are many areas that you can specialize in, within the field of school psychology. Talking to your supervisor about ways that they specialize may help you to find an area that you are passionate about as well, and may help you to understand the different ways that you can specialize within your upcoming training. Also, start to talk to those in your close circle about what being a school psych means. It's a great time to start discussing how being a school psych does not necessarily mean that you are a counselor or psychotherapist!

What advice would you give to individuals in the middle of their graduate career on how to advocate for SPAW?

As you move into the middle of your graduate career, it's a great time to see what kind of activities your program or state groups are doing during SPAW. Don't be afraid to reach out to leaders to ask if they have any activities planned and if you can participate in them! Additionally, your state school psychology association group likely has a group that works on advocating for school psychology related issues throughout the school year. If advocacy is something that you're interested in, ask if you can participate in any upcoming meetings to hear what they are working on, and if there is a way that you can support their future work!

What advice would you give to individuals toward the end of their graduate career on how to advocate for SPAW?

As you move forward in your graduate career, you might find yourself in leadership positions in practicum or in your program. Or, if you want to move into leadership positions, this might be the time to begin by being a leader during SPAW! Your program likely has a NASP Student Leader who is affiliated with the Graduate Student Leader group and can share more about what NASP has to offer for SPAW. You can share these resources with those that you work with and other school psychs who may also be interested in supporting advocating for their role. Additionally, try to be present in local and state activities related to SPAW. The more that are present at SPAW related events, the more power that your group will have.

What is the main thing you want readers to know about when advocating for SPAW?

It's never too early to get involved. If it's your first year in a school psychology program, then don't be afraid to reach out to students who are further along in the program and talk to them about SPAW. Reaching out

can begin to open doors to future advocacy work in the field of school psychology. Advocating for the field of school psychology is an important one, as we continue to face a critical shortage of practitioners and trainers in school psychology. Therefore, getting involved in these issues will continue to be important for graduate students to continue to move the field forward.