

Telling Your Story to Legislators & Others

Telling YOUR story is crucial to advocating for yourself and others, as your experiences and needs are not only what fuels legislators' and others' priorities, but it also is the single most effective way to create real, meaningful change.

It may seem intimidating, but it certainly doesn't have to be. First, make sure you are registered to vote. Second, get to know your audience/legislator and what has been important to him/her and hopefully find some common ground that connects you to him/her. Third, craft your story. Your story can be written, in video form or prepared for a brief, in-person meeting (typically

COMPONENTS OF THE STORY

Elements of Your Story

1. Person – Who are you?

- Your name
- Where you live (so legislators know you are a constituent) and let them know you vote!
- Something about yourself (your age, disability, where you work, who you live with, etc.)
- Think about how you might make them connect with you/understand where

2. Problem – What's the issue?

- Clearly describe a problem, challenge or barrier that you want to discuss.
- Use data, if available, to indicate the depth of the problem.
- How does this problem affect you and others' lives?
- Think have you inspired them to want to help fix the problem?

3. Personal Experience – What are samples that explain the impact of the issue?

- How has this problem or barrier affected you?
- What happened? How were you personally affected?
- Evoke emotion.
- How would solving the problem help you and others' lives?

4. Proposal – What do you want them to do?

- Ask. Describe in detail how the audience/legislator can help solve the problem.
- Keep language simple.
- Be persuasive.
- Make it necessary, not just nice.

5. Appreciation – Thank them, more than once.

- Show your appreciation to the audience/legislator for listening and/or meeting.
- Reinforce your confidence in their ability to make a change and what it would mean to you.

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