

Handout 8: A Framework for Effective Storytelling

What is your motivation?: Be clear about why you are sharing this story, and how it relates to your advocacy goal.

Being clear about your advocacy goal will help you to pick which story (or part of it) will most powerfully illustrate the reasons behind your campaign for change.

Have a clear storyline: Tell your story so it has a beginning, middle and end.

Impactful stories take us on a journey with a beginning, a middle, and an end. They demand our attention, make us curious and empathic and then bring us to a conclusion.

What were the stakes?: identify what was at risk, what was the cost and how did it feel to have your your experience.

An effective story makes the listener feel something. You can achieve this by making your audience aware of what was at risk, what was the cost and how it made you feel. This demonstrates how important the issue is to you.

Who was involved?: introduce us to the main characters in your story.

Effective stories introduce us to characters that we have an emotional response to. Who should we care about? Who is the villain? By making it clear what types of people were involved with your story you can help the audience to empathise and understand your motivations for change.

Use energy and empathy: No none else can relate the emotion of your story like you.

In storytelling, emotions are more important than facts. Anyone can read a research report, but only you can tell your story. By demonstrating honesty and authenticity you are inviting your audience to connect with the you and your cause.

Who else matters?: Sometimes it is more powerful to include other voices in your story.

Your story matters, and you can make your advocacy goal stronger by adding the voices of other people affected by an issue to yours. By including quotes, accounts, and perspectives from others you can increase the chance of your story connecting with your audience.

Do you have any visual images?: They can help bring your story to life.

Using visual devices like a photograph, a picture, video or object can help translate complex ideas into accessible information for your audience.

Why are you sharing this? Make sure you have a point to your story and an 'ask'

It is not enough to simply relate a story. What do you want to see changed? Make sure you take the time to ask directly for this in simple and direct terms.

(Adapted from "Tell Me a Story" by Eric Friedenwald-Fishman, 2012 - http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/tell_me_a_story)