How to Tell Your Story with a Purpose: Nine Components of Your Story

Do you want to change the way a system works? Do you have a story to prove why it needs to be changed? Then you are on your way to becoming an advocate! All you need to do is follow these 8 steps when writing or telling your story to a decision maker. Ready, set, go!

1. **Who are you addressing?**
   - Address the Representative or Senator who represents you
   - Use their title (Dear Representative Something)

Dear…____________________________________________

2. **Who are you?**
   - Name
   - Experience with Mental Illness
   - Legislative District
   - 1 sentence

My name is…

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

3. **Do you have something in common with this legislator?**
   - Does the legislator have a family member with mental illness?
   - Do they live in your neighborhood?
   - Did they go to the same school?
   - Or something else!
   - 1 sentence, if applicable.

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________
4. **What issue does your story demonstrate?**
   - Clearly describe the problem
   - 1 sentence

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. **Why is this issue important to you?**
   - Only use the parts of your story which help explain the issue you have identified.
   - 3-4 sentences

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. **What do you want the legislator to do about it?**
   - As clearly and specifically as possible, tell them what you’d like to see changed.
   - Legislators want to hear your creative solutions because you may have a unique perspective or solution to a problem.
   - 3 sentences

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
7. **What are YOU going to do?**
   - Tell the legislator that you will help them solve the problem.
   - You do NOT need all the answers, just willingness to help!
   - 1 sentence

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

8. **What are they doing right?**
   - Legislators are very rarely thanked for the work they do, end on a positive note and acknowledge their hard work.
   - Committee role or other position in leadership
   - Did you see them at a previous town hall?
   - Did they vote for a bill you agreed with?
   - 1 sentence

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

9. **How do they contact you?**
   - End your letter and sign it
   - Give them one or two ways to contact you.
   - Phone, email address, physical address (place to receive mail)

Thank you for your consideration.

Name: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: _____________________________
Address: ___________________________

Example:

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Darya Farivar
206-324-1521
daryaf@dr-wa.org
315 5th Ave S, Suite 850
Seattle, WA 98104