

Storytelling for Advocacy: How to Tell Your Story

Storytelling is a powerful tool for advocacy. Stories have the power to persuade and move people to action. Stories are up to **22 times more memorable** than facts alone and help make the case for why a policymaker should stand behind your cause.

Policymakers want to hear your story! Telling a personal story that conveys why you are invested in an issue can inform lawmakers and sway their support for legislation.

We all have stories to tell. Choosing the one that resonates most with your elected official is key. When considering a story, keep in mind two key components that compel others to listen and take action: the main ‘ask’ and the audience.

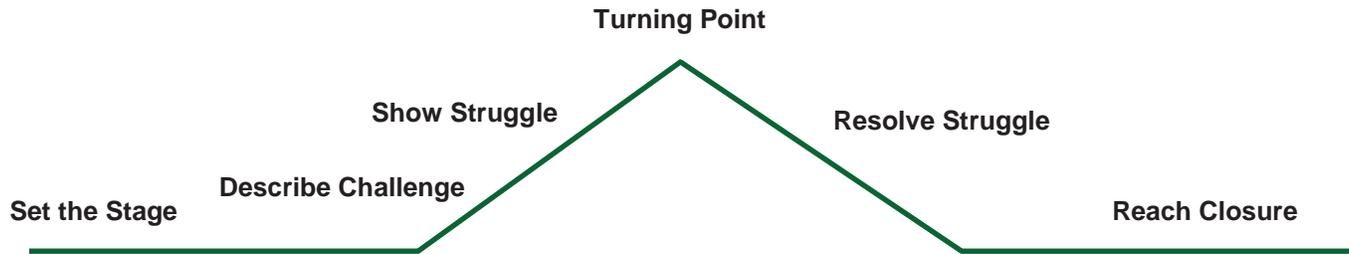
- **The ‘Ask’:** Let your policymaker know why you are there and what you want from them. You want to **be clear, concise and confident**.
- **Know Your Audience:** Be familiar with whom you plan to speak. Frame your story based on the values you share with your audience. Consider the relevance to your policymaker’s district and how your story might reflect broader community issues.

Tell an effective story. The most effective stories **follow tried-and-true story logic**. Include each component to craft an organized, exciting and memorable story.

1. **Set the Stage:** Begin by introducing yourself and your role as a nutrition professional. Think outside of your title. Instead of saying “I’m an RDN,” say “I lead a program in your district that helps people living with diabetes stay healthy.” Lay the groundwork of your story, describing the setting and context, and establishing the stakes.
2. **Describe the Challenge:** Think the main conflict that sets your story in motion. In your first few sentences you’ll want to ‘hook’ your audience by making them want to know what happens next. Give them the promise that where your story takes them will be worthwhile.
3. **Convey the Struggle:** Struggles can be internal, physical, emotional or philosophical problems that propel the story forward, creating tension, suspense and excitement along the way. Describe your struggles with vivid language, strong adjectives and key details that captivate the audience.
4. **Highlight the turning point.** It can be the moment of discovery or the moment of greatest tension that leads to resolution of the main conflict.
5. **Show Resolution:** Describe how the conflict has been resolved and tie up any loose ends. Link your story to a broader context that connects with the policy for which you are advocating. Introduce the potential for success.
6. **Reach Closure:** This is a final well-crafted sentence that you leave with the policymaker. Reemphasize the importance of your story and include a reiteration of ‘the ask’.

Storytelling for Advocacy Worksheet

Use this worksheet to develop your personal story or to interview others for a compelling story.



The 'Ask': What do you want the elected official to do? How should they think and feel after your story?

Know Your Audience: What do you know about your target audience? What do you have in common? What are your differences?

- 1 Set the Stage:** Introduce yourself and your story. Where does your story take place? Who is involved? What will happen if action is not taken? Begin with a strong statement.
- 2 Describe the Challenge:** Involve as many senses as possible in your story. What did you see, hear, feel, taste and smell?
- 3 Convey the Struggle:** When describing the conflict, use emotional appeal. How did the issue impact you personally? How did it impact the individual? What internal, physical, emotional, mental or philosophical challenges or roadblocks did you face?
- 4 Highlight the Turning Point:** What is the 'Aha!' moment of your story? How does this moment relate to the future?
- 5 Show Resolution:** How is the challenge resolved? What changed?
- 6 Reach Closure:** What is your main point? How is it related to your 'ask'?