

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL STORYTELLING

These tips provide guidelines for conveying your stories and ideas with legislators. Storytelling is a crucial part of advocacy, and no one is better equipped to tell compelling stories than you!



Why do we tell stories?

Our brains are wired to remember stories. We're set up to not just listen to stories, but to experience them alongside the storyteller. Stories are a powerful way to plant ideas, thoughts, and emotions in our elected officials. Stories help legislators do their job. By sharing stories, we help our representatives understand how mentoring programs are changing and improving lives.

Storytelling for advocacy:

1. Introduce the **main character** (which could be you, a mentor, a mentee, etc.). Why do we care about them?
2. **Critical moment**: what creates conflict in the life of the main character? What spurs them to action?
3. **Rising action**: what are complications and obstacles that our main character faces?
4. **Turning point**: what changes the direction positively for the character?
5. **Resolution**: how does the turning change the character's life? What has the main character gained at the end?

Quick tips:

Choose one story to tell. Your visit may be short with only a few minutes to tell your story. Pick one story that is clear, concise, and conveys the point you want.

Focus on personal aspects of your story. Share one or two personal details to make it unique and memorable. Elected officials may hear many stories during a day and details will help them remember yours.

Connect your individual story to a broader picture with a piece of data. The purpose of your story is to make your audience care about mentoring as much as you do. But the icing on top is adding in a statistic (see our Talking Points sheet) which puts more force behind your experience.

Take a deep breath. It's okay to be nervous! Sharing personal stories is difficult. Take a deep breath, stay calm, be yourself, and speak from your heart. Your representative's job is to listen to you.