

Story Feedback Guides

These three simple checklist tools set up grassroots advocacy managers to help advocates tell a memorable story that earns their audience's attention and builds rapport. The checklists are designed to be used by grassroots managers while listening to an advocate tell a story. Grassroots managers can use the checklist to isolate areas for improvement. Each checklist also features suggested questions or exercises to help the advocate improve their story.



Outcomes:

- » Grassroots practitioner helps advocate improve story so that it is memorable, earns attention, and builds rapport with listeners.
- » Advocate practices telling their story in front of an audience and becomes more comfortable telling it.



Prerequisites:

- » Advocates should have prepared a story in advance based on their experiences that puts a human face on the organization's policy objectives.



Directions:

- 1 Read the *Story Fundamentals Checklist* beforehand so you know what to listen for during the advocate's story.
- 2 Ask advocate to tell their story.
- 3 Check off each box as it appears in the story using the listening cues.
- 4 If an item is missing or could benefit from improvement, ask the included questions to help advocate develop that component.
- 5 Complete the *Storytelling Delivery Checklist* and *Washington Fit Checklist* after hearing the complete story. Provide feedback as appropriate.
- 6 Ask advocate to tell their story again. Repeat checklist as necessary.



Guidance on Coaching Tone and Approach

Stories are very personal expressions for a storyteller. Critiquing and editing can be easily mistaken as personal criticisms. So when coaching advocates, guide the advocate into making changes to their story on their own. Some suggested techniques include:

Do: Ask how they would tweak the story themselves. ("How would you...?")

Do: Model effective examples.

Don't: Issue editing instructions. ("Cut this section...")

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Directions for Completing Story Fundamentals Checklist

- 1 Ask advocate to share their story over the phone or in-person and check off items below as you hear them.
- 2 If an item is missing, ask a prompting question after the story is complete to help advocate fill out their story.



Character and Context

A person or community

Listen for these cues:

- » "I am..."
- » "We have..."

Questions to help draw this out:

- » "Who is this story really about?"
- » "What do I need to know about you to understand your goals?"



Goals

What they wanted to accomplish

Listen for these cues:

- » "I wanted..."
- » "We were trying to..."

Questions to help draw this out:

- » "What motivated you?"
- » "What were you really trying to do here?"



Conflict

What stopped them

Listen for these cues:

- » "But..."
- » "However..."

Questions to help draw this out:

- » "Why was it difficult to achieve your goal?"



Plot

New way they tried to achieve goals

Listen for these cues:

- » "Instead..."
- » "So then..."

Questions to help draw this out:

- » "How did you overcome that challenge?"
- » "What else did you try to overcome your obstacle?"



Resolution

What changed and how they changed

Listen for these cues:

- » "In the end..."
- » "Finally..."

Questions to help draw this out:

- » "What did you take away from your journey?"
- » "How did this experience change you?"



Directions for Completing Post-Story Checklists

- 1 After story is complete, assess advocate delivery and story fit.
- 2 If advocate needs improvement in one area, work through the accompanying questions or exercises.

Storytelling Delivery Checklist

- The story made me care. It caused an emotional reaction.
 - » Ask advocate what is meaningful to them in their story and what emotions it stirs in them.
- Language is accessible.
 - » Share examples of how to translate jargon:
 - Jargon: "I am a pulmonologist"
 - Simple: "I am a lung doctor"
 - Jargon: "I've been trained in DISC and MBTI systems"
 - Simple: "I learned psychology in my military training"
- Story is well-articulated.
 - » Ask advocate to repeat less-refined parts of the story, but to emphasize their feelings and senses (e.g. "I felt..." and "the water was ice-cold...").
- Story is well-paced.
 - » Ask advocate to tell a 1-minute, 5-minute, and 15-minute version of their story.

Washington Fit Checklist

- Story represents problems many constituents face – it's not too extreme an example.
 - » "How does your story represent broader problems within your community?"
- Story is relevant to policymaker and district.
 - » "How might your neighbors be experiencing similar challenges?"
- Story connects to policy.
 - » "What are the broader implications of your story?"
 - » "What really needs to change in your community?"