

Introduction to Strategic Sharing

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What is Strategic Sharing?

- Strategic Sharing is a way to share your story effectively in different situations
- Different situations – different audiences, goals, and opportunities
- Originally developed by the Foster Care Alumni Association

Why Strategic Sharing?

- Personal stories are compelling
- Your experience can inform improvements in policies and programs
- Targeted communication maximizes impact on audiences
- You represent a larger group of people when you share strategically

Three Strategies

- Choose your purpose (why you are telling your story), what you will share, and the details
- Connect with your audience and purpose of your talk
- Claim the meaning, importance, emotion, and process of sharing (talk about what the experience meant to you)

Credibility

- What is it?
- Where does it come from?
- How do you get it?
- Why do we need it?

Credibility

- What is it?
 - Believability; trustworthiness; expertise
- Where does it come from?
 - The audience
- How do you get it?
 - Strategic and honest communication
- Why do we need it?
 - Must be credible for your story to be accepted

Own Your Story

- **YOU** decide what you tell, to whom and when
- Don't be afraid to tell someone a personal question is inappropriate

Example: That's a good question, but right now we are talking about.....

- Don't over share – this can make the audience uncomfortable and damage credibility; they may stop listening

Damaging Credibility

- What do you think?

Damaging Credibility (Believability)

- Exaggerating
- Telling things that are irrelevant and may be perceived as untrue (audience decides what is factual and relevant and what is not)
- Going off topic – can be perceived as not being an expert on the topic
- Talking too much about self and not enough about larger issues/effect on audience

Don't

- “Out” anyone – they own their story just as much as you do and can decide what and when to share their experiences
- Attempt to damage others – it only serves to damage your credibility

I am here to talk to you today about how my experience being homeless affected my family. I grew up in a middle class neighborhood. I had 3 brothers and one sister and we all got along pretty well. We had no idea that dad getting sick would one day create a situation where we were all forced to live with friends and then, as our welcome ran out with all of them, in a shelter. It was humiliating and I was separated from my siblings. My mother was always trying to get odd jobs to make ends meet, but it felt like we would never be able to go back to the life we once had. Luckily, we found out about Health Care for the Homeless. They were able to treat my dad and helped us get back on our feet and back into a home of our own.

- I was homeless for a long time. Before and while I was out on the streets, I had a problem with drugs – mostly heroin. All I cared about was that next fix. I prostituted, hustled, and stole wallets to get money to support my habit. I spent time in and out of emergency rooms throughout most of the 1990's – I must have been there at least a million times. I was also incarcerated 20 or 30 times. This one guy, James Smith, was my supplier at the time and he told me he had a crappy childhood and he sold drugs since he was about 11. He showed me how to inject the drugs. I got Hep C and HIV from using.