

# Social Storytelling: Making Homelessness and Homeless Services Real to a Broader Community, Pt. II

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National Health Care for the Homeless Council

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HEALTH CARE  
*for the*  
HOMELESS  
COUNCIL

# Learning Objectives, or #Takeaways

- Describe the role that storytelling can play in destigmatizing homelessness and illustrating homeless services.
- Name three tactics for incorporating storytelling in social media.
- Describe common challenges and concerns in storytelling.

# What Is Storytelling, and Why Is It Important?

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# Storytelling Is...

- Stories personalize, humanize, and make experiences concrete
- More impactful than stats, facts, and figures
- Takes multiple forms
  - We will focus on digital and multimedia storytelling.
  - Photos
  - Video
  - Copy (blogs, posts, etc.)

# Importance of Storytelling

- Destigmatization
  - Help change public opinion
  - Help counteract the dominant narrative of homelessness
- Powerfully illustrates homeless services
- Useful for development and advocacy
  - Show value
  - Increase community support/awareness
  - Attract new potential consumers

# Why Is Social Media Important?

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# Social Media

- 79% of American adults use social networking sites
- Great storytelling vehicle
- Fluid, direct, and immediate
- Unlike advertising, it's not a "loudspeaker", but a conversation
- Engagement
- Way to be part of a community



# Social Media

- Think beyond social media
- Not the only storytelling platform
- Part of your integrated communications
- Remember: Everything you do on social media can also be applied to other communication strategies



# Methodology

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# Backbones of Good Stories

- Stories should be
  - Credible
  - Make an impact
  - Evoke emotions
  - Relevant to the audience
  - Consensual

# Copy

- The simplest building block of stories is the written narrative.
  - Facebook posts
  - Tweets
  - Links to longer-form content; blog copy

# Impact of Services



Central City Concern

“”

I have so much more than I expected. I am grateful every second.



**Central City Concern**  
Like This Page · April 26 ·

Tyrone walked out of prison, then through the doors of the Central City Concern Recovery Center. As he reaches milestones that once felt impossible, he keeps looking to the future with hope and gratitude. Read his story at [www.centralcityconcern.org/cccturningpoints/tyrone](http://www.centralcityconcern.org/cccturningpoints/tyrone).

49 Likes · 4 Comments · 2 Shares

Like · Comment · Share

Most Relevant

**ShellyBelly Barker** I was also given the mentor recovery program as well as other CCC opportunities. Forever grateful to David & the guys for helping me learn to be the best me. Sober. Happy. Helping others, now. I am so grateful. ... See More

Like · Reply · 2w · Edited

**Michael Nicholas** That is awesome!!!! The CCCRC and VOA also saved my life.

Like · Reply · 2w

**Alvssa Nicholas** That's beautiful Tyrone.

Write a comment...

- Humanizing
- Follows through with [link](#)

# Impact of Services



## Central City Concern

### Achieving His Dream: Tyrone's Story

*"I have so much more than I expected. I am grateful every second."*

A home. A family. A career. For some, these goals define the American Dream. For Tyrone, all he wanted was "to walk down the street with a life."

Tyrone's childhood in Pasadena, Calif. was relatively stable and secure, but he made some bad choices that landed him in juvenile detention by age 14. He fell deeper into drug use and revolved in and out of incarceration. But during his last stint, he began to study the laws of attraction and positive thinking, which he says turned his life around. When he left prison for the last time, he spent his \$124 on a ticket to Portland in search of a fresh start.



#### How CCC Helped Tyrone

CCC Recovery Center outpatient substance use disorder treatment

Housing & intensive peer support through Recovery Mentor Program

Opportunities to build skills & give back with Community Volunteer Corps

#### How You Can Help

Donate

Volunteer

- Makes a call to action
- Awareness AND fundraising

# General Awareness and Advocacy



Harborview  
Medical Center

- Syndicated article intro and linked to the full KUOW story
- Highlights impact of services
- Informs AND raises public profile
- Human, heartfelt with direct consumer focus

**Harborview Medical Center**  
February 23 · 🌐

DaShawn Horne spent 103 days at Harborview after being hit in the head with a baseball bat in a vicious hate crime. KUOW Public Radio tells his story of recovery and how his life is one year later. <https://bit.ly/2VeBCMg>

KUOW.ORG  
**Life after a hate crime: the recovery of DaShawn Horne**  
Police thought they were responding to a homicide. But when they arrived,...

👍👎🥰 52      5 Comments 10 Shares

# Telling Stories Through Copy

- Work with CAB to engage a willing consumer
- Take portrait and conduct interview
- Quote news coverage that illustrates a story
- Should always be about people
- Be vigilant: stories are everywhere
- Keep it simple and relatable
- Remember, Facebook for longer posts and Twitter for short and direct

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# Photos & Images

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# Photos & Images

- Imagery is a key element of storytelling
- Higher engagement than narratives alone
- Use it whenever possible!
  - Even a simple photograph can tell a story

# Images: Simple Goes a Long Way



## Open Table Nashville, Inc.



Open Table Nashville, Inc.

Page Liked · February 10 · 🌐

Help us welcome our dear friend Barbara into her new home!

"I've worked with BB since I started this job and she is the most resourceful human I've ever met. She worked so hard for this place and even overcame a denial for this apartment that she fought and won!" - Haley Spigner, OTN Outreach Worker

Barbara attended 61st Avenue UMC for years, and now is a member of [Glencliff United Methodist Church](#), the site of the Village at Glencliff. We're so grateful for these partnerships and connections in our community!

[#OpenTableNash](#) [#HousingHealingHope](#)  
[#HousingEndsHomelessness](#)



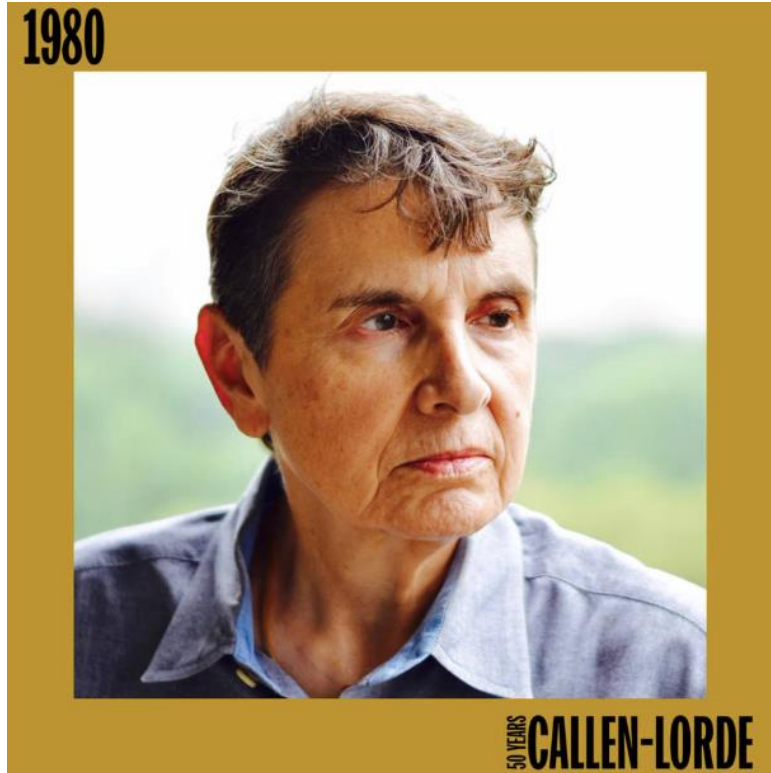
You and 229 others · 12 Comments · 7 Shares

- Humanizing
- Effective and compelling
- Simple
- Awareness and impact of services

# Images: Multipurpose



## Callen Lorde Community Health Center



- Shows impact of services
- Promotes something specific
- Use of consistent #hashtag

# #VisualizeHomelessness



National Health Care for the Homeless  
Council

- <http://www.nhchc.org/visualize>
- Regular series of graphics that tells the story of homelessness
- Began March 2018: now with over 40 images and growing
- Brings awareness to HCH issues
- Free to share and use

# #VisualizeHomelessness: Opioids

People experiencing homelessness are **nine times** more likely to die from an **opioid overdose** than those who are **stably housed**.

#VisualizeHomelessness



[www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org)

Source: Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: How the Opioid Crisis Affects Homeless Populations



**National Health Care for the Homeless Council**

Published by Jennifer Rachels Dix [?]

Page Liked · August 19, 2018 · Edited ·

The numbers tell the tale – opioid overdoses accounted for more than 42,000 deaths in 2016, and the **#opioidepidemic** has significantly impacted people experiencing **#homelessness**. Learn ways to advocate for needed solutions on the federal, state, and local levels: <https://bit.ly/2BeyBq8>.

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- Current “hot topic” important to the HCH community
- Link to your services, resources, or a call to action
- Other examples that would fit this strategy?



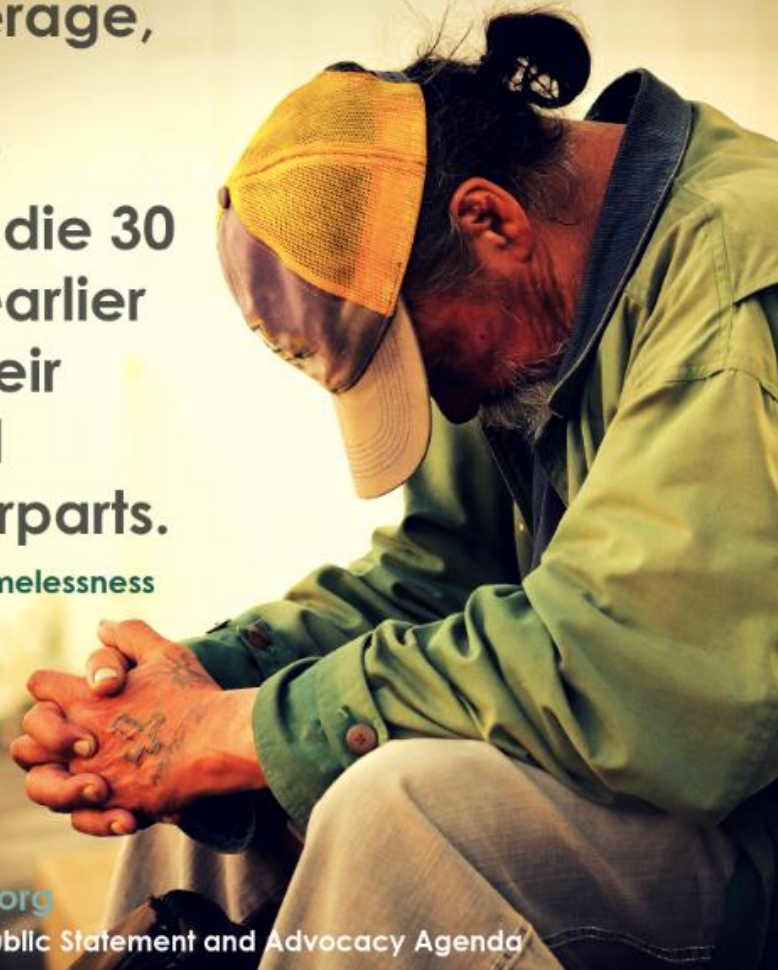
# #VisualizeHomelessness: HPMD

On average,  
people  
without  
homes die 30  
years earlier  
than their  
housed  
counterparts.

#VisualizeHomelessness

[www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org)

Source: HPMD Public Statement and Advocacy Agenda



National Health Care for the Homeless Council



Published by Jennifer Rachels Dix [?]

Page Liked · December 23, 2018 ·

As we look back on Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, let us not forget that hundreds of thousands of people will continue to experience #homelessness in America throughout 2019. We will continue to fight and advocate for vulnerable populations year-round. #VisualizeHomelessness Learn more about this tragedy and how you can get involved: [www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org).

Tag Photo Edit

371

16 Comments

363 Shares

Like Comment Share

Most Relevant



Write a comment...



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# #VisualizeHomelessness: HPMD



- Call attention to event; build or maintain momentum
- Bring awareness to issue of homeless deaths
- Call to action




# #VisualizeHomelessness: Mental Health Month



More than half of people experiencing homelessness have had thoughts of suicide or attempted suicide.

#VisualizeHomelessness




[www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org)  
Source: Suicide and Homelessness, Data Trends in Suicide and Mental Health Among Homeless Populations


 **National Health Care for the Homeless Council** ...





Published by Jennifer Rachels Dix [?]  
Page Liked · May 12 · 🌐

This #MentalHealthMonth, please help us bring awareness to the suffering of people experiencing #homelessness who cope with mental illness and may not have access to proper care or interventions. #VisualizeHomelessness



Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2QbFDzf>

 Tag Photo  Add Location  Edit


 53 14 Comments  
57 Shares



 Like  Comment  Share 

Most Relevant ▾

 **Lillian Cassell Brooke Sabrina Shrader**  
Like · Reply · Message · 4d  1  
↳ 1 Reply

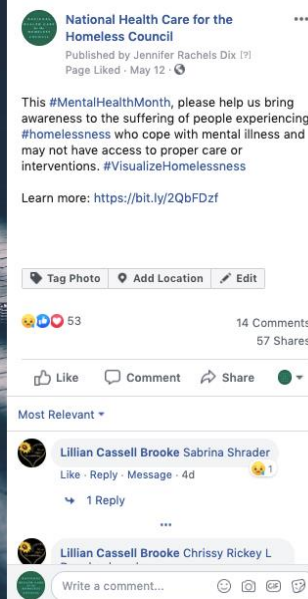
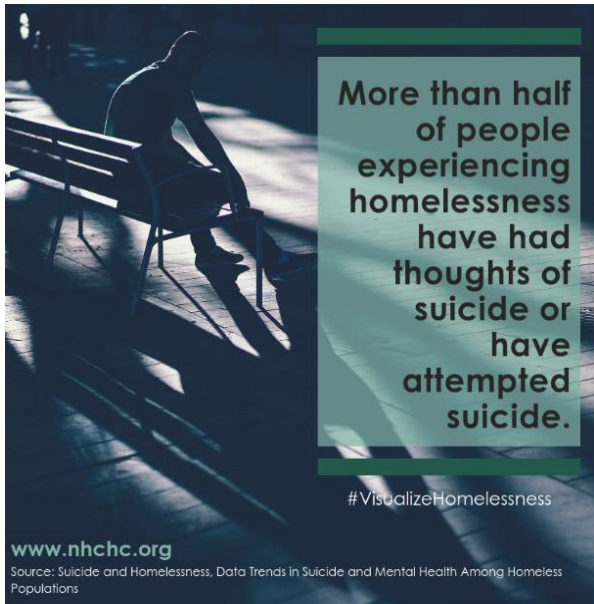
...

 **Lillian Cassell Brooke Chrissy Rickey L**

 Write a comment... 



# #VisualizeHomelessness: Mental Health Month



- Tie in to National Health Observances
- Healthfinder.gov
- Builds awareness and relates to homelessness

# Telling Stories Through Imagery

- What is your objective? What do you want to say?
- Use compelling photos
  - Use stock photography or take your own
  - Look for good photo ops
  - Remember basic photography principles
- Engage consumers in the process
  - Consumer stories can be empowering and very compelling

# Telling Stories Through Imagery

- Take advantage of online resources
  - Canva
  - Use our Storykit
- Use concise copy and simple imagery
- Be responsible with sourcing
- Promote your organization
- Consider using hashtags
- Monitor your metrics

# Videos

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# Videos

- Very effective
- High engagement
- Work across all social media platforms
- Require the most work and time

# General Institutional

## Health Care Without Walls



Health Care Without Walls  
Compassionate care for women and families in need

[www.HealthCareWithoutWalls.org](http://www.HealthCareWithoutWalls.org)



- Highlights services
- Offers clear demonstration of how HCWW impacts clients

# Direct Appeal

## BHCHP Sox for Socks



- Creative and clever
- Engages and informs
- Makes a direct ask



# Consumer Testimonials

## Joseph Benson



- Powerful and in his own words
- Immediate impact
- Implied story of Houston - HCH services

# Telling Stories Through Video

- Don't always need professional equipment: a smartphone can do
- Find a quiet space and use a mic
- Have a plan!
  - Draw on your CAB

# Telling Stories Through Video

- Gather A and B roll
- Always strive for clean edit points
- Get more footage than you need!
- Consider social media:
  - Facebook Live
  - Periscope on Twitter

# Challenges and Concerns

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# Challenges and Concerns: Trauma-Informed

- Consumer Storytelling
  - Trauma-informed
    - Homelessness is traumatizing; be mindful
    - Understand triggers
    - Rehearse story in private, safe space
    - Be clear how the story will be used and who might see it
    - Never be pushy
    - Stay on message
    - Learning Lab: Trauma-Informed Storytelling: Perspectives from Consumer Leaders

# Challenges and Concerns: Confidentiality

- Confidentiality and Respect
  - Patient and consumer confidentiality is critical
  - Use a release form
  - Be clear that people will see the story and it might attract reactions or comments
  - Follow-up with consumer storytellers to ensure they are ok with the content BEFORE it goes out
  - Again, make absolutely certain the consumer understands their story will be public

# Challenges and Concerns: Audience Response

- Be ready for feedback
- Monitor and respond to comments
- Have a plan in mind to handle negative or inappropriate comments
- Acknowledgement is important

# Toolkit and Resources

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# Creating Your Own Initiative

- Storytelling principles can apply to **all** mediums, social media or otherwise
- Make stories simple, relatable, and actionable
- Always have a defined outcome
- Impact of storytelling: two examples
  - Boston HCH Program's Sox for Socks
  - #VisualizeHomelessness and HCH Stories
- Test, measure, and refine

# Now It's Your Turn!

- Use our online toolkit to get started
  - <http://www.nhchc.org/storykit>
- [Sample release form](#)
- Story structure
  - [NCAB Storytelling Guide](#)
  - [Activating Your Inner Aesop](#)
- Digital Storytelling
  - [Stony Brook University](#)
  - [StoryCenter](#)

# Now It's Your Turn!

- Social media resources
  - HCH2017: [Amplify Your Voice in an Accessible Medium: Social Media 101 for Health Centers](#)
  - HCH2018: [Social Storytelling: Making Homelessness and Homeless Services Real to a Broader Community, Part I](#)
  - [Hootsuite](#)
  - Facebook Pages Manager (app store)
  - [SproutSocial's Image Guide](#)
  - [Social media toolkits](#) for health observances
  - [How to Use Hashtags](#)

# Now It's Your Turn!

- Graphics and Photos
  - [Canva](#)
  - [Piktochart](#)
  - [Unsplash](#)
  - [Pexels](#)
  - [Rule of Thirds](#)
- Make the Case for Social Media
  - [The ROI of Social Media in Healthcare: 10 Benefits](#)
  - [Social Media Metrics Study](#)
- Examples of social media done well at  
<http://www.nhchc.org/storykit>

# Discussion and Questions

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