



Curriculum Guide for Storytelling

Learning Objectives

By the end of the Storytelling in Advocacy workshop, the learner will:

1. Be familiar with the 6-step process for developing a personal story for advocacy.
2. Recognize the need for an ask (identify the take-a-way or closure of the story, knowing the request being made to the decision makers).
3. Understand key terms and concepts used in discussing public health by taking the Black Table Talk E-Learning Course.
4. Know the communications concepts important to great storytelling
5. Understand the power of storytelling for educational purposes

Format and Length

Format: The Storytelling in Advocacy workshop can be delivered in person or virtually via an online meeting platform such as Zoom.

Length: Allocate a half day to ensure participants have time to develop and share their stories. Alternatively, you could break the workshop into two 1½ hour sessions based on your needs.

Lessons:

- Identifying Your Communication Style
- The Power of Oral Communication and Storytelling: Analyzing John Lewis's Effective Oral Style

Introduction

Acknowledge The Center for Black Health & Equity for providing the resources we are using today: The Truth Be Told Toolbox: A Community Resource for Equity-Centered Policy Change.

Opening Exercise:

"My Story" Introduction

Objective: To serve as the foundation of the training, get people comfortable, and talking with each other.

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Instructions:

1. Introduce yourself and identify a great storyteller in your life or a great story that you recall hearing. Examples may include a family member, such as a grandmother who would tell you bedtime stories or the actual stories that she shared with you about her childhood, or a professor/teacher who shared stories about their career.
2. Give learners approximately 2 minutes to think about their response.
3. Each participant has up to 2- minutes to respond.

Facilitator Notes: Model the assignment by introducing yourself and the storytelling in your life that you recall and why. Be sure to stick to the 2 minute time frame.

Introduce the Purpose of the Workshop:

Facilitator Script:

Workshop Purpose

The objective of this workshop is to blend the art of storytelling with the science of advocacy. We aim to enable our participants to tell compelling 3-minute stories that can be used in various public settings—from school board meetings to council gatherings. These stories will serve as powerful tools to advocate for health equity, reaching hearts and mobilizing action where data alone may not.

Why Is This Crucial?

In our collective journey towards achieving health equity, we often grapple with how to make statistics and data resonate on an emotional and human level. Storytelling serves as a conduit to accomplish just that. By connecting numbers to narratives, we can create a compelling case for change and equity.

By the end of this workshop, participants will have a ready-to-go 3-minute story and the storytelling skills needed to advocate for health equity. They’ll be empowered to change minds and inspire action for a more equitable healthcare system. Thank you for taking on this important role. You are not just facilitating a workshop; you’re catalyzing change.

Let’s dive in!



Identifying Your Communication Style

Facilitator Script:

Workshop Purpose

Materials Needed:

- Flip chart or whiteboard
- Markers

Objective:

To empower participants to identify and leverage their unique communication styles in health advocacy.

Facilitator Script:

Introduction to Participants

"Hello everyone, welcome to today's workshop. Effective communication is a cornerstone of advocacy. It influences how we connect, inform, and inspire change. As we all come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, our styles of communication differ, and that's a strength! Today, we'll explore five main styles of communication—Oral, Written, Non-Verbal, Visual, and Listening. Let's dive in."

Step 1: Set the Context

"Before we get into the activity, let's set the context. You might recall the significance of oral storytelling in African and African American traditions. It's a medium that has historically carried wisdom, history, and life lessons across generations. Each of you brings your own narrative and style of telling that narrative. Our aim today is to identify those styles."

Step 2: Explanation of Five Styles

Oral/Verbal: "Think of the times you've had face-to-face conversations or video calls. How do you put together your words? When we speak with others, face to face or via Skype, Zoom, telephone, formal or informal, how we put together words creates a message."

Written: "This could be through emails, reports, and texts. How you write can depend on your audience and purpose."

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Non-Verbal: "Our body language, facial expressions, and even how we dress convey messages. How mindful are you of your non-verbal cues?"

Visual: "Social media platforms like Instagram have made visual communication dominant. How do you use images to tell your story?"

Listening: "Listening is the cornerstone of all communication styles. How well do you engage in active listening?"

Step 3: Self-Assessment

"Now, let's take about 3 minutes to jot down which style that you prefer and which style you found challenging. This is a personal reflection, so be honest with yourself."

[Wait 3 minutes]

Step 4: Discussion

"Great, let's discuss the pros and cons you have identified for each style. We 'll have about 10 minutes for this discussion just to get a feel of what works best for you."

[10 minutes for discussion / sharing]

At the end to wrap up the discussion - "To conclude, recognizing your communication style isn't just academic; it's practical. Whether you're speaking at a council meeting or sharing a story to raise awareness about your community, your unique style is a tool for change. And today we are going to learn how to harness the power of your voice and your lived experience."

The Power of Oral Communication and Storytelling: Analyzing John Lewis's Effective Oral Style

Materials Needed:

- John Lewis, March on Washington Video
 - YouTube video: 5:52

Facilitator scripts:

"Stories have the capacity to touch hearts, change minds, and rally communities for justice. And there's no better example to start us off than the legendary civil rights leader, Representative John Lewis. Let's watch a brief clip of John Lewis speaking at the March on Washington. As you watch, pay attention to how he uses different styles of communication to make his point resonate with the audience."

Instructions:

Step 1: Show a video clip of John Lewis speaking at the March on Washington

Ask for input regarding the various communication styles he used to be effective. As you gather responses, list them on your laptop if you're sharing or on a whiteboard or other visual aid to build a visual picture for people to remember (and perhaps capture with their phone cameras). This will reinforce what they learn about the impactful communication techniques Representative Lewis used.

Step 2: Post-Video Engagement

"Now that we've seen this powerful speech, can anyone share what types of communication styles you noticed Representative Lewis using? What made his words impactful?"

Step 3: List Communication Styles and Techniques

"As we're discussing, let's list out the various styles and techniques you noticed."

Oral/Verbal: "How did his tone and pitch add to his message?"

Non-Verbal: "What were his facial expressions and body movements conveying?"

Listening: "How did he engage with the crowd and gauge their reactions?"

"John Lewis was a master at coupling passion with precision in his messaging. He knew that storytelling wasn't just about what you say, but how you say it."

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His delivery—laced with sincerity, filled with examples, and paired with a call to action—served to draw listeners in. This multi-faceted approach made his advocacy not just persuasive but also profoundly impactful.”

Instructions:

Step 1: Show a video clip of John Lewis speaking at the March on Washington

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Step 4: Analyzing John Lewis’s Effective Oral Style Instruction

After listing the communication styles and techniques identified by your participants, you could add a segment to the activity focusing specifically on how John Lewis exemplified effective oral storytelling. "Great observations, everyone. Let's take a moment to dissect some of the elements that made 5 John Lewis's oral style so compelling."

- Clarity of Message: "Lewis didn't beat around the bush. His message was crystal clear. How does clarity contribute to the power of a story?"

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- Use of Examples: "He illustrated his points with examples that made abstract concepts tangible. What makes examples so essential in storytelling?"
- Emotional Connection: "His passion was palpable. How does emotive speaking draw the listener in?"
- Call to Action: "Every compelling story has a purpose, a clear 'ask.' What are some ways you can incorporate this into your storytelling to effect change? He repeats the 'calls the action' several times."

"John Lewis was truly a storyteller for change; his methods combined several elements to make his delivery unforgettable. As we all work towards community betterment, let's consider how we can take a leaf out of his book."

The next part of the facilitator's guide can introduce a structured approach to storytelling. This six-step formula helps learners to craft their stories in a way that is both compelling and geared towards eliciting change—something critical for community members to educate elected officials and other key decision makers.

Crafting Your Story - The Six-Step Formula

Introduction to the Six-Step Formula Facilitator scripts:

"Building on what we've learned from John Lewis, let's delve into crafting our own stories. Stories are structured journeys. While emotion and passion make them compelling, a clear framework gives them shape and direction. We have a six-step formula to guide you in creating your story. Each step serves a specific purpose, so let's break it down."

Step 1: Describe the Setting

"Alright, folks, let's dive into the first step of crafting your compelling story: describing the setting. Now, setting is more than just a backdrop; it's the foundation upon which your story is built. It's the 'where' and 'when' that provides context to your narrative."

In every story, context is king. Think about your favorite movie or book. The setting is what initially pulls you in. It's what provides you with a 'mental image' to which you can attach all the forthcoming details. The setting can set the mood, introduce conflict, or even serve as a character in your story."

Participant Activity Prompt: "Now, it's your turn. Take a minute to jot down the setting of a story you wish to share involving a time when you experienced a challenge related to your or your community's health. Is it in a busy city or a quiet place in your neighborhood? Is it past or present? Remember, details breathe life into stories."

Step 2: Describe the Issue Introduction to the Issue

"Now that we've set the stage with our settings, let's move to the next crucial element of storytelling: the issue. The issue is the heartbeat of your story. It's the 'what' that motivates the 'why'—why should anyone listen, care, or take action?"

Importance of a Clear Issue: "Your issue is the crux of your story. It could be a challenge you're facing, an inequity that needs addressing, or a community issue that's been overlooked. Being clear on the issue will not only guide your narrative but also engage your listeners in a meaningful way."

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How to Frame Your Issue: "When thinking about your issue, aim for clarity and vividness. You want to touch on the emotional aspect of the issue but also be succinct enough for anyone to understand quickly. Your issue should evoke empathy, spark curiosity, or call for action."

Participant Activity Prompt: "So now, take a few minutes to jot down: What is the pressing issue or problem at the center of your story? Make sure it's concise but vivid. If someone reads or hears this, they should feel an urge to know more or even to act."

Step 3: Conflict Introduction to Conflict

"We've established the setting and pinpointed the issue. Now let's introduce the element that gives your story its pulse: conflict. Conflict is the hurdle or the obstacle that stands between you and the resolution of the issue you've highlighted."

Why Conflict Matters: "Conflict adds tension and depth to your narrative. It creates a dynamic situation where things are not just stated but experienced. In essence, conflict builds a bridge between the issue and potential solutions, making the listener invested in the outcome."

Characterizing Your Conflict: "The conflict could be internal—a personal struggle or dilemma—or external, such as institutional barriers or community challenges. It's the conflict that often highlights the complexities around the issue you're discussing."

Participant Activity Prompt: "Now, let's take a couple of minutes to identify the conflict in your story. How does this conflict make the issue more complex or multi-layered? Please jot down your thoughts."

Step 4: Lightning Bolt - When You Realized a Change is Needed

Introduction to the Lightning Bolt Moment: "So far, we've set the stage, identified the issue, and outlined the conflict. Now let's discuss the 'Lightning Bolt' moment. This is the point in your story where you—or the characters involved—realized that change was absolutely necessary."

Importance of the Lightning Bolt Moment: "This 'aha' moment is often the emotional highlight of your story. It's where your narrative shifts, pulling the listener further into your world. It's a signal that change is not just desired, but imperative."

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Examples of Lightning Bolt Moments: "This could be a personal revelation, a shocking statistic you discovered, or a significant event that made the scales tip. Whatever it is, it should act as a catalyst for change."

Participant Activity Prompt: "Now, it's your turn. Describe that lightning bolt moment when you realized something had to change. What was the spark that ignited this revelation? Write it down."

Step 5: Resolutions Introduction to Resolutions

"We've built our stories up to this point, highlighting the setting, the issue, the conflict, and the pivotal 'Lightning Bolt' moment. Now, let's focus on 'Resolutions.' This is where you present your action steps or the plans designed to overcome the conflict and solve the issue."

Importance of Resolutions: "Resolutions serve as the way forward in your narrative. It's the solution to the problem, whether it's a personal commitment or a community-based initiative. This section speaks to your agency—your power to enact change."

Examples of Resolutions: "Examples might include forming a community alliance, enacting policy change, or initiating a new approach to providing services. They can be tangible actions or shifts in perspective that pave the way for future change."

Participant Activity Prompt: "Let's engage in an exercise. List down some of the resolutions or solutions you've considered or already put into action. Think about how these solutions might impact systemic change to improve your community. Also, reflect on what has worked and what hasn't."

Step 6 - Closure and Ask Introduction to Closure and Ask: "We've navigated through the setting, issue, conflict, lightning bolt moment, and resolutions. Now we arrive at the final step—'Closure and Ask.' This is your chance to tie up all the elements of your story neatly and to leave your audience with a compelling call to action."

The Importance of a Strong Close: "The ending of your story is as crucial as its beginning. It's where you make your final impression and issue your call to action. Your 'ask' can range from wanting people to think differently about an issue to asking them to join a cause or donate resources. The key is to make it clear and compelling."



Examples of Closure and Ask: "For instance, you could end your story by tying it back to your initial setting or issue, showing how far you've come or how other communities are making progress. Your 'ask' could then be an invitation for others to join you in making even more progress."

Participant Activity Prompt: "Now, let's put pen to paper. Write down your closing remarks and your 'ask' or call to action. This is your final opportunity within your story to captivate your audience and inspire them to action. Make it memorable and impactful."

Incorporating Video and Debrief into the 6 Steps Introduction to Video Segment:
"Before we delve into crafting our stories, let's take a moment to watch a powerful example. We'll be viewing a segment from the 'Truth Be Told' series focusing on either New Orleans or Detroit. As you watch, pay attention to the storytelling elements we've discussed."

Instruction for Facilitator: Pause and show the video clip.

Truth Be Told New Orleans or Truth Be Told Detroit:

Each video is approximately 8 minutes long and is available on the Center for Black Health & Equity website. Post-Video Debrief: "Let's unpack what we've just seen. What 'ask' or resolution resonated with you, considering your experiences? To be effective, your story should focus on just one 'ASK,' especially in terms of policy change. Also, keep in mind that your story should be concise—limited to 2-3 minutes to fit most presentation criteria."

Transition to Six Steps: "With that fresh example in mind, let's revisit our six-step formula and start building our stories."



Storytelling in Action - Sharing Your Story

Facilitator scripts: Introduction and Recap:

"Congratulations, everyone! You've walked through the six pivotal steps to craft a compelling story. From setting the stage to making your 'ask,' each of you is now equipped with the formula to share your story in a meaningful way."

Transition to Storytelling in Action: "But what's a story without an audience, right? The next part of our session is 'Storytelling in Action.' Here, you'll have the chance to share your story and learn from others."

Instructions for Story Sharing: "Now, let's put your hard work into practice. We're going to break into smaller groups. In these groups, each person will have the opportunity to share their story. You have precisely 3 minutes to convey your message, so make them count."

Instruction for Facilitator:

- Divide the participants into smaller groups of 4-5 people.
- Facilitator scripts: Emphasizing Listening and Feedback:
 - "While listening to others, pay close attention to the storytelling elements—like the 'Lightning Bolt' moment or the 'Ask.' After everyone has shared, you'll have a few minutes to offer constructive feedback."
- Time Management: "Now that we've been through each step of effective storytelling and watched a compelling example, let's put this into practice. You'll have 20 minutes to work in your small groups. Use this time to share, critique, and refine your stories based on the 6-step framework."

Instruction for Facilitator:

- Set a timer for each group to manage the 3-minute limit per story.
- Ring a bell or give some other sign for groups to rotate.
- Start a timer for 20 minutes.
- After 20 minutes Transition from Breakout to Full Group:

"Alright, everyone, let's come back together."



- Call for volunteers and manage time to allow each to speak. I hope you found the discussions enriching. Could we have one volunteer from each group to share their story with us? Remember to focus on the framework:

Issue/Audience/Ask. And, as always, brevity and clarity are key. Your story matters."

Closing Remarks: "Storytelling is an art that requires not just good structure but also emotion and authenticity. Today, you've worked on both. After this exercise, I encourage you to take your stories to a broader audience—because stories can, and do, change the world." Instruction for Facilitator: Encourage participants wanting to improve their storytelling in advocacy and utilizing their story to educate decision makers to repeat the 6 steps of the training, and share their story out loud with others.

Notes:

- Observe this video/storyteller and tell me what tools she used to capture the audience, get them involved, and leave them with an understanding of her message: (show video of Legislator speaking on behalf of an issue) Again, list responses on a visual aid.

Debrief: What made these storytellers memorable?

**If you are doing a virtual session, ask participants to respond in the chat or raise their hands. Listen and document highlights of responses.



Key Steps in Storytelling for Educating

Outline the points using a PowerPoint or the 6-step worksheet:

1. Describe the setting
2. Describe the issue
3. Conflict
4. Lightning bolt - When you realize a change is needed
5. Resolutions
6. Closure and ASK? Show a video of a presentation that is 2-3 minutes: compilation video from TBT Toolbox.

Break out instructions:

It's your Turn: Break into teams (2-3 people per team, depending on your group size) and use the worksheet to develop your story.

- You will have 20 minutes to work together in your teams.

Following the breakout session:

- Ask for one volunteer from each group to share their story with the entire class.
- Remember the framework: Issue/Audience/Ask
- Reinforce the guidance: Be brief. Be focused on your message. Your story matters.

Resources for storytellers:

1. Truth Be Told Videos - available on The Center for Black Health & Equity website www.centerforblackhealth.org
2. Storytelling in Advocacy worksheet - LPHI
3. Storytelling Compilation Video