

# Seven Steps to Telling Your Story

The following seven steps will help you craft a succinct and powerful story.

1.	<b>Introduce yourself</b>
	<b>Give your name and city or town</b> (first name only is fine). Describe who you are, what you do and a little bit about yourself. If you are a member of a NAMI Affiliate you can include that as well.
	<b>Share how you are affected by mental illness.</b> Are you living with mental illness, a family member, a caregiver? This brings a "real face" to mental illness.
	<b>State your issue and position.</b> Let your listener know what you want them to support or oppose (or do). This helps your listener focus.
2.	<b>What happened?</b>
	<b>What happened before you received the help you needed?</b> Keep this brief--think about the most important thing you'd like your listener to know.
3.	<b>What helped?</b>
	<b>Describe what helped in your recovery (or would have helped).</b> This adds a hopeful tone and helps show the value of services and supports.
4.	<b>How are you different today?</b>
	<b>Share what is going right in your life or how you are experiencing recovery.</b> This concludes your personal story on a positive note that inspires.
5.	<b>What is the need or problem?</b>
	<b>Mention the problem or need you want addressed.</b> Transition to the challenge(s) faced by people living with mental illness.
6.	<b>What will help others?</b>
	<b>Talk about what will help.</b> Let your listener know what will address the need or problem you described.
7.	<b>Make your "ask"</b>
	<b>Ask your legislator if you can count on their support (or opposition).</b> Include a bill number, if possible. Thank your legislator for his or her time.