



## Shaping Your Story

The flow or structure of a story is very important. People have a strong sense of how a story should flow. This step-by-step guideline lays out some of the key building blocks for your story and suggests a structure that you may wish to try when shaping your story for sharing with others.

*Remember: The most important aspect of telling a story is not to memorize every word, but imagine the story unfold just as though you are watching a movie... and 'tell it' by describing what you are seeing and experiencing.*

### 1. Where to start

When telling a story, it's really helpful to decide **where** you want your story to start. For example, it could be very powerful to start it when you first realized you needed help to cope with your health challenge.

Then, "paint a picture" in words of **when and where** your story starts. For example,

*Three years on a particularly wet February morning, I was standing at the line-up in Safeway, when I suddenly realized something had to change...*

OR,

*It was when Bobby noticed I really wasn't well. That morning in April, two years ago as we were on our way to visit my sister was when I decided...*

### 2. Who else was involved?

Remember to briefly describe the **main people** in your story (including yourself at the time the story starts). Describe their appearance, their age and personality.

### 3. Explain the challenges you were feeling and facing

Provide a brief explanation of the health **challenges or problems** you face (or faced) at this time and how they made you feel.

## ***Now the story moves to the diagnosis and treatment phase***

### 4. Describe what went well in your healthcare experience

- Explain what healthcare staff or physicians did that helped you with your healthcare challenge.
- Describe what they did that made you feel respected and listened to.

### **5. Share what didn't go so well...**

Describe a time when things that didn't go so well regarding your healthcare experience.

- Perhaps this was something that healthcare staff or physicians did (or didn't do) that was particularly troubling for you.
- Or, perhaps it was a time when you realized the impact your healthcare challenge would have on your life – or that of your colleagues, friends or family.
- Was there a program, service or even a piece of equipment that would have improved the care you received?
- If you could, what would be the first thing you would change about the care you received.

This can be a difficult part of your story, however, it's also an important part to share as it can help others who are facing similar challenges, and help those who work in the healthcare sector to better understand and empathize with people who are experiencing similar challenges.

### **6. Tapping into *Your* Local Wisdom**

If you could go back and do this over again, how do you think it could have worked out for the better?

- Were there programs, services or equipment that you didn't receive, but think could have made a difference?
- What would you recommend for anyone else who is starting on a similar journey – what do you wish you had found out earlier in your experience with this challenge?
- What are the lessons you have learned that you can pass along to help others.

### ***And now, we move to your view of the future...***

#### **7. How are you today... hopes for the future?**

- Explain how you are doing today.
- How you feel about the future.
- Describe what provides you with hope.

8. Finally, do you have any comments on what the process of thinking about, writing about and having the opportunity to share your story means to you?