GBS|CIDP
Foundation International

Speaker Series Summary Episode 9: Powerful Storytelling

Overview

In this episode of our Speaker Series, expert storytellers from Change for Balance gave our patient community tips and tricks to become powerful storytellers. Change for Balance is a strategic communications and production agency with a mission to help change the world. The Change for Balance team is made up of health advocates who are trained in journalism and use their skills to empower people to share their stories.

Summary

Storytelling Tips	• **We tend to focus on numbers, but they are not memorable** ○ **Numbers come with bias** • **Humanize the story to make it more memorable so that your story influences both the rational and emotional sides of the brain** • **Use personal experience and numbers to reduce confusion and bias**
The Seinfeld Effect	**Seinfeld is a television show about nothing but it captured the hearts of Americans because of its relatability to the "dailyness of life."** **Therefore, use smaller details to capture audiences** **Keep it simple** • **Humans have an attention span of 8 or 9 seconds, similar to a goldfish** • **Structure your story to maximize details in a short period of time**
Creating a Story Bank from Emotional Moments	**Here are some examples of moments you can use to evoke emotion in your story:** • **When you raised your voice** • **Where you helped someone** • **Where you laughed so hard** • **When you were relieved** • **An unexpected surprise** • **A moment of hard work** • **Where you were embarrassed** • **Something you wish you could keep forever** • **Something you would rather forget** • **When you overcame a challenge** • **When you experienced hope**

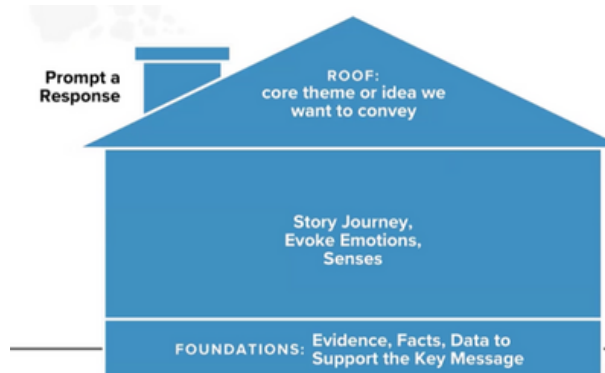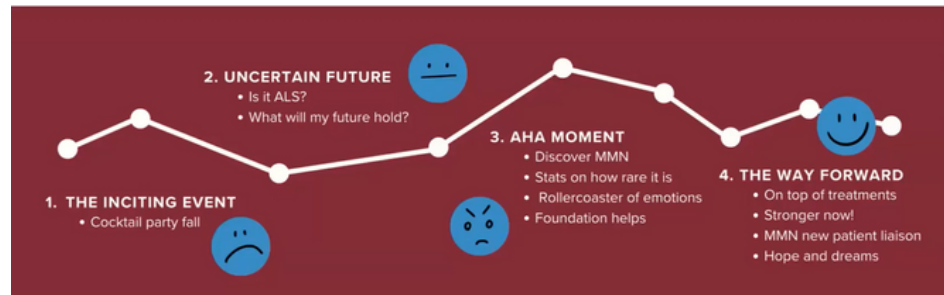|	
First, Last, Best, Worst Exercise	 **Fill in the blanks with your first, last, best, and worst experiences related to your patient experience that can help you connect your experience to your audience. The mini stories that come from this experience can be used together or as stand alone anecdotes.**
Knowing Your Audience	• **Put yourself into the shoes of your audience** ○ **If you know the background of someone, emphasize points in your story that could make it more interesting or engaging to them** • **Ex: Someone who works for the FDA will want to know things about treatment, diagnosis, and recovery, rather than insurance issues.**
The Message House	**Think of creating your story like building a house. Fill in the pieces of your story using the imagery of the house below. Build from the Foundation up, eventually getting to the roof which is where you will get to the core of your story, hopefully prompting a response from the listener.** **The Core Message defines the need, conflict, or problem you want to address** • **Example analogy: Find the umbrella and build the story underneath it**
Six Word Stories	**To refine your core message, try writing it in 6 words** **Example: For Sale: baby shoes. Never Worn.**
Landing Your Opening	**Focus on how you open your story and memorize it** **You can open with:** • **"Imagine if...."** • **A dramatic question** • **A jarring event or quote** • **A funny statement**

The Emotional Story Journey Exercise	Here is another storytelling template you can use: 1. **The Inciting Event** 2. **Unsure Future** 3. **AHA Moment** 4. **The Way Forward*** **Example:** ***not every story has a happy ending so being honest is ok, it helps people stay engaged and makes your story more impactful**
3 Key Tips for Transcendent Stories	1. **Can your message be supported with one vivid story?** 2. **Make them come to life with emotion from these events** 3. **A good technique is to use present tense**
Use Shared Language to Build Awareness	• **GBS, CIDP, and MMN patient stories tend to include similar descriptive language which can build awareness around these conditions** • **Words to include in your story might be: tingling, misdiagnosis, loneliness, exceptional, rare until it happens to you, courage, new normal, change, isolating, hope recovery, empower, relapse, slowly, community, uncertainty, family pressure**
Leave Your Audience with a Satisfying Close	Here are some tips to make a satisfying close: 1. **If you opened with a question, answer it at the close** 2. **Link parts of the story together with your core message** 3. **Invite your audience to be a part of your journey – call to action**

Edit!	1. **Organize your story into 3 main parts (we are more likely to memorize messages in 3's)** 2. **Each message should have one specific message, cut additional examples** 3. **Write out your presentation and incorporate power and power descriptions** 4. **Invite someone else to read it and make suggestions** 5. **Time your presentation** **Authentic Speakers were considered to be 1.3x more trustworthy and 1.3x more persuasive**
Own Your Storytelling Strengths	**Take the VIA Values in Action Character Strengths quiz** **Then use your top strengths to revise your story**
ChatGPT	**Steer Away from using ChatGPT because:** • **It eliminates the emotion by sounding like a cover letter** • **Your tone, cadence, and experience are your strengths** • **Does not help you lean into your voice**
Pace Yourself	• **Plan pauses into your story** • **Pauses help eliminate filler words** • **A slower pace makes you sound more confident** • **Set a timer, record yourself, stay around 150 words/min**
Body Language!	• **Your body language matters the most when talking to someone** ○ **55% of communication is body language, 38% is voice/tone and, 7% is spoken words** • **Have good eye contact, stand up straight, and show you are engaged** **Exercise: stand in front of the mirror and do a power pose for two minutes before speaking, it will reset your brain and emotions**

You have a license to lead	**You have a unique experience and story** **You are more than a data point** **You can:** **Uniquely contribute to raising awareness about GBS, CIDP, MMN, and variants** **Educate the public and health care professionals about your condition and help with improving diagnosis and treatment** **Provide needed community to others facing the same diagnosis**

Relevant Resources

Share your story and Inspire others Here!

Advocacy Action Center

Community Connections

Take the VIA Values in Action Character Strengths quiz