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EFFECTIVE PERSONAL STORYTELLING



"ROCH HAS GIVEN ME SKILLS TO GO TO ANY STATE AND SIT WITH AN OFFICIAL, NOT ONLY TO SHARE MY PERSPECTIVE, BUT TO BUILD A SOLUTION THROUGH POSITIVE DIALOGUE."

**ANDREA DALZELL (NY)
UNITED SPINAL ADVOCATE**

SHARING YOUR STORY

Storytelling is one of the most powerful tools for affecting change in our society. By relating your own personal experiences, your audience can more easily relate and empathize. The stories we share are unique and have the power to motivate others to support a cause.



"At home I had felt alone, at ROCH 2012, I realized that my wife and I mattered, that my issues were real, and that I could possibly be the first person Capitol Hill had ever seen using a wheelchair that can stand me up with a voice communicator that responds to my eyes."

- Earle Powdrell (TX), 2018 Finn Bullers Co-Advocate of the Year

STORY DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

Tailoring your story to your audience

- What is the purpose of this conversation? Who is my audience?
- What is my core message for this conversation?
- What do I want my audience to take away from this conversation? How do I want them to think about the issue?
- How will my story help someone more deeply understand this issue or policy?
- What parts of my story specifically relate to this societal issue or policy?
- How does my story connect to someone else's experience? How does it connect to a broader context?
- How can my story create change? How can it help someone see a new perspective?





MESSAGES THAT INSPIRE ACTION



ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

In a sentence or two, make a statement about your experience that will grab your audience's attention.

PRESENT THE PROBLEM

Describe what the issue is, who it is affecting, and the impact on your life. If you have data, this is a good time to present it.

SHARE A STORY

Share an experience that helps the legislator empathize and understand how the problem effects your community as citizens.

CONNECT VALUES

Take the time to research what issues your audience cares about and frame your story with that in mind to help make an impact.

STICK TO THE HIGHLIGHTS

You want to make your point, but leave them wanting to know more. When they ask questions, you've caught their attention.

SHARE A SOLUTION

If you have an idea of how to help, speak up, showing a policymaker a path to change may allow them to serve you better.

MAKE YOUR REQUEST

Legislators expect requests. Let them know what would help and ask for their support. If they say "yes," you have a supporter.

ADVOCATES IN ACTION: REFORMING REHABILITATION

NATALIE BARNHARD (NY) UNITED SPINAL ADVOCATE AND CHAPTER LEADER 2021 FINN BULLERS ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Natalie Barnhard is a community activist, speaker, entrepreneur, advocate for those with disabilities, and the Founder and President of the Motion Project Foundation, Inc. Prior to her spinal cord injury (SCI) in 2004, Natalie was a physical therapist assistant and a licensed massage therapist. After her injury, her vision and personal goal centered around starting a local rehabilitation facility in Buffalo, NY. Natalie experienced firsthand the challenges of the ability to obtain the proper intense rehabilitation, home modifications, and necessary equipment that are all critical after an SCI. Those experiences were the driving force behind her motivation to help people with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D) while also raising awareness in the Buffalo and surrounding areas.

Natalie is a woman on a mission, and her hard work and dedication all came full circle when Motion Project Foundation opened the Natalie Barnhard Center for Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation and Recovery and celebrated its grand opening in September of 2021. The center is dedicated to improving the lives of those with a spinal cord injury and other neurological disorders by promoting physical independence through Activity Based Therapy, emotional support, and spiritual healing. The center provides state-of-the-art equipment, trained Recovery Specialists, research, care navigation, advocacy, and support.

Natalie was awarded the 2021 Finn Bullers Advocate of the Year Award at the United Spinal Association's Roll on Capitol Hill event and she continues to dedicate her time and passion to helping the disability community and advocating for reforming rehabilitation. You can find out more information about Motion Project, The Natalie Barnhard Center for Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation and Recovery by visiting the website at www.motionprojectny.org or by clicking on any of the social media links below.

"I was taught early on in my injury that I would be my own best advocate. I feel we all have the right to use our voice to speak up for injustice and inclusion for all people with disabilities. I am blessed God has given me the strength and ability to do the work that I am doing, including using my voice to help those who can't."

**— Natalie Barnhard PTA, LMT
NY United Spinal Advocate**

