



Sharing Your Story

FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

ENGAGING EDUCATING EMPOWERING FAMILIES

WWW.FCSN.ORG

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First, an Inspiring Story ...

Barbara K. Popper was a co-founder of Family Voices, Inc. and worked at the Federation for over 30 years.

Focused first on her own family, she had a vision for all families. Her work helped

- establish family-centered care in health settings;
- recognize families as partners with professionals;
- empower families by educating and involving them;
- ensure family participation in the shaping of systems; and
- promote family leadership.

AND she first created this workshop.



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AGENDA

- Learn the power of a story
- Understand key elements of a story
- Draft your own story and share
- Identify where to share your story

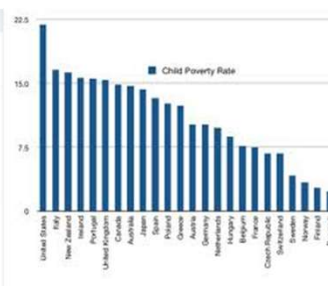
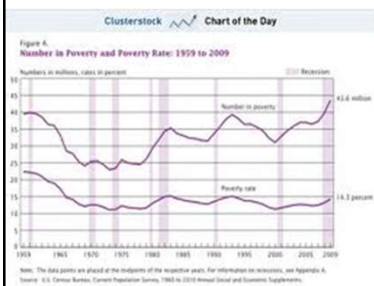


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Why Stories?

- Listening to statistics makes us critics (who selected these data points?)
- Listening to a story makes us a participant (invites openness)
- We associate with the story/experience rather than critique, defend or judge.



THE TEN POOREST CITIES IN THE U.S.A.	
City, State, % of People Below the Poverty Level	
1. Detroit, MI	32.50%
2. Buffalo, NY	29.90%
3. Cincinnati, OH	27.80%
4. Cleveland, OH	27.00%
5. Miami, FL	26.90%
6. St. Louis, MO	26.80%
7. El Paso, TX	26.40%
8. Milwaukee, WI	26.20%
9. Philadelphia, PA	25.10%
10. Newark, NJ	24.20%

Stories
are
data



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Personal Stories are Powerful and Important

There is no right or wrong story, it is your story.



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
ANNUAL APPEAL

"The most important thing the Federation gave me was the opportunity to educate myself about my son's condition. That changed everything."

fcsn.org/donate

Stories

- Hold attention
- Trigger feelings
- Are memorable
- Influence others
- Find commonality
- Cross cultural barriers



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What's in a Story?

- Describe details to connect with the listener, help your listener visualize the setting
- What is the conflict/issue?
- Who are the important people?
- Where/when does the story occur?
- What happened/was the problem resolved?
- What do you want the audience to understand?



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Target your Audience

- Age – Children, youth or adults
- Size – Large group or one-on-one
- Who - Professionals/Parents or both
- Setting – In-person or virtual



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Before you Share your Story

- Consider any limits on what to tell
- Are you comfortable sharing personal experience and information in public?
- Consider your emotional reaction
- If using someone else's story – do you have the family's permission? Make the story anonymous if necessary. Or ask them to join you in telling the story.



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Tips to Share Your Story

- Time/attention is limited, focus on one topic
- Practice (even in front of a mirror)
- Keep sentences short
- Use words, not acronyms
- Share your passion!
- Be comfortable with your style
- Make eye contact
- Use pictures if in-person



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Keep it Brief

Can you tell your story in 6 words?

Can you tell your story in 2-3 sentences?

Can you Tweet your story?
(280 characters or less,
includes spaces between
words)

For Sale
Baby Shoes
Never Worn



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Draft and Share Your Story!

Practice
makes
perfect.

Take 10 minutes to write a short draft or tweet of a story.

After you have created your draft, we will ask you to

1. Share your story with the group
 - raise hand and share your story, or
 - copy and paste into the chat and we will read anonymously
2. Hear the group's reaction/feedback
3. Use it to improve your story



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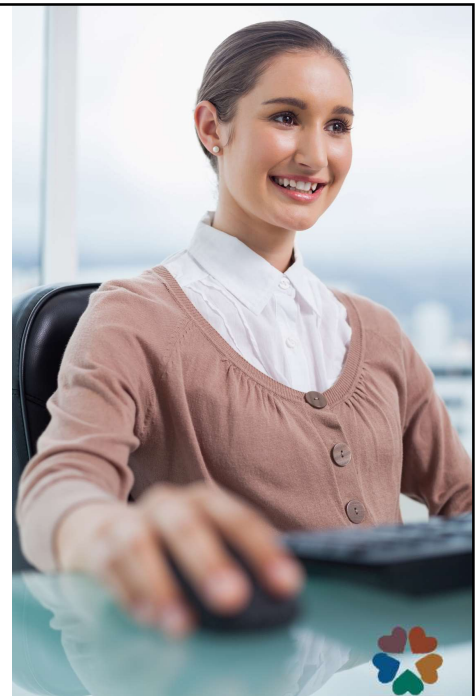
Systems Advocacy – Why Do It?

Caregivers can:

- share “real world experience” on how a system is working or not working
- suggest ideas for improving services
- encourage other parents to participate
- Connect on a personal level

**“Be the change
you want to see in the world.”**

-Mahatma Gandhi



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How to Give Public Testimony

Important for public officials to hear the perspectives of parents and professionals

Make a clear connection between your story and a current issue/policy/piece of legislation

Written testimony can also be submitted, along with letters

*“Be brief.
Be sincere.
Be seated.”*

Franklin Delano Roosevelt



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A parent story ...

What It Takes to Get Support for a Black Boy with Special Needs

TIME, Inc. /Ideas January 11, 2022

<https://time.com/6137387/taylor-harris-this-boy-we-made-iep-excerpt/?fbclid=IwAR0M7sWzwVWB0jKNT5RtgX7GDkHML1N5ed4O3gRnsmUHPgzWfsu-xSGqWDw>



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Online Resources

The National Storytelling Network - <https://storynet.org/resources/>

NPR/StoryCorps - <https://www.npr.org/series/4516989/storycorps>

STORYTELL, sponsored by the National Storytelling Network is a forum for discussion about storytelling

<https://lists.storynet.org/lists/info/storytell>

Storytelling Courses

<https://www.storybug.net/links/collegecourses.html>

Tools for Building Power Through Personal Stories

<https://thearc.org/wp-content/uploads/forchapters/Story-Toolkit-Final.pdf>



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THANK YOU

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ONLINE INTAKE FORM

<https://fcsn.org/fcsn-intake-form/>

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