



TELLING YOUR WIC STORY: WHY AND HOW

WHY TELL STORIES?

Storytelling is one of the most powerful tools we can use to convince others of the value of a cause. Your story is the “why” of WIC — the art of translating values into action through stories. Through stories, individuals, communities and organizations can construct their identity and inspire action. Each of us has a compelling story to tell that can move others.

The key to storytelling is understanding that values inspire action through emotion. Because stories allow us to express our values as lived experience, they have the power to move others to act as well. If you would like to use WIC data in your advocacy, that is a good idea; however, it is always best to start with an emotional, values-based appeal (such as your WIC story), then to use data-driven success indicators as supportive points.

HOW TO TELL AN EFFECTIVE WIC STORY

We can only tell our own story – not anyone else’s – so our story can only be what we find compelling about working for WIC, what difference being a WIC participant has made in our lives, etc. Our stories express the values or experiences that call us to take leadership on WIC advocacy.

The key focus should be on critical points of problem-solving: moments in our lives when values are formed

because of a need to give or receive help. When did you first recognize the value of the work you do, or learn something that changed your family for the better and made you want to take action? Why? What were the circumstances? What WIC person, program, or service existed to help you?

THE THREE KEY ELEMENTS OF STORYTELLING STRUCTURE:

CHALLENGE – CHOICE – OUTCOME

A plot begins with a challenge that confronts a character – in this case a WIC participant or staff member – with an urgent need. The choice of how to meet that need yields an outcome, and the outcome teaches a moral.

Because we can empathetically identify with the character, we can “feel” the moral. We not only hear about someone’s courage, compassion or resourcefulness; we can also be inspired by it.

The story of the character and their effort to engage around values engages the listener in their own challenge, choice and outcome relative to the story. Each story should include all three elements. It’s not enough to say, “I was scared.” You need to say, “I was very scared to try breastfeeding; I needed to decide. WIC helped me, and I learned it was possible for my family.” Challenge, choice, outcome.

INCORPORATING CHALLENGE, CHOICE, AND OUTCOME IN YOUR OWN STORY

There are some key questions you need to answer as you consider the choices you have made and the path you have taken that brought you to this point in time as WIC advocate. Once you identify the specific relevant moment when you needed and received help, dig deeper by answering the following questions.

CHALLENGE: What was the specific challenge you faced? Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?

CHOICE: What was the specific choice you made? Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage (or not)? Where did you get the hope (or not)? How did it feel?

OUTCOME: What happened as a result of your choice? What hope can it give us? How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?



STORYTELLING TIPS

- » Focus on one key story — one event or one place or one important relationship. Take some time to think about the elements of your story in the context of the challenge, choice and outcome. In this case, the outcome might also be the thing you learned, in addition to what actually happened.
- » Remember, the purpose of telling your story of self is to begin to create common ground with your audience by sharing a story that reflects the values that brought you to work on your given issue, and where those

STORYTELLING PHOTOGRAPHS

Most people find stories become more interesting when there are illustrations. Pictures somehow make the stories alive and they feed a lot to your imagination.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A GOOD STORYTELLING PHOTOGRAPH

These tips and tricks will help you come up with photos that tell clear, focused stories.

- » It is important to use a variety of images to create the right pacing for your story. You can choose from wide shots that include a lot of detail, a medium shot, or a close-up shot, a portrait or an action shot.
- » Avoid redundancy in your pictures. Exclude those photos that do not add anything significant to the overall narrative you want to create. Not all the photos you took need to be used.
- » Make sure that the first photo will “hook” viewers into the story. Your first image should be compelling and should invite curiosity.
- » Another important element is framing. As mentioned earlier, you should be able to identify which object needs to be included or excluded in a shot.

STORYTELLING VIDEOS

WHY VIDEO?

If you are a social media user, you may find that more and more, videos dominate your feed. Inspirational videos, fitness videos, video recipes, funny parenting videos. They grab our attention!

CREATING A VIDEO STORY

The idea of creating a video story can be intimidating, but good news – you may have already done it! If you’ve ever vlogged, recorded an interview with someone, or created a video with clips and pictures from your kid’s soccer season, you’ve created a digital story. If you haven’t, don’t worry, it’s easy!

YOU WILL NEED:

- » A video (or even just audio) recording device. No need to get fancy – your phone will do.
- » Access to a computer with video editing software – most computers will come with a pre-installed editing program like iMovie or Windows Movie Maker.
- » Any pictures, scans, or clips of old video or audio that you think might belong in your story.

CREATING YOUR VIDEO STORY

Some video stories are very polished, with music, special effects and transitions, but some are incredibly simple “selfie” style videos. A video doesn’t need to be fancy to tell an effective story.

- » Write down the questions that you think will produce the story you want to tell.
- » Answer the questions to produce a script.
- » Edit the script.



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- » Assemble photos or other materials you want to include in your story.
- » Film your story, or record the narration.
- » Edit the video, either by editing the video footage you shot, or by piecing together the photos and/or video clips you assembled.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF VIDEO

- » DO use natural light whenever possible.
- » DO have your subject looking into the frame rather than out of it.
- » DO get close.
- » DO find a quiet space to record.
- » DO encourage the speaker to take it slow.
- » DON'T record outside if it's windy or you're near a road.
- » DON'T rely on dim interior lighting or your phone's flash lighting to light your video.
- » DON'T turn off your recording device every time you make an error – trimming out parts is easier than assembling many pieces of recorded material.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO SOMETHING?

- » Google it! There are MANY tutorials, and often just searching the question you have immediately produces exactly the information you need.
- » YouTube is your friend –

searching “iMovie Tutorial” on YouTube produces 1.7 million results.

- » Search the customer website of the device or software that you're using.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- » www.socialbrite.org: Helps nonprofits and organizations with all facets of social media: strategy, website design, community building, multimedia storytelling and fundraising campaigns. Provides thousands of free articles, tutorials, and resources to the social good community.
- » <http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu>: “How-to” site with examples and links to digital story creation resources and software.
- » <https://www.storycenter.org>: Provides workshops and many beautiful examples of video stories.
- » <http://www.calwic.org/policy-center/wic-works-for-us-campaign>: CWA's page with story-collection resources and audio/video stories that CWA has collected.

