

# Telling Your Story

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## **The Importance of Telling Your Story**

**Your voice matters.** Sharing your story can help you connect with your legislator and drive them to action.

Policymakers aren't experts on all issues – they look for ways to better understand what's important to their constituents.

- Your experience helps members understand important issues in cancer care.



Statistics and facts reach people's minds, but stories reach their heart.

Your audience might disagree with your arguments, but they can't argue with your unique personal experience.

## ▶ Completing Your Story Worksheet

NCCS' Telling Your Story Worksheet can help you identify the key pieces of your story while also keeping your story concise and compelling.

Take some time to answer the following six questions.



**Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act  
Telling Your Story: A Step-by-Step Worksheet**

People have been telling stories since human beings first sat around campfires. We are hard-wired to take in new information through stories.

Statistics reach people in the head. Stories hit people in the heart. Sharing your personal experience is a powerful way to establish a connection and drive your listener to action. Your audience (e.g. elected officials, donors, the media, other volunteers) may disagree with your facts or arguments, but they cannot argue with your unique personal experience.

The steps below are based on research in effective storytelling, but you should tailor them to your own circumstances.

**1. Hi. I'm [name] from [place].**  
*If meeting with a member of Congress, identify yourself as living in their district.*

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**2. My life changed when [describe your diagnosis or a loved one's].**  
*Example: I had to undergo multiple surgeries and rounds of chemotherapy, which took a physical and mental toll on me. Despite having a good relationship with my doctors, it was difficult to coordinate my care between them, leading to confusion and frustration.*  
*Example: As my father's primary caregiver when he was diagnosed with cancer, I had to navigate a complex health care system that I knew little about. I was constantly worried about whether I was making the right decisions for his care and felt like I had to advocate for him at every turn.*

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**3. Fortunately, [describe the intervention you received].**

*Example: I had a supportive workplace that allowed me to take time off for treatment, but I know many cancer survivors struggle with maintaining employment during and after treatment. The bill's employment assistance grants will help survivors and their families receive assistance necessary to continue working and remain financially stable.*

*Example: I had a supportive network of friends and family who helped me through the process. They helped by driving me to appointments and taking care of my kids while I was in treatment. Without their help, I don't know how I would have managed.*

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**4. It would have been easier if [describe the obstacle to quality care you faced, preferably one addressed by the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act].**

*Example: My cancer care experience could have been better if I had access to cancer care planning and coordination services. Without these services, I struggled to coordinate my care between multiple doctors and often felt lost in the process.*

*Example: It would have been easier if we had access to transportation and financial assistance. Instead, we had to rely on neighbors and friends to drive us to treatments. Sometimes, that meant we had to miss appointments and delay treatment because no one was available to help.*

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**5. I am not alone. There are 18.1 million Americans just like me.**

*Example: Today, I am a cancer survivor who is passionate about helping other survivors access the care and support they need. Others, just like me, would benefit from the bill's employment assistance grants. This targeted assistance can help survivors facing employment challenges remain employed and financially stable.*

*Example: Today, I am a cancer survivor who is grateful for the care and treatment I received, but I know there is still much to be learned about late and long-term effects. An adult cancer survivorship study would provide important data and insights to help survivors and their health care providers make informed decisions about their care. By supporting this study, we can help ensure that future survivors have access to the best possible care.*

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**6. Can you help by co-sponsoring the Comprehensive Cancer Survivorship Act?** This bill aims to improve survivorship, treatment, and transition by addressing the entire continuum of care to close many of the gaps that cancer survivors face.

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## **Perfecting Your Story**

Practice telling your story.

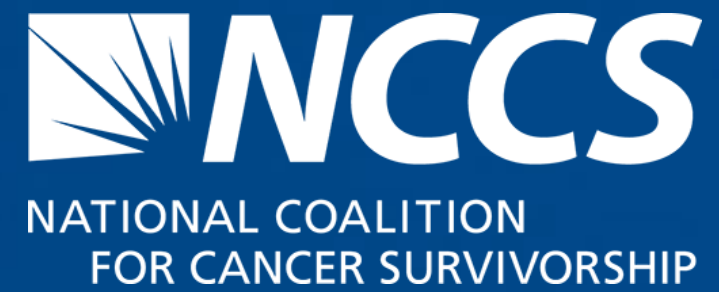
Time yourself and try to keep your story under two minutes.

Keep vivid and share memorable details.

Skip content that is overly detailed, unnecessary, or distracting.

Ask your family, friends, and other advocates for feedback.

With practice, you can shake any nervousness but still be energetic and passionate.



# Questions?

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