

# Six Steps to Telling Your Story: Sharing Our Cultural Perspectives

The following six steps will help you craft your story in a succinct and powerful way. Each step includes examples. Make sure you include each step, but feel free to put things in your own words.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduce yourself</b>
	<b>Share your full name and city or town.</b> This helps your audience connect with you. Example: <i>I'm Maria Velasquez Romero and I'm from Tempe, Arizona.</i>
	<b>Let your audience know how you are affected by mental illness.</b> This gives a "real face" to mental illness and prepares your audience to empathize with your story. Example: <i>I live with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.</i>
	<b>Share the cultural perspective you identify with.</b> Optional: Add why you are sharing your story. Example: <i>As a Latina, I am sharing my story to highlight how my family experienced mental illness.</i>
<b>2.</b>	<b>What happened?</b>
	<b>What happened before you go the help you needed?</b> Keep this very brief--think about the main highlights that you could share in 30 seconds. Example: <i>Before my recovery, I went through some dark times. I lost the job I loved, my marriage and my family. My depression left me...</i>
<b>3.</b>	<b>What helped?</b>
	<b>Describe what helped in your recovery,</b> especially if culturally appropriate. Example: <i>My case manager spoke my primary language and included my family. That made a huge difference in their acceptance of my illness and of treatment.</i>
<b>4.</b>	<b>How are you different today?</b>
	<b>Share what is going right in your life or how you are experiencing recovery.</b> Example: <i>Today, I am working and serving as a peer support specialist with our local ACT team. I use my experiences to help others know there's hope.</i>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Make your point</b>
	<b>Talk about mental illness or mental health care and the hope of recovery.</b> This is a transition from your personal story to a message for your audience. Example: <i>Mental illness is common in our community, but many don't get the help they need. With the right services and supports, a life of recovery is possible.</i>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Make your "ask"</b>
	<b>Let your audience know how they can help.</b> Say thank you. Example: <i>You can help by talking openly about mental illness, recovery and the need for treatment.</i> Example: <i>You can help more people experience recovery by supporting efforts to recruit multicultural and multilingual mental health professionals.</i>