

Strategic Sharing 101

Stand Up Exercise

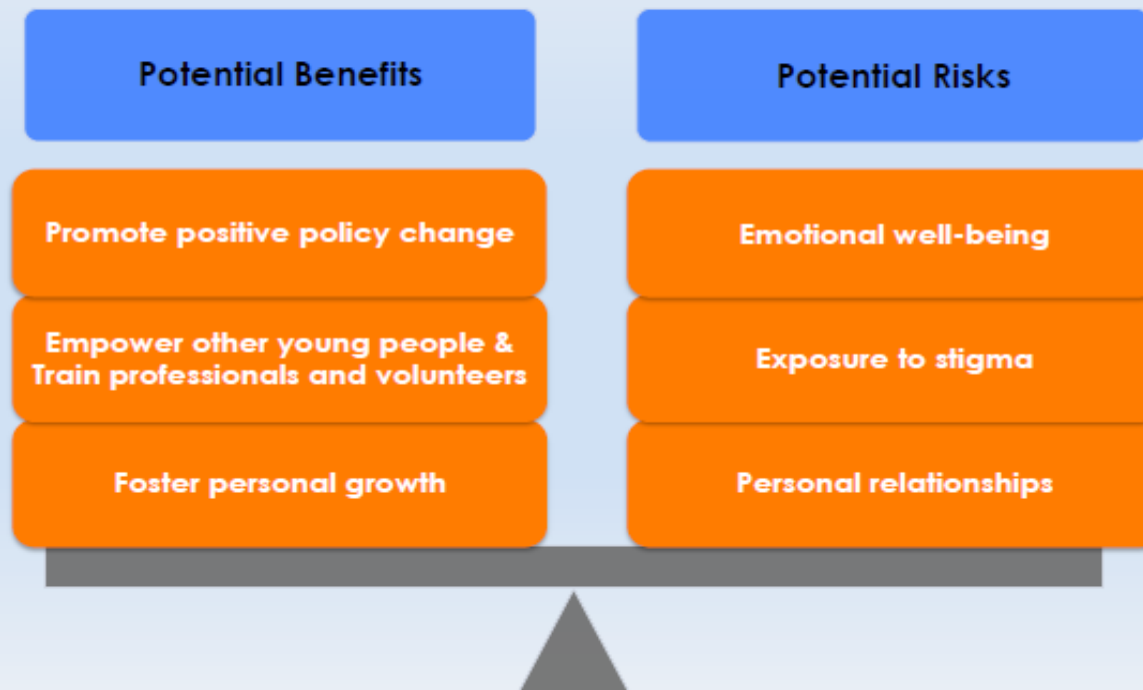
- Told a story about yourself
 - Told a story about yourself that involved a painful memory
 - Told a story about yourself and was asked an uncomfortable or inappropriate question or comment
 - Told a story about yourself that motivated others to make a positive change
-

What is strategic sharing?

Strategic sharing is an [empowering] method of telling your story safely and effectively to achieve a goal. This includes making intentional and thoughtful decisions about when to use your story, for what you are willing to lend your story, how much you wish to share, who you want to allow to hear your story, and what types of preparation and supports you'll need.

Lulow, E., & Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. (2012). Strategic Sharing Workbook: Youth Voice in Advocacy. Portland, OR: Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures. Foster Club. (2011). Youth Leadership Toolkit: Strategic Sharing. National Resource Center for Youth

What are some benefits and risks involved in strategic sharing?



Lulow, E., & Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. (2012). Strategic Sharing Workbook: Youth Voice in Advocacy. Portland, OR: Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures.

What steps can I take to protect others and myself?

Step 1:
Assess the
“reason”

Step 2:
Target your
audience

Step 3:
Safeguard
yourself

Step 4:
Debrief
with an ally

What steps can I take to protect others and myself?

Step 1: Assess the "reason"

- Ask yourself "why do I want to share my story and life experience with others?"
- Ask questions that help you better understand the reason you were asked to speak
 - "I am really not sure why I should talk about this. It makes me kind of uncomfortable to share this experience."
- Educate yourself with objective facts about the issues
- If you don't support or feel comfortable with the reason or don't feel your experiences are related to the issues, you can simply let the individual or organization know that you are not interested in participating

What steps can I take to protect others and myself?

Step 2: Target your audience

- Know who the audience is and what information is relevant and important for them to hear
- Support the relevant, objective facts with your experiences
 - For example, if you're asked to speak to policymakers about low funding levels for community programs, you might discuss how community programs made or would have made a difference for you.
- Be aware of what influence your audience has
- Be mindful of how your audience might receive or interpret your story

Lulow, E., & Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. (2012). *Strategic Sharing Workbook: Youth Voice in Advocacy*. Portland, OR: Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures.

What steps can I take to protect others and myself?

Step 3: Safeguard yourself

- Your audience's main focus should be on what you are saying, not on what you are feeling
- Ask yourself "what am I comfortable sharing with this audience?"
- Develop "safe stories" or stories that you know you are comfortable sharing
- Identify a supportive ally and discuss what they should say and do if you don't feel comfortable

What steps can I take to protect others and myself?

Step 4: Debrief with an ally

Debriefing provides an opportunity for you to learn and improve your strategic sharing skills, as well as to process how your audience responded to your story. You might ask yourself:

- Was there any challenges with logistics?
- Did I achieved the end goal?
- Was there anything that surprised me?
- Did I and/or do I need to improve on anything?
- Did I feel any negative emotions?
- Did I feel like I needed support? If so, did I receive the necessary support?

General Tips for Strategic Sharing

- You are the expert of your story.
- You are ready when you say you are ready.
- Talk with the people that you want to mention in your stories
- Don't give out the names of people unless you have their permission
- Ask if the media will be present and ask them to use only your first name
- Take a break

General Tips for Supportive Allies

- Practice the process
- Debrief
- Help coordinate logistics and negotiate stipends and expenses
- Develop a plan for inappropriate questions or comments

Lulow, E., & Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. (2012). Strategic Sharing Workbook: Youth Voice in Advocacy. Portland, OR: Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures. Foster Club. (2011). Youth Leadership Toolkit: Strategic Sharing. National Resource Center for Youth

Strategies for Handling Inappropriate and Difficult Questions/Comments

- **Redirect**
- **Open a question for discussion**
- **Politely decline**
- **Rely on ally to provide support**

Planning Checklist

- Who is in my audience?
- What is the purpose of the event?
- How does my experience relate to the purpose?
- What data and statistics support or relate to my experiences?
- What do I hope to influence by sharing my story?
- What are the risks of sharing my story with this audience?
- What parts of my experience do I feel comfortable speaking about in front of this audience?
- Will anything that I'm sharing be a trigger for me?
- How might my audience interpret this information?
- Who is my ally?
- What do I need my ally to say and/or do if I feel uncomfortable?
- What are my signs that I need my ally to step in and take over?
- What are the positive supports and coping skills that I can access after the event?

Lulow, E., & Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. (2012). Strategic Sharing Workbook: Youth Voice in Advocacy. Portland, OR: Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures. Foster Club. (2011). Youth Leadership Toolkit: Strategic Sharing. National Resource Center for Youth