

HOW TO DELIVER YOUR STORY

There are two main formats to share your story.

Written

When sharing in written text, try to check for spelling and grammar. It's not a big issue, but little errors can distract your audience from the message. You usually have a character limit if you are sharing on a social platform like Instagram or Facebook etc. which will determine the story length. However, if sharing a letter or on a blog, you can cover as much detail as you like.

Verbal

When sharing verbally, you may choose to share live in person (e.g. at an event), in audio version (e.g. a podcast interview), or video format.

TIPS FOR SHARING



If sharing in audio or video, choose high quality recording equipment. Ensure that your voice is clear and your face is well lit so that people can read your expression and tone. You may not want to share your face at this time, but we encourage you to help humanise the conversation by showing your true self (if you feel ready to do so)



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Speak more slowly than you do in everyday life. This gives people a chance to calibrate their listening to your accent and phrasing and reduces the chance that they will miss important words. Pause, and take moments to breathe.



Connect your tone to the words. Vary the pitch and volume of your voice to colour the story for the listener, signposting important points to create an appropriate atmosphere. Aim for no longer than 10-15 minutes, like a Ted talk.

DELIVERY: PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speaking is highly intimidating for many people, but we've worked with many people who are eager to take advantage of a platform offering to carry a message of hope to people who may still feel alone. If you take up the opportunity to speak at a live event, here are a few tips:

TIPS FOR SHARING



Your energetic state will be read by the audience. If you're nervous, that's ok, and it's even fine to tell the crowd that you are. Name it to tame it. Also, this often helps build their empathy for you, no doubt that there are many people watching who would be terrified doing the same thing.



Notice your body, and your breath. Feel your feet on the floor and the air around your face. Breathe deeply, into your belly. Let your shoulders relax. Unlock your knees. Pick a few faces or spots on the walls that feel safe and return your gaze to those places to feel safe.



Rehearse. It really helps to know that this isn't the first time you're speaking the words aloud and confident in the knowledge that you are the expert on your story. You don't need to know everything about mental health, just your personal experiences.



Use simple and clear language. In our effort to be articulate, we may use technical language that alienates or disengages some audience members. Explain any complex ideas to bring everyone on the journey. This is empowering, educating and inspiring.



Don't rush your story. Remember to give yourself and the audience breathing space to not only help pace your message but give them time to process as you progress, allowing feelings to be felt, connections be made and your experiences to fully land.



Try to read the room and respond accordingly. As you become more experienced at public speaking, you will be less anxious and better able to be present to pick up on the audiences body language and energy to detect what's landing well and what's missing the mark

DELIVERY: SOCIAL MEDIA

We advocate for authenticity, which means being real about how you feel and owning your story. Sometimes on social media and to a certain extent in our everyday lives we offer a curated version of ourselves, which is potentially unrealistic and one-dimensional. Be cautious of creating a brand and a profile for yourself that's not reflective of the totality of who you truly are. No one is "just" an adrenaline junkie, or "just" a parent or "just" a CEO or "just" a survivor of trauma. Each of us is a tapestry of identities based on our relationships, hobbies and beliefs. As part of sharing your story, you're committing to sharing more of the whole, real you.

Most of us know how to stay safer online now, but here are a few permission slips for you to apply at will:

It's ok to delete, block and report anyone who crosses your boundaries on your page. Your social media is an extension of you and electronic boundaries are to be respected in the same way as we'd expect live boundaries to be.

It's ok to restrict your audience. Check your privacy settings. Share with a trusted few or share widely, you choose.

It's ok to disengage from conversations or ignore comments that don't require or deserve your emotional bandwidth. Come back to them later if you like, but give yourself permission to disagree quietly if someone presents an opinion or idea that you oppose.

If you are ready and willing to share publicly, you can submit your story to our blog. Or share it on your own socials and tag us, which gives us permission to amplify your story.

SUBMIT STORY

PREP



Draw a heart on your outer forearm (or visit our store for a temporary tattoo)

CREATE



Tell your story in the caption of the photo or in the video.

SHARE



Upload it to social media
#heartonmysleeve
@heartonmysleeve