

## **DPAC Guide: How to Tell Your Story**

Sharing your personal experience is one of the most powerful and impactful things you can do to defend our rights and create community change. Direct stories from real people make a huge difference to politicians and the public.

Here are a few simple steps to help you tell your story effectively.

### **Step 1: Find Your Purpose**

Ask yourself why you want to share your story. Having a clear purpose will help you stay focused.

Your goal might be to:

- Educate politicians and health professionals.
- Stop the NDIS funding cuts.
- Help other people with disabilities feel like they are not alone.

### **Step 2: Choose Your Key Message**

Decide on the most important thing you want your audience to take away from your story. For example, your main message might be showing that you are a real person who deserves choice and control, or showing how local jobs and lives are impacted by cuts to support.

### **Step 3: Focus on Strength and Hope**

While it is okay to be angry or talk about hard times, your story will be most powerful if you also share your strength and resilience. Share what you have learned from your experiences and use your story to show that the right support makes a positive future possible.

### **Different Ways to Tell Your Story**

There is no single "right" way to advocate. You can choose the method that works best for your energy levels and comfort:

**Online and Digital:** You can post your experiences on Facebook, Twitter, or TikTok, or record a short video testimonial from your home.

**In Writing:** You can write a physical letter or email to your local Member of Parliament, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, or fill out online campaign portals.

**In Person:** If you feel up to it, you can schedule a face-to-face meeting with a politician, speak up at a community town hall, or simply talk to your friends and neighbours. Keeping Yourself Safe

Telling your personal story can be hard work. It is incredibly important to protect your mental health while advocating.

**Set Firm Boundaries:**

You are the boss of your story. Only share the parts of your life that you are completely comfortable sharing. You always have the right to keep things private and to say "no thank you" if someone asks you an uncomfortable question.

**Prepare for a "Disclosure Hangover":**

Opening up about your life takes a lot of emotional energy. It is completely normal to feel very tired, vulnerable, or drained for a day or two after you share your story. Be kind to yourself and plan to rest.

**Buddy Up and Debrief:**

Try not to do this alone. If you are speaking in person, bring a support person with you. Always make sure you have someone to talk to and "debrief" with after you finish sharing your story.