

# SHARING YOUR STORY

by Sue Robins

Families who have children with disabilities are asked to share their story in different ways: at medical appointments, to access services or at meetings at schools. Here are some tips about telling your story.

## KNOW THY AUDIENCE



Think about the reason why you have been asked to share your story with this person or group.



Practice a 2 minute version of the story in case you don't have a lot of time to talk.



You have a right to say no to questions that you are not comfortable answering.



Open by saying something positive about the person you are talking to. You may have to dig deep, but it sets a good tone for listening.



How you talk about your child is important - share about their strengths first & use your child's name a lot so they see your child as a person first, not as a diagnosis.



Whose story is it? Include your child's voice as much as possible - ask your child what they would like you to say & bring a photo of them to humanize the situation.



Sometimes you have to focus on negatives to access services or programs. This is hard - bring support if you can & take care of yourself afterwards.

## CHOOSE YOUR APPROACH

## PICK 3 KEY MESSAGES



Pick the 3 most important things about your child that you want these people to know and share them first - don't leave them until last.



Write down your messages to keep you focused.



Bring a visual or diagram to back up your messages.



There can be 'storytelling fatigue' when we have to tell stories over & over again.



Telling stories in safe spaces can be healing, but telling stories in less-friendly places can be exhausting.



Bring an ally with you, schedule time to prepare & debrief & have someone friendly you can call afterwards.

## BE KIND TO YOURSELF



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