# Seven Steps to Telling Your Story

The following seven steps will help you craft a succinct and powerful story.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| 1.    | **Introduce yourself**  

**Give your name and city or town** (first name only is fine). Describe who you are, what you do and a little bit about yourself. If you are a member of a NAMI Affiliate you can include that as well.  

**Share how you are affected by mental illness.** Are you living with mental illness, a family member, a caregiver? This brings a "real face" to mental illness.  

**State your issue and position.** Let your listener know what you want them to support or oppose (or do). This helps your listener focus. |
| 2.    | **What happened?**  

**What happened before you received the help you needed?** Keep this brief—think about the most important thing you’d like your listener to know. |
| 3.    | **What helped?**  

**Describe what helped in your recovery (or would have helped).** This adds a hopeful tone and helps show the value of services and supports. |
| 4.    | **How are you different today?**  

**Share what is going right in your life or how you are experiencing recovery.** This concludes your personal story on a positive note that inspires. |
| 5.    | **What is the need or problem?**  

**Mention the problem or need you want addressed.** Transition to the challenge(s) faced by people living with mental illness. |
| 6.    | **What will help others?**  

**Talk about what will help.** Let your listener know what will address the need or problem you described. |
| 7.    | **Make your "ask"**  

**Ask your legislator if you can count on their support (or opposition).** Include a bill number, if possible. Thank your legislator for his or her time.