

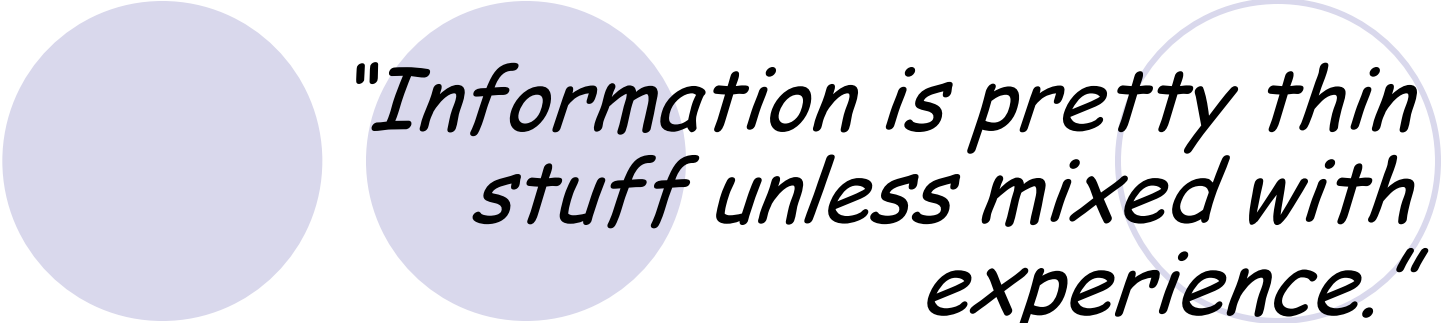
# Finding Your Voice ~ Sharing with Others

Telling Your Story & Elevator Talk





# Telling Your Story



*"Information is pretty thin  
stuff unless mixed with  
experience."*

Clarence Day, American Essayist

# Your Story is Important!

- To promote community sensitivity and awareness of deafblindness
- To educate about family needs and viewpoints
- To support other families and develop relationships
- To show the audience that KIDS are KIDS (and families are families)
- To spur change in systems for appropriate and quality services
- Shares powerful information that can't be shared in charts or graphs



# Points to Remember

- There is no 'right' or 'wrong' story
- It is your family story - how you feel and see it at this moment in time
- You are the expert in your story

# Different Places To Tell Your Story

- On a panel of speakers
- In a classroom or school setting
- Talking with a informal groups of people
- Presenting to a formal group
- As a presenter at a conference
- Meeting with public officials
- Providing testimony

# Getting Ready to Tell Your Story ~ Questions to Explore

- What is the objective of the presentation?
  - Who is the audience?
  - What do I want the audience to know when I'm finished?
  - If invited to share, what does the person who invited me expect the audience to learn?
- What specific topic should I address?
- How much time will I have?

## Then:

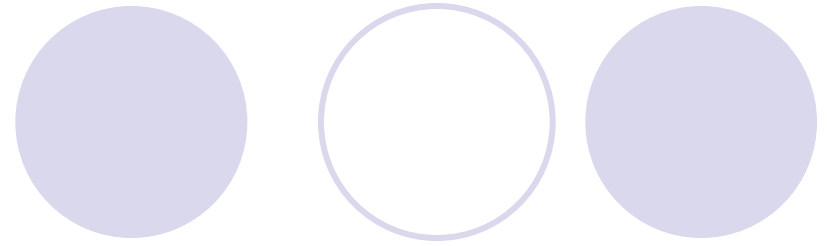
- Organize your ideas
- Determine a beginning-middle-end sequence in an outline
- Practice, practice, practice
- Stick to your outline



"You must be the change you wish  
to see in the world."

Mohandas Gandhi, Political and Spiritual Leader

# The Beginning



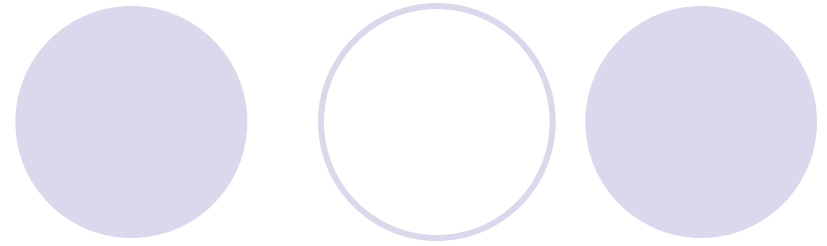
- Something to “hook” their interest
- Set the stage
- Identifies key characters
- Identifies issue or challenge



Adapted from Glenn Gabbard, Family Experiences: Ways to Lead Change Through Telling Your Story, Early Childhood Bulletin



# The Middle



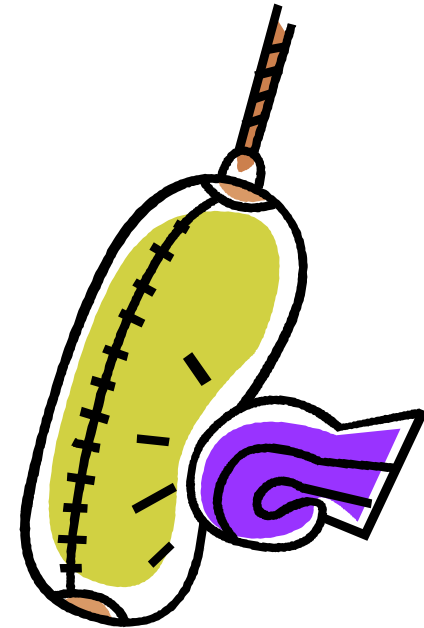
- Details: Telling them what they're 'gonna' get
- Adds examples and interesting information

*"Life was like a box of chocolates.  
You never know what you're  
gonna get."* *Forrest Gump*



# The End

- Punch line
- Ties things together
- Ends with the "ask"
- Ends by sharing the theme or lesson
  - State directly
  - Let listeners draw their own conclusion



# Story Activity

The title 'Story Activity' is positioned at the top left. To its right are three circles: a solid light purple circle, an outlined light purple circle, and another solid light purple circle.

- Prepare to “tell your story” of the impact and influences your child with deaf-blindness has had on your life. (positives and negatives)
- Pick one or two of the following areas and describe your experience and thoughts.

# Story Activity - Story Areas

- Some of your family's joys and celebrations
- The positive contributions of your child
- Coping strategies and supports you've used
- How professionals, family, and friends have or have not been supportive
- Most important message you want your child's new educational team to hear
- How your child is or isn't included in the school or community

# Use your Worksheet to Prepare

- What is the purpose of my presentation?
- What outcome would I like for my audience?
- What powerful examples do I have that I am willing to share?
- What would my outline look like?
- What visual aids, creative wording or "audience hook" can I use?
- What solutions or suggestions can I leave my audience with?
- How will I close?
- What will I do if I get nervous and don't know what to say next?



# Polishing your Presentation

"In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure."

Bill Cosby, Actor and Writer

# Making Presentations



The average person speaks over 34,000 words each day, which adds up the equivalent of several books each week!

The #1 fear of American people is public speaking. It ranks above fear of dogs, fear of flying and even fear of death.

Deborah Manning

# What to do about **FEAR**

- **Prepare yourself**
  - Do your homework
  - Envision yourself in front of the group
- **Prepare the presentation**
  - Know your topic and key points
  - Know your audience
  - Have a comfortable beginning, middle and end
  - KISS - **K**ep it **S**imple **S**peaker
  - Know how to use your technology or aids
- **Practice**
- **Check out the room beforehand**
- **Relax and breathe**
- **Delight in the moment**



# Telling Your Story Effectively

## Posture

1. Stand up straight, but not stiff
2. Keep your weight evenly distributed on both feet so you don't sway and shift

## Movement

1. Take a few steps to the side and toward your audience
2. If you are behind a table, step to the side or front occasionally to make contact with your audience
3. Stay close to your audience to keep them engaged

# Telling Your Story Effectively

## **Gestures**

1. Use gestures as you do in a normal conversation with your friends

## **Orientation**

1. Be sure to keep your shoulders square with your audience and to speak only when you are facing the audience

## **Eye Contact**

1. Eye contact is crucial to establish and build rapport
2. Focus on one person and maintain eye contact 1-3 seconds before moving on to another person
3. Smile more and frown less

# Telling Your Story Effectively

## Voice

1. Articulate clearly
2. Speak loudly and don't trail off at the end of sentences
3. To tell your story with natural animation, relax by gesturing (naturally) and breathing normally
4. Keep the talk free of um's, uh's, likes and okay's, as much as possible
5. Don't hesitate to pause if your emotions overcome you - it's okay and understandable

## Overall Presence

1. Try to look relaxed
2. Keep focused on your topic and stick to your outline
3. Use visual aids and props effectively
4. Stick to your time allotment - don't ramble to fill space
5. Engage your audience

# Dress Rehearsal



"If you take responsibility for yourself you will develop a hunger to accomplish your dreams."

Les Brown, Motivational speaker and Author

# Before you Tell Your Story: Some questions you may want to ask

- When do you want me to speak? What day? What time? For how long?
- Where do you want me to speak? What city, site?
- Who is the audience? How many people will be there?
- What's the theme or topic of the whole event?
- What part of my story do you want to hear?
- Is there a message you want me to leave with them?
- Will you be reimbursing me for child care and transportation?
- Is there an honorarium?
- Do you need an answer today? If not, by when?

# Elevator Talk



- Used to describe/sell an idea
- Concise statement of your issue or challenge
- Focus: "Just the Facts, Ma'am"
- Your proposed resolution
- 2 minutes at the most



# Start by thinking about it

- What do you want to change?
- What would it look like if it was fixed?
- Who can make the change?
- How can you influence them?

# Preparing your 2 minutes

- **Know your audience**
  - Interest and investment in the subject
- **Know your subject**
- **Outline your speech (handout)**
  - What is the issue/challenge?
  - How does it affect you?
  - How does it affect other families?
  - How can the problem be solved?
  - What resources are needed?



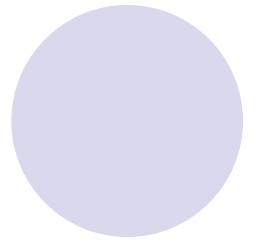
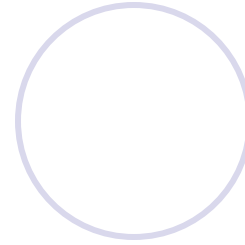
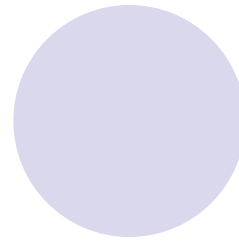
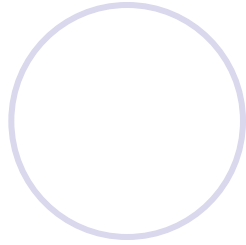
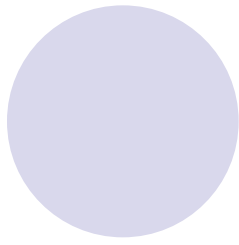
# Finalizing your Elevator Talk

- Take each point on the handout and write a sentence about it
- Take each sentence and connect them together with additional phrases to make them flow
- Change any long words or jargon to everyday language
- Cut out any unnecessary words or phrases
- Finalize your speech on a note card



# An Important Reminder

As children grow older and more independent, it's important to consult them about the story details and, sometimes, whether or not the story should be told at all. This includes siblings.



What's Your Story?