Annotated Agenda

**Telling Your Personal Story**

**TIME ALLOTTED: 90 minutes**

**PRESENTER(S):**

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

* Projector and PPT
* Sound projection (for YouTube video)
* Execise Handout

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** Slide 6 has a video embedded into the slide. The video will play from the slide on an animation cue. However the video files has to be saved in the same folder as the PowerPoint. In the Dropbox folder for this curriculum module it is saved in the same folder. If you combine all the slides into a master PowerPoint, be sure to save the video file in the same folder as your master PowerPoint. Otherwise the embedded video will not play properly.

**GOALS FOR THIS SECTION:**

* To understand the principles of building relationships and trust through story
* Practice moving people to action by understanding one’s own story as an organizer
* Feel comfortable sharing your personal story with a variety of audiences

**SKELETAL AGENDA**

1. 0:00 – 0:07 Introduction & Agenda
2. 0:07 – 0:10 Key Story Elements
3. 0:10 – 0:15 Challenge, Choice & Opportunity
4. 0:15 – 0:25 Video Story Exercise
5. 0:25 – 1:10 Personal Story Exercise
6. 1:10 – 1:20 Sharing w/ Group
7. 1:20 – 1:30 Debrief, Closing and Next Steps

**AGENDA**

**0:00 – 0:08 Introduction & Agenda**

0:00 – 0:03 Personal story intro

* **[Slide 1]** [Trainer should give a two-minute version of their personal story as relevant to this module. Don’t forget to share challenge - choice - outcome and practice it like any other section! It’s especially important with this module that those three elements of your story are clearly identifiable and that your story is no longer than three minutes.]
* And that shows you how personal story can be a strong tool for community organizing.

0:03 – 0:05 Stories Connect Us

* **[Slide 2]** Personal stories are a powerful organizing tool because they help people relate to the issue on the level of values and not just facts and figures.
* As an organizer you will be building relationships with fellow members and with voters around shared interests, values and issues. You will be asking others to step forward, get involved and take action.
* To do this we need to build trust, inspire hope, and move people to act. Stories are a powerful way to do this: they are how we communicate who we are, and why others should trust us, what is at stake and why there is such urgency and need to act together.
* We are looking to create a story that motivates and explains why we must act together. If we don’t have a story that connects us, we cannot have collective action.

0:05 – 0:07 Agenda

* **[Slide 3]** In this session we’re going to take a closer look at the role stories play in organizing.
* Then we will break down the elements of a good story
* I’ll show some examples or stories being used as an organizing tool
* And finally, you’ll have a chance to practice telling your personal story to move someone to action

**0:07 – 0:10 Key Elements of a Story**

* **[Slide 4]** What must all stories have? [have participants brainstorm and popcorn answers.
* **[Animation Cue]** Exactly! The core elements of a story are:
  + Characters (Heroes and Villains) – these are characters whom we fall in love with, identify with, cheer on or boo
  + Plot (Direction/Engaging Purpose) – our stories need to have some purpose and direction otherwise we get bored
  + Challenge (Choice – Conflict) – good stories have a conflict where the hero faces a critical challenge or question
  + Resolution (Climax – Consequence) – The decision regarding the challenge is made and the result becomes known – and hopefully, a happy or inspiring ending
  + Theme (Moral – Lesson) – did anyone read Aesop’s Fables in school? What’s a fable? [Stories that teach lessons]. Right! The theme should help us learn more about ourselves and the world around us. There is a purpose to our story and a lesson to be learned.

**0:10 – 0:15 Key Elements of an Organizing Story**

* **[Slide 5]** Organizing stories follow a similar structure, does anyone know what all good organizing stories need? [Challenge, Choice, Outcome, Ask]
* Right! We need a challenge that we face, a choice we have and an outcome and an ask for action that is inspired by the story! Let’s look at each of those pieces a bit closer
* **[Animation Cue]** Challenge – a critical question that drives the story. What’s the last book you read? [ask for a couple of responses until we find something that most people are familiar with] Great! Who can tell me what the challenge is in this book? The challenge is the part of organizing stories that keep people hanging on your every word because they want to know the outcome.
* **[Animation Cue]** The decision made by the main character. Let’s go back to the [book that participant read from challenge section]. What was the choice in that story? Great! Organizing stories are similar in that there is a path that leads in two directions and you must choose to take one over the other.
* **[Animation Cue]** From here, you’ll round out your story with the results of that decision. Describe the outcome that emerged. This could exemplify how you ended up volunteering with OFA, or could connect back to the values or issues that resonate with your listener. Either way this element should bring the story to an inspirational close, showing that when make a decision to take action, it can make a difference.
* Outcome can often be the most powerful and commonly underplayed element because it shows people what can be accomplished if you take action. This is a great opportunity to present the audience with a winning cause and motivation to get active!
* **[Animation Cue]** Finally, make an ask that the audience get involved, preferably in a specific activity at a set date and time
* The beauty of an organizing story is that it presents the audience with an opportunity to act and become part of the story.
* These are the types of stories that we become fascinated and engrossed in. They are stories that inspire heroic activity and commitment.

**0:15 – 0:25 Personal Story Example Video**

0:15 – 0:18Faizan’s Story

* **[Slide 6]** As an example, let’s watch a recent Organizing for Action video.
* **[Animation cue]** [Play video. The video will automatically start playing and the photo disappear with the animation cue. However, you will need to save the mp4 video file in the same folder as the powerpoint when you download them in order for the embedded video to work. If the embed doesn’t work, the video can also be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGX4NfL\_BF4]
* So what are the values shown in this video?
* What’s the challenge?
* What’s the choice?
* What’s the outcome?
* What’s the ask?

0:25 – 0:27 Story Tree

* Here’s another way to think about how we develop, use and weave our stories together with others.
* First we have the roots. What do roots do for a tree? [ask participants]
* In terms of personal stories, what role do you think the roots play? [Roots: strong foundation of personal motivations, issues and key life moments & Base: Your core story: the anchor from which you build other stories from] When we think about our personal roots, then we’ll develop our base story.
* From there we figure out how to ask questions of our audience to find out a way to make our story resonate more with them**.** What part of the tree do folks think that corresponds to? [Solicit responses][Trunk: asking questions and listening so you can make a connection between you and the listener to build a relationship]
* Then, we are able to have a broad reach and connect with lots of different people and move them to action. Sounds a lot like braches, right?[Branches – various issues, constituencies, and different ways that you will connect and reach people]
* Today’s session focuses mostly on the base of the story tree. That’s what we’ll be doing next, working on our core personal stories!

**Personal Story Exercise 0:27 – 1:10**

0:27 – 0:33 Exercise Set Up

* Okay so let’s try to wrap our heads around this, specifically in terms of our stories. Think about your roots - you chose differently than a lot of your friends, co-workers and neighbors. Some of those choices are why you are in this room today.
* Instead of losing hope and becoming isolated you go involved. Why? At the core of your personal motivation and the issues that resonate with you are values that you share with other OFA volunteers. These values get to the heart of why you are volunteering to support OFA’s mission and policy agenda. They speak to a belief in a certain ideal for what America can and should look like.
* Look deeply. What motivated you to become an activist in the first place? When did you decide that politics and organizing mattered? Connecting your interests with your life experiences is a key tactic for illustrating why the OFA agenda is important for the lives of people in your community.
* Your motivation might be related to your family, your faith, and events in your childhood, your work, school or recreational activities. They may have been shaped by your race, ethnicity, economic and social circumstances, where you started in life and where we are now. This will become the root foundation of your personal story.
* Each of these questions will help you fill out the roots section of the story tree. When you interact with volunteers, constituents, or coalition partners, you will draw from these to relate to them and will learn to adapt and adjust to different audiences and issues.
* Each of you has a handout for this exercise, let’s take it out and review it. [hold up a copy]
* In this exercise we will focus on creating your own organizing story using the framework of challenge, choice and opportunity. We’ll break it into four parts:

1. You will do the first part; this will be the story about why you became involved with OFA.
2. After reflecting on what brought you here today, you will write your story
3. For the third part you will share the story you wrote in a small group
4. In the fourth part there will be an opportunity to share your organizing story with the whole group.

0:33 – 0:39 Reflecting Key Experiences

* You will have five minutes to reflect on key experiences that helped shape who you are today:
  + When did you decide to become involved?
  + What was the challenge and choice you faced?
  + What core values are reflected by your experience(s)?

0:39 – 0:54 Writing

* + - * Okay, now please spend another 15 minutes writing your own story that connects your challenge and choice with the urgency & opportunity to act.
      * When structuring your story, think of the following questions
        + What was the challenge you faced that makes this issue or OFA so important?

How does it connect to others – what is our challenge?

* + - * + What choice did you face when you decided to get involved?

What is our choice that we face in this election between action and inaction?

* + - * + What is the urgency and our opportunity to act right now? Where is the hope?
      * Please make your organizing story no longer than 2 minutes.

0:54 – 1:10 Share Stories in Groups

* Okay, now that you’ve had a few minutes to think about your story please join the nearest two people to you. In a group of three please take another 15 minutes and share some of your experiences and values. Think about these questions while you are talking with each other:
  + What themes do you find you have in common?
  + What is your collective story of hope that connects you together and moves you to act?
  + [Give people a heads up every 5 minutes and ask folks to move to the next person’s story. Give a 2 minute warning before ending]

1:10 – 1:20 Sharing to Group

* **[Slide 12]** Now we are going to share our stories with the entire group. Please be no longer than 2 minutes. I’ll be timing each of you and will have to cut you off so we can hear from more people.

NOTE: There may not be time to hear every story in 30 minutes, but try to call on a number of participants from around the room – looking for a diversity of gender, race and age.

* Thanks for sharing that with us!
* What was his/her challenge? What was his/her choice? What was his/her opportunity?
* Did any of you feel moved to act and join him/her because of this story?
* What do you know about his/her values, and what she/he values because of this story?

1:20 – 1:30 Debrief

* **[Slide 13]** Now let’s review some key takeaways from today’s session.
* The reason personal story is such a powerful organizing tool is because it builds a relationship between you, the volunteer, and the issues we care about.
* Personal story telling is a skill and you can refine it with practice.
* And finally, stories should be developed to relate to any values that might be particularly important to your audience.
* OFA organizes on so you can be a versatile issues organizer!
* **[Slide 14]** What did you learn today that surprised you?
* Why do you think personal stories are an effective organizing tool?
* How will you use your personal story in the work ahead?
* Wow, we have some amazing people in this room! I have no doubt that your own experiences will move others to action! Give yourself a hand for being so open and sharing with each other and all of us!
* **[Slide 15]** Does anyone have any questions before we move on?
* Thank you for leaning in today!