Social Storytelling: Making Homelessness and Homeless Services Real to a Broader Community, Pt. II

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National Health Care for the Homeless Council
Learning Objectives, or #Takeaways

• Describe the role that storytelling can play in destigmatizing homelessness and illustrating homeless services.

• Name three tactics for incorporating storytelling in social media.

• Describe common challenges and concerns in storytelling.
What Is Storytelling, and Why Is It Important?
Storytelling Is…

• Stories personalize, humanize, and make experiences concrete
• More impactful than stats, facts, and figures
• Takes multiple forms
  – We will focus on digital and multimedia storytelling.
  – Photos
  – Video
  – Copy (blogs, posts, etc.)
Importance of Storytelling

• Destigmatization
  – Help change public opinion
  – Help counteract the dominant narrative of homelessness
• Powerfully illustrates homeless services
• Useful for development and advocacy
  – Show value
  – Increase community support/awareness
  – Attract new potential consumers
Why Is Social Media Important?
Social Media

• 79% of American adults use social networking sites

• Great storytelling vehicle

• Fluid, direct, and immediate

• Unlike advertising, it’s not a “loudspeaker”, but a conversation

• Engagement

• Way to be part of a community
Social Media

• Think beyond social media
• Not the only storytelling platform
• Part of your integrated communications
• Remember: Everything you do on social media can also be applied to other communication strategies
Methodology
Backbones of Good Stories

• Stories should be
  – Credible
  – Make an impact
  – Evoke emotions
  – Relevant to the audience
  – Consensual
Copy

• The simplest building block of stories is the written narrative.
  – Facebook posts
  – Tweets
  – Links to longer-form content; blog copy
Impact of Services

Central City Concern

“...I have so much more than I expected. I am grateful every second.”

- Humanizing
- Follows through with [link](#)
Impact of Services

Central City Concern

Achieving His Dream: Tyrone's Story

“I have so much more than I expected. I am grateful every second.”

A home. A family. A career. For some, these goals define the American Dream. For Tyrone, all he wanted was “to walk down the street with a life.”

Tyrone’s childhood in Pasadena, Calif., was relatively stable and secure, but he made some bad choices that landed him in juvenile detention by age 14. He fell deeper into drug use and revolved in and out of incarceration. But during his last stint, he began to study the laws of attraction and positive thinking, which he says turned his life around. When he left prison for the last time, he spent his $124 on a ticket to Portland in search of a fresh start.

How CCC Helped Tyrone

CCC Recovery Center outpatient substance use disorder treatment
Housing & intensive peer support through Recovery Mentor Program
Opportunities to build skills & give back with Community Volunteer Corps

How You Can Help

Donate
Volunteer

• Makes a call to action
• Awareness AND fundraising
General Awareness and Advocacy

Harborview Medical Center

- Syndicated article intro and linked to the full KUOW story
- Highlights impact of services
- Informs AND raises public profile
- Human, heartfelt with direct consumer focus
Telling Stories Through Copy

• Work with CAB to engage a willing consumer
• Take portrait and conduct interview
• Quote news coverage that illustrates a story
• Should always be about people
• Be vigilant: stories are everywhere
• Keep it simple and relatable
• Remember, Facebook for longer posts and Twitter for short and direct
Photos & Images
Photos & Images

• Imagery is a key element of storytelling
• Higher engagement than narratives alone
• Use it whenever possible!
  – Even a simple photograph can tell a story
Images: Simple Goes a Long Way

Open Table Nashville, Inc.

Help us welcome our dear friend Barbara into her new home!

“I’ve worked with BB since I started this job and she is the most resourceful human I’ve ever met. She worked so hard for this place and even overcame a denial for this apartment that she fought and won!” - Haley Spigner, OTN Outreach Worker

Barbara attended 61st Avenue UMC for years, and now is a member of Glencliff United Methodist Church, the site of the Village at Glencliff. We’re so grateful for these partnerships and connections in our community!

#OpenTableNash #HousingHealingHope #HousingEndsHomelessness
Callen Lorde Community Health Center

• Shows impact of services
• Promotes something specific
• Use of consistent #hashtag
#VisualizeHomelessness

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

- [http://www.nhchc.org/visualize](http://www.nhchc.org/visualize)
- Regular series of graphics that tells the story of homelessness
- Began March 2018: now with over 40 images and growing
- Brings awareness to HCH issues
- Free to share and use
#VisualizeHomelessness: Opioids

People experiencing homelessness are nine times more likely to die from an opioid overdose than those who are stably housed.

The numbers tell the tale – opioid overdoses accounted for more than 42,000 deaths in 2016, and the #opioidepidemic has significantly impacted people experiencing #homelessness. Learn ways to advocate for needed solutions on the federal, state, and local levels: https://bit.ly/2BeyBq8.

www.nhchc.org

Source: Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: How the Opioid Crisis Affects Homeless Populations
#VisualizeHomelessness: Opioids

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www.nhchc.org
Source: Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: How the Opioid Crisis Affects Homeless Populations

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• Current “hot topic” important to the HCH community
• Link to your services, resources, or a call to action
• Other examples that would fit this strategy?
On average, people without homes die 30 years earlier than their housed counterparts.

#VisualizeHomelessness

www.nhchc.org

Source: HPMD Public Statement and Advocacy Agenda
#VisualizeHomelessness: HPMD

- Call attention to event; build or maintain momentum
- Bring awareness to issue of homeless deaths
- Call to action
#VisualizeHomelessness: Mental Health Month

More than half of people experiencing homelessness have had thoughts of suicide or have attempted suicide.

#VisualizeHomelessness

www.nhchc.org
Source: Suicide and Homelessness, Data Trends in Suicide and Mental Health Among Homeless Populations

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This #MentalHealthMonth, please help us bring awareness to the suffering of people experiencing #homelessness who cope with mental illness and may not have access to proper care or interventions. #VisualizeHomelessness

Learn more: https://bit.ly/2QbFDzf

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#VisualizeHomelessness: Mental Health Month

• Tie in to National Health Observances
• Healthfinder.gov
• Builds awareness and relates to homelessness
Telling Stories Through Imagery

• What is your objective? What do you want to say?

• Use compelling photos
  – Use stock photography or take your own
  – Look for good photo ops
  – Remember basic photography principles

• Engage consumers in the process
  – Consumer stories can be empowering and very compelling
Telling Stories Through Imagery

• Take advantage of online resources
  – Canva
  – Use our Storykit
• Use concise copy and simple imagery
• Be responsible with sourcing
• Promote your organization
• Consider using hashtags
• Monitor your metrics
Videos
Videos

• Very effective
• High engagement
• Work across all social media platforms
• Require the most work and time
General Institutional

Health Care Without Walls

• Highlights services
• Offers clear demonstration of how HCWW impacts clients

www.HealthCareWithoutWalls.org
Direct Appeal

BHCHP Sox for Socks

• Creative and clever
• Engages and informs
• Makes a direct ask
Consumer Testimonials

Joseph Benson

• Powerful and in his own words
• Immediate impact
• Implied story of Houston - HCH services
Telling Stories Through Video

• Don’t always need professional equipment: a smartphone can do
• Find a quiet space and use a mic
• Have a plan!
  – Draw on your CAB
Telling Stories Through Video

- Gather A and B roll
- Always strive for clean edit points
- Get more footage than you need!
- Consider social media:
  - Facebook Live
  - Periscope on Twitter
Challenges and Concerns
Challenges and Concerns: Trauma-Informed

• Consumer Storytelling
  – Trauma-informed
    • Homelessness is traumatizing; be mindful
    • Understand triggers
    • Rehearse story in private, safe space
    • Be clear how the story will be used and who might see it
    • Never be pushy
    • Stay on message
    • Learning Lab: Trauma-Informed Storytelling: Perspectives from Consumer Leaders
Challenges and Concerns: Confidentiality

• Confidentiality and Respect
  – Patient and consumer confidentiality is critical
  – Use a release form
  – Be clear that people will see the story and it might attract reactions or comments
  – Follow-up with consumer storytellers to ensure they are ok with the content BEFORE it goes out
  – Again, make absolutely certain the consumer understands their story will be public
Challenges and Concerns: Audience Response

- Be ready for feedback
- Monitor and respond to comments
- Have a plan in mind to handle negative or inappropriate comments
- Acknowledgement is important
Toolkit and Resources
Creating Your Own Initiative

• Storytelling principles can apply to all mediums, social media or otherwise
• Make stories simple, relatable, and actionable
• Always have a defined outcome
• Impact of storytelling: two examples
  – Boston HCH Program’s Sox for Socks
  – #VisualizeHomelessness and HCH Stories
• Test, measure, and refine
Now It’s Your Turn!

- Use our online toolkit to get started
  - [http://www.nhchc.org/storykit](http://www.nhchc.org/storykit)
- **Sample release form**
- **Story structure**
  - [NCAB Storytelling Guide](https://www.ncab.org/resources/)
  - [Activating Your Inner Aesop](https://www.ncab.org/resources/)
- **Digital Storytelling**
  - [Stony Brook University](https://www.stonybrook.edu/)
  - [StoryCenter](https://www.storycenter.org/)

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Now It’s Your Turn!

• Social media resources
  – HCH2017: Amplify Your Voice in an Accessible Medium: Social Media 101 for Health Centers
  – HCH2018: Social Storytelling: Making Homelessness and Homeless Services Real to a Broader Community, Part I
  – Hootsuite
  – Facebook Pages Manager (app store)
  – SproutSocial’s Image Guide
  – Social media toolkits for health observances
  – How to Use Hashtags
Now It’s Your Turn!

• Graphics and Photos
  – Canva
  – Piktochart
  – Unsplash
  – Pexels
  – Rule of Thirds

• Make the Case for Social Media
  – The ROI of Social Media in Healthcare: 10 Benefits
  – Social Media Metrics Study

• Examples of social media done well at http://www.nhchc.org/storykit
Discussion and Questions