WHY TELL STORIES?

Stories can **shift our perspective** by helping us take off our own shoes and step into someone else’s. Stories light up...

- **Memory.** We are **22 times more likely to remember** a fact when it has been wrapped in a story than when it is presented on its own.*

- **Empathy.** People hear statistics, but they **feel** stories. We can experience a good story as if it is happening to us.

- **Action.** Data & large numbers can numb us; individual stories **awaken** us.

*Source: Jerome Bruner as cited in "A Good Presentation Is About Data And Story," Forbes

WHAT IS A STORY?

- A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

- A story has characters (who was involved in the action?) and a setting (where did the action take place?).

- A story has a turning point in which a situation changes or a character learns something.

- **Compelling stories** often focus on...
  - Difficult choices
  - Unexpected challenges or events
  - Turning points
  - Transformation
  - Truth
  - Personal experience
  - A moment in time that illuminates a broader issue

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[Diagram: Story Mountain]

- **Hook**  
  - Characters & setting

- **Beginning**
  - Problem

- **Middle**
  - Rising action (setbacks)

- **Turning point**
  - Falling action (resolution)

- **End**
  - Conclusion
TIPS FOR TELLING A GOOD STORY

- **Start strong.** Grab your audience’s attention and set up the stakes from the beginning.
- **Know your story well.** Don’t make the audience wonder what the point is. Know what you want to tell your audience and why. Practice.

**Instead of...**

- Telling a story that spans a long period of time and many different events
- Telling what a person or place is like
- Meandering
- Embellishing
- Ranting, lecturing, or giving a long opinion
- Using discriminatory language or stereotypes

**Do this.**

- Focus on a moment in time that illustrates your broader point
- Show what that person or place is like
- Know exactly where your story is going
- Stick to the truth
- Tell a vivid story about something that happened, with a beginning, middle, and end
- Be respectful

Questions to Ask Yourself When Developing a Story to Advocate for GBV-SRHR Integration

#1: **What is a specific challenge you faced working toward GBV-SRHR integration?**

- How did you adapt or change course to meet the challenge?
- Were you able to address or overcome the challenge?
- What did you learn, or how did your systems, processes, and understanding change as a result?
- What advice would you give to others beginning the integration process?

#2: **Have you discovered any unexpected benefits of GBV-SRHR integration from your personal experiences?**

- How was what actually happened different from what you expected to happen?
- How did this facilitator or benefit come about?
- Why was it surprising?
- What did you learn, or how did your systems, processes, and understanding change as a result?

#3: **Can you remember a specific moment when you realized the importance of GBV-SRHR integration from your lived experience?**

- What did you see or notice that left an impression?
- Was it a benefit of integration or a downside to lack of integration?
- What action did you take as a result?
- What have been the resulting effects?
- What did you learn, or how did your systems, processes, and understanding change as a result?

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