The Voices Behind the Data: Great Home Visiting Stories and How to Get Them

Kathryn Harding, M.A.
Brianna Stormer M.S.W
Introductions & Overview

Presenters:
* Kathryn Harding, M.A., HFA National Director of Research
* Bri Stormer, M.S.W., HFA Data Support Manager

Overview:
* Why stories are important
* How to tell a story that is powerful
* Skill building exercise
Stories and the Cycle of Helping

- **STAFF** – “change agents”
- **PARENTS** - discover their helping and leadership potential
- **ADVOCATES** – raise awareness, support for program
  - The parents we help have the greatest power to help us
Why collect stories when we already collect so much outcome data?
Evaluation = zzzZZZZzzz

* 48% reduction in babies born with low birth weight.

Add Stories = interesting

HFA helps parents like Alicia have a healthy pregnancy and birth:

* Alicia B.: Jill helped me go through all of the good and bad parts of pregnancy. She was even with me when I had my first contraction.
Evaluation = huh?

Parents are 5 times more likely to be enrolled in school and to increase their years of education.

Add Stories = interesting

HFA helps parents like Maggie reach their educational goals:

* Maggie returned to work and re-enrolled in college while relatives kept her son....she just found out that she was admitted to an LPN program and hopes to continue into the RN program.
Are You Ready?

- Barriers and fears
- Comfort zone
- Signs of readiness
- Other challenges
  - Focused on parents who need the most support
  - Not enough time
  - Don’t know how to start
Core Elements of a Story

- Plot
  - Exposition (beginning)
  - Inciting Incident
  - Barriers (middle)
  - Resolution (end)
Core Elements of a Story

- Characters
  - Protagonist (primary caregiver)
  - Helper(s) (home visitor, others)
- Emotional Connection (relatability)
- Easy to follow (avoid jargon)
This story is about a single father of a son disabled as a result of prenatal trauma. The child is taken away, and the father uses community and social supports to get him back.
Exposition (beginning)
* Inciting Incident
* Barriers (middle)
* Resolution (end)
Characters
What makes Marlin relatable?
In what other ways do we relate to the story?
Example Two: Heather
Core Elements of Heather’s Story

- Plot
  - Exposition
  - Inciting Incident
  - Barriers
  - Resolution
- Characters
  - Protagonist
  - Helpers
- Emotional Relatability
Final Tips

* Success Story vs. SuccessFUL story
* You don’t need all of these elements every time for great stories.
  * Emotional Connection goes a long way
“I would like to send the message that I know it is a hard and bumpy road, but if I can do it, anyone can. I want to give all families faith. Healthy Families believes in me and they will believe in you. Together WE ARE creating healthy families, we are still creating mine and for that I will be forever grateful.”
Group Activity: Share Your Story

Groups of 2 or 3

Storyteller:
- Any story - change names if not your own
- 5 minutes

Listener:
- ask questions but don’t push
- The real beginning, challenges, barriers overcome?
- Emotional connection, relatability
Tips

* You can use the questions on your tip sheet as a starting point, as follow ups, or not at all
* Notice what story elements are easy to get, and which ones are harder
* Don’t push something that makes the storyteller uncomfortable; this should be an empowering experience
* Be ready to share:
  * What was easy and what was hard about gathering stories
  * Any tips you have to share with the group
How did it go?

* When telling your story:
  * What was easy? What was challenging?
  * Think about how a parent in your program would experience

* When collecting the story:
  * What was easy? What was challenging?
  * What could you take back to your program to help?
Who are we trying to reach & Why?

- Public Awareness & Advocacy – goal: raise support for programs
  - Educate policymakers about real world challenges
  - End story with a “Call to Action” for Advocacy

- Engaging parents – goal: understand what the program is about
  - Story should focus on trust, support, what families get out of the program
  - Avoid accomplishments – can be intimidating to families
Key Elements – stories should have one or more of these elements:

* Beginning
* Challenges
* Relatability/Emotional connection

Stories put a face on evaluation findings

Stories are a step toward Parent Leadership
Stories can be submitted anytime!
Consent to use first name and city is helpful but not required
Email to Bri Stormer at bstormer@preventchildabuse.org
The End....?