



Meningitis
Research
Foundation



Using storytelling to drive health policy change

A resource for patient groups and health activists
working on meningitis and related health issues

meningitis.org comomeningitis.org



“When someone tells us their personal story, we can better understand an experience that may be very different from our own.

When we walk in their shoes for a moment, and see the world as they see it, it inspires empathy and can lead us to action – in a way that data and evidence rarely can.”

Sam Nye, Network Lead, Confederation of Meningitis Organisations



The Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis

an opportunity for change

The launch of the World Health Organisation's [Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030](#) provides a focus and an opportunity for civil society organisations, national governments, health experts and others to work together to tackle meningitis. The Road Map contains nineteen strategic objectives, organised around five pillars relating to: prevention; surveillance; diagnosis and treatment; support for those affected; and advocacy and engagement.

In this resource, we focus on the role of storytelling in effective health advocacy, share examples of the work that members of the [Confederation of Meningitis Organisations](#) are doing, and offer guidance on using storytelling in advocacy to support the Road Map and related health campaigning.

Don't be daunted by the Road Map

WHO's [Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis](#) is an ambitious plan, detailing all aspects of tackling meningitis, and covering the work of international bodies, national governments, health experts and many others. But patient groups can pick one aspect of the Road Map, which they may already be working on, around which to focus.

Omorodion Rhoda Omoile, Director of [Care and Development Centre \(CADEC\)](#) in Nigeria, says: "The road map has five pillars, but Civil Society Organisations can focus attention where they have capacity and expertise. CADEC is concentrating on 'raising awareness' and 'better support and care' because that's where our knowledge and experience lies."

[Learn more about the work of CADEC](#)

“I have met with some families and individuals suffering the after effects of meningitis, which has made me determined to help defeat meningitis through media campaigns and social mobilisation; helping people with meningitis to get the rapid care they need and educating mothers to vaccinate their babies.”

*Omorodion Rhoda Omoile,
Care and Development Centre, Nigeria*



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1

Why share stories?

Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Taliban in Pakistan for wanting an education, says that she tells her story not because its unique but because it represents the story of many other girls and helps people to understand **their** experience, as much as her own.

Equally, the story of one person's experience of meningitis is often easier to understand, and more compelling, than statistics about the number of deaths or impairments or the social and economic impact of the disease. Statistics are figures relating to anonymous people whom we don't know. Stories are about individual people like us and our families and friends.

Research shows that stories lower an audience's resistance to new ideas; and that people are more likely to recall details of a story than fact-based information – whether they are familiar with the subject matter or not. In this way, personal stories can shift the opinions of decision makers and prompt them to act on an issue which they were otherwise reluctant to do.

This resource will help you develop and use stories which will move and influence audiences, and help you achieve the changes you want to see.



The faces of meningitis campaign, Asociación Española contra la Meningitis, Spain

Asociación Española contra la Meningitis (AEM) has invested in high-quality campaign materials, including brochures and pop-up banners featuring the stories of survivors such as Davide Morana. Davide, who suffered limb loss due to meningitis, says: "Forward with life. Even though there are potholes in the road, the challenge is worth the effort!"

AEM had hoped to display the materials, developed in 2019, in public venues around Spain, but unfortunately COVID stopped the '*Caras de Meningitis*' awareness roadshow in March 2020. Whilst it has been hard to return to many public spaces, AEM has been able to display materials in a network of private hospitals, cultural centres, and a symposium of health experts – raising awareness with hundreds of thousands of patients and visitors.

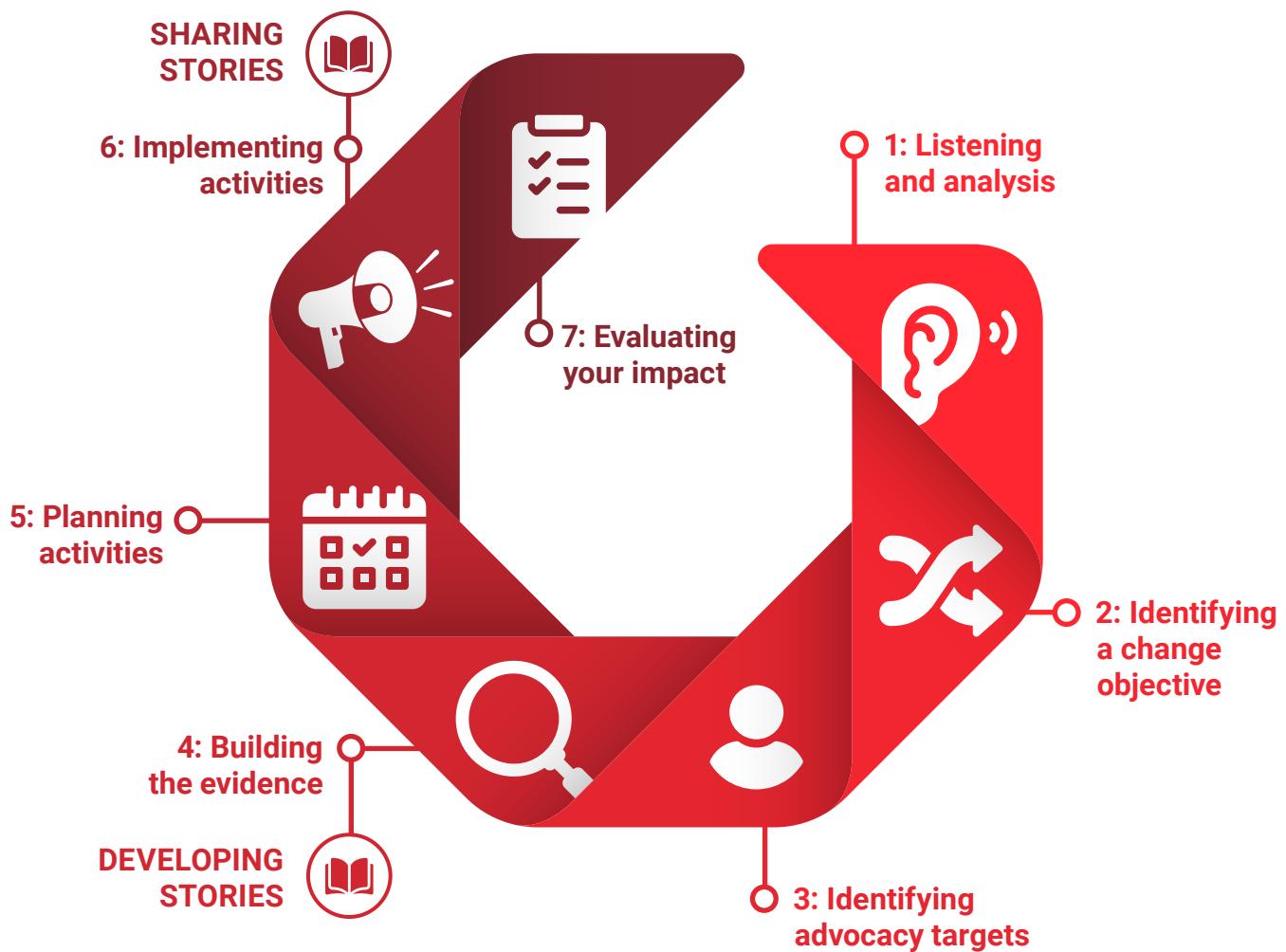
[Learn more](#)

2

The advocacy cycle

Your storytelling will have greater impact if it's part of a wider advocacy strategy, with a clear change objective.

Here we give a few pointers on integrating storytelling into the advocacy cycle to get you started – so that the stories you share really do make a difference.



A historic day at the Catalan Parliament: AEM campaigners celebrate the Parliament's decision to recommend the Men-B vaccination for all babies born in Catalunya

Building stories into the advocacy cycle

The advocacy cycle (above) shows the different steps your advocacy campaign is likely to go through.



- 1: This might start with a period of **listening or analysis** to understand what is happening in your context.



- 2: This will help you identify something you want to achieve or change – **your change objective**.

Perhaps awareness of the signs and symptoms of meningitis is very low in your country, or a certain vaccine is not available? This might help you identify a change objective such as raising awareness about meningitis or extending vaccine provision.



- 3: Next you can identify the people or organisations that can make this change – **your advocacy targets**.

Your advocacy targets might be the individuals and families you would like to be more aware of signs and symptoms; or decision-making bodies or individuals with the power to approve new vaccines.



- 4: You will then need to do some **evidence gathering** as you build your case for the change you would like to see. The evidence you collect should be that which is most likely to influence the advocacy targets you have identified.

Evidence may include scientific information or statistics. It will probably also include personal stories of those affected by meningitis.



- 5: After gathering your evidence, you can start to **plan**...



- 6: ...and then **implement activities** to ensure your evidence reaches your advocacy targets.

Family members or survivors could share testimonies at a face-to-face meeting with a policy maker or their stories could be included in a written brief. World Meningitis Day could be a focus for sharing stories and awareness raising messages through social media.



- 7: The final step is to **evaluate** the impact your stories have had as part of these advocacy activities and work out if they have taken you closer to your change objective ([see Evaluation](#)).

How stories can support different change objectives



Change objective

To raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of meningitis

Possible stories

Story of how meningitis presented in one or more individuals, highlighting signs and symptoms to look out for.



To extend provision of vaccines

Story illustrating the impact of preventable meningitis on families and survivors – bereavement, impairment etc.



To improve diagnosis and care

Story illustrating where opportunities for prompt diagnosis or treatment may have been missed, and the impact this had on families and survivors.



To improve support for survivors and their families

Story of the impact of disease on survivors and their families – physical and neurological impairments, loss of educational and employment opportunities, social impact etc.



Campaigning on vaccines in France

In France, *Ensemble contre les ménigrites* (Together against Meningitis) identified their change objectives as encouraging vaccine uptake and getting the MenB vaccine introduced into the immunisation schedule. Members shared their personal experience of meningitis with decision makers as part of their advocacy process and the health authorities now recommend the vaccine – a major achievement.

[Learn more](#)



Top Tips

- ✓ Identify your change objective.
- ✓ Work out who can make that change happen.
- ✓ Think about what stories will persuade your audience to help make that change.

3

Developing a simple storyboard

Stories can be developed in many different formats including case-studies, short films, news articles, podcasts and 'in person' presentations – among many others.

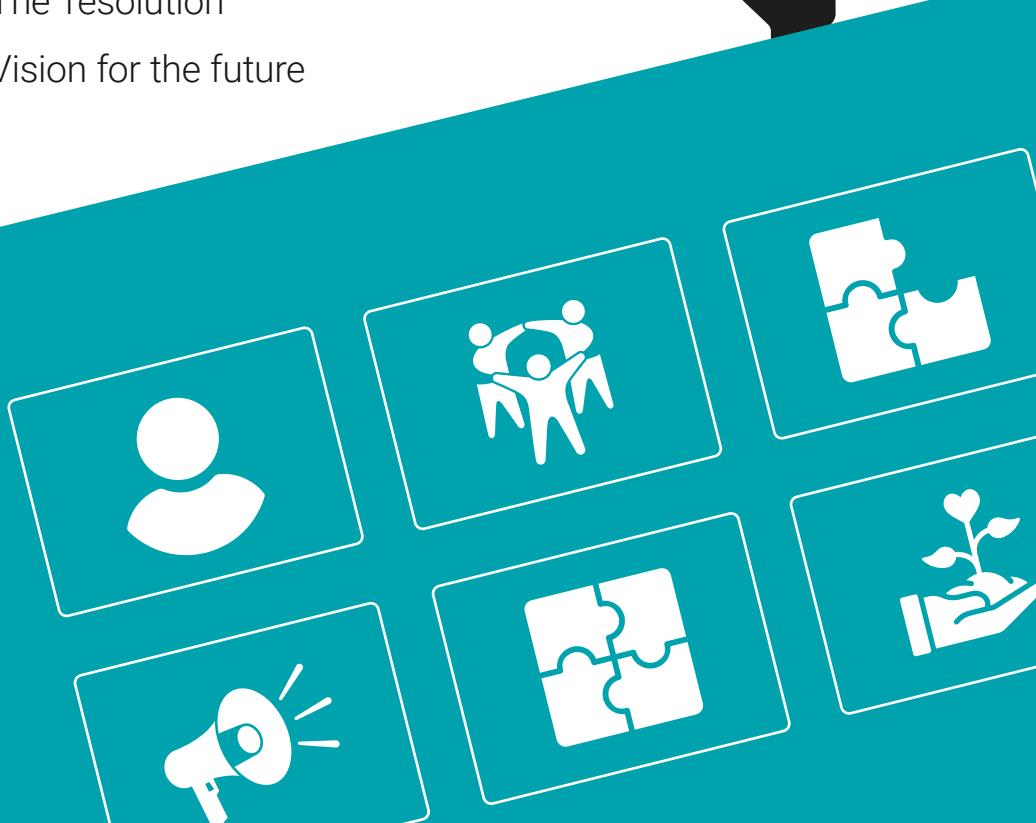
But most of these formats will include the same elements to progress through a simple story to a resolution at the end.

The following storyboard can help you develop a meningitis-focused story and can be adapted for different formats and audiences. Remember the audience for your story should be the advocacy targets (families, health workers, policy makers etc) you identified earlier in the process.

- Main character
- A few more details
- The wider problem
- The call to action
- The 'resolution'
- Vision for the future



Download a template to help you plan and develop your story





Main character

It's good to start with one main character.

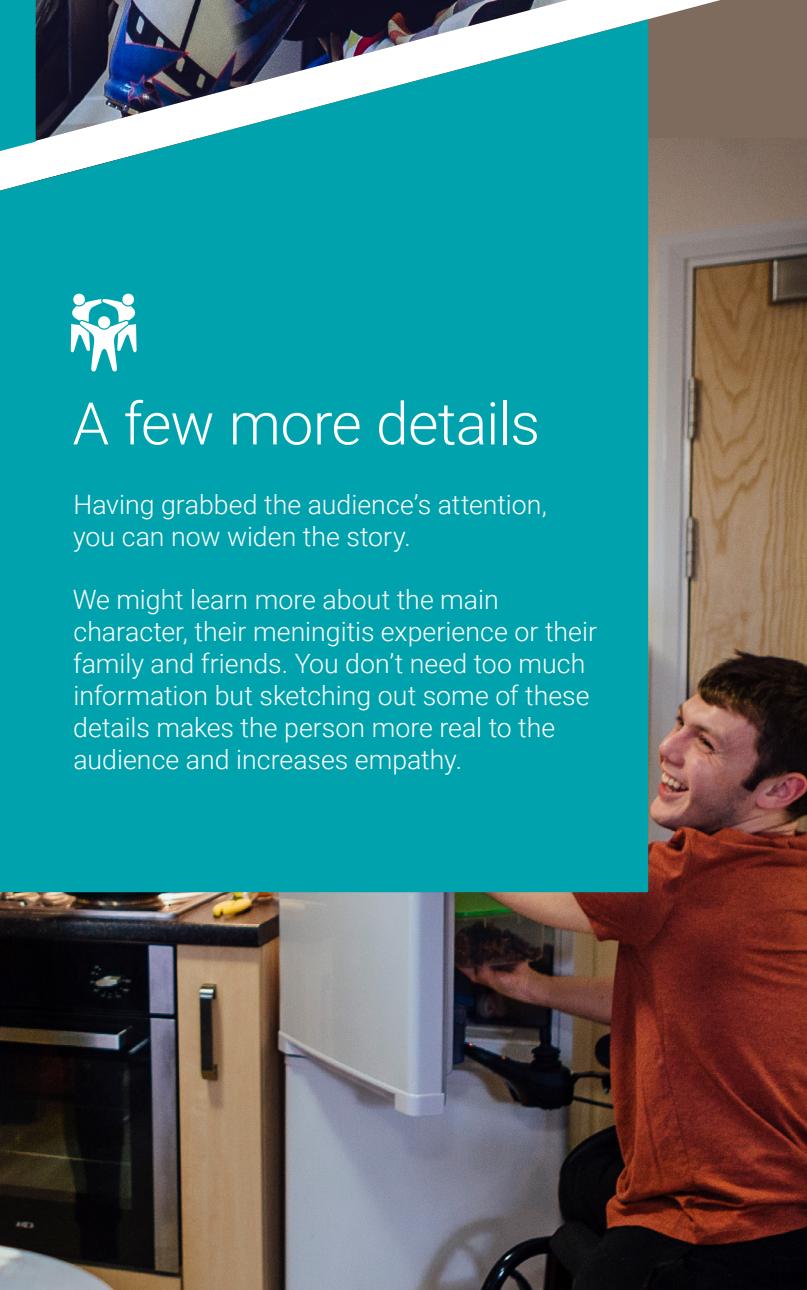
Most people can't empathise with the hundreds of people affected by meningitis in a certain context, or even all babies or all students / young people – which is why charity fundraising appeals often focus on one child and not whole communities. Focusing on one person and a few key details about their meningitis experience should grab the attention of the viewer or listener and help create empathy.



A few more details

Having grabbed the audience's attention, you can now widen the story.

We might learn more about the main character, their meningitis experience or their family and friends. You don't need too much information but sketching out some of these details makes the person more real to the audience and increases empathy.





The wider problem

Having enabled the audience to understand what meningitis means when it affects just one person, you can now pan out from an individual to give information about the wider context.

How many people are affected in a similar way in this community, country, or around the world? This is a good point to include key statistics about the number of cases, deaths, or impairments as the audience are already engaged.

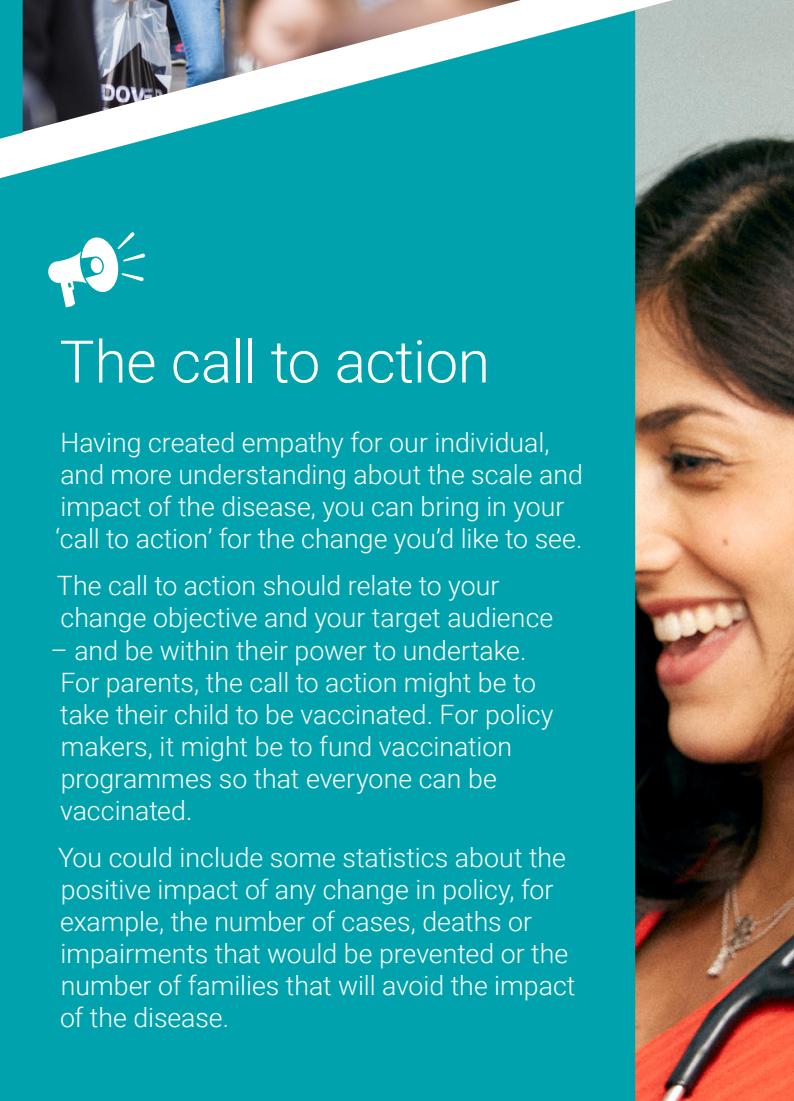


The call to action

Having created empathy for our individual, and more understanding about the scale and impact of the disease, you can bring in your 'call to action' for the change you'd like to see.

The call to action should relate to your change objective and your target audience – and be within their power to undertake. For parents, the call to action might be to take their child to be vaccinated. For policy makers, it might be to fund vaccination programmes so that everyone can be vaccinated.

You could include some statistics about the positive impact of any change in policy, for example, the number of cases, deaths or impairments that would be prevented or the number of families that will avoid the impact of the disease.





The 'resolution'

It's good to revisit your main character and update on their situation at the end of the story. It's important to show positives where you can – both to reflect the power and agency of people affected by meningitis and because it is more likely to be engaging to your audience.



Vision for the future

The most positive element of your story should be painting a picture of your hope and vision for the future if your audience respond to the call to action. Make it clear what action you want people to take, how they can take it, and where they can get further information.



Top Tips

- ✓ Relate your story to your change objective and your target audience.
- ✓ Have a clear call to action – so your audience know what you want them to do.
- ✓ Keep it brief and tight. People's attention spans are short.

4

Some practicalities

This section helps you with some of the practical issues around using stories in advocacy

- Identifying storytellers
- Capturing stories
- Using 'fictionalised' stories
- Using images



Identifying storytellers

Many people involved in health advocacy have their own experience and often want to share their stories to help other families – but it can be good to have a wider group of people call on. If you are a patient group or health organisation, you may be able to identify storytellers from the individuals or families you already know and work with. If this is not the case, you might want to put a call out on social or traditional media asking people with stories to share to get in touch.

In some contexts, it can be difficult to find people willing to tell their stories, because the culture in a particular country or region does not encourage sharing private experiences or because women or other groups are not encouraged to speak out. In this case, you can anonymise stories or use fictional scenarios (making it clear that you are doing this). Sharing examples of storytelling from other contexts – and the impact these have had – may encourage people to share their stories, even where this is not common practice.



Sharing personal stories, Australia

Meningitis Centre Australia put an advert in local, and then national, papers and collected hundreds of handwritten testimonies from affected families, showing how meningitis had impacted their family member – and their own work, family, and social lives. They subsequently used them in campaigning and published them in *Meningitis: A Tragedy by Instalments* in 2008.

[Learn more](#)



Capturing stories

You may want to interview your storyteller, in person or by virtual conferencing technologies or video, to capture their story for future use. This lets you direct the conversation to bring out aspects of their experience and to edit the text or video to create a narrative that suits your audience and purpose.

Before you start, let people know how long you have available for the interview, how much of their experience will be used in the final product, where it will be shared, and what you want to achieve. Afterwards, remember to check the edited version with your storyteller and make sure they approve it for use; you can ask them to sign a simple form to indicate consent. Only use the story at the time and for the purpose you have agreed.

It can be useful to create a bank of stories that can be used in different contexts, such as [World Meningitis Day](#) or [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#). Again, you'll need to check back with your storyteller that they are happy for you to use them in that context, at that time.

Meningitis Research Foundation has developed a series of videos, [Meningitis and Me](#), featuring the stories of survivors and families affected by meningitis, to help others dealing with the impact of the disease.

[Learn more](#)

'Meningitis and Me' support videos, Meningitis Research Foundation

Meningitis Research Foundation has developed a series of videos, featuring the stories of survivors and families affected by meningitis – to help others dealing with the impact of the disease.

The original plan was to film the videos face-to-face, but COVID restrictions necessitated a different approach. "In the end we used Zoom to film most of the videos, which actually meant that many more people could get involved and we also saved money," explains 'Meningitis and Me' manager, Rosanna Russell.

"We produced step-by-step guidance for those filming their own videos but also offered 'live' filming opportunities where we operated the camera, which some people preferred."

"It was really important to give people enough time to talk about their experience, so they felt 'heard' and not rushed," continues Rosanna. "But we also needed to be clear that the videos would be edited. Our experience from YouTube analytics shows viewings drop off sharply after one minute, so it's important to keep stories short and tight."

[Learn more](#)

Meningitis
and **Me**

Using 'fictionalised' stories

Sometimes it can be useful to create 'fictionalised' stories or characters, illustrating certain aspects of the meningitis experience.

Counting the Cost, UK

For the *Counting the Cost* campaign, Meningitis Research Foundation interviewed multiple people affected by meningitis about their care and support needs at their life stage and developed two fictional scenarios around 'Peter' and 'Emma', costing their projected care into later life and using their stories to make the case for extending vaccination to prevent meningitis.

[Learn more](#)



Storytellers campaign, Peru

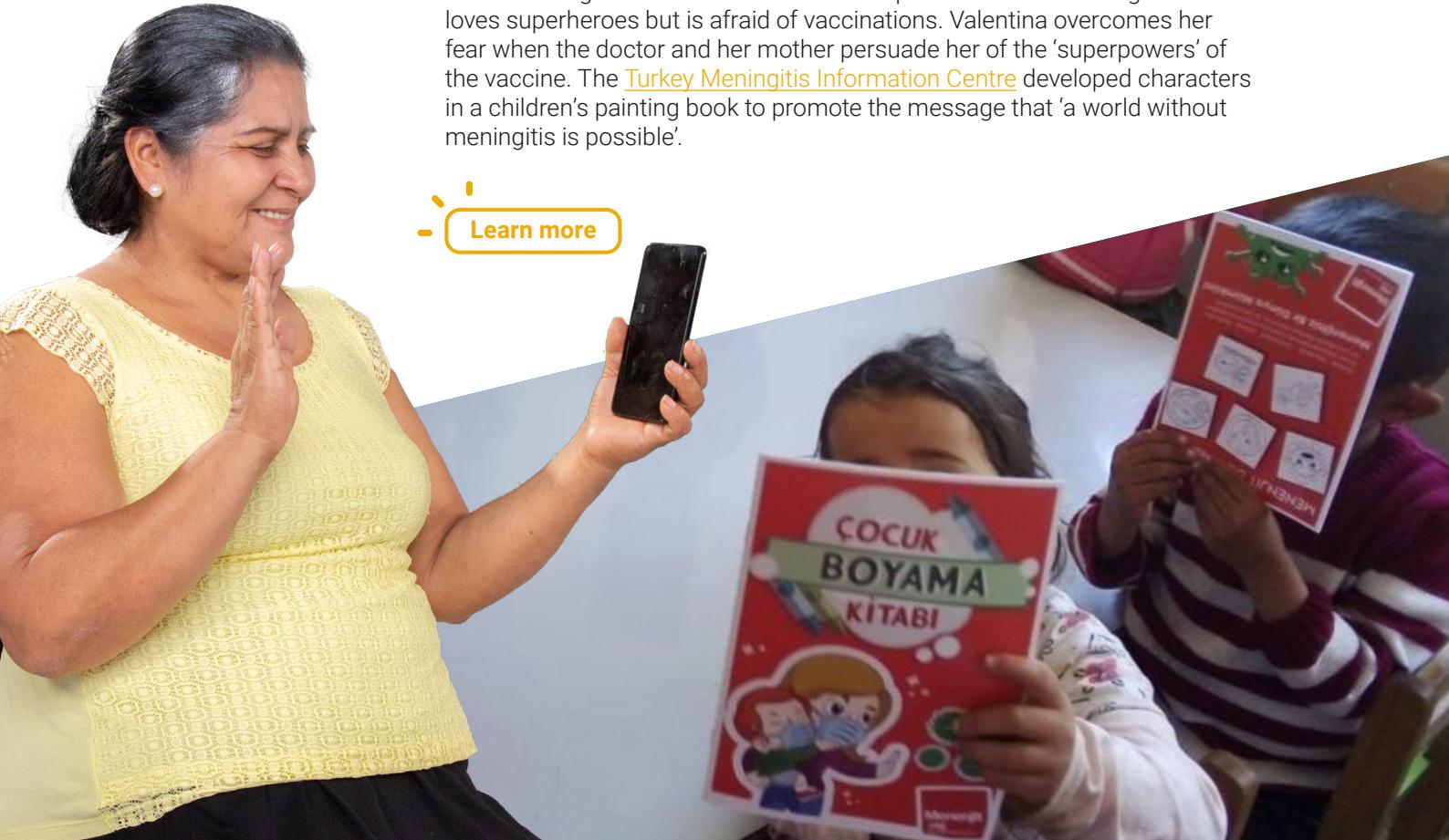
Una Vida por Dakota, in Peru, developed short videos of an older person each telling a story to a younger family member. A voiceover then declares that 'pneumonia should not interrupt a good story' and encourages everyone over sixty to take up the offer of a free jab. The videos featured characters from different parts of Peru – and the language, dress, and customs of the area – so that people all over Peru could identify with the characters.

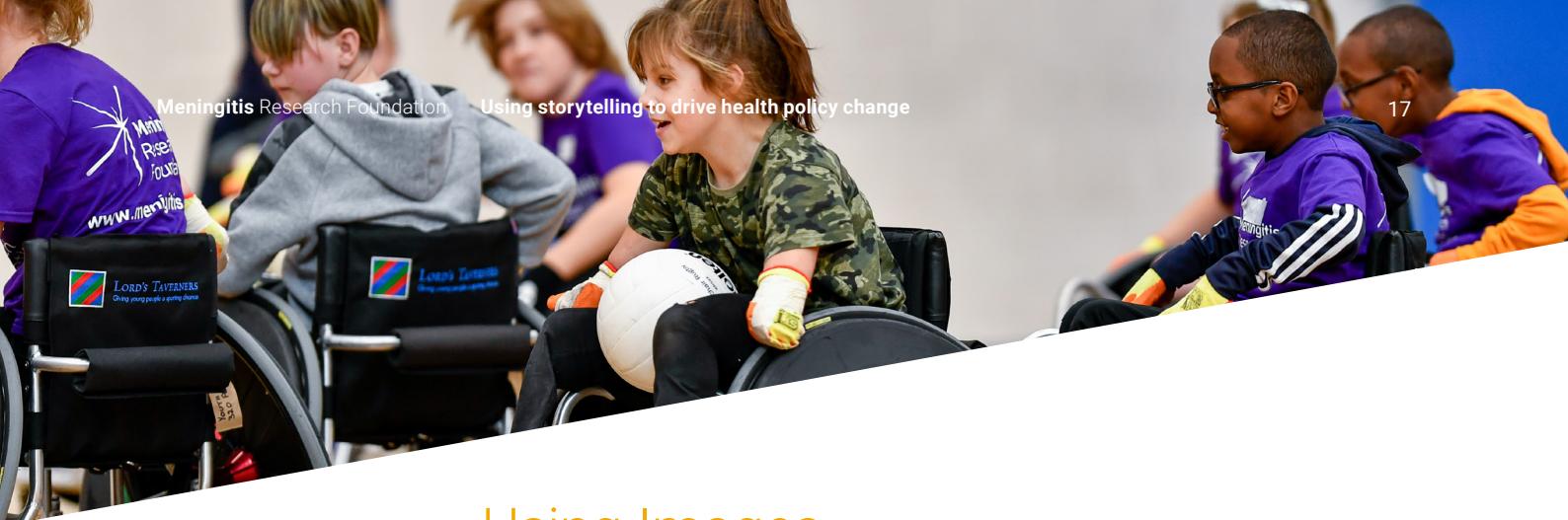
[Learn more](#)

Storybooks for children

Asociación Española contra la Meningitis produced a children's storybook about meningitis vaccination. Valentina Superheroína features a girl who loves superheroes but is afraid of vaccinations. Valentina overcomes her fear when the doctor and her mother persuade her of the 'superpowers' of the vaccine. The Turkey Meningitis Information Centre developed characters in a children's painting book to promote the message that 'a world without meningitis is possible'.

[Learn more](#)





Using Images

It's worth setting some organisational guidelines on using images so that everyone adopts best practice. For example, the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations avoids images of children being vaccinated and crying as these may be off-putting. It's also better to present positive images of people affected by meningitis as these demonstrate the power and agency of survivors and are more likely to engage your audience.

You can often find appropriate images on free image sites such as [flickr](#) or create your own images with free tools such as [Canva](#) (free to registered non-profit organisations). Do make sure that any images you use are copyright free, or that you have obtained the copyright for them. You can also find resources on the [Confederation of Meningitis Organisations](#)' website. Use captions to explain what is happening in photos and always credit the photographer.

Telling stories to advocate for better diagnosis and care, Meningitis Research Foundation and Meningitis Now, UK

Both [Meningitis Research Foundation](#) and [Meningitis Now](#) offer direct support to families affected by meningitis and often families are keen to share their stories to help others. In 2017, the organisations supported three families to talk to the UK Secretary of State for Health about their experiences, with the objective of improving future diagnosis and treatment.

The families shared their devastation at losing their loved ones, and the missed opportunities for diagnosis and treatment which might have saved them. In response to the meeting, and further evidence from the charities, the government agreed to establish a working group – including affected families, meningitis charities, and experts – to look at improving early diagnosis and treatment.

[Learn more](#)



Top Tips

- ✓ Use your networks to find storytellers.
- ✓ Make it clear to people how you will use their story, that you are likely to edit it, and what you hope to achieve. Always get their consent to publish it.
- ✓ Be sensitive using images, always ensure you have copyright, and credit the photographer.

5

Getting your story out there

Social media enables you to reach many people, anywhere in the world, at little cost.

Before you start planning a social media campaign think about channels your organisation already uses, what you want to achieve, what groups or individuals you want to reach, and how best to engage your target audience.

- Social media campaigns
- Engaging your current audience
- Reaching new audiences



Social media campaigns

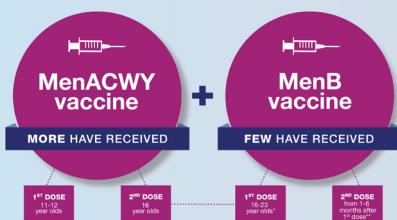


For social media campaigns, you should think about your target audience and your call to action, as you would with any other campaign. For example, to reach parents, you may choose to use Facebook and Instagram; TikTok and Instagram work well for young people; use Twitter and LinkedIn to reach policy makers and health care providers. Create short, punchy text to convey your message and add a strong visual element.

Try to get relevant, high-profile individuals and organisations to share and 'amplify' your messages, to reach the widest possible audience. Contact people in advance by email to ask them to support your social media campaign or send them a personal message through Twitter or other social media. Getting them to repost or share your content to their followers will attract more interest in your campaign, spread your messages wider, and increase your followers.

BACK TO SCHOOL?
IT TAKES TWO
types of meningitis vaccines!

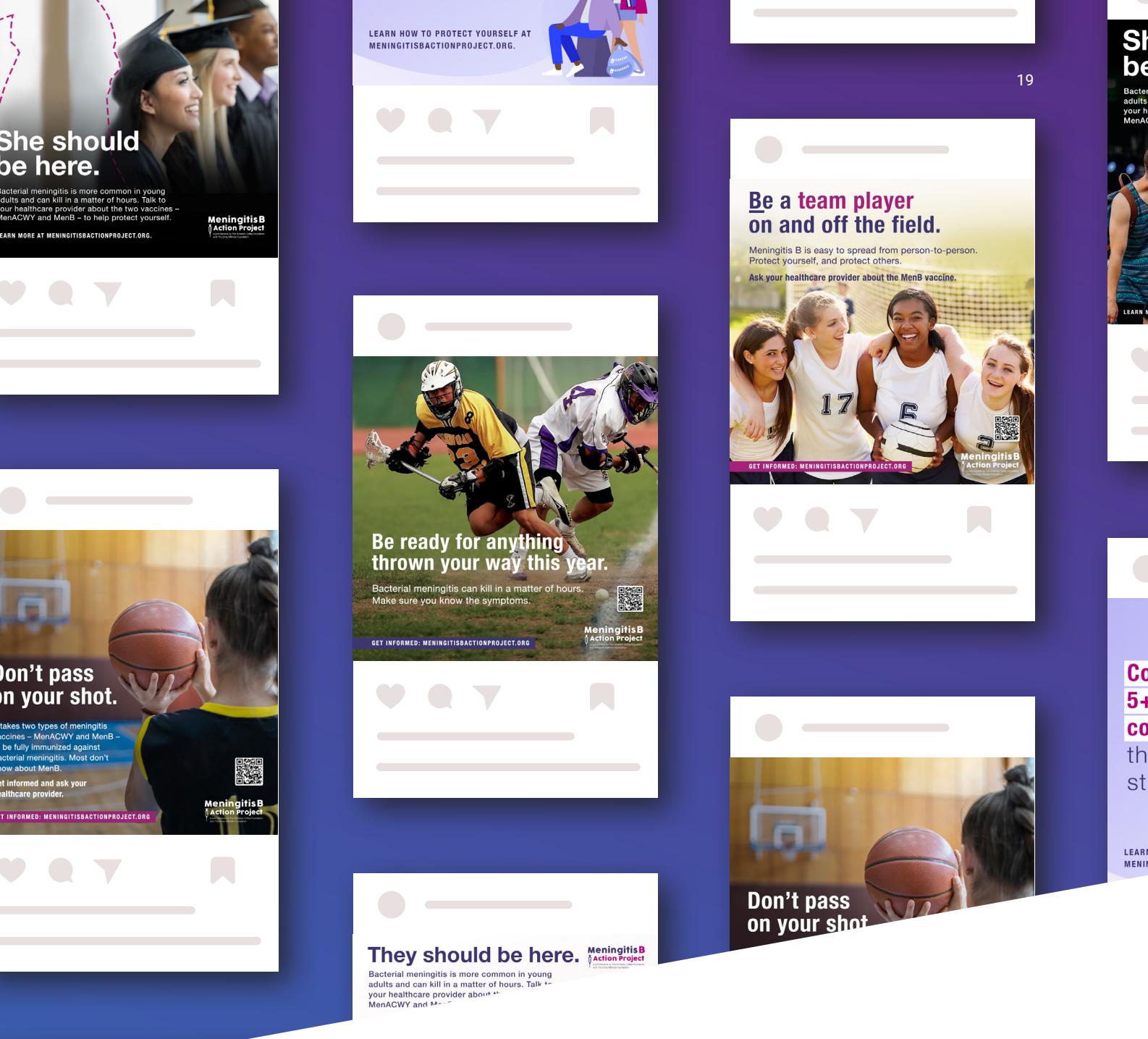
Both the MenACWY and MenB vaccines are necessary to be fully vaccinated against the most common form of bacterial meningitis in young adults.



Back to school vaccination campaign, Meningitis B Action Project, US

When [Meningitis B Action Project](#) launched a back-to-school vaccination campaign in the US, they created [simple graphics](#) which clearly explained the issue and shared them with parents and young people.

- [Learn more](#)



Engaging your current audience

To keep your audience engaged with your social media activity, it's important to make them feel involved. Create content that your audience relates to, using images and stories of people with relevant experiences to them. Giving updates on your work will also help your audience feel involved in the process: tell followers about your campaign goals at the beginning and update them on your progress.

Encouraging user-generated content is also a good way to engage your audience. Ask people to share their stories with an organisational or campaign hashtag and let them know you'll repost their posts. To build community and connection, you can also share longer content without a direct call to action. Popular Facebook pages like [Humans of New York \(HONY\)](#) prove that audiences are willing to read long posts because they are so interested in personal stories.

Reaching new audiences

Growing your audience on social media takes time, creativity and patience but is a highly effective way to get your message out there. These ideas may help:



Don't be shy

Talk about your work and share links to your social media accounts at every opportunity.



Work with organisations that share your values

Find other organisations interested in similar topics (such as vaccines or disability). Reach out to potential partners and ask them to share your content or let you take over their social media channels for the day. You can also support other health organisations by following them on social media and interacting with their content.



Social listening

Look at [Google trends](#) and [Answer the public](#) to find out what people are talking about. Search meningitis (or other key words) and filter by country to see the health questions people are asking in your context. If viral meningitis is a popular search for instance, a post about the topic may help you reach potential audiences.



Hop on trends and campaigns

Find popular online campaigns such as [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) or [World Immunisation Week](#) and use these to share information about meningitis.



Paid-for advertising

Paid-for advertising can be very effective if you have the resources to support it. Learn how to launch a paid campaign on Facebook Ads Manager from a Confederation of Meningitis Organisations [webinar](#) (26 minutes in). Facebook also offers [free training modules](#) on their platform.



Top Tips

- ✓ Identify the social media channels used by your target audience.
- ✓ Use days such as World Meningitis Day, to share messages and content.
- ✓ Ask organisations and individuals to share and amplify your messages and content.

6

Safeguarding storytellers

Always put the interests of storytellers first (including when you are the storyteller). The most powerful story in the world is not worth pain or suffering to those who share their experiences.

Here are some things to think about when you are the listener or the storyteller.

- Being the listener
- Being the storyteller





Being the listener



Clear communication is vital

Let people know how long you have available for the interview, how much of their experience will be used, where it will be shared, and what you want to achieve. Afterwards, remember to check the edited version with your storyteller and make sure they approve it for use. Only use the story at the time and for the purpose you have agreed.



Raising concerns

You may hear information that indicates that your storyteller or someone they know could be in danger or is suffering from abuse. It's important to be clear from the start that you will abide by your organisation's safeguarding policies, which may mean raising concerns ([see Resources](#)).



Encourage the storyteller and validate their feelings and experience

When someone talks about something difficult there can be a tendency to fill silences if they stop talking or provide them with solutions if they are upset. Listening to and validating their experience is the most useful thing you can do. Signpost them to further resources and support, rather than trying to offer this yourself.



Children and young people

Families may sometimes speak on behalf of a child or dependent. Make sure that the survivor's own views and interests are considered. Sometimes young people don't want their stories to stay in the public domain as they get older, so be prepared to take them off-line if necessary.



Protect the storyteller

Some people may be happy to give their real names and appear in photos, but this isn't always necessary. Names can be changed, and photos anonymised or not used. Your storyteller may wish to tell part of their story but keep other parts private.



Protect yourself

Spending a lot of time listening to or reading other people's experience with health issues can be very tough, especially when you have your own personal experience of the disease. Make sure you keep yourself safe emotionally. Take time to yourself, talk to people, and reach out for support if you need it.



Being the storyteller

Being the storyteller can be an empowering experience, but it can also be difficult or even harmful. Make sure you take steps to protect yourself.



Identify your boundaries and stick to them

Identify what you're willing to share with certain people, and what details you want to keep to yourself or those close to you. You may feel differently over time and feel that you want to tell more of your story or don't want to share it any longer. These are both fine.



Make sure you have support

Make sure you have someone to talk to after the experience and that you are not under immediate pressure from work / family etc. Sharing stories is hard, so give yourself some recovery time.



Sharing personal stories to raise awareness in Sweden

Christine Bennborn lost her son Mathias to meningitis and has used her personal experience to raise awareness about meningitis in Sweden. Her blog talks about why she does this, how she protects herself, and what sharing personal stories can achieve.

[Learn more](#)



Top Tips

- ✓ Protecting the storyteller is always the most important thing.
- ✓ Both telling, and listening to, personal stories can be hard. Storytellers need support.
- ✓ If you have safeguarding concerns, you must raise this through the appropriate channels.

7

Monitoring and evaluation

Evaluating storytelling for advocacy may seem daunting, and even unnecessary, for small organisations with limited time or capacity. But it doesn't have to be complicated and can make a real difference to your work.

Why do it?

Evaluation can help you understand what is working and what is not working – and help you improve. It can also help you demonstrate that your work is making a difference. This will boost your motivation and ambition and help you demonstrate success to funders and other supporters.

How do you start?

Start small, learn, and evolve your approach as you go along. There are lots of tools and resources to help ([see Resources](#)). But keep things simple. The most rigorous evaluation system in the world is no use if it's too complicated or time-consuming to manage.

What are you evaluating?

It's important to evaluate your storytelling for advocacy against your original change objective. Your evaluation should help you see to what extent you managed to achieve this or make progress towards it. It will also help you see if you achieved any other unexpected outcomes (positive or negative).

Making an evaluation plan

It's a good idea to make a simple evaluation plan at the start of a storytelling activity. This should set out your change goal for the activity, and how you plan to capture evidence of progress towards it.

Click through for more information on:

- Output monitoring
- Uptake monitoring
- Outcome monitoring
- Impact monitoring



Output monitoring



One of the easiest ways to monitor storytelling is to monitor your 'outputs'. This means counting the number of talks you give, case-studies you produce, social media messages you share, or media articles you generate. It doesn't tell you what impact these outputs had, or whether you achieved your change objective. But it does give you, and your funders, a clear idea of the scale and scope of your work.

Uptake monitoring



This is where you capture the number of people your 'outputs' have reached – which gives an idea of how many people your messages have reached and may have influenced.

This will involve counting, for instance, the number of people at the talks you give; the number of times your case-studies are viewed, downloaded, or given out (hard copies); the number of followers your messages attract on social media or times your messages have been amplified by others (shares, likes, comments); or the number of people reading or listening to a particular newspaper or radio programme.

Outcome monitoring



A more sophisticated and useful method of monitoring is to capture the 'outcome' of your storytelling activity. This can be harder to do and may not always be within your control. This involves capturing a range of possible outcome information such as:

Secondary statistics

Record whether website traffic increases after a talk or media appearance, or you receive more enquiries. This shows the activity has engaged the audience and increased awareness and interest in your work.

Feedback from talks and events

Design simple surveys or feedback mechanisms to get feedback before and after events. Collect 'one-off' feedback such as someone coming up to share their own experience after a talk, or a policy maker indicating that they intend to take some action.

Third party citations and quotes

Track whether your policy briefings, case-studies, or stories are quoted or used by other people or organisations in their communications (reports, speeches, websites etc). This shows that your messages have influenced others and may show a change of attitude or opinion or a commitment to action.



Impact monitoring



You can also try to monitor actual change. This might be a change in health policy (to offer new vaccinations for instance); a change in practice (for all health workers to give 'safety-net' information on meningitis to 'at risk' patients); or a change in awareness (more of a certain population group might recognise the signs and symptoms of meningitis and know what to do).

Looking for evidence of impact

Evidence of policy or practice change is likely to be available in the public domain. Evidence of impact might include a change in the law, or a new written health protocol or guidance note.

Using interviews

Interviews with key stakeholders including your advocacy targets can capture information about how your advocacy has contributed to achieving change. People may not spontaneously explain why they have taken the action they have but an interview may reveal a link between your storytelling and advocacy, and a change in their opinion or action.

Understanding your role in the change

Of course, many other factors may have contributed to the change, apart from your campaigning – including highly motivated policy makers or health staff or the work of other groups. It's good to be aware of these factors but you can conclude that your campaigning is likely to be one factor contributing to the overall change.



Top Tips

- ✓ Even small organisations should monitor and evaluate their work as it helps you see what you have achieved and to report to funders and supporters.
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation does not need to be daunting. Start simple and learn as you go along.

8

Storytelling for health advocacy at a glance

✓ **Personal stories are a great resource for health advocacy**

They help change opinions and encourage people to act in a way that statistics alone can't do.

✓ **Stories can be used in many different formats**

As written case-studies or videos; to add a personal testimony to policy briefs or face-to-face meetings; or in blogs, social media messages, or campaign communications.

✓ **Ensure your stories support your change objective**

Decide what you want to change (your change objective) and identify who you need to influence to achieve it (your advocacy target). Plan your stories to help you achieve your goals.

✓ **Highlight the positives**

Your stories may focus on painful issues but try to highlight positives where you can – a person who has overcome health challenges or has helped others in a similar situation. And highlight the positive outcome you are working towards.

✓ **Communicate clearly with storytellers**

Make it clear to storytellers what you hope sharing their story will achieve, and where it will be published. Make sure you get their permission to use the final product; and check back again if you want to use it again for a different purpose in future.

✓ **Safeguarding storytellers is paramount**

The best story in the world is not worth causing harm or distress to any storyteller. Ensure storytellers (and those who listen to their stories) are supported. Report any safeguarding concerns.

✓ **Evaluate your storytelling**

Evaluating your storytelling will tell you whether you have achieved your change objectives or made progress towards them, and help you report back to funders and supporters. Start simple and learn as you go along.



Resources

Information on WHO's Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030

- Press release - [WHO and partners call for urgent action on meningitis](#)
- Four-page summary - [Defeating meningitis by 2030: a global road map](#)
- [Full road map document](#)

Resources from the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations

- [Confederation of Meningitis Organisation's website](#) including [Personal Meningitis Stories](#)
- Please contact Confederation of Meningitis Organisations at info@comomeningitis.org if you are a member and not sure how to access the Members' Area.

Safeguarding resources

The [Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub](#) (RSH) supports civil society organisations to strengthen their safeguarding policy and practice against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH). The Hub offers an open-access platform bringing together quality assured guidance, tools, support, and research on safeguarding.

Resources on storytelling and communications for health advocacy

- [A two-pager](#) from the US Health Centre Advocacy Network covers effective storytelling; getting your story out there; and planning a storyboard.
- [A three-pager](#) from the UK's Health Foundation covers the basic principles of storytelling for health advocacy and channels for dissemination.
- UK based, [Health Poverty Action](#) have a series of posters and tool-kits on different aspects of [communication for development](#). These include [Animal Traps – A Guide to Communications Pitfalls](#) and an excellent toolkit, [A Practical Guide for Communicating Global Justice and Solidarity](#).

Other storytelling resources

- [How to Tell a Story](#) is a power-point suggesting 10 simple strategies for storytelling by Jonah Sachs.
- [Authentic Storytelling with Greenpeace: A 10 Step Process](#) is an hour-long webinar developed by Greenpeace and Tech Soup.
- [The Community Catalyst website](#) has good information about why it's important to tell stories in advocacy and how to develop a story bank (database).
- [Josephine Ensign](#) has good information on her website about the power of telling stories for advocacy – and the ethics of doing so.

Monitoring and evaluating advocacy

- [Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy](#), Unicef, Julia Coffman, Director, Center for Evaluation Innovation
- [Advocating with Personal Stories](#): An evaluation toolkit. This toolkit is an easy-to-use resource for advocates to evaluate their work using personal stories for advocacy.

Other useful resources

- The [Advocacy Accelerator](#) is an innovative platform for driving greater impact for grassroots and national advocates in Africa by equipping them with information, tools, and resources for advocacy.
- [Advocacy Case-studies](#), developed by CoMO and Meningitis Research Foundation (2022). The case-studies share stories of meningitis-related campaigning in different contexts – including Nigeria, Peru, US, Spain, and France – sharing tips and approaches and celebrating success. Also available in French and Spanish.

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Published by Meningitis Research Foundation and the
Confederation of Meningitis Organisations May 2022

We'd like to thank all those individuals and groups who
shared their experience and ideas with us in the development
of this resource

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from Nadia Vaenerberg and Sam Nye

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