



Donate Life Northwest Storytelling Guide for Volunteers

At Donate Life NW we aim to save lives and improve health through the promotion of organ, eye, and tissue donation.

Whether you are a donor or a recipient family member, a transplant recipient, currently waiting, a living donor, or a professional in the field, your personal story is one of the most powerful tools to educate the public about donation and transplant and inspire donation registration.

This guided activity, paired with **DLNW's 201 Webinar: Crafting Your Donation-Transplant Story**, will help you discover your unique **voice**, structure your **story**, and connect with your **audience** in five easy steps.

I. Discovering Your Voice

Your voice is what makes your story uniquely yours. It encompasses your tone, your experiences, your perspectives, and your values. *Remember, you don't have to be a perfect speaker, you just need to be real and speak from your heart.*

Example Voice: I share my story to honor my brother and show that even though there is loss, there is healing and hope.

To help discover your voice, ask and answer the following questions:

Story Element	Your Reflection
Why do I share my story?	
What emotions do I want others to feel (hope, gratitude, inspiration)?	
What message do I want people to remember after I speak?	

II. Building the Framework for your story

Every story has five common elements: character and setting, conflict/rising action, a climax, falling action, and a conclusion or resolution. Use the **Heartbeat Framework** below to help organize your story.

Story Element	What to Include	Your Reflection
The Heart	Who you are and your connection to transplant/donation	
The Pause	The challenge or loss you face(d)	
The Gift	The turning point: donation, transplant, or act of generosity	
The Beat	The impact or transformation since The Gift	
The Echo	The message you want your audience to remember and carry forward	

III. Building Connection with Your Audience

Think back to an impactful story you have heard and carried with you. Do you remember all the details, or do you remember how it made you feel? Feelings build connection.

Use the space below to answer the question, What do you want your audience to feel after hearing your story?

Connection tips

- Speak in a conversational tone.
- Share small details that make your story real (a sound, a smell, a simple moment).
- Make eye contact and smile if you are in person; look at the camera if virtual.
- Use pauses to give your words power and emphasis.
- Always end with hope and gratitude.

IV. Fine-Tuning Your Story for Time & Audience

Volunteers at DLNW can share their stories in many ways--school or community presentations, tabling events, or documentary screenings, just to name a few. It's important to adjust your story based on your audience and the time available. Use the space below to plan out different versions of your story.

Time Frame + Event	Story Focus	Notes for Your Story
1-minute tabling event or informal conversation	Key message + emotion	
5- minute community or school presentation	Full story, include the heart, the gift and the takeaway.	
10-minutes + panel or keynote speech	Include deeper background, more emotion, reflection, and hope.	

Audience reflection:

Who am I speaking to (students, health care workers, potential donors), and what will resonate most with them?

V. Practice and Refine

After you have used the Heartbeat Framework to write and organize your story, take time to practice and refine it.

- Say it out loud to find flow and emotion
- Time yourself and practice the short, medium, and long versions
- Practice in front of a trusted friend or family member and ask for their feedback
- Always honor you donor(s), your loved one, or the gift of life

By sharing your story--your joy, your grief, your gratitude--you help others see the real impact of donation and transplantation.