



## Telling A Good Story: Storytelling is Advocacy

### The 27-9-3 Rule

When you tell your story, you want to get other people interested in what you are talking about. The person that you may be speaking to probably won't know you already and won't be familiar with your story. You may only have a few seconds to speak to that person. Therefore, you have to tell your story in a way that gets attention.

That's where the 27-9-3 rule comes in. You should work as hard as you can to get your story down to only **27 words** that can be said in **9 seconds** and convey **3 points** of information. That isn't much time. You may not be able to tell your entire story in just 27 words, but don't worry! If you tell this short version of your story well, the person you're talking to may become interested in what you are saying and could ask you to give more details.

Here's an example:

Sonya is the mother of three active kids. She works two jobs so she can pay for rent, groceries, and utilities. While she and her kids are mostly healthy, her youngest daughter has asthma. Twice in the past three months, Sonya has had to take her daughter to the emergency room after an asthma attack. While Sonya is grateful for the care her daughter received, the hospital is expensive, and Sonya is worried that her daughter's attacks are getting worse. The hospital gave Sonya a break on the bills, but she's struggling to pay them the money she still owes.

Between work and her kids, Sonya doesn't have much time to get involved in her building. Recently, however, she's been attending community meetings in her building after a neighbor told her that their landlord has refused to take care of mold and pest problems – problems that Sonya knows make it harder for people with asthma, like her daughter, to breathe. Sonya and some of her neighbors have a meeting with leaders from the hospital and the public health department. They want to ask for advice and help on how to get their landlord to do the right thing and fix the problems in the building. **Sonya's 27-9-3:**

"My daughter has asthma, and our building is making her sick. Fixing mold and removing lead will keep her out of the ER and lower costs for everyone."

Notice that the 27-9-3 rule didn't cover everything in Sonya's story, just a few specific points. From this brief story, she can expand her story filling in the details and telling more once she has an audience that is interested and wants to hear more.

## Developing Your Own Story



What do you think is important about your story? What do you want decision-makers to know?

From the above, can you shorten your story down to no more than 3 points that you want to convey? Remember, you want to include the PROBLEM, SOLUTION, WHO WOULD IT AFFECT/WHY THIS NEEDS TO CHANGE.

1.

2.

3.

Use the space below to craft your 27-9-3 story.