

U.S. PAIN FOUNDATION

VIRTUAL ADVOCACY TRAINING SERIES

October 15 – November 4, 2025

Make yourself comfortable.
We will get started in a few minutes.

SESSION 2

THE POWER OF YOUR STORY

Cindy Steinberg, Director of Policy & Advocacy
with guest speaker, **Dionne Dougall**, Communications Expert &
Consultant

Agenda

- Introductions (Cindy, 10 minutes)
- The Power of Your Story (Dionne, 25 minutes)
- Workshop (30 minutes)
- Break (25 minutes)
- Share & Discussion (Dionne and Cindy, 25 minutes)
- Closing Reminders (Cindy, 5 minutes)



Rules and Guidelines

Take care of your health and pain first!

- Be comfortable, move around if you need to, stretch, stand, lie down, deep breathing

Be respectful of others.

If you have questions or concerns, contact us:
michele@uspainfoundation.org



Small Group Leaders



Cindy



Janet



Michele



Victoria



Nicole



Rebecca



Tom



-



How Does Communication About Your Story Affect Policy?

- Helps to raise the profile of a topic
- Helps keep issue alive during long legislative sessions or across sessions
- Gives a human face to issues that are hard to explain
- May help you get more supporters & collaborators
- Gives an opportunity to publicly thank lawmakers, other policy makers, collaborators for their help



MEET GUEST PRESENTER

Dionne Dougall

- 30+ years in PR/communications
- Oversaw Mayday Pain Fellowship
- Founder, 9th Sign Ventures, LLC ~ a communications and coaching consultancy for health & wellness
- Dionne will tell us how to make your stories compelling
- Explain a helpful process to develop your story



Mayday Fellows 2013-2014

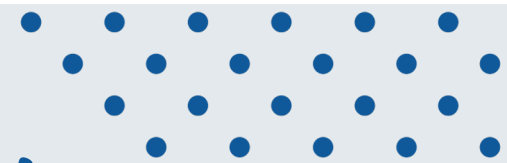


Starting on the left: Karen D. Davis, PhD; Catherine Underwood, MBA, CAE; Brian L. Schmidt, DDS, MD, PhD; Steven P. Stanos, DO; Cindy Steinberg; Bill McCarberg, MD

Let me tell you a story...

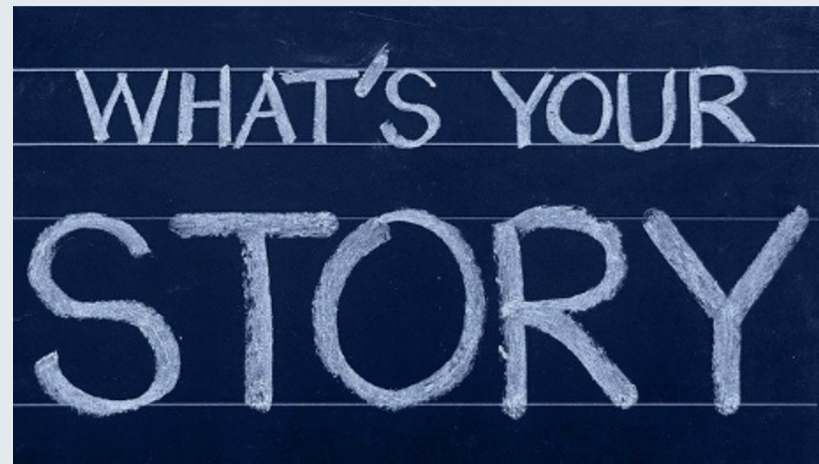


Stories Are Powerful Because They...



- Create empathy
- Foster understanding
- Inspire action

This makes stories a valuable tool for raising awareness and driving change.



Ask → Story → Ask

- Your message = your ask.
- Lead with the ask.
- Use your story to support it.
- Repeat the ask at the end.





Know Your Audience

You will share your story with one of these audiences:

- Federal Lawmaker's Aide
- State Lawmaker's Aide
- State Legislative Committee
- Reporter covering new law on pain
- Other _____



Grab Their Attention

- Provocative statement
 - Surprising fact or startling statistic
 - Question
 - Quote
 - Humor
-



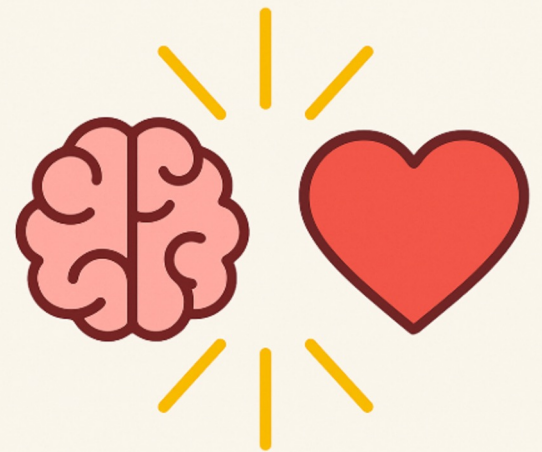
Explain Why It Matters

- Answer the question “why should I care?”
 - Connect story to broader impact
 - Relevance is:
 - Memorable
 - More impactful
 - Likely to achieve your goal
-



Make It Memorable

- Use vivid, descriptive detail
 - Evoke emotion (laughter, tears, hope, urgency)
 - Share struggles, frustrations, and triumphs
 - Keep it authentic and personal
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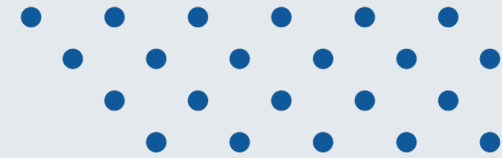
Message = Ask (Call to Action)

- In advocacy, your message is the ask.
 - Be clear about the action you want taken.
 - Tailor the ask to your audience.
 - Keep it concise, compelling, and repeatable.
 - Think about what you want them to: DO, SAY, THINK, FEEL.
-



**KEEP
CALM
AND
SEND ME
AN ASK**

In the End, Make Them FEEL...



PEOPLE WILL FORGET
WHAT YOU SAID,
PEOPLE WILL FORGET
WHAT YOU DID,
BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET
HOW YOU MADE
THEM FEEL.

- MAYA ANGELOU -

*~ Maya Angelou
Poet, Author, Storyteller, and Activist*

Advocacy Storytelling Recap



Putting the Formula Into Practice

Ask/Message: I'm asking the Senator to support SB 123 to expand access to pain care.

Story (4 elements woven in):

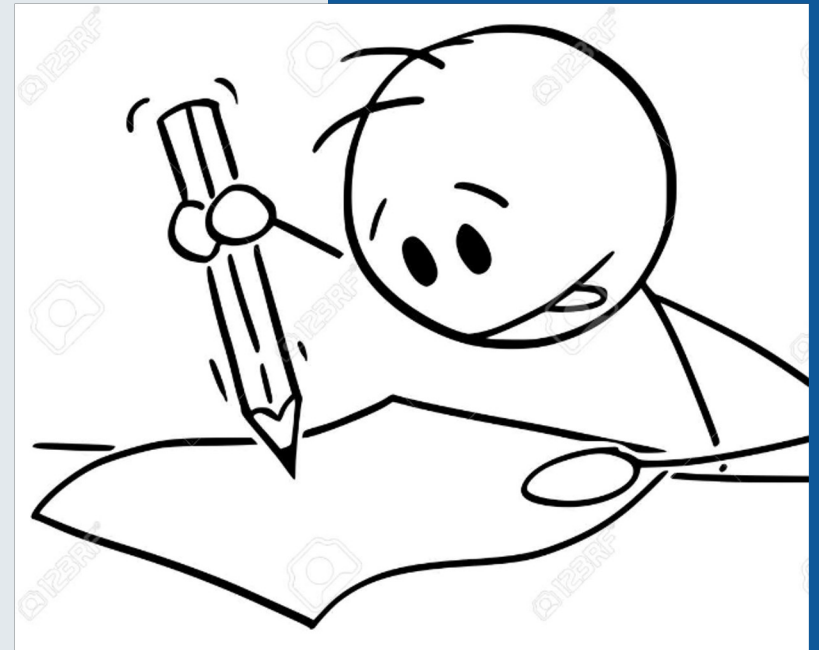
I live with chronic pain every day — some days it's so sharp and stabbing I can't sit up for more than an hour. I've seen neighbors in our community lose jobs or fall into poverty because they couldn't get the care they needed. Chronic pain affects 51 million Americans, and many of them are your constituents. I want you to imagine what it's like to choose between lying down in agony or standing in pain while trying to work or care for your kids. That's what my life looks like without the right care.

Ask (repeated): That's why I'm asking the Senator to support this bill, so people like me can access treatments that give us a chance at a full, productive life, and live with dignity.



Your Turn

- Choose your audience.
 - Start with your ask.
 - Share your story. Make it authentic, brief, descriptive, memorable, and flexible.
 - Explain why it matters to them.
 - Repeat your ask. What action do you want them to take?
-



BREAK

We'll take a break now.
When we return, we'll ask you to share your stories

Share Your Story and Discuss

How did it go?

Were you able to make your story compelling and concise?

Who would like to share from the group?



Lingering Questions



Reach out to Dionne until Wednesday, November 5:
dionne.a.dougall@gmail.com

Our Sponsors



The 2025 Virtual Advocacy Training Series was developed independently with funding support from Kenvue and Vertex Pharmaceuticals.



Thank you also to our Corporate Council for their continued support of this program, and other U.S. Pain initiatives.

What's Ahead

- **Tomorrow**, Thursday, October 23rd, 1:30-3:30pm ET, “Federal Pain Policy”
 - Wednesday, October 29th, 1:30-3:30pm ET, “State Pain Policy”
 - Tuesday, November 4th, 1:30-3:30pm ET “Your Pain Policy Projects”
-

THANKS!

Any Questions?

Homework

- In Portal read info & docs under “Recent Federal Pain Policy Milestones” & “Important Federal Pain Policy Milestones”
- You do not need to read the full Task Force Report nor everything under the NIH HEAL Initiative
 - uspainfoundation.org/virtualadvocacyseries

Next webinar - tomorrow!

Thursday, October 23rd, from 1:30 pm- 3:30pm ET | Same Zoom link!

Any questions or issues?

Reach out to Michele Rice: michele@uspainfoundation.org

U.S. PAIN FOUNDATION

