



## Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Toolkit

### HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY

**Be Brave, Be Concise, and Be Honest.**

Before you reach out to the media or elected officials, prepare what you are going to talk about. The best place to start is with YOUR story!

**Why tell your story:** A message from Sarah Goldman, [here](#).

#### What should be in your story?

- Introduce yourself, where you are from
- Let listeners know what you want them to know and what they can do
- Fill in with a brief personal story as time permits
- Let the listener respond!
- Repeat what you want while you are thanking them for their time. Check out the [FDDC Capitol Updates and Legislative Platform](#)
- Give them a leave-behind flyer or summarize with a thank you email and attach anything you would like them to have

To get you started, here are some others telling THEIR story:

- *Our Care Matters* [videos](#)

#### How do you share your story?

Once you are comfortable with telling your story, decide HOW you will share your story. You might:

- Write a letter
- Make a phone call (press, legislator local office)
- Request a meeting with a legislator (local)
- Share with your network on social media (organizations, friends)

## Who should you tell?

**Elected Officials:** Identify your Elected officials in the [FLSenate.gov](https://www.flsenate.gov), [FLHouse.gov](https://www.flhouse.gov), or Local officials (City, County) and:

- **Get to know your legislator**
  - Gather everything you know about the person or the organization
  - Who do they listen to
  - What committees or boards do they serve on
  - Their ideology (what are their ideas/values)
  - Who do they contribute dollars to or receive dollars from (who has the sway with them)
  - What was their job before
  - Where did they grow up (cultural practice/values)
  - Share information and develop a strategy for outreach/monitoring
- **Write a letter/email:**
  - [Download Sample Letter](#)
  - Email (use sample letter as an example and customize, omitting the address, etc.)

- **Ask for proclamation:**



- Request issuance of a resolution, proclamation, or designation as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day or Month or other specific date you want to recognize from your local city and/or county commission in several ways.
- [Download Sample Proclamation](#)

- If you know a city or county commissioner, or the mayor, ask them to issue a proclamation or resolution. While it is best for a chairman or mayor to request a resolution, any commissioner can put in a request.
- If you need a personal contact, call the main phone number for the commission or council office, and find out the process for issuing a resolution or proclamation.
  - Explain your request and the key issues.
  - Ask for an email address to send information and let them know you have sample language for the proclamation/resolution prepared.
- Once you have agreement, confirm when it will be scheduled on a meeting agenda. You and as many other advocates as you can find should attend the meeting to show your support. Frequently, they will not just designate the day, but they may also wish to present the official proclamation to you on behalf of your organization.
  - Be sure to have someone take a picture of you receiving the proclamation.
  - Email the picture to: [Margaretd@fddc.org](mailto:Margaretd@fddc.org)
  - Send a personal message (letter or email) to the commissioner or whoever assisted you, expressing your sincere gratitude.

#### **Press:**

- **Email or call:** Good places to start are the healthcare or human-interest reporters at local newspapers and TV stations
- **Write a [Letter to the Editor](#):**
  - Letters to the editor are a good way to present ideas, promote a campaign, or respond to a previously published article.
  - Letters to the editor are brief opinion pieces reflecting the viewpoint of the author. When writing a letter to the editor, it is best to keep the length to 150 words or fewer and no more than 200 words.
  - Letters to the editor can be sent via email or submitted through the newspaper's website. Include your name, address, phone number, and email address at the bottom of the letter as a signature of authenticity.
  - To submit a letter, call your local daily or weekly newspaper or check online for letter submission information. Be sure to read through the submission guidelines before sending.
- **Invite them to attend an event/meeting**
  - Inviting the press to events or meetings in your area with other advocates (e.g. FCC, community disability groups) is a good way to get coverage for your ideas or campaigns.

**Support legislation:** Check out FDDC Capitol Updates and platforms - [Platforms](#)