

The Prevention Story Formula (Checklist)



Use this as a mental checklist, not something that has to be perfect.

1. WHO is this about? -----

- A person, group, or community
- Can be anonymous, composite, or community-level
- Grounded in lived experience (not the organization)

If there is no “who,” it is a report – not a story.

2. WHAT were they experiencing before? -----

- A need, barrier, risk, or gap
- The context that made prevention matter
- What was missing or challenging

This creates relevance – not drama.

3. WHAT did they encounter? -----

- A prevention tool, resource, conversation, or space
- Training, campaign, relationship, or opportunity
- Keep this brief – this is *exposure*, not the star

Avoid listing everything you did.

4. WHAT shifted? -----

- Awareness
- Confidence
- Language
- Behavior
- Willingness to Engage

Even small shifts count – impact is cumulative.

5. WHAT protective factor was strengthened? -----

- Connection
- Skills
- Trust
- Access
- Support
- Knowledge

This is the prevention science moment.

6. WHY does this matter? -----

- What’s the difference today?
- What became possible?
- What risk was reduced or buffered?

This is your impact – not your activity.

Ultra-Short Version

The 6-Question story Checklist

- Who was this for?
- What was happening before?
- What did they encounter?
- What changed?
- What protective factor grew?

If you can answer these, you have a prevention story!

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One-Sentence Formula

When **[who]** encountered **[prevention exposure]**, it led to **[shift]**, strengthening **[protective factor]** and result in **[impact]**.

Example: When parents encountered a safe space to ask questions at the community forum, it increased confidence and strengthened communication skills with her teens – a key protective factor for youth to stay substance free.

Ripple Effect Storytelling Template

1. **Data:** Pick an outcome/metric.
2. **Story:** Recall a “Human Signal” – What is the one thing you heard or saw during that activity?
3. **Ripple Effect:** How does this tie into your intent and mission? Why does that small moment matter for your long-term goal?

Prevention Storytelling Ethics: A Quick Checklist

- Is this story accurate and competent?
- Does this protect people from harm?
- Was consent and confidentiality respected?
- Does this uphold dignity and equity?
- Am I centering public trust — not personal gain? Am I sharing to educate, inform, and promote community health?