Video Storytelling for Impact:

A Planning Tool to Help Multisector Community Coalitions Get Further Faster

Overview

Videos are an impactful way for multisector community coalitions and partnerships addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) to share their stories with partners and the wider community. They can serve as powerful communications tools for engaging diverse audiences and can offer versatile storytelling platforms for raising awareness about initiatives, providing resources, and sharing community stories.

> Impact stories **showcase the collective impacts** your coalition has achieved so far—and the future impacts you hope to achieve together—to address SDOH by **featuring lived experiences** and data within a larger narrative to illustrate qualitative and quantitative dimensions of impact.

This resource serves as an addendum to the Impact Storytelling Toolkit and walks through key steps and considerations for you and your coalition partners to work through collaboratively to develop a video story, including defining your purpose, determining your message, identifying your team, and finalizing your content.

Define your purpose → Determine your message → Identify your team → Finalize your content

Define your purpose

An impact story inspires and transforms communities. When preparing to tell an impact story, you must first clearly define the purpose, vision, and goals of your coalition. Step 1 ("Why": Vision and Purpose) of the Impact Storytelling Toolkit includes key questions coalitions can consider to identify and define their work, purpose, and goals.

Determine your message

Next, you should determine the key message, or the one main idea you want your audience to remember from your video story. When developing this message, always ensure it aligns with your broader purpose and goal. Coalitions can use Communicating for Impact: A Guide to Building Your Messaging Matrix and Step 2 ("What": Key Messages and Metrics) of the Impact Storytelling Toolkit to help them think through the story they want to tell. As you build your key message, consider supporting messages or points that can help to shape your impact story.

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Coalitions working to address SDOH may have numerous priorities and key messages. If this is the case, it can be helpful to engage in a **prioritization exercise** to determine the focus for your video story. Another effective approach can be for members of the coalition to each draft their vision for the key message to share in the video, and then come together to build consensus.

The Getting Further Faster Video Hub includes videos created to support coalitions participating in Year 2 of the Social Determinants of Health–Getting Further Faster initiative and showcase their impact stories.

When deciding on the key message for your video impact story, reflect on **which messages might be best suited for a video format** and **who you are trying to reach** (for example, community members, current funders, or prospective funders). Videos are especially impactful for showcasing coalition partners' diverse perspectives, personal narratives, and activities in action.

Consider the **desired audience** and **method of dissemination** for your video, as it will impact the video's length and format. For example, when using social media, a shorter, visually engaging video might be valuable. When looking to showcase an impact story in more depth—for example, at a board meeting—it could be useful to develop a longer video showcasing individual stories and other coalition work in action.

👥 Identify your team

Coalitions should identify and engage people to be part of the video storytelling team, as well as messengers to feature in the video. In some cases, members of the video storytelling team might also be the messengers.

Video storytelling team

A successful video storytelling team includes those who can help to craft the message and bring the video from the idea stage to a final product. Assigning and communicating clear team roles from the outset is crucial to ensure effective collaboration and productivity, avoid duplicating efforts, and create an efficient and smooth process. Many effective video storytelling teams find it useful to assign a **project lead** who is responsible for engaging with the entire team regularly, providing support, and ensuring the team fully executes its vision for the video.

In addition to the project lead, you may decide to identify a **strategy team** comprising roles such as content lead, data lead, or community liaison. Strategy teams often include program or evaluation staff who have direct experience and knowledge about a coalition's work and impact. A strategy team is responsible for guiding the overall narrative of the video by determining the most effective message and messengers.

Lastly, your coalition should identify a **communications team** that will be responsible for managing the writing, filming, and editing of the video. An in-house communications team with video production capabilities could support this role, or you could contract with an external videography team, if funding allows.

To further create an inclusive and trusting environment for community members to share their story, **consider production teams that are part of the community** or share lived experiences with the community. Strategy and communications teams must work together closely to ensure the vision and key message are apparent in the video impact story.

> **Delineate the decision-making process.** It is critical that the entire storytelling team clearly understands the decision-making process for developing the video story. A clear process identifies who will make the decision and how others will be involved. Example questions to consider during this process include:
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> - Will decisions be made by consensus with everyone agreeing to support the final decision?
> - Will the team leader gather input but make the final decision?
> - Will the team vote?
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> When team members know what to expect, and what is expected of them, decision-making can flow more seamlessly, which helps build support for the final product.

Trusted messengers

The video storytelling team should identify trusted messengers to feature in the video impact story who can help amplify the key message by sharing their own experiences with the coalition's work. Messengers could be members of your multisector partnership, external collaborators such as evaluators or researchers, or community members who are well-suited to deliver key messages authentically and credibly. Ensure that messengers represent diverse perspectives across your coalition and can speak to different aspects of the message. Step 3 ("Who": Identify Your Messengers) in the Impact Storytelling Toolkit includes more information on identifying and uplifting your trusted messengers.

Finalize your content

The video storytelling team can finalize the content for the impact story by connecting with messengers and determining audiovisual elements for communication.

Connect with messengers

Ensure messengers are prepared for their role and can contribute their unique insights and perspectives to the impact story. One strategy to achieve this objective is to **conduct individual preparation calls** with each messenger. During these calls, a member from the video storytelling team should ensure the messenger understands the overall vision and key message for the video, why you invited them to participate, and what aspect of the message you hope they can convey. The storytelling team might also choose to share data points that may be helpful for the

> **Tip**
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> As funding allows, compensate messengers, especially those from the community, to demonstrate respect and appreciation for their time and effort in contributing to the video.

messenger to incorporate to further convey their message. Allow ample time during the prep calls for the messengers to brainstorm their talking points and ask questions. When including community members with lived experience perspectives as messengers, it is important to ensure they do not feel pressured to participate, and to give them ownership of their own story and how it is told.

Following the prep calls, **develop tailored interview guides** for each messenger. Interview guides include potential questions for the interviewee as well as a summary of talking points discussed during the prep call. Empower all messengers to iterate on the draft interview guide and ensure that it accurately captures their perspective and voice. Developing a strong interview guide ahead of filming will help messengers feel more prepared and confident on the day of filming. It will also help the video storytelling team ensure the key message will be conveyed.

Determine audiovisual elements of communication

A key part of video storytelling is determining how you want to convey your story and key message with visuals and audio. In many cases, audiovisual elements will align with topics that messengers will be speaking about. **Identify videos and images**, such as program or community photos or infographics, that you can incorporate into your new video. Note that some of these resources might require licensing to use. Identify new video and images that you may need to develop to further convey the story. **Consider creative and branding styles** (such as logos or color palettes) as part of determining visuals. In many cases, videos developed by coalitions should be co-branded to ensure all organizations are visually represented.

Determine locations for any new planned filming, including sites for interviewing messengers. Consider which activities or actions you want to highlight to bring the story to life, such as by showing visual examples from an initiative, program, or event. It might be helpful to ensure filming is planned around specific events and that all participants are informed and opt in to the filming, including signing any required release forms. It is also important to ensure that availability of all new filming locations aligns with the respective availability of messengers.

Consider whether you would like to include **narration** throughout the video or have individual interviews and associated video clips guide the story. If using narration, develop a voice-over script alongside the interview guides. Identify who will narrate the script; this might be a messenger, or a member of the video storytelling strategy or communications teams. If funds allow, the communications team might want to use a professional voice-over talent. Also consider how to **incorporate other sounds to help amplify your message**, including silence, ambient music, and music with lyrics. Obtain any music licenses needed.

💡 **Tip**

Engage with your local community or partner network to identify funding opportunities for video planning and development, including through existing or new grants, fundraising, or in-kind support.

Ensure accessibility of the video, adhering to Section 508 standards. This may include adding captions, using large text, optimizing contrasting colors, and avoiding flashing content. When sharing the video, use a media player that supports captions and assistive technology and share a transcript of information included in the video. Include ASL or other language translation, as appropriate, to ensure the video is accessible to your desired audience.

Looking ahead

Careful planning is critical to ensure that coalitions' videos share their impact stories successfully. The planning steps included in this resource require collective and ongoing communication, time, and resources. It is important to allow adequate time for these planning steps to ensure your coalition can develop a compelling video storytelling product that helps achieve your objectives. Coalitions can also use or adapt the resource log in the Impact Storytelling Toolkit to support and operationalize the planning steps included in this resource. After completing these planning steps, coalitions can move into executing and disseminating their video impact stories to reach their desired audiences.

> 💡**Tip**
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> Coalitions can reference Step 4 ("How: Share Your Story and Sustain Your Efforts") in the Impact Storytelling Toolkit for tips on identifying opportunities to share your stories.