

#THINGS2CONSIDER

Strategic Sharing

Strategic Sharing is a method of telling your story safely and effectively in order to achieve a goal. Basically, it's a process for sharing your lived experience with others in a manner that keeps you safe from negative experiences, and that teaches you how to share in a way that will help you reach the end result that you are aiming for. —From the *Strategic Sharing Workbook*.

Strategic sharing is an important part of the [youth engagement guidelines developed by SAMHSA](#).

Whether it's for personal, educational, or advocacy purposes, strategic sharing is a valuable skill and resource for youth. Every young person has a story and the ability to share the story safely and purposefully can be empowering and improve self-efficacy. Learning how to share your story strategically is just one of the many potential benefits of using the following free resources.

Hearing a youth's journey through child and youth serving systems offers a valuable learning opportunity for professionals in helping them to further their understanding and develop a realistic perspective. Youth who can constructively share their experiences, thoughts, and ideas born of their journey are an asset and key force in system change efforts.

Supportive adults, youth coordinators, youth peers, and other professionals working with youth and youth groups can share strategic sharing resources and support youth in practicing newly learned skills. (Participant workbooks make it easy for youth to take in the information and practice on their own, for their own purpose).

When planning to share strategically in public...

It is crucial for youth to practice with a supportive ally (friend, family member, or mentor) beforehand and to debrief with an ally after the experience.

STRATEGIC SHARING WORKBOOK: YOUTH VOICE IN ADVOCACY

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/pbStrategicSharingGuide.pdf>

Developed by the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health in collaboration with The Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures at Portland State University, the Strategic Sharing Workbook was written from the perspective of someone who has lived through the foster care system and is easily adapted for any youth who wants to share their story for change. The resource information covers why a youth might want to share, the benefits and risks of sharing, tips on being strategic, and more.

HONEST, OPEN, PROUD: TO ELIMINATE THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS

<https://wisewisconsin.org/resources/honest-open-proud/>

This is a workbook for small group discussion or personal use. It helps you to look at the story you have been telling yourself, discern helpful and hurtful self-attitudes, and analyze the pros and cons of disclosing in different settings to different people. Lastly, it guides you to draft your own story into a format that discloses not only the pain of mental health challenges but also the internal and external resources you discovered and use to live your life in the way you choose. It was written in first person, specifically for those living with a mental health challenge but can be adapted for use by anyone.

Materials include a Facilitators' Manual, Participants' Workbook and Fidelity Measurement. This free resource can be presented as a daylong seminar, four 3-hour sessions, or nine separate 1-hour sessions- each with a booster follow-up about a month later.

STRATEGIC SHARING

Foster Care Alumni of America partnered with Casey Family Programs to develop the Strategic Sharing booklet to support foster care alumni in making good decisions about when and how to share their experiences. The booklet also provides some advice for professionals who ask young people and alumni of foster care to publicly share their experiences.

<http://www.fostercarealumni.org/strategic-sharing/>

STRATEGIC SHARING FROM THE NRCYD YOUTH LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT

The National Resource Center for Youth Development, in collaboration with FosterClub, includes an overview and worksheet on strategic sharing within a larger Youth Leadership Toolkit. The guide is free to use and written in a direct, open style for youth leaders.

<http://store.fosterclub.com/youth-leadership-toolkit/>

STRATEGIC SHARING RESOURCES HELP EMPOWER YOUTH TO:

- Improve self-awareness
- Identify personal triggers
- Develop presentation skills
- Recognize the importance of self-advocacy skills
- Cultivate strategies to protect themselves from potential bias and negative interactions with others
- Learn how to set and use different boundaries with different people
- Decide if, and when, to disclose living with a mental health challenge



words by
MICHELLE VANCE