

## A Guide to Developing Powerful Innovation Stories

**Inspire.** Good stories allow the reader to view the world through the eyes of another, they grab readers or listeners, they *inspire*. Good stories are emotionally appealing—a key component to convey the overarching goals of any anecdote—and may help the audience remember the story enough to share it with others. Often funding decisions are determined first by emotions and second by analysis. Data and general overviews elicit analysis, and stories elicit powerful emotional involvement that invigorate.

**Captivate.** Why do stories work? People are captivated by stories that are easily relatable. If you can capture the essence of your innovation in the particulars and details of the lives that are ultimately impacted by those changes, your readers and listeners will sit up and take notice. This is what we refer to as “the universal in the particular.”

**Frame.** How do you construct a story? The following are some questions that can help guide you through your efforts. You may discover that the questions lead you to gather further narratives from stakeholders. Sit down and interview them. Dig for what it was like for them before and after the intervention. Learn what difference it has made for them. By answering these questions you will develop the building blocks to frame a story that can be crafted to truly engage key stakeholders.

1. **What were the challenges or problems for the characters/stakeholders in the story before the innovation?** Identify actual people involved, whether it's a payer, purchaser, provider, or patient. Describe their world (a typical day) before the intervention.
2. **Why is it important to the characters involved to make a change?** What would the world of these characters be like if the status quo continued?
3. **What were the interventions?** Who was involved? What did they do?
4. **How did the characters/stakeholders in the story respond at first to these initial changes?** Did they resist the change, and if so, how?
5. **What were the complicating factors that made the change emotionally challenging for the characters/stakeholders?** Were there any unexpected consequences that made the change effort more difficult than anticipated?
6. **How did the outcomes of the changes impact the lives of the characters/stakeholders?** Do not seek lofty concepts here—describe the day-to-day differences these changes have made that are tangible.
7. **How have the characters/stakeholders reacted now that the changes are in effect?** What's next for them? What does the future hold for them?