

## SHARING YOUR STORY FOR THE GREATEST IMPACT

### Example: Martha's Story Map

#### 1. Introduce Yourself

*Tip: Share your full name, city or town. This helps your audience connect with you.*

Good evening. Thank you for joining us for our talk on women's heart health, Because Her Heart Matters Too. Let me begin by introducing myself. My name is Martha and I come from Ottawa. I became involved in this advocacy campaign because I have heart diseases myself. I suffered a heart attack. Let me tell you how my heart health journey began.

Two years ago my life was very busy and stressful due to work demands. I didn't have a lot of down time to just rest and decompress so my excessive fatigue and aching body seemed par for the course. My husband noticed that I was more run down than usual, and urged me to see my doctor. I scheduled an appointment. (Martha's Story Map 'then')

#### 2. What Happened?

*Tip: What happened before you received the help you needed? Keep this very brief – think about what you could share in 30 seconds.*

A few days later I was leaving work and felt really unwell; cold sweats, weak, and short of breath. One of my colleagues noticed and was worried. I tried to dismiss her concerns. She would not take 'no' for an answer. She called an ambulance. I was embarrassed and felt guilty for wasting their time. Once I arrived at emergency they ran some tests. Then I was told, "Martha, you have had a heart attack." (Martha's Story Map 'what happened')

#### 3. What Helped?

*Tip: Describe what helped in your recovery, especially if culturally relevant.*

I was in disbelief. Someone like me would not have a heart attack, would they? It took me some time to adjust to realizing that I was now a woman with heart disease. I initially thought that I would get my stents and take my medications as prescribed and that my heart would then go back to the way it was before the heart attack. But then as I learned more about heart disease, I realized that this is not a curable disease – once you have it, you have it for life. I felt scared and alone. My family was treating me differently too.

I participated in cardiac rehabilitation and a peer support group for women with heart disease. Both significantly helped my physical and emotional recovery. I have made a lot of changes. (Martha's Story Map 'now')

#### 4. How are you Different Today?

*Tip: Share what is going right in your life or how you are experiencing recovery.*

I was pushing myself too hard and in the end I paid the price. Today, I am proud to say that I am living a healthier life and I am happier because of it. I made the changes necessary to ensure I am able to manage my disease as best I can because there is a lot I do have control over when it comes to being heart healthy.

#### 5. Make your Point

*Tip: This is a transition from your personal story to a message for your audience.*

Moments like these really do make you reflect on what is important and I have readjusted my priorities as a result. Instead of trying to be all things to all people, I realized that without good health I would not be any of those things.

#### **6. Make your "ask"**

*Tip: Let your audience know how they can help. Say thank you.*

I am now raising awareness so women start to put themselves and their health first. Do not feel guilty or ashamed about looking after yourself. You deserve to live this life as fully as possible. Thank you for listening to my story.