



Share your story safely

Sharing a personal story of mental health can reinforce feelings of strength, resilience, and perseverance. Storytelling is also a powerful tool to reduce stigma and shame. You might consider sharing your story to inspire others in a similar situation to find a way through.

But sharing your story is an important personal decision and without proper care, it could negatively impact your wellbeing and the wellbeing of those reading or listening. Protecting your mental health is just as important as giving voice to your experience.

It's also important to consider that some people might never feel safe enough or wish to share their stories publicly – and we need to respect that. Racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and personal and institutional biases are pervasive and can impact one's ability to share safely.

If you decide to share your story, here are a few items to consider.

Find the right time for you

Take your time when deciding to share your story. Only you can know when it's the right time to share. If you need support making that decision, consider consulting with a mental health professional or a trusted friend.

Make sure you feel safe

When you're ready to share, make sure you feel safe and supported. This could include enlisting your friends or family members for support or even having your pet with you when you share your story. You can also choose to share some parts of your story and leave out other parts. Consider what details you are comfortable sharing and respect your boundaries.

Think about where and how to share

Sharing your story publicly can happen in various ways. You may feel more comfortable within the intimacy of a small group of friends, or within the anonymity of strangers in



person or online. You might prefer to share your story through social media, a video or blog post. Remember that it's not the platform or audience size that matters, but that you get a feeling of strength and freedom from sharing.

Consider others in your story

While your story is yours to tell, it's important to consider who else might be featured in your story as others might feel differently about privacy. Tell your story from your own perspective and lived experience and avoid disclosing identifying information about other people without their prior consent.

Consider the listeners

Although stories can foster a connection between the narrator and the listeners, it's crucial to consider the potential impact on the listeners. If you disclose details about past traumas, keep in mind how that might affect others. For instance, while suicide, self-harm, and trauma are part of many people's mental health journeys, people who are currently thinking about ending their lives might be drawn to those details. As such, we recommend you leave out specific details about places or methods that pertain to suicide, self-harm or trauma. Further, if your story speaks of suicide, sexual assault, violence, or other traumatic events, consider sharing a trigger warning to help reduce potential harm.

If you experience any distress, reach out to:

- Talk Suicide Canada (call 1-833-456-4566 or text 45645)
- Kids Help Phone (call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868)
- Wellness Together (call 1-866-585-0445 or [visit their website for resources](#))
- [A CMHA near you](#)

Sources:

[How to tell a story safely](#) by Jack.org

[Sharing your Story Safely](#) by the Mental Health Commission of Canada

[How to tell your mental distress or illness story safely](#) by the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

[Toolkit: Sharing your personal journey for public speaking and/or advisory engagement](#) by Support House