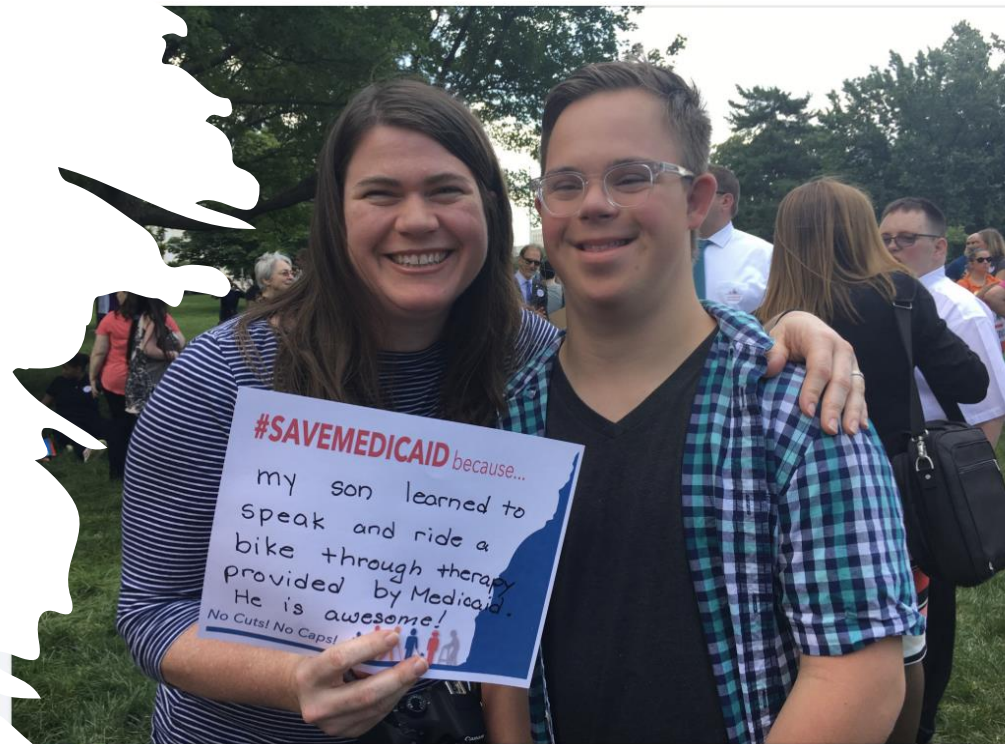


How to Tell Your Story So It Leads to Action

Sharing Your Story to Advocate, Influence Public Policy, and
Educate Your Friends & Family

Dr. Stephanie Meredith

Step 1: Know How the Issue Impacts Your Family



1.3K

180 comments 9K shares

Like

Comment

Share

more comments

Stephy Pendlington

Have the coolest aunt in the world 🍌 and coolest cousins of course ❤️

Love Reply

17

Siila Salmon Nichols replied · 3 Replies

Stephanie Hall Meredith

Step 2: Deciding
Who You Want
to Influence and
What You Want
Them to Do



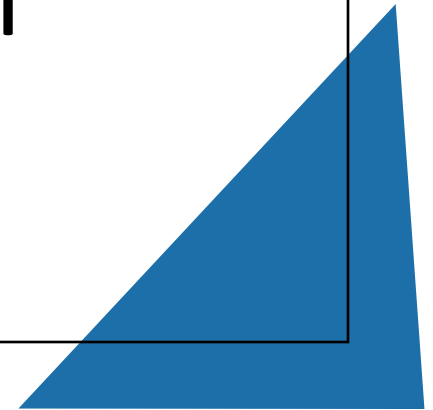
Know Your Audience

*The Key to Getting What You Want:
Know What You Want*

- Identify Your Audience
 - Legislators
 - Friends and Family
 - General Public
- Considerations
 - Know the values of your audience
 - Preaching to the choir or swaying opinion



Step 3: Understand Communication Essentials



Communication Essentials

1

Identify and explain
the Issue

2

Tell your story about
the impact on you

3

Give an action item

- Easiest for US Policy:
Contact Capitol Switchboard:
(202) 224-3121



Step 4: Crafting Your Story

Rhetorical Magic

Ethos: Credibility

- Identify who you are: a parent, a professional, your experience
- Use sources that the audience will value: progressive AND conservative media sources where possible
- Direct sources and non-profits are best
- Feature bipartisan legislators/advocates

Pathos: Emotion

- Use photos
- Tell how a program or policy is essential to YOUR family
- Figurative language: Repetition and Comparison



Rhetorica | Magic

- Logos: Logic
 - Use plain language
 - Use data with sources: Kaiser Family Foundation
 - Be aware of politically-charged words
 - Anticipate rebuttals and address them ahead of time
- Think of logical, innovative, and respectful rebuttals

Anticipating Rebuttals and Logical Fallacies

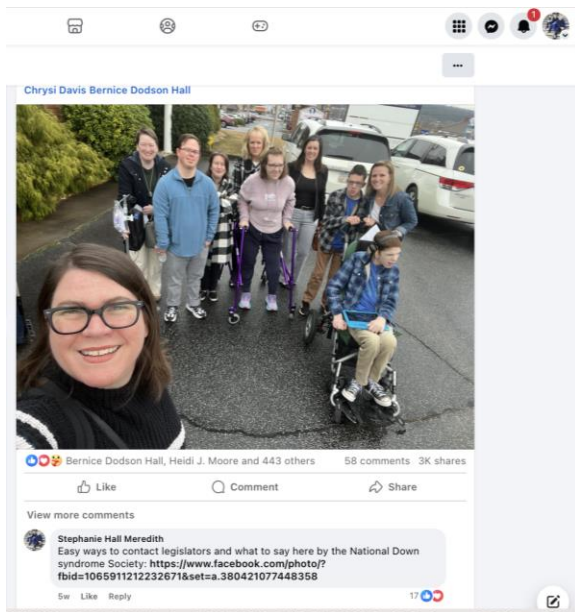
- Parents: Things are already really bad.
 - Everyone: Stop overreacting
 - Everyone: Don't believe the media
 - Everyone: Trust the leaders.
- Check their state; strengthen and improve current laws
 - Never hurts to educate and lobby. Make PWD a priority.
 - Information coming from advocacy organizations led by bipartisan leaders.
 - Where's the plan? Need a plan before cutting or moving essential services for PWD.

Anticipating Rebuttals and Logical Fallacies

- Everyone: They already said they aren't cutting Medicaid
- Everyone: Medicaid cuts won't really hurt people with disabilities—just the freeloaders.
- Everything will get passed to the states: local control
- Not possible to cut 880 billion without cutting Medicaid, SSI, or Medicare. Medicaid most likely target.
- 37% of state Medicaid budgets go toward Home and Community Based waivers.
- States like Texas already don't prioritize PWD, so this will make disabled Texans even more vulnerable without federal oversight. Also, do you really want to give states all that federal money with no accountability for following federal law?

Step 5: Choose Your Medium





Medium: Social Media

- Target: Public Opinion and Friends/Family
- Always use a photo
- Hot Take: Don't worry about length on Facebook
- Timing: How often you post
- Control the comments in your house
- Pretend you are talking face to face and set that expectation for discourse
- Share on legislator page



Medium: Traditional Media

- Target: Public Opinion and Policymakers
- Respond to articles with letters to the editor
- Submit editorials
- Develop relationships with journalists: write thank you's when they do a good story



Mediums for Legislators

- Email (Policymakers)
- Phone Calls
- Visits: DC or Local Office (Policymakers-Most Effective)
 - Call or email office to set up appointment
- Bring a One Pager with Your Story
- Bring a One Pager about the Issues
- Bring Friends
- Write a Thank You Note
- Establish a Relationship



My name is Linzee Carroll and I am the parent of two adult children with disabilities as well as the president of the 11q Research and Resource Group, a support and advocacy organization for individuals with chromosome 11q abnormalities. My boys, Brayden (26) and Zachary (23) both have Jacobsen Syndrome or 11q deletion syndrome. They have intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, behavior issues, autism, a bleeding disorder, feeding issues, congenital heart defects, lung and respiratory issues, seizure disorder, hearing and vision loss, immune deficiencies and much more that they deal with on a daily basis. Both rely on Medicaid funds to provide them with necessary services that help them live productive and meaningful and healthy lives. They both receive the COMP waiver, and those funds and services are literally a lifeline for them.

Without Medicaid waiver funds, my sons would not be able to attend their day program (Nest Step Ministries). Day programs provide opportunities for continued growth and learning, activities, care and social interactions for clients who attend and additionally, provide the opportunity for parents to work and support their family. Many individuals receiving these funds require 24-hour care and without day programs, parents lose the opportunity to work.

Without Medicaid waiver funds, my sons would not have much needed nursing and community support care. Parents of individuals with disabilities work very hard and need a break sometimes. I never planned to still be changing diapers, tube feeding, bathing, dressing, and grooming, taking to appointments, and managing every aspect of daily care for my children even as adults. Nursing and community support individuals give parents a much-needed break from the medical and skilled care. We can't leave medically complex individuals with those that are not trained in

Mediums: Other Options



Video:

Reels

TikTok



Podcasts

Check out Coded

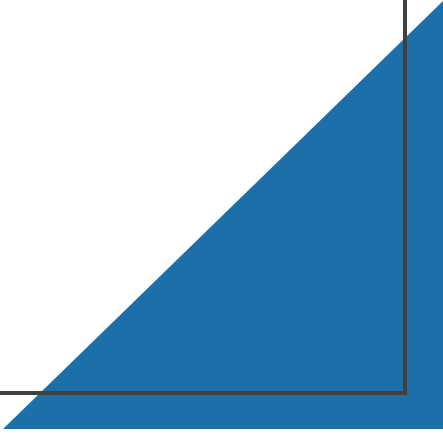


5 Calls



Civil disobedience

Step 6: Protect
Yourself as
Needed



Advocacy Growing Pains

- Negative comments
- Vulnerability to ableism
- Disappointment
- Exhaustion
- Time constraints and Guilt
- Stress
- Personal evolution in understanding about disability
- Humble leadership

 **Emily** last month ...
His future is bright? Because he got a job at a grocery store? My daughter just finished her freshman year at Penn. My son is at basketball camp. My youngest is in a science program for gifted kids. Their futures are bright. Your kid will be lucky to earn more than minimum wage. And if you knew he was going to have Down Syndrome while you were pregnant and continued the pregnancy anyway, you are a horrible, selfish person and a pathetic excuse for a mother. And yes I can say that because my first pregnancy had Down Syndrome and I did the responsible thing and terminated.
[Reply](#) [1](#) [1](#)

 **George** last month ...
Do all downs people get immediate disability from the government regardless of their parents income?? tell the truth.
[Reply](#) [Replies \(1\)](#) [1](#) [1](#)

 **George** last month ...
Scandanavian countries abort all downs -in several of these countries ,Iceland and Denmark, its the law. These are the ultral liberal socialist countries the Democrats want the USA to ne like.
[Reply](#) [Replies \(1\)](#) [1](#) [1](#)

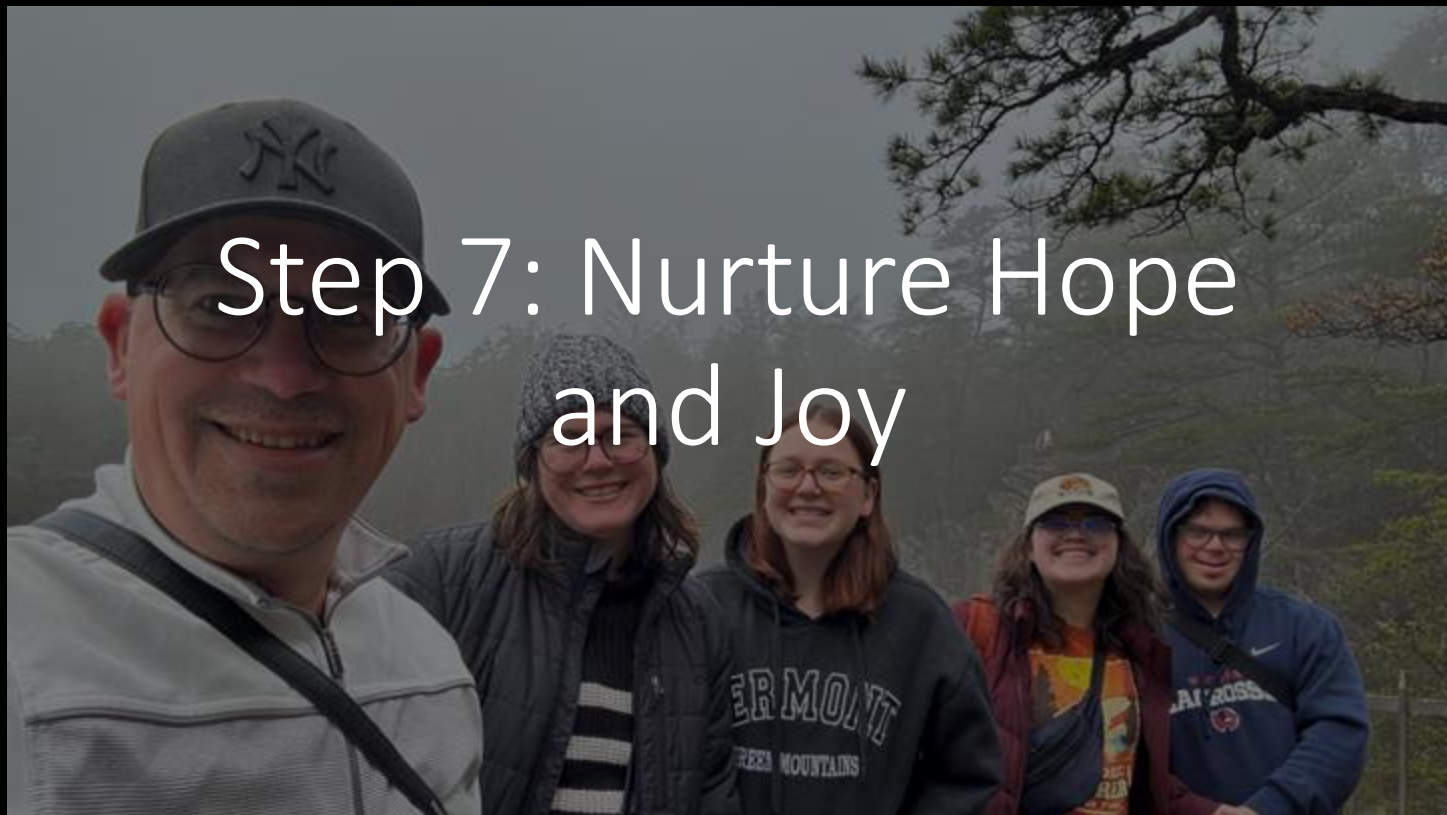
 **Kay** last month ...
I think we need to start seeing the other side of Down Syndrome presented. The individuals chosen to be highlighted are always the high functioning. Let's see some honest portrayals of what low functioning DS looks like. It might enlighten people as to why some choose not to go through with a DS pregnancy.
[Reply](#) [1](#) [1](#)

Coping Strategies



- Seek solace from friends who get it
- Take media breaks
- When you don't have the energy to create, then share and give just a sentence or two of a testimonial
- Sense of humor
- Music, nature, hobbies, exercise, etc.

Step 7: Nurture Hope and Joy



Advocacy Rewards

- Accomplishing goals
- Friendships and community
- Helping others

VACCINE

COVID vaccine will 'give him his life back,' says family of son with Down Syndrome

The developmentally- and intellectually-disabled community is now able to get the vaccine in Georgia.



COVID vaccine will 'give him his life back,' says family of ...



Stay Connected



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