

TESTIMONIAL : WRITING TIPS AND PROCEDURE

Employee testimonials regarding their personal lived experience around mental health/mental illness are generally posted in the Departmental Newsletters *Intersection*, and subsequently displayed on the testimonial page of the Mental Health iService section. Testimonials must have a word count of approximately 450 (usually about a page).

Your testimonial should have an opening, a discussion, and a conclusion. Before doing this, however, you should take a moment to write a topic sentence. The topic sentence summarizes what you want to communicate. For example:

“I want to tell the audience about my experiences in relation to mental health/mental illness, show them how I now take care of my mental health, and encourage them to use resources such as the Employee Assistance Services.”

It may seem silly at first to write a topic sentence, but as you prepare your testimonial, you can refer back to the topic sentence from time to time to remind yourself of your goal. The topic sentence helps you remove unnecessary information and keeps you on track.

When you prepare and organize your testimonial in an interesting and logical manner, you can lead your audience to the desired conclusion. Remember that *Intersection*'s readers are a vast and diverse audience from across Canada and that your purpose is to share your experience with them and call them to a reflection or to some action. When your testimony is published in *Intersection*, you can expect departmental employees to provide feedback and comment. Therefore, you may want to monitor the comments and respond, if you find it is appropriate.

Here are a few reminders to help you develop each of your testimonial's section:

1. Opening:
 - Get the reader's attention
 - Identify your topic or issue

2. Discussion:
 - Your goal is to inform others about yourself and your experiences, and the resources you may have tapped into.
 - Compile important key points and expand on those.
 - Develop your personal story that supports where you were versus where you are now and why.
 - Use vivid language to keep it interesting.

3. Conclusion:
 - Summarize your main points
 - Finish your story with something inspirational that supports your theme (a lesson learned, some useful resources, recognition for someone's work, etc.) or make a call to action.

Approval

We encourage you to openly share your intention to have your testimonial published with your immediate supervisor and to keep him/her in the loop all along the process. Before the official release of a testimonial in *Intersection*, the Human Resources Services Branch will officially notify the employee's management team (Director and Director General) for reasons of due diligence.

Any content that is published in Intersection is subject to Public Affairs and Stakeholders Relations Branch approval. As Communications experts, they may recommend some minor edits to your story.

Photo

If you agree, we may be able to use a photo of you in both Intersection and on the iService website. While your testimonial is being prepared, please have a good photo of you being taken (for Intersection, a **horizontal** photo is required and it's going to be resized for iService). Be conscious of the background – try to ensure it is pretty and/or neutral. Keep your photo handy and forward it to us when getting close to the final stage.

Examples

For a few examples of testimonials, visit this [iService page](#).

Contact

When your testimonial is ready or if you have any questions or comments, please send an email to the following generic mailbox: NA-MH_WORKSHOP-ATELIER_SM-GD@hrdc-drhc.net.