Objectives

Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the essential elements of a story to promote flu vaccination
- Discuss best practices for developing narratives
- Learn about story dissemination strategies
Why Stories Work

- Historical tradition of storytelling among African American, Latino, and American Indian cultures
- Oral history is an honored means of sharing values and beliefs
- Stories today are shared through multiple channels at lightning speed
- Stories shape people’s understanding of the world around them*

*Weinschenk Institute, 2013

Why Stories Work

- Research shows that stories have the power to help people “edit” their personal narratives
- Stories can prompt people to evaluate their behavior
- People put themselves in the “shoes of the other” to evaluate their own persona (character), decisions (action) and possibilities (transformation)*

Why Stories Work

Cultural storytelling

- Oral lore that is passed on in many forms
  - Sidewalk and jump rope rhymes
  - Handclap songs and rap
  - History and creation stories
  - Cuentos (stories) and dichos (proverbs)

Cultural Storytelling
Essential Elements of a Story

- Passion
- Protagonist
- Antagonist
- Conflict
- Awareness
- Transformation*

*Richard Maxwell and Robert Dickman, *Elements of Persuasion*

A Real Story
A Real Story

Albuquerque, New Mexico

- Distrust and fear of medications entering the bodies of a young Navajo couple
- Local Navajo nurse explains benefits of flu vaccine
- Couple sees the benefits of getting vaccinated but are still somewhat uneasy
- Nurse suggests that the couple get vaccinated at the same time while holding hands
- Trust and love for each other transcends fear

Following the Narrative

- Young fearful couple (Protagonists)
- Misconception and fear (Antagonist)
- Challenging decision to get vaccinated (Conflict)
- Nurse educates about benefits (Awareness)
- Couple gets vaccinated (Transformation)
- Love conquers fear and education counters misconception
Stories that Stick

- Likeable characters
- Universal conflict
- Cultural values
- Transformation
- Reflection on personal narrative

Best Practices in Storytelling

- Design for young adults
  - Characters
    - Pregnant mom
    - Loving father
    - Young daughter
  - Conflict
    - Perception of risk
    - Doctor's advice
  - Transformation
    - Commitment to protect family
    - Misconception countered
Dissemination Strategies

Audience analysis can reveal:

- Platforms that are the best fit
- Media partners that reach the target audience
- Means to evaluate success

Take Home Message

- Stories work to create emotional connections with target audiences
- Stories can promote healthy behaviors that influence personal narratives
- Stories should be culturally bound and transformative
Storytelling helps saves lives

J. Carlos Velázquez, MA
HMA Associates, Inc.
Senior Vice President of Community Engagement
(202) 342-0676
cvelazquez@hmaassociates.com