**Telling your story**

We are aware that this may be a difficult experience.

Disclaimer: we cannot take any responsibility for any distress caused by filling in this template

Here are some numbers you can call if you experience distress

* Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 (24 hours)
* SANEline 0845 767 8000 (6-11pm)
* No Panic 0844 967 4848 (10am-10pm)
* Your crisis team

 We want you to look after yourselves while doing so. Here are some tips:

1. Make sure you have nothing important you need to do soon, or after you finish your story.

2. Have something in place that you can treat yourself to afterwards; e.g. a movie with popcorn; a gentle walk; a hot bath for me it will be going to Costa for a Chai Latte.

3. You do not need to do this all in one go. It’s possible to do it in small chunks if necessary

4. Ask a friend, family member, advocate or support worker help you fill it in if you need to

5. While you are writing have a glass of cold water beside you, the sensation of the cold can often help ground you when you need it.

6. If you have the support of someone near you or on the phone, let them know what you are doing in case they need to step in and help with distraction exercises.

This is going to be quite a tough thing to do but also make sure you stick to the facts and this will also lessen the emotional feelings you are going to experience while writing. Take care everyone.

Remember this is your story and you're doing it for a great cause. And of course BE KIND TO YOURSELVES

**Template for Telling Your Story**

**Please note - the information you give us will be kept fully confidential by leaders of the project, who have signed a confidentiality agreement. It will not be shared with other individuals or parties without your signed permission.**

**My Story**

**(Insert Individual or Family Photo Here - optional)
(Insert FIRST Name)**

**(County)**

**Write a brief paragraph describing yourself, your family,
& your challenges (optional)**

**Describe the issue with your/your loved one’s care**

**Brief timeline of your care over last few years (optional)**

(Can draw this if you wish on a scale)

**Write about what the right support would include and what it would mean for yourself/someone you love.**

* Give specific example(s) of a support system, service, etc.
* Describe the value (e.g. cost savings, quality-of-life
improvement, respect, recovery etc.) of the example above.
* Describe what will happen without the
support, services, etc.

**Concisely “ask” for what you want on a broader scale** **(optional – you do not have to include this if you have nothing to say on this)**

(e.g. increase funding, ending postcode lottery/better regulation of services or spending nationally, more funding for certain services, e.g. mental health drop-in centres, patient voice, accountability etc. etc.).

 **One or two short sentences saying anything positive you’ve experienced under mental health services if applicable (concise)**

eg. The positive things I’ve experienced under mental health services are… (a good CPN in 2013 who listened to me and a few thorough appointments with the psychiatrist)

**Include one key message for the political parties**

**Close your story as you would end a letter**

Sincerely,

First Name, County

(Please do not write any personal details other than first name and county on this – as per the website, please include your full name, email address and borough or start of postcode on your email when you email over the story. Please also keep this letter to 2 pages, so that policymakers are inclined to read it)

**Thankyou so much!**