Self-Advocacy Story Template

Self-advocacy is a challenging task because it requires us to be vulnerable and express what is most important to us, often at the risk of negative consequences or backlash.

Sharing an example or a story about something that illustrates why it is so important to you can be an effective way of helping your audience understand where you are coming from. The following template can be used as a guide for situations where you need to give a concrete example of a specific personal need or accommodation you need from people you work with. It also is designed to be used with people who are willing to listen to you, but may not understand where you are coming from (as opposed to a hostile audience). Depending on the situation, you may need to shorten the story portion and just provide an example, but the key purpose is to make sure you highlight a need that is important to you personally and that you need others to respect, if not understand.

Description	Example
1. One sentence describing what we need in the world and what you need in order to contribute to the conversation.	"Hi, my name is _____, and today, I will be talking to you about _____. We need _____." I therefore personally need _____."
2. Describe the need and why it is important to you.	"This is particularly important to me because _____."
3. Tell a story about when that need was not fulfilled, using details about yourself, what you went through, and how it made you feel.	"Here is one example where this wasn't fulfilled_____."
4. Describe an alternative reality and what you would have rather happened instead in that situation.	"Instead of this happening, I would have rather_____."
5. Explain why this need is important in this particular context.	"It is especially important in this situation because_____."
6. Conclude by telling us what we should consider moving forward to best serve this need for you.	"Moving forward, I hope _____."