

2024 NW Youth Leadership Retreat

Traffic Light Activity

Flip Chart:

1. What are the benefits to sharing your personal experiences?

(i.e. public awareness, advocacy, ability to change public policy, empowerment of youth/alumni, self-acceptance, healing, challenge stigmas, belonging and normalcy, help others feel less isolated and alone, reclaim and reframe our experiences by telling the story in a different way)

2. What are the risks of sharing your personal experience?

(i.e. judgment, pity, retaliation from others, re-opening emotional wounds, triggering, being exploited, people might try to take advantage of you, undermining your professional credentials, making you subject to scrutiny)

3. How can it be empowering to choose which parts of your story to share, and redirect if people ask questions you aren't comfortable answering?

4. Why does it help to plan ahead of time?

Sample Scenarios

- 1. News Interview:** You agreed to an interview with a reporter to discuss an issue that you care about. During the interview, the reporter starts asking more personal questions, "Were you ever abused? How badly? Who hurt you? This can be off the record if you want, I won't necessarily include it in my story." *(Some reporters have a "if it bleeds, it leads" mentality)*
- 2. Panel Presentation:** You are part of a youth panel at a statewide conference. During the question and answer portion, an audience member asks you a question that brings up painful emotions: "How long has it been since you've seen your little brother?" *(How to redirect to the larger issue)*
- 3. Legislative Testimony:** You've written legislative testimony and are reading it out loud to Ohio legislators. When they ask questions, they are respectful and stay on topic.