



Your Stories: Guidelines for Contributors

What's your story?

Open Up's Your Stories project is an online collection of material, in which people with experience of mental distress talk about how they have dealt with discrimination. The idea behind the project is to celebrate the positive and constructive things people have done to tackle the prejudice they have faced as a result of their mental health experiences.

Open Up is part of Time to Change (www.time-to-change.org.uk) - a new movement for change in public attitudes towards mental health which officially launched in October 2008. Part of this launch involved the creation of a new website, where the stories will be displayed. As part of this website, we hope that your story will be seen by thousands of people, and become an inspiration for others who want to take action against discrimination.

Our aims

We want to inspire and encourage the people out there who may not feel empowered to do anything about the discrimination they have encountered. We also want to show that there are many different ways of challenging discrimination, ranging from speaking out to your family and friends to campaigning for better mental health services. Each story is unique, and in the contributor's own words – because we understand that this way its message is more powerful. We also believe that a story doesn't just have to be something written down – it could be a spoken piece, a cartoon, video, poem or even a song. We want to use as many different formats as possible, and we will work with you to help you find the way of telling your story that works best for you.

Our promise to you

At Open Up we believe in giving our contributors editorial control. We won't publish anything you're not comfortable with, we promise to let you review and approve your submission, and we will make any reasonable alterations you think are necessary before it is posted online. However we may sometimes need to take out parts that specifically identify names and places for legal reasons.

We are unable to offer payment for contributions. However, we will do whatever else we can to support you to create your piece.

Anonymity

Your presence on the site can be as public or as anonymous as you wish it to be. You can use your full name, just your first name, or a pseudonym if you prefer. You can have a photo of yourself with your story, or another image of your choice. One of our members of staff will discuss your options with you fully before your story is published.

Conditions of release

When you send us your story, we will ask you to fill in a release form before it is posted online. By signing this form you will be accepting the terms and conditions of your story's release – how the story is displayed, how we publicise it, and whether it is used again by ourselves or any of our partner organisations. However we will explain this to you fully beforehand, and you will have the chance to opt out of anything that you don't feel comfortable with.

If you wish to withdraw your story at any time, either before or after it is posted, we will return it to you.

Open Up and Mental Health Media reserve the right to decline to publish pieces that are unsuitable or offensive to others. For more information, please contact us on the details below.

More information/contact

Questions about Your Stories, or support creating your piece:
Contact Open Up on 020 7700 8171 or email open.up@mhmedia.com

For more information on Time to Change, call 020 8215 2356 or visit www.time-to-change.org.uk.

