

RESILIENT VOICES

Your voice has power.

The path to healing is different for everyone. Often times, for survivors and others affected by crime, healing leads to a desire to speak – to embrace their voice and share their personal experience with others.

Survivors choose to share their story for several reasons. Some seek to educate for prevention. While at times, family members may share their story to memorialize a loved one who is gone. Often, retelling an experience may help the personal healing journey.

Through hearing personal testament, we know that most individuals become more empathetic and caring in their attitudes, dialogue, and actions. The Office of Victim Advocate matches speakers with community and state organizations looking for personal testimony during their programs and events. Some of the speaking opportunities could include colleges and school forums; trainings for new county probation officers, state parole agents and corrections officers; classes for inmates on the impact of crime; statewide rallies for victim rights; various small to large community events; and legislative hearings.

The goal of the Resilient Voices Program is to provide a space for survivors to share their personal experience, strength and hope in a setting that matches their individual goals. Because most citizens come in contact with victims, even if they don't know it, another priority of the program is to prepare people to work and communicate effectively with victims and treat them with dignity and respect.

Is Resilient Voices the right fit for me?

This program could be the next step in your journey if...

- You are passionate about sharing your experience
- You are dedicated to educating others of the impact of crime on victims
- You have a strong support network in place
- You are open to feedback to improve your public speaking skills

What happens next?

If you are interested in being a participant speaker, this is what you can expect.

- You should fill out the application. It is available at www.ova.pa.gov > Programs > Resilient Voices. Email it to ra-ovainfo@pa.gov.
 - Note that if you are under 18, your parent/guardian will need to sign the application.
- You will be invited to share your story with our OVA staff at a workshop. This allows us to hear your experience and match you up with the closely aligned speaking opportunities.
- You will also have an opportunity to work with a staff member to craft your message.
- You should ensure you have regular access to email. You will be added to our email list for speaker requests.

Tips for participant speakers.

Sharing your story can be difficult. Each survivor will process this time differently. Below are a few tips for your journey.

- As a Resilient Voices speaker, it is your choice to accept or decline any speaking request.
- There is no timeline for healing from crime or abuse. It is important to know yourself and if there are anniversaries or time of the year that could make speaking more difficult. Please share this information with a program coordinator.
- Having a support network and a self-care plan in place can be an essential aspect of how you rejuvenate after speaking. Think about what you may need for your own healing and wellbeing.
- As a Resilient Voices speaker, you are a representative of the Office of Victim Advocate. You will be expected to conduct yourself professionally while in the community.
- If you would like a staff member from the Office of Victim Advocate to accompany you while speaking, we will do our best to accommodate your request.