

Crafting a personal statement about you and your connection to neuromuscular disease is an important first step toward becoming the most effective advocate possible. MDA encourages all of our advocates to take the time to write a personal statement because we know that lawmakers want to know how the policies they consider will affect the people they represent.

Consider the following tips, compiled by the members of the National Community Advisory Committee, as you write your personal statement:

1. **Be concise.** This statement is more an elevator pitch than a keynote address. Aim for 150 words or fewer.
2. **Focus on WHY you are an advocate, not on what you're advocating for.** Save the subject matter for later. This statement is something that you should refer back to as your opening introduction every time you interact with policymakers, whether that happens on the phone, in an email, or in person.
3. **Enlist the help of others.** If you're having trouble deciding how to describe yourself, think about asking a friend or family member to help get you started. Ask them to share what it is about you that makes you a great potential advocate.
4. **Feeling stuck? Review the statements of other advocates.** Check out the personal statements written by the members of the NCAC [link] – they will probably help get you started!
5. **Remember the end goal.** Your stories will affect policymakers and help them understand you. Write from a point of power, but share light on your struggles.
6. **Use your statement!** Include your personal statement as your introduction on all of your communications to policymakers – use it as your opening paragraph in emails, get comfortable sharing it to introduce yourself on phone calls, and refer back to it whenever you have the chance to meet with policymakers in person. If you aren't already signed up to be an MDA advocate, click here [link] to get started.