



Shifting the Narrative

What is Shifting the Narrative (STN)?

- STN is an immersive, interactive and in-depth legislative advocacy initiative for Hoosiers from the disability and Deaf / Hard of Hearing (HoH) communities.
- STN is a five (5) month long VIRTUAL initiative -- from May 2022 through September 2022.
- STN will include approximately seven (7) large group peer meetings, five (5) small group / individual peer meetings and additional ongoing meetings with elected officials. These take place during the 5-month span of the initiative.
- Individuals participating in the STN initiative will receive a stipend for their time and effort in the amount of **\$1000.00** upon completion of the 5-month initiative.
- Space is limited to participate in STN.

What is the purpose of STN?

- Shift how elected officials perceive disability and deafness recognizing Hoosiers in the disability and Deaf / HoH communities as the leaders of our own movements and owners of our own stories/experiences.
- Amplify the voices of our peers with lived experience in leading and driving legislative advocacy endeavors.
- Leverage and foster opportunities for our peers with lived experience to develop authentic, meaningful relationships with elected officials.
- Push for professional lobbyists, providers and others outside of the disability and Deaf / HoH communities to stop exploiting and speaking for us and start speaking with us and at our direction.
- Educate our peers with lived experience on critical long-term care issues empowering their engagement to press for increased home and community-based services and significant expansion of self-direction in Indiana.

Why STN?

In Indiana, healthcare providers, disability service providers, guardians / parents and professional lobbyists are often seen and treated by most elected officials and their staff as the “experts” on legislation and policy regarding disability and Deaf / HoH-related issues. Unfortunately, the picture often presented and painted about us, *without* us by these individuals to elected officials is one typically rooted in charity, saviorism and pity where our independence, health, safety, capacity, etc. is weaponized against us as a

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covert means to maintain control and power over us and the systems, programs and policies that directly impact our day-to-day lives and impede our ability to thrive and live meaningful lives integrated in our communities. It is important to note that we recognize that the individuals speaking for us and the elected officials listening to them often mean well and have good intentions. However, the fact remains, one does not need to operate with great malice to do great harm. And the continued practice of others speaking *for us* instead of *with us* (or at our direction) is perpetuating great harm. This is why it is time to **Shift The Narrative**.

INSILC is a disability-directed, peer-led entity, which holds steadfast to the belief that the individuals with the lived experience -- Hoosiers from the Disability and Deaf / HoH communities -- are the experts, not individuals speaking for us and not at our direction. As the experts of our own lives, we have the first-hand knowledge, experience and expertise to know what works best for us and what does not. This is why it is time for *us* to **#BeTheVoice**.

Where & How will STN take place?

STN will provide VIRTUAL safe spaces to share robust information and provide legislative advocacy-related technical assistance that supports our Hoosier peers from the disability and Deaf / HoH communities participating in the initiative. In these spaces, our peers will work together and learn from each other while developing opportunities to cultivate strong, meaningful relationships with their elected officials. To begin shifting the narrative to one that elevates, centers and amplifies the voice and leadership of our peers in Indiana public policy, we need to ensure those of us with lived experience are well-informed, active and engaged with our elected officials. This is critical for us to direct systemic advocacy efforts that drives positive legislation / public policy changes.

Because INSILC is a disability-directed entity, we are very familiar with the multitude of barriers our peers face when trying to meaningfully engage in systems change, particularly when it comes to legislative advocacy. As such, STN will help guide our peers on how to address and navigate these barriers, especially when arranging meetings or meeting with their elected officials.

Who is STN is for?

STN is an initiative rooted in the Independent Living philosophy (Nothing About Us, Without Us) and guided by the 10 principles of Disability Justice. Therefore, STN is developed by and for our Hoosier peers in the disability and Deaf / HoH communities,

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centering our peers who are most marginalized.

NOTE OF IMPORTANCE: While we genuinely appreciate the support of our authentic non-disabled and hearing allies, the STN initiative is solely for our peers in the disability and Deaf / HoH communities. More specifically, STN is not for parents / guardians, providers, siblings, or our allies, UNLESS these individuals also openly identify as part of our disability and / or Deaf / HoH communities.

Do STN Participants need any advocacy and/or legislative experience?

Individuals interested in participating in STN should be familiar with the basics of systemic advocacy and / or have a minimum level of knowledge of the legislative process. Some examples of this experience can be, but are not limited to, the following:

- Knowledge of how to find the names and contact information of your elected officials and understanding the basics of how a bill becomes a law
- Acted on Action Alerts by calling / emailing / meeting elected officials to support, amend, or oppose bills or legislation
- Attended a past INSILC legislative advocacy workshop series
- Work (or worked) for an advocacy organization (this does not have to be disability-related)
- Participate (or participated) in a systems change coalition (this does not have to be disability-related)
- Graduated from Partners in Policymaking (in Indiana or another state)
- Graduated from the INSILC Advocates in Action systems-change training program
- Serve (or served) on a board, council, commission, committee, etc. that conducts systems change initiatives or efforts
- Serve (or served) on a public policy or legislative advocacy committee
- Other

Again, the above are just a handful of examples. Don't doubt or discount your experience - You know yourself best!

Will STN focus on any specific policy issues?

INSILC publicly released its 2022 public policy agenda in November 2021, which prioritized the long-term care needs and desires of our Hoosier peers in the disability, aging and Deaf / HoH communities. As such, STN will provide in-depth information on healthcare issues as related to long-term care in Indiana. This will include information on Medicaid, Managed Care, Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), Expansion of

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Self-Direction and Structured Family Caregiving, MED Works, etc.

Ultimately, the purpose of STN is to help YOU develop an ongoing relationship with YOUR elected officials. And while we believe it is critical for our peers in the Disability and Deaf / HoH communities to have a solid understanding of the LTC issues in Indiana, we also recognize and respect that there are other issues impacting our peers. Therefore, STN participants who have an interest in discussing other issues with their elected officials are more than welcome to do so as they take part in the STN initiative.

What are some of the other types of information STN participants will receive?

STN participants will receive information on INSILC and the independent living philosophy, disability justice, intersectionality, getting comfortable with being uncomfortable, recognizing / leveraging privilege and creating safe and equitable spaces. In addition, because learning from and with our peers is one of the most empowering parts of engaging in systemic advocacy, the small group meetings with STN participants will focus on strengthening individual skills utilizing a peer support model.

NOTE OF IMPORTANCE: Disability intersects with all other identities and we do not expect anyone to leave any of their other marginalized identities at the door. Racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, ableism, etc. will not be tolerated in any spaces.

STN Logistics & Reasonable Accommodations

- Live captioning will be provided for all virtual STN meetings hosted by INSILC.
- ASL interpreters will be arranged/provided for our Deaf / HoH peers for all virtual STN meetings hosted by INSILC, as needed.
- INSILC strives to create safe, welcoming, and ACCOMMODATING spaces and will do everything in our power to meet all reasonable accommodation needs.
- We know that the ongoing public health emergency (COVID-19) makes public spaces unsafe for many of our peers. Thus, we will be holding all STN large group and small group meetings virtually via Zoom.
- STN participants can choose whether or not they prefer to meet with their elected officials via Zoom or in person. The INSILC Zoom account may be used as a back-up option for meetings with elected officials, specifically if a free personal account poses a barrier for longer meetings.
- If an STN participant does not have access to a computer or tablet and / or an internet connection to take part in the STN initiative, INSILC may be able to provide assistance to help address these access needs.

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- If an STN participant prefers to meet with their elected officials in-person and has difficulties with accessing affordable, accessible transportation, please contact INSILC to let us know. We may be able to provide assistance to help meet this need.

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