

IDEAS FOR SHARING CARE ACT SUCCESSES

Sharing success stories from CARE Act implementation allows counties to demonstrate accountability and build public trust. It also strengthens partnerships and encourages greater participation by showing tangible outcomes and the real impact of the program on individuals and families.

Check out the [**CARE Act Communications Toolkit**](#) intended to help counties and other stakeholders raise awareness and educate their communities about the CARE Act. It includes an overview of communications strategies and template materials. The toolkit is designed to help each stakeholder make a plan that fits their capacity, budget, and community needs.

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How to Get the Word Out

You don't need a full media team to tell meaningful stories. Every county has different resources and staffing levels, so this process should be **adaptable**. Think creatively and look broadly at what "success" means: it could be a major milestone or collaboration between systems/agencies to provide more comprehensive, person-centered support.

This section offers a range of options, from press releases and op-eds to social media campaigns and partner amplification. Adapt these ideas to fit your staffing and capacity.

Media Outreach

- **Press Release Distribution:** Leverage the Press Release Template on the [Communications Toolkit](#). Compile a list of local reporters (Health Beat, Government/Courts Beat, and Investigative Reporters) and email the press release with a brief note offering access to a representative for an interview. Ensure the press release is posted to a prominent "News" or "Press Room" section of your county's official website concurrently with the distribution.
- **Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed) Distribution:** Draft an Op-Ed and share with the largest local or regional newspaper or a prominent online news site with a strong opinion section. The Op-Ed should be attributed to a single, high-ranking official whose opinion carries weight and reflects the county's commitment.
- **Targeted Pitching:** Develop a pitch focused on the *individual* and the *local impact*, not just the program.
 - **Local TV News (Feature Segment):** Pitch to assignment editors for a "Feel Good Friday" or "Community Spotlight" segment. This is ideal for showcasing an achievement video.
 - **Regional Newspapers/Magazines:** Pitch to feature writers for a longer, more detailed article that explores the journey of the family and/or petitioner.
 - **Radio and Podcast:** Pitch a sound-rich story focusing on the interviewee's voice and the environment of stability they've achieved. Offer to participate in a live or taped interview.
- **Media Briefings:** Offer background briefings to policy reporters and editorial boards on the operational challenges that were overcome (e.g., staffing, training the courts, overall understanding of petitioning process, etc.).

Digital and Social Media Campaign

- **Dedicated Web Feature:** Create a permanent "CARE Act Success Stories" section on your county's behavioral health website. With the individual's consent, include photos, a written narrative or a one-to-two-minute video summary of the story.
- **County Newsletter or Email List:** Feature the story prominently in your county's weekly or monthly email newsletter, linking directly to the full narrative on the website.
- **Social Media Video Series (Short Form):**
 - Create a 30-second video specifically for platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube Shorts: "**Meet [Name/Pseudonym]: A Year After the CARE Act.**" Use subtitles and strong visuals.
 - Tag partner organizations (e.g., local housing authority, legal aid, mental health advocacy groups) to expand reach.
- **Partner Amplification:** Distribute the success story link to all CARE Act system partners (e.g., local NAMI chapter, homeless services organizations, community clinics) and ask them to share it with their networks.

Approaches

Localized Stories

The media and public respond strongly to individual experiences. Focus on stories that demonstrate the before-and-after of the CARE Act process. And remember that sharing any identifiable information requires the individual's consent. See the section on [CARE Participant Consent](#) for more information.

Focus	Examples	Recommendations
"Graduation" Story	Profile a respondent who successfully completed their CARE agreement or CARE plan, focusing on their current stability (e.g., housing, treatment adherence, family reunification).	Highlight client-focused goals and positive outcomes. Include quotes, with consent.
Petitioner Perspective	Interview a petitioner (e.g., family member, friend, first responder, etc.) who initiated the CARE process, highlighting the relief they feel now that they have resources	Emphasize the personal impact and practical benefits of CARE support.

	and support, and their loved one is stably connected to CARE. What motivated them to file a petition and what services and supports has the individual received?	
Housing Partnership	Highlight a partnership that led to securing immediate housing for a respondent. Frame the story around the dignity and stability housing provides, which enables treatment success.	Include partner names and describe how collaboration made housing possible.

Commitment to Progress

Counties can also use key implementation milestones (e.g., one year since first petition was filed) to describe your county's effort and operational success.

Focus	Examples	Recommendations
One-Year Milestone	'One Year of CARE Act Implementation: Progress and Renewed Commitment.' Highlight petitions filed, agreements completed, and operational improvements.	Issue a press release using the CARE Act template. Include statistics and quotes from leadership.
Expansion Announcement	Announce new resources or expanded eligibility under Senate Bill 27.	Frame as a commitment to continuous improvement and meeting community needs.
Efficiency Highlight	Share data showing reduced processing time or improved service coordination.	Use visuals (charts, infographics) to make progress tangible and easy to share.

System and Partnership Strength

Media coverage could emphasize the successful collaboration that made implementation possible.

Focus	Examples	Recommendations
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Joint Press Conference	Feature a judge, court representative, and Behavioral Health Director discussing collaboration.	Emphasize the historic nature of inter-agency teamwork and its impact on recovery.
Partner Spotlight	Profile a key partner (e.g., housing authority, legal aid) and their role in successful implementation.	Include quotes and examples of how partnership solved real challenges.
Collaborative Success	Share a story where multiple agencies worked together to resolve a complex case.	Highlight the “one team” approach and its benefits for individuals and families.

Addressing Challenges

Acknowledging challenges helps to build credibility and trust. It shows transparency, reinforces accountability, and demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement. Rather than avoiding sensitive issues, frame them as opportunities for growth and collaboration. When you share challenges, always pair them with concrete solutions or next steps—this reassures stakeholders that progress is ongoing.

Focus	Examples	Recommendations
Transparency Statement	“We recognize challenges in eligibility and workforce capacity and are addressing them.”	Pair acknowledgment with concrete next steps to maintain credibility.
Community Engagement	Host a Q&A session or publish Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to address common questions from petitioners and families.	Use plain language and emphasize commitment to listening and adapting.
System Partner Confusion	Partners can be unsure how to work together effectively. Set up ongoing calls and host learning sessions to clarify roles and processes.	Reinforce inter-agency communication and provide structured opportunities for alignment.
Timelines	The time it takes to complete the CARE process. Work with courts to	Share measurable goals for reducing timelines and improving efficiency.

	reduce administrative back-and-forth and streamline steps.	Emphasize that teams begin outreach and offer services immediately.
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Considerations for Development

CARE Participant Consent

Always ensure you have explicit, written approval and clear consent from any client, participant, or staff member before sharing their story, quote, or image in any media materials.

Obtain Explicit, Informed Consent

- Always use **written consent** (not verbal) and ensure the person understands:
 - **What will be shared** (e.g., story, photo, video, quote).
 - **Where it will appear** (e.g., social media, website, printed materials, presentations).
 - **Who might see it** (e.g., public audience, partners, funders).
- Use plain language and check for understanding.

Offer Choices and Control

Provide a **menu of options** so participants can choose what feels safe:

- **Full transparency:** Name, photo, and story.
- **Partial anonymity:** First name only, blurred face, photo from behind.
- **Complete anonymity:** No identifying details, generalized story.
- **Opt-out:** They can decline without any impact on services or support.

Document their choices clearly and respect them across all platforms.

Trauma-Informed Approach

- **Do no harm:** Sharing should never retraumatize or pressure someone.
- **Empowerment:** Frame the conversation as giving them control, not asking for a favor.
- **Check readiness:** Ask if they feel comfortable and safe sharing now—and remind them they can change their mind later.

How to Have the Conversation

- Start by explaining **why stories matter** (e.g., to inspire others, advocate for resources).
- Emphasize **voluntary participation** and that saying “no” will not affect their care.
- Use **open-ended questions**: “How would you feel about sharing your experience?” rather than “Can we use your photo?”
- Offer time to think—don’t rush consent.

Revisit and Respect Consent

- Consent can be **withdrawn at any time**. Make it easy for participants to contact you if they change their mind.
- Before reusing a story in a new context, **reconfirm consent**.

Additional Considerations

- **Multilingual Engagement:** Where appropriate and dependent on the publication's reach, consider offering press releases or media alerts in languages other than English to reach diverse communities.
- **Interview Availability:** Proactively offer interviews to multilingual media outlets if a designated spokesperson is available and comfortable conducting the interview in that specific language.
- **Diverse Representation:** Strive for authentic and diverse representation in all visuals (photos, videos) and success stories.
- **Accessibility:** View the [**Accessibility section of the CARE Act Communications Toolkit Overview & Best Practices**](#) for guidance on accessibility best practices. Additionally, be sure to offer language services at live events, and include accurate captions for all video content.

Evaluation and Monitoring

You don’t need a complex evaluation framework to understand whether your storytelling efforts are making an impact. Start by being clear about what you’re trying to achieve and pick a few simple ways to measure progress.

Think creatively about what success looks like for your county. Is it increased awareness? Stronger community engagement? More media coverage? Once you define your goals, identify indicators—both **qualitative** and **quantitative**—that help you evaluate whether you’re moving in the right direction.

Practical Steps

- **Decide what you want to measure** before you start. For example:
 - Are you aiming for more media visibility?
 - Do you want to increase community trust and engagement?
 - Is your goal to strengthen partnerships?
- **Pick a few metrics** that match your goals. You don't need to track everything—choose what matters most.
- **Review and adjust regularly.** Evaluation isn't one-and-done; revisit your approach as your capacity and goals evolve.

Examples of Metrics

- Media Coverage
 - Number of media mentions.
 - Media placement quality (local vs. regional outlets).
 - Media impressions (circulation, audience size).
- Digital Engagement
 - Social media engagement (comments, shares, likes).
 - Website analytics (users, sessions, engagement rate).
 - Newsletter performance (reach, clicks, opens).
- Community Feedback
 - Attendance at events or briefings.
 - Anecdotal feedback from participants and partners.
- Qualitative Impact
 - Stories shared by partners or community members.
 - Positive sentiment in comments or interviews.

Ideas for Simple Evaluation

- Create a **monthly or quarterly dashboard** with 3 – 5 key metrics.
- Collect **partner feedback** through short surveys or informal check-ins.
- Track **story reach** by noting where and how often stories are shared.
- Document **lessons learned** for continuous improvement.