

Creating Your Own Vaccine Testimonial

A Step-by-Step Guide



All adults in the U.S. are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. As the challenge shifts from access to reaching those who are still undecided or vaccine-hesitant, those who are vaccinated can play an important role in moving people along on their journey to vaccine acceptance. In general, people are most interested in hearing information about vaccines from already trusted sources, including their own doctors, community leaders or even family and friends. This means we can all be influencers when it comes to getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Colorado Health Foundation recently released a set of [evidenced-based messaging strategies](#) and sample videos that were effective in supporting equitable vaccine uptake. While each conversation, like each individual, will be slightly different, research shows that the following three-step approach can help move people along their vaccine acceptance journeys:

1. Build Trust
2. Answer Questions
3. Inspire Hope

Individuals and organizations who are interested in recording their own videos can use this step-by-step guide to capture a powerful testimonial that follows the proven, three-step formula. You do not need any kind of special camera or equipment to record your testimonial. In fact, videos that are not highly produced – meaning they have more of a homemade feel – tend to be more well-received and less likely to prompt suspicions about your motivations. If you have a smartphone, you're well on your way to capturing a powerful testimonial.

In this guide you'll find:

- ✔ Tips for building trust, answering questions and inspiring hope – with sample questions and examples,
- ✔ Steps to choosing the right location for recording your video testimonial,
- ✔ And guidance on how to record your video on your smartphone.



Prepare for your testimonial

Preparing and practicing are essential to capturing an effective testimonial that achieves all three steps in the formula in a succinct and powerful way. Videos should be short (one to two minutes) to avoid losing your audiences' interest and attention.

Build trust. Answer questions. Inspire hope.

It's important to note that all messengers – including health care professionals – need to build trust before moving on to the next two steps in the formula. Below are effective ways to **build trust**, **answer questions** and **inspire hope**, with questions for you to consider and examples.



Build trust

How to build trust

- Introduce yourself and your motivations for speaking out in support of your community.
- Take a friendly, nonjudgmental tone.
- Share your own initial questions or hesitancy about the vaccines.

Sample questions

- What is your name, what do you do and where do you work or how are you involved in your family or community?
- What made you want to do that type of work (or be involved in the community) in the first place?
- How did you feel when you first heard about the vaccine?

Example

“My name is Ximena Rebolledo León and I am a registered nurse at the Telluride Regional Medical Center. I learned about giving back and helping other Latinos from my mom at a very early age. Nursing seemed like a logical career for me. Today, over 200 Latinos in my community have my personal phone number; they call me when they have health questions. When the pandemic first started, there was not enough reliable information available in Spanish so I started creating videos answering questions about COVID and the vaccines and posting them to my Facebook. It's understandable people have questions about the vaccine, especially Latinos who've experienced betrayals of trust from the government and medical community. Even I was skeptical when the vaccine first came out. I was like, “No thanks, I'll wait.”



Ximena Rebolledo León

Registered Nurse
Telluride Regional Medical Center

Watch Ximena's full video [here](#).



Answer questions

How to answer questions

- Acknowledge that it is understandable to have questions and concerns about the vaccine.
- Share what information helped you overcome your hesitancy, where you found the information, and how you felt about it.
- If you're a medical professional:
 - Share answers to the 2 - 3 most common questions you've received.
- Encourage people to do their own research and direct them toward trusted, expert resources (e.g., [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or [DeTiDepende.org](https://www.DeTiDepende.org))

Sample questions

- Why is it understandable that people have questions about the vaccine?
- What information helped you feel better about getting the vaccine?
- Where did you find that information and how did you feel about it?
- For medical professionals: What are the 2-3 most common questions you get asked about the vaccines and how do you answer them?

Example

Ryan had some initial concerns about getting the vaccine.

“I have conflicting views. Number one, I hate needles. I just, I hate needles. But you know, you are here one day and you're gone the next. Do whatever you can to stay here for however long that you possibly can.”

Ryan felt more reassured about getting vaccinated after learning that over 12,000 Black people had volunteered to be in the vaccine trials to make sure they were safe and effective. Since then, millions of Black people have gotten vaccinated.



Ryan Cobbins

Small Business Owner
Coffee at the Point

Watch Ryan's full video [here](#).



Inspire hope

How to inspire hope

- Share what you're specifically looking forward to when it's safe to gather again.
- Help people draw the connection between getting vaccinated and being able to experience the things in life that we love – hugging, sharing a meal, seeing grandma, etc.
- Share why you got vaccinated (not why you think others should).

Sample questions

- Why did you get vaccinated?
- What's giving you hope for the future?
- What are you looking forward to when more people are vaccinated?

Example

"I have to protect myself. I have children to raise. I have a community that I love that depends on me showing up."

Olga feels hope for the future. "So for friends or family members who say they're so over this pandemic, I hear you. I am too. I'm tired of having to wear the mask. I'm tired of keeping six feet away from folks. And for Latinos, we miss our quinceaneras, our weddings, our baptisms."

"We look forward to a day where we can get together and hug one another again."



Olga Gonzalez

Executive Director
Cultivando

Watch Olga's full video [here](#).

Common pitfalls and how to avoid them:

- ✔ Avoid fear-mongering, such as sharing stories of someone getting sick or dying from COVID; instead focus on hopeful reasons for vaccination such as protecting yourself, your community, or your family, or getting back to work.
- ✔ Avoid saying “you should get vaccinated”; instead focus on yourself and your own experience.
- ✔ Avoid saying “it’s a personal decision to get vaccinated”; instead, say, “it’s up to each of us whether or not to get vaccinated.”

Choose Your Location

Now that you’ve reflected on your answers and story, it’s time to find a suitable location for recording your video. The location can be your office or your living room at home, however there are a few points to consider when looking for the right place.

Background

- Choose a clutter-free location – you don’t want anything distracting in the shot.
- Avoid being directly against a wall.

Light

- Shoot in daylight if possible – natural light is best.
- Position yourself so windows or your main light sources are facing you, not behind you.
- Avoid overhead lights, which can create harsh shadows.
- A ring light that clips to your phone or computer can be helpful but is not necessary.

Sound

- Choose a location that is quiet and distraction-free. You don’t want anything that will interfere with your message, such as background music, side conversations or outdoor traffic.
- Use headphones, if possible.

Record Your Video

You've practiced your message and found a good location. It's time to record your testimonial.

Placement

- Shoot in landscape mode (horizontal) if you plan to share on YouTube or Facebook. Shoot in portrait mode (vertical) if you plan to share on Instagram, WhatsApp, or TikTok. If you aren't sure, go with landscape mode.
- Prop up your phone or find someone to record for you – just make sure your device is stable.
- Keep your camera at eye level. You want to be able to see from about your rib cage up – a full body shot is not ideal.

Record

- Exude confidence and warmth by looking at the camera and remember to smile. Some of us look around or up when talking or thinking about what we want to say. In recorded videos, this can become distracting or even make us look “shifty eyed” or dishonest. If talking directly into a camera lens feels strange, consider placing a stuffed animal or a picture of a person next to the camera to help you land your gaze in a consistent place. This will help you come across as more conversational to your audience.
- Speak slowly and clearly at a natural pace that is easy to follow.
- Aim for a one to two-minute video – being slightly over or under is fine.

Review

- Confirm you have built trust, answered questions and inspired hope.
- Assess your background, delivery and message to determine whether they follow the guidelines above.
- Reshoot if needed.

Share Your Video

Congrats, you are now a vaccine ambassador! You can share your video testimonial as part of an organizational campaign or on an individual basis on your personal channels of communication, including social media, text and WhatsApp – the opportunities are limitless!