

How to Write a Human Rights Defender Monologue

Human rights defender monologues honor human rights defenders and raise awareness about their lives as well as the human rights they protect and promote. Writing and performing the monologues provide a pathway for action as we embody the courageous and relatable stories of defenders. These stories show us what it means to be fully human and how to create ripples of hope wherever we are.

1. Choose a local defender who is protecting and promoting human rights in your area.
 - a. What human right are they protecting or promoting?
 - b. What is an example of the work they are doing?
 - c. Why are you interested in this person or issue?
2. Interview the human rights defender. If you are not able to directly interview the defender, do research about the defender's life and work or interview family members or others associated with the defender.

Sample questions to ask:

1. Describe your work. How did you get involved in this work?
 2. What is an example of a powerful moment you experienced?
 3. What is one challenge you faced?
 4. What is one thing you most want people to know about you or the work you are doing? How can people help?
3. View the play, [past performances](#), and [sample monologues](#) as templates for the structure of your monologue. Remember that a good story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. The monologue should also have emotional resonance. Questions to ask as you review the sample monologue:
 - i. How does the monologue begin? How does it hook the audience?
 - ii. What do you learn about the defender and their work in the monologue?
 - iii. How does the monologue end?
 - iv. Where does the monologue work in the defender's own words?
 - v. What was most effective about this monologue?
 - vi. What emotions does the monologue evoke in the audience? How?
 4. Write a 2-3 minute first person monologue about your defender based on the interview or research you conducted. Make sure to include the defender's name in your monologue.

5. Share your piece with the defender or family (if possible) to make sure that they feel accurately represented. Invite them to the performance.
6. Perform your monologues and invite audiences to take action on the issues you presented. The staging can be very minimal (such as actors stepping forward to read or perform the monologue) or can include costumes, live music, and staging.