PASSPORTS FOR ATAXIANS FOUNDATION
Travel. Explore. Learn.

SHARE YOUR STORY

YOUR 60-SECOND ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a brief introduction you could share during a short elevator ride. In about 60 seconds, tell someone who you are, how ataxia affects your life, and what you want them to remember.

1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF — 0-10 seconds

My name is _____

I have _____ (specific type of ataxia), and I live in _____.

2. WHAT IS ATAXIA? — 10-30 seconds

Ataxia describes impaired coordination and a group of neurological disorders that can affect balance, walking, speech, swallowing, hand movements, and vision. It can be inherited, develop from illness or injury, or have an unknown cause, with symptoms, progression, and effects on life expectancy varying widely. With an estimated 150,000 people affected in the United States and approximately 1 million worldwide—less than 1% of either population—ataxia is rare and remains unfamiliar to many people.

3. SHARE ONE MOMENT — 30-45 seconds

One experience that impacted my life was _____.

Describe what happened and how it affected you.

4. SHARE YOUR TAKEAWAY — 45-60 seconds

I want people to understand _____. Thank you for listening.

Leave your listener with one thing you want them to remember.

Planning sources: The Arc; EveryLife Foundation youth advocacy guide; NAF; NORD; RARE Foundation.

Use the prompts to write, type, or record your story. Your experience is yours to share.

BEFORE YOU START

Be yourself

Share only what you feel comfortable sharing.

Keep it focused

Use one real example. Explain unfamiliar words and acronyms.

Choose your takeaway

What do you wish people understood about living with ataxia?

PRACTICE YOUR PITCH

Read all four sections aloud in order. Time yourself, pause, and trim details as needed.

60 seconds is a guide.
Use the time and communication tools that work for you.

SEND YOUR STORY

Send your story and a picture of yourself to:
contact@passportsforataxians.org

Ataxia Awareness

The Passports For Ataxians Foundation empowers people with ataxia—and their caregivers—by reducing financial barriers to obtaining passports and visas. We believe that travel is a powerful form of education, independence, and personal growth.

PassportsForAtaxians.org

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THREE 60-SECOND EXAMPLES

Sample scripts following the template: introduce yourself, explain ataxia, share one experience, and close with a takeaway. Use your own words to help others understand life with ataxia.

ADAM NELSON



My name is Adam Nelson. I have SCA28 and I live in California, USA.

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One experience that impacted my life was having to leave full-time teaching. Slurred speech, fatigue, and falls made a career I loved difficult to continue. I started the nonprofit Passports For Ataxians.

I want people to understand that unsteady walking or slurred speech can be symptoms of ataxia. Thank you for listening.

ANAMARIA MITRE



My name is Anamaria Mitre. I have AOA2 and I live in Romania.

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One experience that impacted my life was receiving the right diagnosis after 29 years. A virtual conference inspired me to seek more genetic testing. I started an online support group in Romania called Comunitatea Ataxia.

I want people to understand that daily tasks take extra effort. Kindness matters. Thank you for listening.

SHAWN DAVIS



My name is Shawn Davis. I have Autosomal Recessive Cerebellar Ataxia type 1 (ARCA1) and I live in Kansas, USA.

Ataxia describes impaired coordination and a group of neurological disorders that can affect balance, walking, speech, swallowing, hand movements, and vision. It can be inherited, develop from illness or injury, or have an unknown cause, with symptoms, progression, and effects on life expectancy varying widely. With an estimated 150,000 people affected in the United States and approximately 1 million worldwide—less than 1% of either population—ataxia is rare and remains unfamiliar to many people.

One experience that impacted my life was trying to explain ataxia to my children. I wrote a picture book to help them understand why their dad is different. What is Ataxia?

I want people to understand that sharing our stories can teach children compassion. Thank you for listening.

Sample scripts adapted from the supplied stories, not verbatim quotations. Timing varies with your speaking pace.