

Personal Statement Draft & Review

Purpose: Turn the verified facts and personal experiences organized in Tool 12 into a clear, concise statement, then review the draft for accuracy before using it.

Guiding question: Does this statement clearly communicate my experience without adding, exaggerating, or changing anything?

Condition / Health Issue:	
Statement Purpose (if helpful):	

1. Draft Your Statement

Use your completed Tool 12 as your outline. Write naturally in the first person. You do not need to use every section or follow the prompts word for word. Include only what helps accurately communicate your experience.

Your statement should not sound like it was written by a lawyer, clinician, or VA employee unless you are, in fact, a lawyer, clinician, or VA employee. The point is not to make your statement sound more official. The point is to make it sound like you and make it easy to understand. **Clear is better than impressive.**

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

2. Source Check

Use this section for dates, diagnoses, test results, treatment details, provider statements, or other facts you rely on from records. Your personal experiences do not require a medical-record citation simply because you described them.

Statement / Factual Detail	Based On	Source / Location	Verified?
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐
	Personal experience / Medical record / Journal / Other		☐

3. Final Read-Through

Accuracy: Did I say anything I cannot support from my own experience or an identified source?

Attribution: Is it clear when something is my experience versus something documented by a provider?

Consistency: Does anything in this draft conflict with something I identified in Tools 7-11?

Completeness: Is there important context from Tool 12 that I accidentally left out?

Relevance: Did I include material that does not actually help the reader understand this condition or my experience?

Voice: Does this sound like me?

Simplicity: Could I say any of this more clearly with fewer words?

4. My Final Review

- ☐ I have read the entire statement.
- ☐ It accurately reflects my experience to the best of my knowledge.
- ☐ I verified record-based facts where reasonably possible.
- ☐ I removed anything that was added only because I thought it sounded stronger.
- ☐ I am comfortable submitting these words as my own.

YOU OWN EVERY SENTENCE YOU SUBMIT, REGARDLESS OF WHO OR WHAT HELPED YOU WRITE IT.

The structure can come from the toolkit. The facts come from the veteran.