The Power of Storytelling in Our Everyday Lives

Meghna Bhat, PhD
(she. her. hers)
Agenda

- My Story
- What is storytelling?
- Why storytelling?
- How to write or share stories?
  - Types of storytelling
- Where to use storytelling?
- Important considerations
- Resources
My Story...
I AM...
I COME FROM...
I COME AS...
“Stories move in circles. They don’t move in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in circles. There are stories inside stories and stories between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is getting lost. And when you’re lost, you start to look around and listen.”

—Corey Fischer, Albert Greenberg, and Naomi Newman
A Travelling Jewish Theatre from Coming from a Great Distance Excerpted from Writing for Your Life by Deena Metzger

Digital Storytelling Cookbook (StoryCenter, 2010)
WHAT IS STORYTELLING?

Storytelling Basics
• True and personal narratives
• Lived experiences
• First-Person
Polling Question:

How familiar are you with writing and/or sharing stories with others?
Polling Question:
What is your intention with storytelling?
WHY STORYTELLING?
Benefits of Storytelling

- Increases empathy
- Community building
- Affirms our values
- Improves physical & mental health
- Finding our own voice
- Public policy
- Narrative & culture change
Please type your reply in the zoom chat

What are some of the other benefits of listening to and/or sharing true personal stories?
HOW TO WRITE OR SHARE STORIES?
Types of Storytelling

- Video [visual/ no words]
- Written
- Audio/Oral
- Digital [audio/visual]
Identify and Write a Script

What’s the story?

Who do you want to share with?

Why do you want to share this story?

Why share this story now?

Write a script of 250-400 words
Read, narrate, edit and finalize script
Add images, voice, videos or just share your story
A short, first-person video-narrative created by combining
- recorded voice,
- still and moving images, and
- music or other sounds.

7 Steps of Digital Storytelling

Facilitated by a trained digital storyteller
Story Circles

Image source: geo pixel
Dear Aayee...

“Stories of Home”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRIgE5R2DE4
Other Types of Storytelling
WHERE TO USE STORYTELLING?

Next Steps
What’s the purpose?

- Highlight a social problem in your communities
- Asking for grant money
- Job Hiring or Interviewing
- Intergenerational legacy and family bonding
- Personal growth and/or healing
- Success stories for funding reports
- Spread joy, hope, and stories of resilience
- Historical documentation
Who is your intended audience?

- Significant others, family members and children
- Your communities: cultural, faith-based, etc.
- Grant funding organizations
- Important community stakeholders and leaders
- Hiring team and/or work colleagues
- Yourself :)
- College application and/or scholarship committee
What story to share?
Unpacking story writing:

- What is your memory about your favorite home meal?
- What is your first memory of your first work experience?
- What was your first experience of leaving home like?
- Share a story when you were told by someone you inspired them or your kindness made their day
- Write a short letter to your younger self thanking them for a moment of courage or hope...
- Picture Story Prompt

**Li, Cun et al. ‘Facilitating Intergenerational Storytelling for Older Adults in the Nursing Home: A Case Study’. 1 Jan. 2020 : 153 – 177.**
Important Considerations
Checklist:
TAKE AWAY:

- Storytelling is not a substitute for therapy/counseling
- Ongoing consent and readiness as a storyteller
- It’s okay if you write your story only for yourself
- Facilitate ethical and trauma-informed storytelling
- Do not share others’ stories outside your story circles
- Anonymity and confidentiality
- Attend virtual/ in person story slams, Moth events etc.
Audience Chat Question:

List one thing you learned and are taking away from today’s session?
“We are ALL storytellers” ~ Jimmy Neil Smith
- Meghna Bhat: www.meghnabhat.com (trained in Oral and Digital storytelling facilitation)
- StoryCenter: www.storycenter.org
- Capital Storytelling: https://capitalstorytelling.com/
- Story At Scale: https://www.storyatscale.org/
- [Vermont Network] Write It Out: Using Words and Art to Strengthen and Heal Family Bonds
- Art + Storytelling (Resonance Network): https://resonance-network.org/art-storytelling/
- Ada Cheng https://renegadeadacheng.com/
QUESTIONS?