

Tips for using story online

When using traditional stories make sure the story:

- Connects to the purpose of the work
- Connects to you
- Is appropriate for your audience
- Connects in some way with the human condition
- Is written or told with passion
- Is rich in language
- Has a strong beginning and satisfying conclusion

Shape your story around what appeals to you.

Change descriptions of things into dialogue – use language to articulate the scene.

Add Cultural Markers

Open a story by sharing something from a particular culture. For example you could begin with a question like *Did you know that part of the Chinese word for Crisis is the word Opportunity?*

Learn about cultural practices, rituals and customs.

Lead in by incorporating language for:

- Place names, food, customs,
- Object names,
- Courtesy phrases – such as hello, good bye
- Key repetitive phrases
- Names from other cultures that personalize your story

Orientate your story to your particular audience – what will be most important to them?

Group stories can come from just about anywhere. Topics that have worked well are:

Sharing a learning from a previous career and how it now helps you in your current role

Sharing a learning from your worst job or worst failure

Share a dream for the future

Conquering a challenge

Share what are the burning questions around the topic

Share what your deepest knowing or yearning about a situation

What would you do if _____ happened to you

Face-to-face Storytelling Processes

THE TALKING STICK

(Adapted from Liebman, Wayne Tending the Fire: The ritual men's group. Ally: St Paul, MN, 1991. pp. 16-17).

The talking stick is a tool that helps to create a sacred space for exchanging ideas. The tradition is to carve or decorate a special piece of wood that becomes a ritual object for the group. The stick is passed around the circle. Holding the stick confers on a person the authority to be heard; it's time to speak their truth and have it listened to without being interrupted.

Purpose To speak the unspoken

Time 5-10 minutes each

Process

In a circle, the first person takes the speaking stick and speaks.

Three guidelines for speaking are:

Speak briefly

1. Speak about yourself
2. Speak from the heart

While they are speaking others are silent and listen.

When the first person finishes, they pass the stick to the next person, And so on around the circle.

If you have remarks you feel you can't contain and you don't have the stick in hand, you contain them anyway.

If you have nothing to say, or if it has been already spoken, just pass the stick to the next person.

Variation

- When finished speaking each speaker returns the speaking stick to the centre of the circle. Whoever is ready to speak next will step forth and claim it.

EXPLORING THE GROUP STORY

This process explores the story of a group (its birth, its milestones, context and events, the key players and challenges faced) can reveal what is available next and provides a blueprint for further action.

Purpose To explore the group story

Time 30-45 minutes

Materials Flip charts and markers, paints, pastels and crayons.

Process

Invite the participants to describe beginning of the group. Describe the birth of the group. Describe the group's characters and the setting for the story.

What were the first things that happened?

Who were the initiators?

What was their vision?

What did they do?

The middle of the story

Invite the participants to introduce the current opportunities or challenges facing the group.

Ask:

- Who are the key characters?*
- What is happening now?*
- How does the present embody the vision?*
- What are the paths we could take now?*

The end of the story

Invite the participants to speak as if they are in *happily ever after* and the story is ending.

Ask:

- What happened?*
- How did you get to a positive outcome?*
- What were the first steps?*
- What was let go?*
- How is the vision fulfilled?*

Variation

- Create a timeline of the events and people from the beginning to the end. Then extend it further both before and after the beginning and the end of the group.
- Use graphic facilitation (drawing) to illustrate the group's story

ONCE UPON A TIME

This story process is a light approach to describe a group's story in a simple and non-threatening way.

Purpose To describe the group story

Time 20-30 min

Process

The facilitator begins a structured round (or go round) of story with the group by asking the first person '*Once upon a time...?*'

The first person then adds in an event or people at the birth of the group or its vision. A scribe takes down the responses on flip chart.

The facilitator asks the next person '*and every day...?*'

The second participant fills in one thing or event that also occurred. The third person is asked '*and then every day...?*' and so on until the group runs out of events and issues.

The facilitator then asks '*Until one day...?*'

The group then describes their current problem, opportunity or challenge.

The facilitator then asks the group '*Because of that...?*'

The group then describes the impact of the change or challenge.

The facilitator then asks the group '*Until finally...?*'

The group then describes possibilities for action, alternative options and steps to take.

Finally the facilitator asks the '*and the moral of the story is?*'

This provides the following information for the group:

Once upon a time...	History and context of the group
Every day...	Description of problems and issues
Until one day...	Catalyst for change/ movement
Because of that...	Impact that the change/ movement creates
Until finally...	Steps to be taken/ Goal
And the moral of the story is...	Group learning

EXPLORING THE GROUP CONTEXT

Exploring the group context helps uncover the wider environment within which the group is operating and the influences that impact the group.

Purpose To explore the wider context of the group

Time 45 min-1 hr

Materials Flip charts and markers, paints, pastels and crayons

Process

Ask people to explore the group context looking at the different layers of relationships and society surrounding the group and organisation as a prompt.

PROVIDING THE PHAT STRUCTURE

Sometimes groups need a little help coming up with stories or may not see them as something serious to engage with.

Try giving them this structure to start wit:

1. Something related to the topic that they are **passionate** about.
2. Who is (or could be) the **hero** in the situation
3. Who or what is the **antagonist** – personalise them and detail their behaviour
4. Then describe the **transformation** that occurs.



Stories must have passion. If a story has little passion in it's telling it won't work. Stories must have an identifiable hero in order to be effective. There needs to be an antagonist – where would Luke Skywalker be without Han Solo and Darth Vader. It must be a story about transformation to be engaging and useful in the telling.