

Storytelling is a key part of everyday life and sharing stories is the bedrock of relationship-centred practice.

Feelings are often expressed through stories and we can be profoundly moved, making us curious to find out more. In this way, telling our stories out loud or in writing can provide new insights and help to shape deeper understanding of other peoples' experience.

This Unfolding Stories resource is one way in which to facilitate storytelling.

The unfolding story relates to the fact that the story is being unfolded on a piece of paper, and also that what is written is just the beginning, the unfolding story can be the introduction of a story that continues to emerge.

Example of an Unfolding Story

- My idea of community is...
- What helps me to feel part of something is...
- When I think of community in care homes i...
- To be dementia-friendly could mean...
- My ideal community would ...

The How

- Pre-prepare a number of opening prompts, which participants will complete to form a full sentence. These can be tailored to whatever topic you would like the participants to write about. Please see example above, there are additional examples given under The 'Where and When'.
- Each participant starts with a blank sheet of paper.
- Tell the participants that as a group they will be writing a 6 line story, and so they should write 'as clearly as possible, so that it can be read by others, and to write in a size that will allow six lines to fit on the page.
- Ask the participants to write the topic that the story is about on the bottom of the page- for example, in image below the topic people will be writing about is 'Our Team Meeting'.



- Call out the first prompt, (may also be useful to have this prompt on flipchart paper where possible- one prompt per flipchart page/ powerpoint slide, which can be turned over one at a time, so that each prompt remains a surprise).
- Ask the participants to write down the words for the first prompt and then to complete the sentence however they wish.
- After participants have finished writing their sentence they are then asked to fold the paper forward so that their sentence is no longer visible, while bearing in mind that this will be repeated 5 times so to be aware of the fold not being too big.
- Ask the participant to pass the piece of paper to the person on their left.
- Advise the participants that they are to write the next sentence under the fold of the sheet of paper (i.e. not on the fold).
- Call out the second prompt, and repeat the above process until all 6 lines have been written.
- Once lines have been completed participants can then unfold their story by unfolding the piece of paper.
- Each participant then reads out the story on their piece of paper to rest of the group.
- Following this the group can have a general discussion or they may want to focus on a number of inquiry questions such as:

What did you connect with in the stories you heard?

Were there some common threads?

What are you curious about now?

The Where and When

Below are some examples of how this tool could be used with residents /patients/ clients who use service and staff

Life Story Work (with one person)

When I was a baby...

My favourite thing about school holidays was...

I would love to have worked...

An important day for me was...

A meal that I'd love to have all over again...

Something I'd like others to know about my life is...

Working Together (with teams)

What lights my fire about working with this team is...

When we are all singing from the same hymn sheet our song is...

Imagine if everyone...

Something that puzzles me...

It's a bit radical but...

A really good outcome for me when working together is...

Evaluating an Event e.g. training session/team meeting

What stood out for me was...

I loved it when...

I would like to think more about...

My sense of belonging was...

I wondered if...

I'm taking away...

Co-Creating an Agenda for a Meeting

What we really need to celebrate...

Can you tell me more...

Something I'm unsure about...

I wonder if it would strengthen our team if...

Something I'd like to share is...

Could we find a way...

Resources you may need Pre-prepared prompts.

One piece of blank paper per person.

Try it out/play around/ ask for feedback

Developed by My Home Life Scotland team, adapted from learning from Pádraig O'Tuama at Storywork Narrative Practice Weekend, Corrymeela, Ballycastle, Nov 2016.