



TELLING OUR STORIES: Participant Workbook

Section 1: Brainstorming Your Stories

What personal stories can you tell about your experiences? A few examples include:

- **Educating:** Sharing experiences and information about you/people you love.
- **Navigating Conflict:** Use your story about your identity (e.g., being LGBTQ+, being an ally, being a parent of someone queer) to help find common ground.
- **Engaging:** How/why you became engaged in advocacy work, why others should be too.

Write down your ideas in the space below. **Just include the headlines, not full stories.**

Section 2: Your Most Important Thing (M.I.T.)

What is the **Most Important Thing** that you want to communicate through your story? Imagine there's only one thing that people remember about what you said. What do you want it to be?

Here are a few examples:

1. Understanding the challenges that may be faced by specific communities (or people like you).
2. Recognizing the power we each have to be a game-changer for someone at work.
3. Educating someone about a specific issue.



What's the M.I.T. for the story you're developing today?

Section 3: Finding Key Theme(s) for Creating Common Ground

Your common-ground themes will help people relate to your story, even if they do not share your experience. Just a few examples of some feelings most people can relate to are:

- Care
- Family
- Commitment
- Achievement
- Friendship
- Respect
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Inclusion
- Understanding
- Fairness
- Fear
- Happiness
- Relationships

Circle two of these themes that you plan on using as part of your story to create common ground. Avoid using more than two themes – otherwise your message may be unclear.

Is there a theme that doesn't appear here but you'd like to use? List it below.



Section 4: Developing the Arc of Your Super-Awesome Story

Building structure for what you want to share keeps people interested and makes your story an effective tool for change. Here's a quick rundown of the parts of the **Story Arc** that we covered in today's workshop.

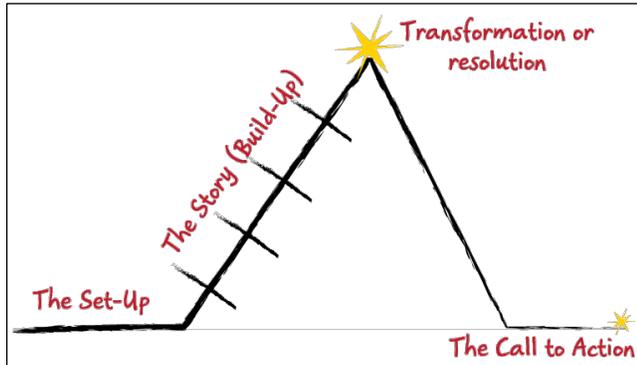
The Set-Up: Remember that you want to get people interested. Create your Set-Up so that people will be curious to hear what happens next.

The Build-Up: Fill in the critical details and the relevant characters to the story. Keep your details simple and focused.

The Transformation: This is the big moment in your story that makes it meaningful. Did someone do something that changed it all for you? Did you have a realization that changed your life? Did you learn something that transformed who you are?

The Call to Action: This is your call to action for the listener. Now that they've heard your story, ask them to do something. It should be accessible and it should tie back to your M.I.T.

Here's an example: My M.I.T. is that as a person who identifies as queer, I know the incredible power that allies have on the survival of youth in my community. So my call to action will be to ask allies to be sure to be out about their support because they never know whose lives they may change by speaking up or being visible.



Your Set-Up

This is the place where you want to capture people's interest. Rather than saying, "Now I'm going to tell you the story of why trans inclusion is important," think about how you can set it up so people want to keep hearing the details. This is also where you introduce the people (including yourself) involved. Please note: Respect confidentiality and privacy. If you don't have permission to share specifics (names, identifying characteristics), don't.

Your Build-Up

What happened in the story? This is where you fill in more of the details and create interest as you get to your important points. What challenge or emotion did the incident evoke in you? How did the circumstance in the story make you and/or the other characters feel?

Your Transformation

What was the big moment of transformation in your story? What did you learn? How did it change, educate, or inspire you? What did it mean moving forward?

Your Call to Action

You've shared your story for a specific reason. What is the call to action you want your listener(s) to do? Remember that it should be accessible (not so big that they won't/can't do it) and it should tie back to your M.I.T.

"WE'RE ALL STORIES IN THE END. MAKE IT A GOOD ONE."

- DOCTOR WHO

HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON STORIES WHILE YOU'RE PRACTICING:

Getting great, constructive feedback can be the key to turning a good story into one that's truly memorable. Here's a quick process for sharing stories and getting critical feedback to fine-tune your message.

1. Decide who will go first in telling their story. Agree on some time signals (e.g., I'll hold up one finger when you've used a minute, two when you've hit two minutes, etc.)
2. Listen and enjoy the story.
3. Use the process below to facilitate the feedback loop. Start by asking the storyteller how they felt, then move on to feedback.
4. Switch places and repeat!

A very important note:

The feedback you provide should be focused on the structure and delivery of the story, not the specific incident. For example, it's not helpful – and, honestly, rude – to respond to a coming out story with, “Well I don't know why you didn't come out sooner and just tell people who you are.” But it is helpful to suggest that the way that the person tells their coming out story could be stronger, e.g., “I'm not sure people are understanding how much fear you had when you were coming out. I think that if you introduced this earlier, the story would be more effective.”

THE FEEDBACK LOOP:

Ask the storyteller for a self-assessment:

- What do you feel you did well?
- What would you do differently?

Give feedback to the storyteller:

- Did it follow the arc and make a clear point?
- Did it fit into the two-minute timeframe?
- Did you know what the person's MIT is?