Stories of Possibilities

Empower Idaho Peer Support Conference

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Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion

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Objectives

- Describe what a community participation story
- Identify 3 potential benefits of developing and sharing community participation stories
- Identify three concepts that support story development
- Develop an outline for creating your own community participation story

Who is the Temple University Collaborative

1

Targets obstacles that prevent people with mental illnesses from being full members of their communities;

2

Identifies the supports consumers and communities need to enhance the prospects for community integration;

3

Expands the range of opportunities for people who have mental illnesses to participate in their communities as active and equal members.

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

1

Conduct state of the art research

- Develop evidence-based practices aimed at increasing community participation of individuals with serious mental illnesses
- Understand factors that influence community participation

2

Provide training and technical assistance

- Support providers interested in implementing community participation interventions
- Develop documents and training materials to increase community participation

What do we mean by Community Participation?

Community Participation is…

A Medical Necessity	A Human Right	Reflects Self-Directed Care
• Improves cognition (getting out of the house) • Increases opportunities for social interaction • Increases in physical activity • Improved mood	• The opportunity to live, work, play in the community- just like everyone else is often the mission of mental health services	• Desire to increase participation in areas meaningful to the person • Recognizes the value of diverse participation

Key terms

Recovery Narrative: A first-person account of experiences with and recovery from mental health problems, including elements of struggle, adversity, overcoming and survival (Llewellyn-Beardsley et al., 2019).

Story: An account of incidents or events told for entertainment.

StorySlam: A StorySlam is a live storytelling event where storytellers may volunteer to share a 5-minute story related to the chosen theme. A StorySlam story is *not* a life story. It shares a specific moment (or related moments) in time, with a beginning, middle and end.

Llewellyn-Beardsley, J., Rennick-Egglestone, S., Callard, F., Crawford, P., Farkas, M., Hui, A., ... & Slade, M. (2019). Characteristics of mental health recovery narratives: systematic review and narrative synthesis. PloS one, 14(3), e0214678.

Gretchen's Story

'Dining Out'

Benefits of storytelling

Personal Benefits	Interpersonal Benefits
Self-esteem	Improved relationships
Self-awareness	Friendship development
Identity development	Connection with others
Achievement	Empathy
Hope	Exploring different perspectives

(Fayers & Guraya, 2020; Nurser et al., 2018; Ørjasæter et al., 2011; Steward et al., 2019)

Listener Benefits

- Connectedness
- Validation
- Hope
- Empowerment
- Appreciation
- Reference shift
- Stigma / shame reduction

(Rennick-Egglestone et al., 2019; Piat et al., 2019)

Risks of storytelling

Risks to the Storyteller

- Discomfort w/ disclosure
- Regretting disclosure
- Not fitting into a required framework
- Disconnection
- Painful, overwhelming, frustrating

Risks to Listeners

- Inadequacy (comparing self to others)
- Disconnection
- Pessimism
- Burden
- Distress / Discomfort

(Fayers & Guraya, 2020; Llewellyn-Beardsley et al., 2020; Nurser et al., 2018; Ørjasæter et al., 2011; Rennick-Egglestone et al., 2019 Steward et al., 2019; Piat, 2019)

The Need

Storytelling is often included in mental health services programming

Recovery narrative frameworks can be limiting and may decrease narrative authenticity and thwart connection

People should be supported to develop and share stories of community participation in addition to recovery stories

The Question

How can we support individuals to shift focus from recovery narratives to developing stories of community participation?

1

Focus on developing stories related to valued social roles, welcoming places, and natural supports

2

Approach storytelling from an artistic perspective and include mainstream storytelling resources

Proposed Solution

4 Guiding Principles

For developing stories of community participation

Guiding Principle 1

Stories of community participation uphold the values of self-determination and dignity of risk, and never require or force disclosure of any aspect of a person's identity.

It is the storyteller's choice whether and how to share personal information through storytelling.

Guiding Principle 2

Stories of community participation are focused on ‘the person, not the patient’ and represent diverse stories of living in the community.

Storytellers are welcomed as individuals with unique strengths, problems, interests, and cultural identities, and are never defined by impairments or differences.

Guiding Principle 3

Stories of community participation embrace multiple domains of mainstream life and participation in areas that are important to the storyteller.

Storytellers' creativity and experiences are honored by offering a variety of storytelling strategies and exercises rather than being limited to a pre-determined format that is focused on illness or recovery.

Guiding Principle 4

Stories of community participation are shared with diverse groups of people and in places that are open to everyone, regardless of mental health diagnosis or history.

Stories of community participation reflect the storyteller's experiences of life in the community and are developed to be shared with a variety of community members.

What Community participation elements do you notice in stories?

- Domains of participation?
- Natural supports?
- Welcoming places?
- Valued Social Roles?

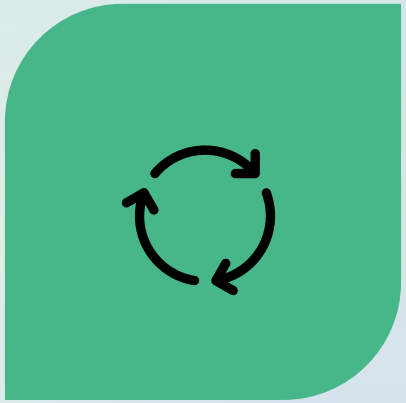
Social Role Valorization

- **Examples of Valued Social Roles**
- Parent
- Partner
- Student
- Educator
- Researcher
- Family member
- Volunteer
- Friend
- Storyteller

(Wolfensberger, 1983; Osburn, 2006)

Welcoming Places

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BEING, DOING AND BECOMING



A ‘SPACE’ BECOMES A ‘PLACE’ WHEN IT IS MADE MEANINGFUL BY PEOPLE

IN STORYTELLING, CONSIDER THE RELATIONSHIPS YOU HAVE TO DIFFERENT PLACES

(Doroud, Fossey & Fortune, 2018; Creswell, 2011; Snethen, Jeffries, Thomas & Salzer, 2020).

Natural Supports

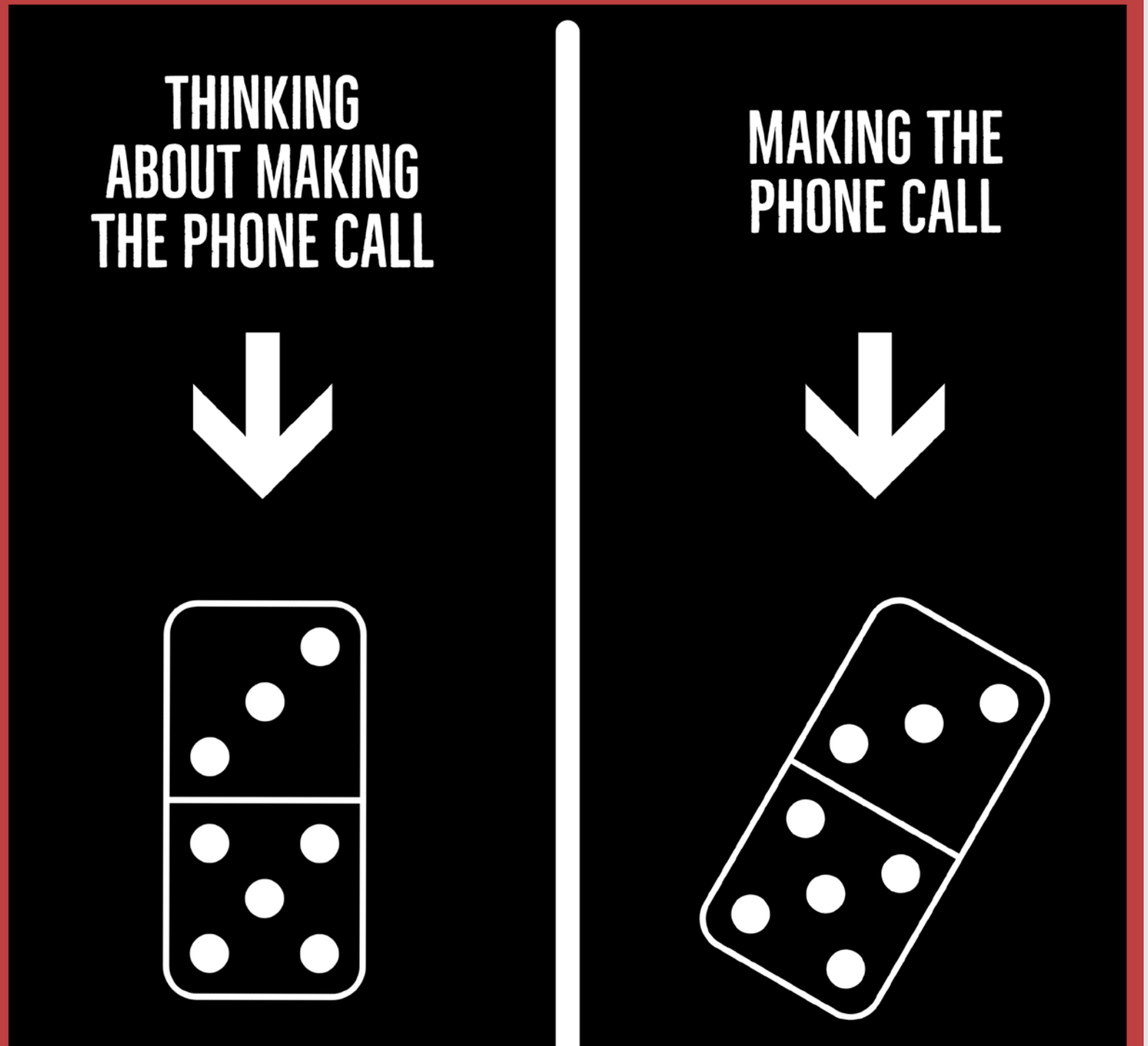
- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Someone who helped you at the grocery store
- Pets!

3 Artistic Criteria:

"Is it a story?"

Criterion One:

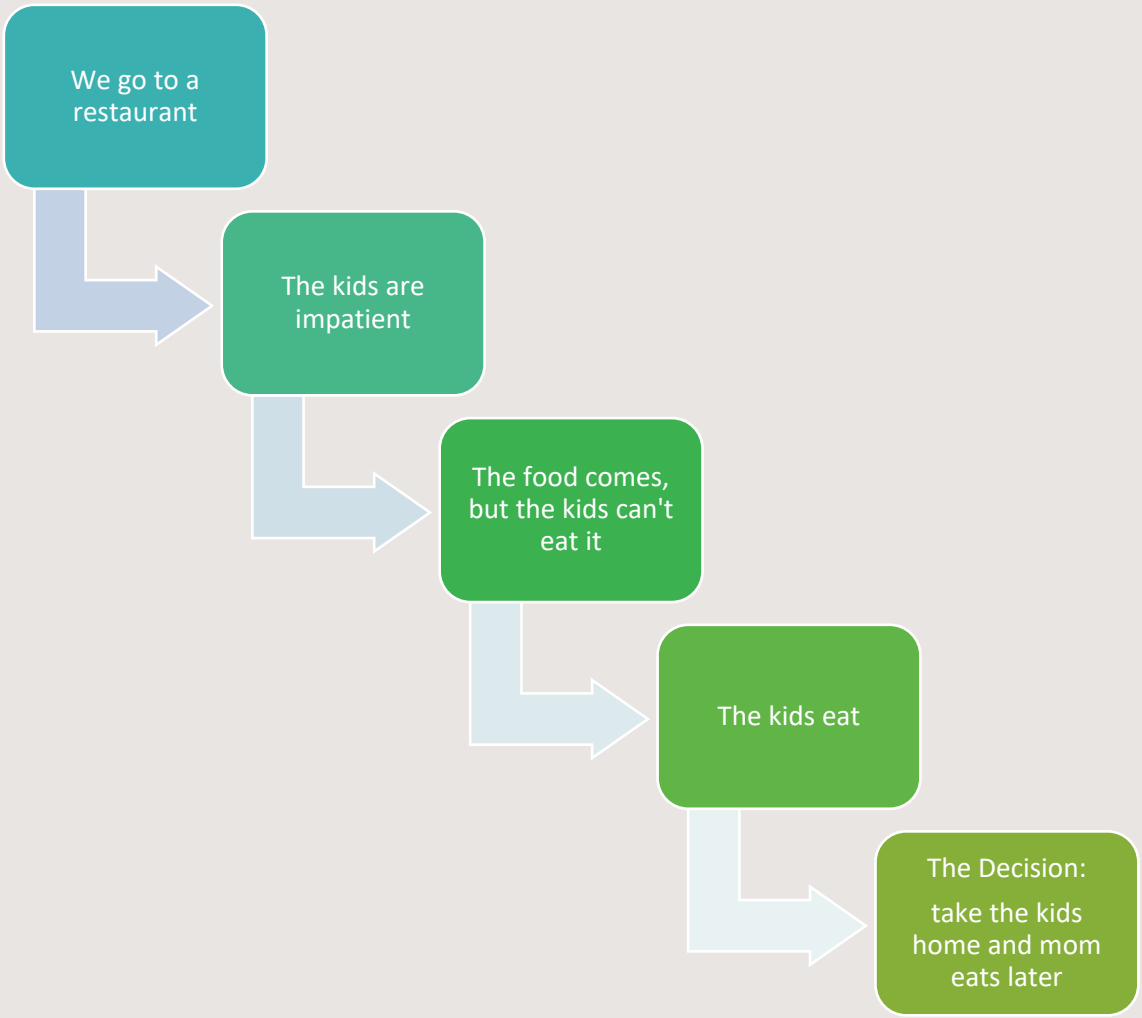
SOMETHING HAPPENS!



What is ‘something happening’?

- An event or action is something that happens
- In storytelling, thoughts and feelings are not actions!
- A thought or feeling can become an event when action is taken.

What happens in ‘Dining Out’?



Criterion two:

SOMETHING HAPPENS!

IN RELATIONSHIP TO SOMEONE ELSE

Criteria Two:

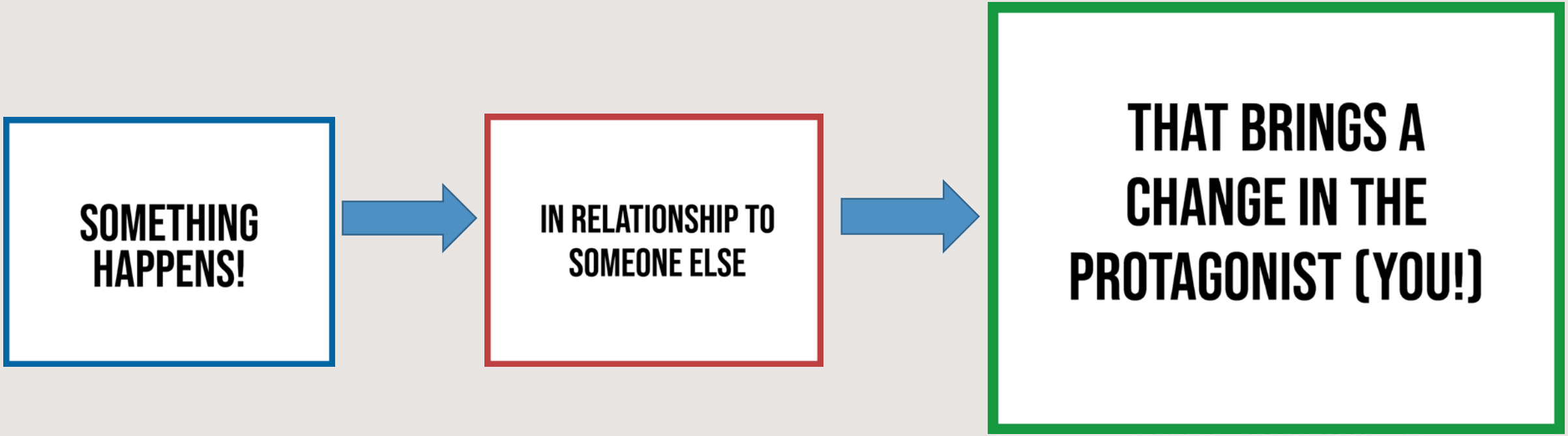
Who are the natural supports in ‘the dining out’?

Husband

Restaurant staff

Kids

Criterion three



Criteria three:

What relationship brings the change?

Who is the most important relationship in *this* story?

It doesn’t have to be someone you know!

Knowing the most important relationship can help clarify the events of a story

Criteria Three: How did you change?

How did you change?	Why is this change important?	Helpful phrases to use in stories: 'In that moment, I…'
• Let this part of the story be where you reflect	• What is at stake to gain or lose?	• Realized • Became • Learned • Decided • Knew

Remember to Focus on Community Participation!

What stories are available to the person?

The availability of stories reflects a person's community participation experiences and interests

Be aware of what stories are being asked for (assumption may often be recovery stories)

What community participation opportunities does the person have?

Identify barriers and facilitators to participation

Support the development of stories by focusing on meaningful community participation memories

Breakout Rooms!

Thinking through your story!

Breakout Room activities

- Common Roles- With your group, talk about common roles, common places where these roles occur. Discuss how these ideas could come together in a common theme.

Common Roles	Common Places	Theme ideas

- Use the Role Tree worksheet to think through potential stories you might develop- share one (or more) with your group

Role	**Connections**	**Place**	**Stories**
EXAMPLE Parent	Sawyer & Hudson (kids)	Home	•Taking the kids out to dinner for the first time since the pandemic started •Playing with rocks in the park •Climbing through the car to get to the barfing kid
		Park near our house	
	Husband	In the car	
		Restaurant	
	Community members I see when I'm with my kids	Waitress, restaurant	
		Other families- park, restaurant	

Discussion

- What were some of the roles identified in your group?
- What commonalities were in your group?
- How might you use the role tree activity to talk with peers about what's important to them?

Sharing your story

- Share your community participation story
  - Opportunity to discuss different roles
  - Stories are used to connect and share
    - Successes
    - Challenges
    - Funny
    - Navigating new experiences
    - ”change of plans”
  - Deepen connections with peers

Connecting your story, peers' stories to community participation

- **Explore and identify** community participation **goals** through storytelling
- **Connect** with community resources! Reach out to performing artists or storytelling organizations!
- **Navigate the mainstream community**. Meet for workshop activities in community places (library, coffee shop, etc)
- **Build connections and self-confidence** through a StorySwap! Allow everyone to share ideas and provide feedback
- Plan a virtual or in-person StorySlam focused on stories of community participation!

3 Rules of StorySlams

- The story must be true to your life and experiences
- The story must relate to the chosen theme
- The story must be no longer than five minutes (or you might get cut off!)

What are storyslams?

- **StorySlam:** A StorySlam is a live storytelling event where storytellers may volunteer to share a 5-minute story related to the chosen theme. A StorySlam story is *not* a life story. It shares a specific moment (or related moments) in time, with a beginning, middle and end.
- Host your own storyslams
  - Agency-based
  - Peer based
  - Community-based
- Live or virtual
- Support individuals to engage in public storyslams

The case for storyslams

Sharing stories with a common theme is powerful and creates opportunities to connect

Connecting around like-interests (sports, being a parent, being creative, etc…) is a great way to make friends

Sharing stories/listening to stories in public storyslams can increase one’s social network

Thank you!

Want to integrate community participation stories or storyslams into your own work, but still need support? Reach out!

We're happy to offer training and support!

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