

**The California Wellness Foundation
Organizational Learning and
Evaluation Conference**

Telling Your Community's Story

Workshop Presented by

Center for Collaborative Planning

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Why do we tell stories?

- To get **others involved**
- To get **media coverage** for recognition and events
- To get **funding**
- To **influence** policy/decision makers
- To **sustain efforts/activities** to improve the lives of children and families

Telling Your Community's Story

"Institutions learn from studies...Communities learn from stories."

- John McKnight

Storyboarding for Group Storytelling

- This is a fun way to **engage your group** in storytelling about your group's activities, successes, goals, or issues.
- It's also a way to **use the gifts of those in your group** who like to draw, though you certainly **don't have to be an artist** to participate.
- **Kids and young people can help** too!
- Storyboarding is what **screenwriters and film directors** use to create a **visual blueprint for a movie**.
- A storyboard includes **quick drawings of the main events** of a story in a logical sequence.

Storyboarding for Group Storytelling

- **Begin with the ending.**
 - If you're telling the story of a successful activity or event, **what is the result of your efforts?** Where are you now? What have you achieved? Draw the outcome and put it up on the wall.
 - If you're telling the story of a goal you have or an issue you want to address, **imagine the result of your efforts.** Where will you be when you have achieved your goal or addressed your issue? Draw the outcome and put it up on the wall.
- Work backwards and along the way include **high points and low, heroes, adversaries, obstacles, champions.**

Audiences

- Community Members
- Organizations, groups
- Policy makers
- Funders
- Agencies, departments and institutions
(schools, law enforcement, neighborhood services)
- Media

Considering Audiences

- Level of formality
- Length
- Presentation
- Visuals
- Requirements set by institution or funder
- Amount of time you have to pull it together

Audiences: Your Neighbors

The Two-Minute Story: Getting Your Message Across to Neighbors and Other Community Members

- **Write four sentences** that tell your story and enlist others in your efforts.
 - What you've done or hope to do
 - Why it's important
 - What could others do to help?
 - What's their next step?
- **Practice on each other.** Share your two minute story. See if you can convince that person to help.
- **How did it go?**

Accessing the Media

Do your homework. Get to know your local media outlets.

- Read the **paper**.
- Watch the local **TV news**.
- Listen to local news features on the **radio**.
- Check out **on-line calendars**. All the major media outlets have them.
- Look for stories that have **similar themes/concerns as your group**.
- Find out **which reporters cover the stories** you are interested in.

Accessing the Media

Build relationships

- Phone or email reporters to **compliment them on good stories**
- Learn the **tricks of the trade**
 - Story pitches
 - Media lists
 - Press releases
 - Media events

Writing a Press Release

- Organization's name
- Contact information
- Release date
- Headline
- Body
- Inverted pyramid style of writing
- First paragraph (lead) most powerful
- Short sentences and paragraphs
- Plain language
- Quotes
- -End-, 30 or #####
- -more- if more than one page

How to Stage a Media Event

1. Turn your 2 minute story into one **simple message**
2. Create a **visual image** that gets this message across. This is your event or "stunt."
3. Choose the right **time**
4. Choose the right **location**
5. Compile a **media list**
6. Write a **press release**
7. **Distribute** the release
8. **Call** a reporter
9. **Practice** for interviews
10. Consider a **press conference**
11. **Assess** your Event

Telling Your Community's Story

"The world is composed of stories, not atoms."

-Muriel Rukeyser