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**Narrative Leadership: Story of Self**

Participant Worksheet

**Instructions: Pair and Share**

1. Take **5 minutes** to go through this worksheet individually (each person silently reflecting on their own experience and jotting down notes).
2. The first person will practice telling their story to the partner. (**3 minutes)**
3. After the storyteller is finished, the second person will share reflections, commenting on the imagery that caught their attention, the values that were communicated, and at least one opportunity for more detail or imagery. The reflection section should last **2 minutes total.**
4. Transition to the next storyteller, **adjusting the time if needed. (~3 minutes to share story, 2 minutes for reflection)**

**Introduction**

We all live very rich and complex lives with many challenges, many choices, and many outcomes of both failure and success. As such, we can never tell our whole life story in two short minutes. The hope is to learn to interpret our life stories as an everyday practice, so that we can share our own reflections and interpretation of our experiences in ways that help build connection, empathy, and trust. To do this, we must choose stories to tell from our own lives based on what’s appropriate in each situation.

Take time to reflect on your own story, beginning with your “story of self.” You may go back as far as your parents or grandparents, or you may start with your decision to go to school; keep asking yourself why you got involved when you did. Focus on challenges you had to face, the choices you made about how to deal with those challenges, and the satisfaction - or frustration - you experienced. Why did you make those choices? Why did you do this and not that? Keep asking yourself why…

Where Do Stories Come From?

Where do stories come from? Ultimately, what stories can I tell from my own life (about specific people or events) that would *show*, rather than *tell*, who I am and what I care about?

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| **Family and childhood**  Parents/family  Your community  Role models  Learning new skill or information | **Life choices/ experiences**  School  Partner/family  Hobbies/interests/talents  Experiences finding passion  Experiences overcoming challenge | **Profession/ healthcare**  Being a patient  Your first patient  Career decision  Career experiences  Experiences with system/structure | **Leadership experience**  First experience of leadership  Connection to books or people who inspire you  Role models / mentors  Experience with failure |

A good story is drawn from the series of choice points that structure the “plot” of your life: the challenges you faced, choices you made, and outcomes you experienced.

**Challenge |** Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?

**Choice |** Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage - or not? Where did you get the hope - or not? How did it feel?

**Outcome |** How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you?

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| Pencil with solid fill | Craft Your Narrative  Think about the challenge, choice, and outcome in your story. The outcome might be what you learned, in addition to what happened. *Try drawing pictures or evoking the scene using your five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch).* Powerful stories leave your listeners with images in their minds that shape their understanding of you and your motivations*.* Remember, articulating the decisions you make in the face of challenges **is** what ultimately communicates your values. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Challenge | Choice | Outcome |
| Description: | Description: | Description: |
| Imagery: | Imagery: | Imagery: |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pencil with solid fill | Share Reflections  Think about the challenge, choice, and outcome in the stories you are listening to. Pay particular attention to: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What imagery caught your attention? | What values did you hear communicated? | Name at least one opportunity for more detail/imagery |

Application

What did you learn from reflecting on these moments of challenge, choice, outcome? Take a moment to consider when and how you might use this framework. In the space below, please capture two specific places you will share your story of self (challenge, choice, outcome framework).

For Further Reflection

Later, what did you learn from reflecting on these moments of challenge, choice, and outcome? Do these moments of choice teach you anything about yourself, about your family, about your peers, your community, your nation, the world around you… about what really matters to you? What about these stories was so intriguing? Which elements offered real perspective into your own life?

Many of us have stories of both loss and hope. If we did not have stories of loss, we would not understand that loss is a part of the world, and we would have no reason to try to fix it. But we also have stories of hope. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be trying to fix it.

Relational Leadership and Intend Health Strategies

Relational Leadership (RL) is a human-centered approach to working with others that cultivates connection and awareness in order to increase belonging, collaboration, equity, and impact across health systems.

We help healthcare clinicians, teams, and institutions activate the untapped potential of human connection. Our workshops and programs are grounded in Relational Leadership, a practical approach to working better together that prioritizes the quality of our relationships as a driving force of better healthcare and better health. [Intendhealth.org](https://intendhealth.org/).