

Collective Storytelling Template

Brief Description	The collective storytelling template allows the facilitator and the storyteller to co-create the story together, developing a full narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end.
Time Required	At least 1.5 hours (for consent, overview, and collective narrative building)
Notetaking	Facilitator and storyteller to decide on notetaker. Could be both.

There are 2 options outlined here to collectively build out a story with your client. Take some time to read through both approaches to better make an informed decision on which approach you'd like to try. If time allows and you and the storyteller want to, play around and explore both options to see which one flows better!

1. Grounding: Why are you telling this story?

Before you put effort into telling a story (whether your own or someone else's), consider the intent and purpose. If you have a very clear goal in telling this story, this guide can support you in doing so intentionally. If not, consider pausing before continuing through a very vulnerable process and revisit when you are feeling more confident and comfortable in your "why".

Discuss with the storyteller (client, participant, etc). Together, journal or note why their story is powerful and name the goal of telling this story:

2. Build Your Narrative (Option 1)

Stories often have a plot, a character or characters, and a moral. They also often have a challenge, a choice, and an outcome (cite). Commonly, they are built out with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Use these as prompts as a guide in building out your story. You do not need to use all of these to craft something beautiful. In fact, you may have some of your own prompts that you'd like to follow instead. Take this part slowly. This is YOUR narrative. This is YOUR story.



Beginning - The Character(s), Setting, Background

Character(s) - Who is the storyteller? Where do you come from (geographically, culturally, socially)?	
Relationship - What is your relationship with Loaves and Fishes of Fremont County?	

Middle - The Plot:

What initiated this story? What need or desire was present?	
What is a challenge you have faced?	
What are the systemic causes of this challenge?	
How did you or your community respond or resist?	
What support made a difference?	

End - The Moral

What change came out of this experience?	
What are you still working toward?	
What message or call to action do you want to leave the audience with?	
What else do you want the audience to know?	



Now that you've outlined your story using the above prompts, condense into a written version (could be a paragraph or a few sentences for each section).

Example A:

- Beginning: Christine has lived in Denver County for over a decade, having built a deep sense of pride in her community and taking care of her cats and chickens. A long-term grocery worker, Christine caught COVID in 2020 despite being careful and taking numerous precautions.
- Middle: Struggling with fatigue and financial barriers brought about by reduced hours at work, she turned to Loaves and Fishes food pantry for the first time and found support, food, and encouragement. Her nervousness about reaching out for help was quickly curbed with an incredibly welcoming and connective staff at Loaves and Fishes.
- End: With renewed stability, new connections, and access to resources, Christine has developed a greater sense of security and has been able to return to full-time work. She continues to excitedly build community in people, cats, and chickens!

2. Build Your Narrative (Option 2)

Most stories can be told in 5 sentences, even the most complex stories can be boiled down into this bite-sized framework.

Use these as prompts as a guide in building out your story. Take your interview notes and organize them into a story flow with 1-2 sentences in each section. Look for ways to use direct quotes if possible, and you may need to add some sentences for context or flow.

The Beginning - Introduce the main character and the values in your story.

The Build up / Tension - What is happening in their life?

The Challenge - Describe the challenges, oppression, or struggle.

The Resolution - What actions were taken? What changed? How did that happen?

The Ending or moral - What is the message or call to action? What comes next?

Example B:

1. Christine, a proud cat and chicken mom, has worked in a grocery store for 10 years right here in Denver County.
2. While Christine was very careful during COVID, food services workers were getting sick very frequently. Even though she was wearing a face mask and washing her hands, she caught COVID In November of 2020.
3. When she returned to work, she still didn't feel completely better and had to cut back her hours because she was fatigued all the time. Feeling stuck between a rock and a hard place with finances, she visited the Loaves and Fishes food pantry. She had never been to a food pantry before and was very shy the first time.
4. The Food Pantry was so helpful with getting food that was easy to cook, and Christine felt very welcome by the staff. She learned about other services that helped her get more ways to get back on her feet.
5. Now, Christine feels like she has a larger security network, and more friends, and as she is finally able to go back to work full time.

Example C:

1. Christine, who recently visited our food pantry, has a decade of service in a local grocery store. Over the last few years she has faced numerous challenges, such as long-haul COVID, reduced work hours, and food insecurity:
2. ...
3. ... *[Insert a direct quote, 2-5 sentences about their story]*
4. ...
5. Overcoming these challenges together as a community makes us stronger. Looking forward, Christine is excited for the next step in her life and expanding her chicken flock to and caring for the feral cat community.