

## Storytelling as Change Strategy *Story Structure Worksheet*

Please think of at least one story from your own experience that demonstrates the value of your work. Try to choose something that actually happened, whether it's an incident in which you were involved, something you observed, or simply a story you heard about from a colleague.

So that this not seem abstract, ask yourself "Where might telling a story help me to accomplish a work goal?"

In other words, are you trying to build connection with, persuade, or motivate an individual or group - staff, clients, funders, policy-makers, or even the press? And are there stories you could tell to help you do so? Such stories would not have to stand on their own, but could, for instance, precede convincing data. It also helps to know the message, lesson, or moral of each story.

You may find stories that take place at two different levels - a story of collaboration that made something possible, and a story of the ultimate impact in the life of a child or a family. You have every right to tell both stories. The challenge often will be linking them together for maximum impact.

You must be able to answer the following questions about the incident if it is to "rise to the level of story" as we have discussed today. So take a few moments to think about these questions and then write your answers in the spaces provided. (If you cannot answer all of the questions, you may need to select another story.) This will serve as an outline for the story you will write in the remainder of this part of the workshop.

**Who is your target (audience or individual)?**

**What effect do you want to have? What do you want your target to feel? -- think? -- do?**

**Who is the protagonist of your story? (Whom will the audience follow or identify with through the narrative? Remember, stations should not be protagonists!)**

**What does the audience need to know about the protagonist and his/her/their situation to understand the “world in balance” or “status quo” as the story opens?**

**What is the “inciting incident” that upsets this balance in some way?**

**What is the protagonist’s goal?**

**What stands in the protagonist’s way? (What are the internal or external barriers? New ones may emerge as the goal is pursued.)**

**How does your protagonist pursue the goal? (What happens as the protagonist encounters barriers, and if there are no barriers, what is keeping the narrative interesting for the audience?)**

**What is the moment of truth in this story? (...the moment of greatest challenge or change or lesson...) What happens or changes in that moment, and what does it show us about the human condition?)**

**What is the resolution of the story? (Does your protagonist achieve his/her/their goal or is there another outcome?)**

**What's the meaning (or message or lesson) of the story? What do you want the audience to take away?**

**How does this story relate to your station's work?**

**Is your language appropriate for your target audience? Are there other audiences you'd want to tell this story to? If so, would you tell it differently?**