

Story Sharing



Work Book

Facilitator Guide
Participant Workbook

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**Story Sharing in Caring Communities:
Toward Meaningful Life Plans**

- ☺ Gathering ☺ Creating Places ☺ Caring
- ☺ Staying ☺ Interpreting ☺ Presencing
- ☺ Cultivating Friendships ☺ Making visible
- ☺ Preserving the Story

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Dedicated to the Culture Change Champions Resident Facilitator Guides and Participants

Introduction to Story Sharing Welcome!

You are about to embark on an exciting journey. Over the next several weeks, you will be gathering with your neighbors and invited staff members for about 45 minutes and guide them as they think about the stories they share with each other. This guide follows the same order as the Story Sharing sessions: 1] Significance of Story and Creating a the safe place: Coming to know and connect; 2] Understanding the meaning of home and possessions; 3] Listening attentively and ‘reading’ what matters to each unique resident; 4] Toward meaningful resident-centered life planning.

For each session, this guide will include the goal and activity for the session and some questions, suggestions, or examples that will help you guide your group. Please understand that there will be times when your group wishes to focus on only one part of the activity or a different activity/discussion and that is fine. Perhaps they find a particular question very meaningful and one to which most can relate. Most sessions are really enjoyable conversations among friends. The role of the guide is that of facilitator **and** participant. The guide also is asked to share stories as well as begin and end each session and make sure everyone understands the ground rules and has a voice.

Story Sharing involves as many sessions as decided by the group. This workbook offers an example of 4 sessions, each taking place about one week apart. Story Sharing was developed and tested specifically for Long Term Care communities in order to create a Caring Community where residents and staff members [and families] gather and all feel welcome, cared for, and at-home. There are 4 example topics in this workbook and a list of others at the end that have been shown to be successful in helping all participants learn and think about ways of being with each other, and creating a Caring Community of older adults, family, care providers, administrators, housekeepers, activity specialists, social workers and others who enter the world of our long-term care community.

Throughout this guide there are note pages for writing, drawing, and reflecting about various topics and conversations. Participants can use the workbook as a journal and write down reminders of stories between sessions. As a Champion Guide, you may wish to write down how the session went-- things you learned that work well and other things that did not work very well. You may wish to share this information with the next Guide.

Story Sharing

Story Sharing is a reciprocal [give and take] process of respectful telling and listening to what matters to an individual. It is a mutual sharing of experiences.

It is a caring practice. Story Sharing creates a safe space that allows the recognition of commonalities and differences among participants.

The relationships that develop through Story Sharing begin to transform the culture in long term care communities.

Benefits:

- 1. Enhance relationships with staff, other residents, and family;**
- 2. Participate in Meaningful Care/Life Planning;**
- 3. Increased socialization and engagement in the Community;**
- 4. Increased Quality of Living through improved trust, reciprocity, mutuality, shared values, shared pleasurable activities with staff members and improved being-at-home;**
- 5. Improved Quality of Care by staff members who come to know and connect with you and care for you in meaningful ways.**

GUIDE NOTES

PLAN FOR EACH 45-60 MINUTE SESSION

PLAN ON A SMALL GROUP OF 8 RESIDENTS WITH THE OPTION OF INVITING 1-2 STAFF MEMBERS. SAME RESIDENTS AND STAFF MEMBER(S) GATHER EVERY WEEK ROUTINELY FOR AT LEAST 4 WEEKS—THEN CONVERSATIONS CAN BE INFORMAL
PLACE: RESERVE A SMALL PRIVATE ROOM

If possible, cookies and juice are served at each session to encourage an informal, sharing atmosphere

Materials for each session:

Workbook (used throughout the sessions as a journal, notebook, drawing pad)
Perhaps the activity director can provide colored pencils for the first session.

OR

Copy of one session's activity and goals at a time and paper on which to draw and/or write thoughts.

Ground Rules: (1) Discuss confidentiality and mutual trust. In other words, emphasize that the group's meeting room is considered a safe place. Whatever personal information is discussed stays here and is confidential. (2) Everyone needs a chance to speak and contribute. [Take care that one person does not dominate the session]

Note-taker/Scribe: Optional; the staff member or a volunteer resident may be asked to take notes by Session 3, as meaningful care/life plans are discussed. These notes would be reviewed by the Participants and Resident Council and discussed with appropriate staff/administrators who support Meaningful Person-Centered Care for each resident.

Session One

Gathering: Creating a Safe Place Connecting with Each Other

Creating a safe place for conversations, for sharing stories, means that there must be a special clearing, like a clearing in a forest, in which all gather—a safe place where participants can understand and appreciate each other. This safe place opens up new possibilities where all stories can be heard and valued.

Introduce Story Sharing to those gathered.

Explain Ground Rules at the beginning of each session—Creating a safe space. Begin the sharing of stories with the understanding that we must learn to value our own stories as we value the stories of others.

Guide: To prepare for this session:

Think in advance of a story you've heard that has helped you better understand and know someone. Think about how you have come to know yourself, friends, other residents etc. over time.

Goal/Outcome

- ◆ Discuss how we come to know one another through story-sharing and art; Describe ways of telling stories – photographs, storyboard, journaling, art, cooking, sewing, etc.
- ◆ Practice the skills of listening, recognizing things we have in common, acceptance of differences, and tolerance of diversity;
- ◆ Outcomes: Have fun; learning about one another and staff members; sharing ideas; engaging and socializing; Using story and art as a way of connecting and knowing each other.

Activity:

Guide and Participants: Everyone in the group is asked to draw a picture of their favorite place when they were young [6, 7, 8, 9, 10, years of age]; explain that this place could be anywhere...don't give examples; just allow participants to reflect back. Remind the group that most are not artists so the quality of the drawing is not important.

Give the group about 5-8 minutes. Some will be more detailed than others.

Then ask participants to pair off and each member of the pair takes a turn describing his/her picture to one another. Time the descriptions giving each partner 2-3 minutes. When the participants are finished, ask if someone would like to share their favorite place and drawing with the whole group. Allow about 3 volunteers to do this unless the group is small 5-6 people; then everyone can have a chance.

When the exercise is over...Remind the group that our Stories are who we are and tell others what is important to us—our memories are who we are. Reflect on favorite places **today**.

Tips for the Guide

During the drawing activity, there may be lots of talking and laughing. That's OK. The group is starting to come together and that is good! There are no right and wrong answers or stories throughout this program. Remember that you are a participant too! So make sure **you** draw a picture and pair off with someone as well. If the total number in the group isn't even, join a group of 2, making it a group of 3.

Suggestion: You might wish to discuss the following with the group when the drawing exercise is over...

In one study (Heliker, 1995) in which residents in a particular community were asked about their life stories and their lives in the facility, the researcher learned that those who loved to climb trees and were called 'tom-boys' as children, were most active in community exercise and bowling activities. Those who loved to read at an early age, still found most of their enjoyment reading at 90 years of age; those who loved to color as children, loved to paint. Perhaps what was most meaningful then, remains meaningful now? I wonder if we all would like to spend time in our favorite places today???

After the activity----take 10 minutes to discuss:

1. What did you learn about someone else at the gathering?
2. How do we share stories with each other and favorite staff members?

Activity For Next Week:

Give all participants a small plastic sandwich bag with these instructions: For the next session, please bring an object that is very meaningful to you and that fits in this little bag. If you invited a staff member, make sure she/he receives the instruction.

Notes

Art Work
My Favorite Place when I Was Little

Session Two

Gathering: Welcoming and Inviting the New Resident Understanding the Meaning of Treasured Possessions

Guide: Begin this session with a brief review of the last session—5 minutes

This session introduces *Welcoming and inviting* new residents and describes how we call out each other's stories and what is important or what matters to us. The special meanings of possessions can be shared. As a community [residents and staff members], it's important that we're open to new situations or opportunities.

Goals:

Discuss story as the path to knowing what a person considers important and meaningful.

Discuss how objects can be symbols of great personal meaning and importance. Describe how new residents are welcomed to the community.

Activity #1: Meaning of Possessions

Participants and Guide: Group members are asked to share their special possession/item with the group. Why is it special?

Guide: Be sure to share your item and its meaning. You may want to go first if everyone seems shy or uncertain. When all have had a chance to do this, ask how they would like this item to be handled by the care provider helping them move into the community or transfer to another section or room .

NOTE: Sharing is voluntary—group members decide if they wish to share. Be sure to share your item [*As guide and champion, you are asked to participate in every activity as well.*] and its meaning. Remind participants- As a special and safe place is being created, there must be trust and respectful care even for the smallest items.

Suggestion: If you wish, this true story may be shared.

The Story of the Tattered Housecoat

During this session in another community, a Nurse Aide brought a torn and faded housecoat as her most meaningful item [even though it did not fit in a sandwich bag

and that's OK]. She told the story of how she was the primary caregiver for her mom for many many years. When her mom passed away, the only possession and remembrance she had of her mom was this tattered housecoat. The housecoat still had her mom's smell and was a symbol of those many years spent with a loving and warm parent. When this nurse aide comes home after a hard day's work, she sometimes puts on her mom's housecoat and just feels better and very loved....This tattered housecoat will hopefully always be handled with great respect.

Activity #2: Have participants reflect on the how new residents are welcomed into the community. How were they welcomed?

Some communities offer a peer coach to new residents. A peer coach is a resident who volunteers to show the newcomer around. The peer coach joins the new resident in the dining room for meals and, according to one peer coach, helps the newcomer "learn the ropes"! The peer coach may assist the newcomer from 1-3 months. During that time friendships are formed and the transition to the new community is made comfortable and less stressful. Both peer coach and new resident benefit from this encounter.

Activity For Next Week: Participants are asked to visit with a resident and notice what possessions 'stand out' for the group member in that resident's room. Often there is a story behind the item. Ask participants to think about asking the resident to tell them a story about that item. It might be a photograph, a statue, a religious article, etc. By better understanding what is meaningful to a resident, we are able to know and connect with them and begin to build a relationship.

What does the item mean to the resident?

How do these items speak to the resident's meaning?

As home and family are being created, there must be trust and respectful care even for the smallest items.

Keeping a Journal: Participants are asked to consider keeping a journal of their own stories. We all have special stories; some are easier to share than others. Consider writing a story about how you came to know a particular resident or staff member.

Guide Tip: Thank the group for coming and sharing as the session ends. You may want to say something like, "Thank you for coming and sharing. It means a lot to me that we're here together. "

Session Three

“Reading” What Matters-Understanding Meaning of Home Presencing: Attending, Listening, and Connecting

Guide: Begin this session with a brief review of the last session—5 minutes

This session introduces *Interpreting* or ‘*reading*’ another person and describes what you do when you think about what someone’s story **means** to you and the other person. By *attending* to and *listening*, you learn what matters to staff, residents, and families. Our life experiences shape the way we think. This means our interpretations change over time. New ways of thinking open up possibilities and lead to new ways of being-in-community. Taking the time to find out what *being-at-home* means to oneself and others, we can help each other live a quality of life that is meaningful to him/her.

This session also introduces being present. *Presencing* describes “being-with” each other, residents, families, and staff members, our extended community family, we are better able to know and connect with them.

Goal:

Use story sharing as a tool to connect with staff members, residents and families. Interpret what matters most, is meaningful, to another person by listening to a story about a favorite possession and listening to a story about ‘being-home’.

Activity

1. Participants are asked about their visit to a resident’s room and if they noticed a special object. Ask if the resident shared a story about the item and if they might share that experience.
2. Participants are asked to share their thoughts of their community AS home.
 - a. How is this community like home? Not like home?
 - b. What does home mean to you?
 - c. Draw a picture of what ‘being-at-home’ means to you?
 - d. Draw a picture of what ‘being-homeless’ might mean to you?
3. Ask group members to share their ideas/pictures.

Guide: Thank the group for coming and sharing as the session ends.

NOTES

ART WORK
Being At Home

Session Four

Resident-Centered Life Planning Typical Day, Best Day, Worst Day Stories

Guide: Begin this session with a brief review of the last session—5 minutes

Goal: Begin to create a unique and meaningful resident-centered care/life plan.

Activity:

Ask staff member participants to imagine themselves as residents [add 60 years to your current age and imagine you have been invited to come and live in **this** community]; the Community is well known and recognized for its model of **Meaningful Person-Centered Care**; every resident has the right to plan his/her care based on what is important to each person. Have the younger participants imagine that what is important to them right now will be just as important to them 60 years from now.

In essence, you are asking **everyone** to create their own individualized life plans, —**a plan written for them, by them**. We know our likes and dislikes better than anyone else. Being able to share this information and include it as part of the plan, we are able to enjoy a meaningful life and live a life with purpose. What did the participant, resident or staff member, do that brought him/her joy **before** he or she came to live in this community?

Participants are asked what they'd like to **continue** doing. Participants are asked 'what would you still like to learn?'

Participants are asked to plan new possibilities for a typical day.

For example, if a participant woke up at 5am every morning to read the newspaper and have a cup of coffee, this can easily be added to the new life plan. If another participant really enjoys crossword puzzles every evening before bed, this too can be a part of the plan. If yet another participant enjoyed a beer or 2 while watching a football game, that too can be part of a meaningful plan. If a participant loved to garden, working on a garden on the grounds of the community or taking care of an indoor garden can be added. If a resident still wishes to contribute to society in some way, ideas are discussed.

Guide: This activity can be lots of fun and that is fine!!! Join in with your own imagined life plan. Be assured that when participants return to their communities, they will be thinking about the significance of Authentic Meaningful Person-Centered Life

Plans. They will understand how important it is to take time to listen attentively to a resident tell his/her story as he/she gives voice to what is important, and how what is important might be included in the everyday care plan.

How can all care providers make what is meaningful to residents visible?

Reflect on Person-Centered Life/Care Planning with the Resident?

For younger staff member participants: Imagine your mother, father, or a loved one being admitted to a community where stories are shared as part of the life/care plan. Ask the members of the group to describe what the community home would look like.

Guide: Thank the group for coming and sharing as the session ends.

Consider asking one of the participants to become a guide for the next group.

The following pages are meant to assist group members between sessions or even after they have completed the program. Some may want to continue to meet and continue sharing stories and think about companions they have come to know and connect with on their journey.

Some may decide to begin to journal their own experiences. “Continuing the Journey”

Staff member participants may wish to write about an experience with a resident and then meet with others about what is meaningful to the resident. The “Journal Reflections” guide may help.

If care providers wish to meet as small support groups, they may find the “Guide to Reflective Thinking” helpful.

Voice’s day

Voice’s Day—Special gathering for residents, families and ALL care providers including administrators, housekeepers, MDS nurses, Allied Health professionals, CNAs, social workers etc. Refreshments are served. A raffle may be held—a ticket is given to each participant --NOT bought, GIVEN. Raffle is held at the end. This is a celebration.

All gather in a circle—the question posed is: “What is it like to be a (nurse, care partner, administrator, resident, etc.) here at [Name of Community]? It is here that every person’s voice is heard [only if they wish to share] and the work they do is shared, valued, and honored. This is also an opportunity for residents to express appreciation and shed light on positive aspects of the Community and make recommendations for further improvement. This is a wonderful Community-Building activity.

Continuing the Journey

Please begin to journal your own story. We all have special stories. Some are more easy to share than others. Consider writing a story about how you came to know a particular resident or staff member. What story would you tell someone if they asked you, “What is it like in your community?”

Guide to Reflective Thinking

Staff Members

Tell me about a time when you felt you really knew a resident.

How do you come to know your residents?

Their likes and dislikes?

What they were like before coming to the Community?

How did you share this information with others who cared for the resident?

Think about your experience with Story Sharing

How do you feel Story Sharing skills used with residents may affect or change the way you work with your residents?

How do you feel Story Sharing may affect or change how the life/care plan is written?

Can you give an example?

Tell me about a time you shared a story with a resident.

How do you feel Story Sharing will help you make a difference in your everyday care?

Imagine your (mother, father, loved one) being admitted to a LTC Community in which stories were shared as part of the care plan. Could you describe what that community would be like?

When you visited that Community, what would you see? Hear?

Is it home-like?

Tell me about your (mother's, father's, loved one's) care?

What is his/her room like?

What are the nurses, activity specialists, and nurse aides doing?

You as the resident's daughter/son have been invited to the monthly life/care planning conference. What is the discussion about?

Performance Evaluation Reflections Staff Member

Name:

Name of Resident:

Room Number:

Date of Story Sharing Event:

Story or Moment Shared (please describe the story or a moment shared with a resident and how this moment changed (improved? enriched?) your relationship with the resident):

(Example: Stories may be “never again” stories where you discovered something that was not meaningful to a resident or that hurt a resident. Stories may be when you shared something of your day with a resident so the resident would understand you better. Stories may be a joke you shared)

NOTES

Topics for Discussion

Favorite place as a child

Best Day/Worst Day

Typical Day

Friendship

At-Homeness

Being new-Belonging

Dining experiences

Nature

My Favorite Tree

Gardening

My Feet

What I still would like to learn

My Life Plan

