

LEARNING HANDBOOK

Guidance and tools to support systematic learning before, during and after project activity in health and care

Storytelling

'Storytelling' is a popular method of sharing knowledge with others to be passed on in a way that others can relate to. Storytelling is becoming more widely used to convey lessons learned when the subject matter is somewhat personal or has a human element, e.g. patient, carer, staff stories about personal experiences.

When?

'Storytelling' should be used when you want to engage in more depth with an audience for them to understand the topic fully and really consider its meaning and impact. When you have a concept or topic that is sensitive for example, or has the potential to disengage certain audiences, 'storytelling' can be preferable to a 'data dump.' It gives the person reading / listening an opportunity to really engage, connect and listen.

'Storytelling' is best used when the storyteller has a personal connection to the subject matter – you are more likely to tell a convincing story if it means something personal to you or the incident had a profound impact on you or your work.

Stories are also often used to persuade or inspire people to take action within their own lives (personal and / or professional). This is highlighted by strong use of emotive language typical to 'storytelling'.

Who?

All those involved in a process, project or incident from which a story arises can be involved in the storytelling process. It can be more powerful to have numerous 'sides' to each story to inform a debate and to spark additional stories.

If you are a leader, you may wish to have a look at [public narrative](#), which is storytelling for impact and change.

How?

A story can be presented in many different ways; in person, [video](#), [audio / podcast](#) or [blog](#). As a general rule, the more personal the method of delivering the story, the more impactful it will be on its audience.

Once the story has been told, it is beneficial to ask the audience for feedback. The insight gained in doing this can fuel further discussions to help audience members to more deeply remember the story, but it can elicit further stories, opening up new channels of context, further understanding and in turn learning.

Further reading:

- Jonathan Gottschall – [Why storytelling is the ultimate weapon](#)

