



WAAMH

**Western Australian Association
for Mental Health**



Training

Recovery Storytelling

Recovery Storytelling:

sharing stories of lived experience to raise mental health awareness

**Classes occur on Monday evenings from 5.30pm- 9.00pm
October 2017-March 2018.**

Background

This training is built around using stories of lived experience to engage mental health consumers and the wider community in promoting mental wellbeing.

One component of the project is a **“Recovery Storytelling” training course:**

- What?** A training course to develop communication, public speaking and storytelling skills.
- Who?** The course is designed for people with lived experience of mental health Recovery, along with carers or family members who would like to share their stories and messages of Recovery with audiences.
- How?** 12 three-hour training workshops
Peer coaching and personal feedback
Live storytelling events and the possibility of paid speaking work
- When?** 5.30pm- 9.00pm, Mondays
October 2017 – March 2018
- Where?** Level 1, Workzone, 1 Nash St, Perth
Central location: Opposite the Mclver St Train Station
✓ Free tea, coffee and light refreshments
✓ Fully wheelchair accessible
- Cost** Full Members: \$195
Associate Members: \$220
Non-Members: \$245

Why Storytelling?

Storytelling is the most ancient of art-forms.

And the **call to story** is one of the most powerful **human unifiers** - common to every society and culture.

From the fairy tale to the literary classic, the pub yarn to the ancient myth and the biblical allegory to the kitchen table confession, our stories are our **windows into other worlds** and the cheeky analogies for our own.

But in a modern chaos, **we no longer share tales around the campfire**, gather in the village square, or sit by the hearth to hear a chapter.

And since we entrusted our cultural narrative to the mass market media and the Hollywood blockbuster, we seem to have **lost the intimacy and magic** that used to help keep us afloat.

So it is the **reclaiming of personal storytelling** which will illuminate our contemporary journeys and serve as the **bridge of commonality** *between us*.

Just as music can provide a soundtrack for our lives, storytelling weaves our experiences, myths and cultural identity into **a narrative that teaches, heals and entertains**.

It is through telling our stories that we **draw meaning from suffering**, process our experiences and share our journeys.



Why mental health stories?

So as any five year old will tell you, storytelling can be a wonderful experience for both the teller and the listener, but are there any **links with Mental Health?**

Research tells us that some of the most challenging aspects of mental illness are the stigma that surrounds it along with lack of community understanding.

Even those who are aware of the basic facts, may still not connect with the importance of the issue, if they are not touched by it personally. Although 1 in 2 of us will experience mental illness in their lives, a majority still suffer in silence – and fear ridicule, shame, and embarrassment.

The internet and mental health professions are full of evidence driven information and the latest global research.

But sometimes it takes a story to put a human face on an abstract statistic or clinical diagnosis and help us understand the real meaning behind the facts.

Storytelling is a powerful force in breaking down the walls of stigma and creating more empathetic communities.

Types of stories

Each of us is a tapestry of thousands of stories: from exciting to mundane and from comic to tragic.

For this project, we want people who can:

- ✓ Tell stories of **Recovery** – not just mental illness!
- ✓ Promote **positive messages** about mental health
- ✓ Offer stories which are both authentic personal experiences and actively **hopeful and optimistic**.
- ✓ With the help of the training, select individual strands from their lifetime of experiences which can be distilled into **succinct, cohesive stories** which can be told in **10-15 minutes**

Who will the storytellers be?

Approximately **20 people** with lived experience of mental health Recovery will be invited to participate in the training workshops, with some of these invited to perform at live events and / or at future paid engagements.

We will be looking for a range of speakers who represent a diversity of experiences, perspectives, backgrounds and demographics.

We are especially keen to include people who may be from minority or disadvantaged groups including Aboriginal, TSI and CaLD communities, young people, LGBTIQA people, people with disabilities and single parents.



Performance Opportunities

There will be at least two storytelling events in early 2018, where course graduates will have the opportunity to showcase their skills in front of a live audience.

After the course, all speakers are invited to nominate themselves for ongoing, paid speaking opportunities through [WAAMH's training and other community events](#).

There is no guarantee of ongoing work and invitations to speak will depend on a range of factors including speaker suitability and availability and number and types of opportunities available.

However, some speakers may be invited to do paid presentations on an ongoing basis. WAAMH pays lived experience speakers \$105 per presentation of up to an hour, however, typical opportunities are a 10-15 minute story, plus questions.

Speakers always have the right to accept or decline any individual presentation and further information will be provided during the course.

Recovery Storytelling Training Schedule

There are 12 workshops.

Each workshop is three hours, plus a 30 minute break.

The key skills covered are:

1. **Confident communication**

Developing strong communication skills and personal confidence.

Feeling empowered to engage with diverse audiences.

2. **Story Crafting**

Translating your life experience into audience-ready stories.

Identifying your personal messages and building your personal library of stories.

Using stories from your life to promote recovery.

3. **Presentation Skills**

Public speaking and professional presentation skills.

Verbal, vocal and physical language.

Becoming a polished storyteller.

The course will include multiple opportunities each week to actually tell stories and listen to the stories of others.

1. Welcome and Overview Confident Communication 30/10/2017

This first session will be about understanding the forthcoming journey and beginning to build our confidence as speakers and with each other. We will also learn about peer-coaching and critiquing and plan for our first speech.

2. Speaking with Confidence Confident Communication 06/11/2017

This workshop focuses on developing speaking confidence and learning a few trade secrets to handle nerves and manage anxiety. We look at tools and techniques for facing audiences and begin to work towards calm, confident delivery.

3. Finding your stories Crafting Stories 13/11/2017

This is our first writing workshop, and guides participants through a structured process to identify their life stories, and the associated themes and messages they wish to share with the world.

Through a series of stories, questioning, activities and writing exercises, each participant will begin to build their own personal collection of stories and anecdotes, which they will learn to organise and categorise as a resource for their speaking.

4. Storytelling Skills Presentation skills 20/11/2017

We explore a range of key skills associated with powerful storytelling.

We explore what makes a story powerful, and how personal experiences can be useful in communicating a message.

We also focus on boundaries in storytelling, and the role of vulnerability.

5. Storytelling Skills Presentation skills 15/01/2018

Part 2 – continues the previous week’s workshop, including a focus on how we open, close and structure stories.

6. Themes and Messages Crafting Stories 22/01/2018

This workshop looks at the art of drawing messages from life experiences and using them to give audience meaning to our own stories.

We explore the process of selecting stories from life to capture messages and the difference between a “Recovery Story” and other stories of mental health experience.

Participants work on crafting and refining a key story from their experience.

7. Verbal and Vocal Language Presentation skills 05/02/2018

We communicate in many different ways and our actual content is only part of the story. This workshop looks at how our voice and choice of words.

8. Physical language: using our body Presentation skills 12/02/2018

Body language is all about our *non-verbal* communications.

It can be deliberate or subconscious and can powerfully impact how our speech is received. Physical language includes: Stance and Movement, Gesture, Expression and eye contact, Personal space.

Regardless of our physical appearance, (dis)abilities or body size, there are ways to use our physicality and body language to emphasise our message and improve our communications.

9. Refining stories Crafting Stories 19/02/2018

This workshop focuses on key stories which participants have developed and how they can be refined and linked to different themes and purposes.

10. Understanding audiences Confident Communication 26/02/2018

Why is it that the same presentation can be a blockbuster with one audience and a flop with another? This workshop focuses on the diverse needs of different audiences we may work with and how to customise our stories to suit their needs.

We also examine different ways of engaging audiences and how to respond to questions.

We explore the art of Interactive Presentations and how transform a presentation from passive to participative. Participants will also learn a variety of techniques to actively involve your audience and make your presentations more participative.

11. Speakers' Technology and Props Presentation skills 12/03/2018

This workshop looks at using some of the most crucial and popular technologies, along with a few new ones to consider.

We cover the benefits of using selective tools and props in different circumstances and a range of tips and techniques for doing it well. This includes: PowerPoint pros and pitfalls; Powerful images; Understanding and using microphones and Use of props.

12. Public Speaking Opportunities Workshop Confident Communication 19/03/2018

This workshop presents participants with an array of ways to use their Public Speaking skills, both to build a speaking career and in other avenues.

We also look briefly at professional etiquette and personal presentation for speakers.

Participants are urged to think seriously about whether they wish to apply to be part of the TALE Agency and informed about the selection process.

We also look at professional development options, association memberships and other opportunities participants may wish to consider after the course concludes.

Participation Criteria

ALL participants must:

- Be aged over 18 years on 1 January 2017
- Be a resident of WA
- Have lived experience of mental health Recovery as a consumer, carer or family member
- Have a personal Recovery story to share, which has the potential to be inspiring and optimistic
- Be willing to be coached to craft a personal story into a succinct, performance-suited narrative
- Be a fluent speaker of English
- Have basic literacy skills (minimum Year 10 English, C grade or equivalent)
- Be keen to participate in the full workshop process, regardless of subsequent performance opportunities
- Be available and committed to attending ALL the workshops and willing to prioritize attendance

How to apply

1. Read the **checklist on Page 9** and ask yourself if you can say “Yes” to every item.

Especially **check your availability** for the required dates and only apply if you are definitely available for all of them.

Maybe discuss the project with a friend?

2. [Click here to register!](#)