

People are wired for storytelling

“What makes us unique, what makes us amazing, and what makes us connect is our story.” — Emad Rahim

Ethical Storytelling

What is Ethical Storytelling?

Ethical Storytelling **refers to a process** of storytelling which safeguards the control of how stories are told and retold.

Why does process matter?

This person-centered approach ensures control of narratives remains with the individuals who are the originators of their own stories.

Ethical Storytelling

What does the Ethical Storytelling process include?

A Person-centered Approach is a philosophy of care and support that places the individual at the heart of all decision-making, treating them with dignity, respect, and compassion

Think about Values

Questions to ask before starting this work

- What are your most important values?
- How do these values guide your organization?
- Do your values and mission align?
- Can your organization tell its own story?
- What impact do you hope to have?
- What is your organizations call to action?

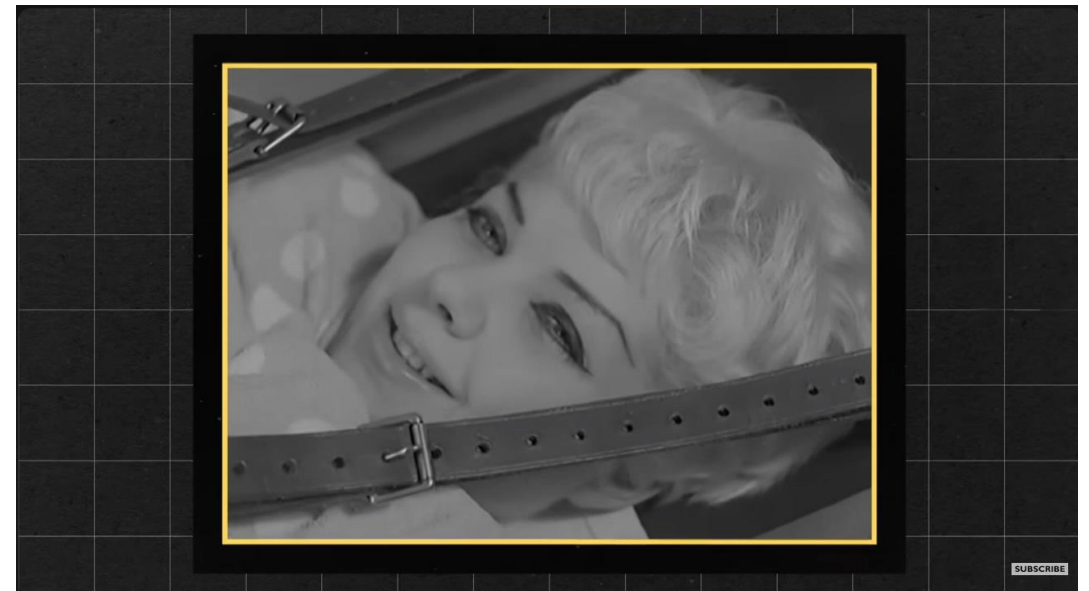
Looking & Learning from examples

What does this image tell you?



[This image was AI generated.](#)

What does this video tell you?



Ethical Storytelling

A person-centered approach in practice:

- Is intentionally slow
- Dedicates time to build relationships & trust
- Recognizes people as multi-dimensional
- Prioritizes safety and needs of the storyteller first
- Recognizes cultural contexts-
 - Learning and evolving to become culturally aware
 - Prioritizes learning and understanding biases
- Focuses on collaboration
- Prioritizes empathy
- Does not use shock value stories

Ethical Storytelling

Person centered approach in practice

- **Prioritizes ongoing informed consent**
 - Stories are not collected or banked
 - Limited time-frame for use
 - Each instance of story sharing requires specific permission

Ethical Storytelling

How do we ensure the process is person centered?

At the Food Bank, we've created multiple resources to guide the process when we collaborate with a storyteller. These resources include:

- Ethical Storytelling pledge
- Media Consent Form
- Internal guidance documents
- Internal workgroup that meets monthly

These resources ensure we are transparent and storytellers remain in control of their own narratives. It is important to continuously check in with participants about their needs throughout the process.

Storytellers Bill of Rights:

As a storyteller, I have:

- Control over how, when, and where the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts sharing my story.
- The right to ask for training, preparation, guidance, or support before and a my story.
- The right to know the intended purpose of sharing my story with the Food the story will be used, and when it will be shared.
- The right to change my mind about making my story public and can request via letter, email, or digital text message, it be removed from the Food Bank

STORYTELLING

Purpose of an Storytelling Pledge

of my community.

An Ethical Storytelling Pledge

The pledge helps ensure

- Transparency
- Storytellers know their rights
- Ensures you (your org) know our commitment to them
- Outlines the **process** for the storyteller and staff
- Helps keep process person centered
- [Food Bank Ethical Storytelling Pledge](#)

Why Tell Stories?

- **Advocacy**
- **Outreach**
- **Connection**
- **Fundraising**
- **Education & Public Awareness**
- **Encourages people to support your cause**
- **Inspires people to take action**
- **Builds and strengthens community**

Different types of storytelling

Articles & Op-Eds

Print & Digital
Submit to your local
Newspaper

**Radio/
Podcast/video**

Multi-media
Work with your local
community access
stations

Social Media

Your own profiles
Post stories to your social
media platforms and share
or tag other local
community groups

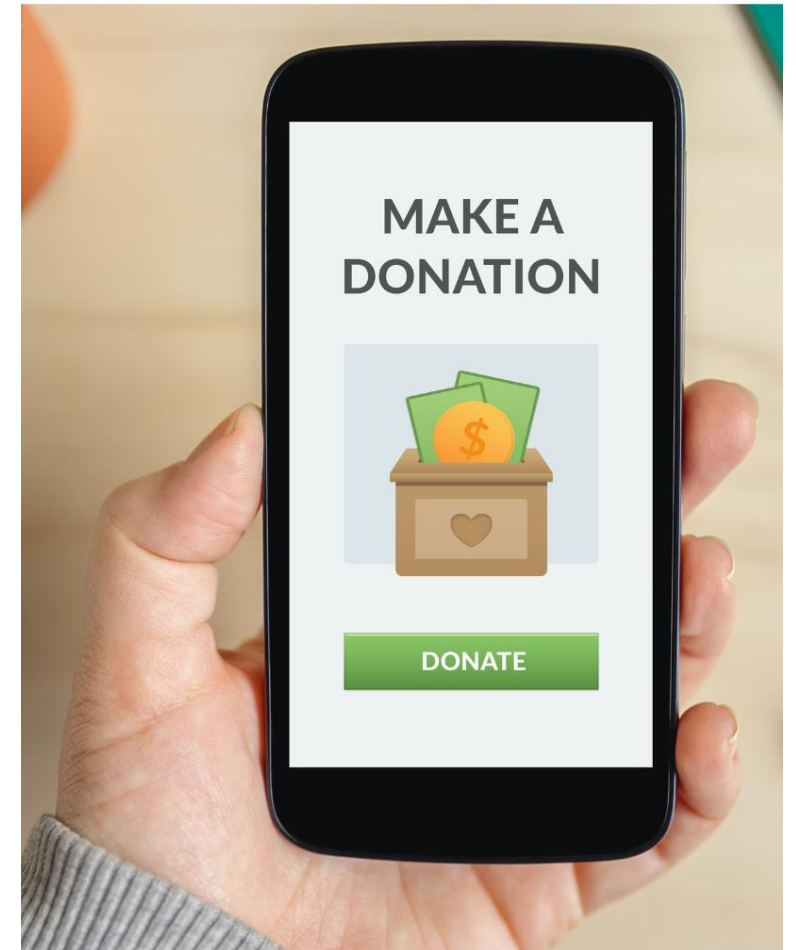
Public Speaking

**Advocacy &
Engagement**
Attend and speak at
government meetings and
other events.

A note about fundraising...

Storytelling is important to help people understand the needs of your community and support your work.

However, people need to give explicit, time-bound consent if you are going to use their story for fundraising.



How to support storytellers

Listen & Connect

- Have a conversation—are they in the middle of a crisis?
- Ask community storytellers what they need
- Ask them how they want to tell their story: format, type etc. (it's a partnership)

Clarify the process

- Explain why you want to share their story
- Be as transparent as possible with use of story (timing).
- Ask well in advance if there are questions that they don't want to answer—no go subjects—**honor this**.

Get Started!

Ways to get started

- Attend storytelling trainings
- Record someone's story on a phone—transcribe for Q&A in a newsletter or social media.
- Ask your community members if they want to share their story?
- Don't forget to go through your pledge carefully with the storyteller and make sure they understand their rights and sign it.
- Be interviewed and experience what its like if you are also a interviewer

Get Started!

Resources

- [Food Bank Pledge](#)
- [Hampshire food Policy Council Oral Storytelling](#)
- [Dignified storytelling handbook](#)
- [Cultural humility](#) workshops with Women of Color Health Equity Collective
- [Voice of Witness](#)
- [Union Capital- Public Narrative](#)
- [Recording an audio interview on a phone](#)
- Op-Ed writing resource



Presenter Information

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Thank you!

