

HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY **IMPACTFULLY**

In the world of social media, we have been conditioned to believe that impact and influence only exist at large scale. But if your story can enable a healthy change in the behaviour of one or just a few people, then the impact you've had can be enormous.

When sharing publicly or online, we can be vulnerable to the lure of external validation in the form of "likes", "comments" and "shares". While interaction like that can spark thoughtful conversation and inspire action, when we tell our story with confidence and humility, whether it be to a room of 5 people, or a post that reaches 1 million, the main intent remains the same, to help just one single person feel connected and inspired.

A story increases in value and potential the more that people can relate to it. Here are some tips for maximum storytelling impact:

Use metaphors or figurative language.

Try to do a feeling justice through your descriptions. E.g. "Every time I had to speak in class, my body turned to fire, and yet I froze with fear". Breakdown umbrella terms like Anxiety and Depression. Explain what that looked and felt like for you specifically.

Use tension and release.

Close the loop on any details that came up earlier in your story. Don't shy away from creating tension, but allow the audience a moment to catch their breath and keep it light where it's right.



HOW TO SHARE WITH IMPACT

Paint a picture.

Use the name of the day of the week or a season to describe a period of time. People can relate to what a "Monday morning in August" or a "Summer after I finished high school" feels like. Describe using senses that draw people into the scene.

Most people "tell", not "story-tell".

Use micro-stories to elucidate how and why you established a core belief or came to a significant realisation. Invite us into the setting, tell us who was there and what was said in the lead-up to the moment that would intensely impact you. Using micro stories, we could replace "I knew I was loved" with "My grandma would collect me from school some days that she'd call 'special occasions'. I know now those were the days my mum was really struggling and needed Grandma's help, but back then, all I knew was that I was loved."

Get feedback.

Ask a trusted friend, family member, support worker, or health professional to read what you've written. It's a great way to get constructive encouragement from a supportive someone before sharing it more widely.

Simplify.

Details may seem like a way to draw people deeper into the narrative, but moderation is key. Too many details can actually narrow the frame of reference for people, and cause people to disengage if it gets too specific. Stick to notions that most people will understand or can easily imagine.

Remain humble.

No doubt you are proud of what you have accomplished, and rightly so. Anyone who is at the point of being able to openly share their mental health journey has seen some battles and won. Think of it as if you're telling people "here are things I've picked up along the way" not "I have all the answers". Don't give advice, just speak your truth.

Speak from the heart.

Honesty is so rare, that seeing someone sharing vulnerably can be magnetic.



ACTIVITY

1. Of the techniques shared, which feel useful for you to make sure that your message connects with the audience?

2. Who would you trust to review and provide feedback on your story?