

WP 1

«Storytelling»	
The material was created by	KBT - Trondheim
Type of media	Text: Lesson in class or through internet interaction
Estimate of time usage for the material	2 hours
The learning aim for this material	Using story telling becoming a peer support worker - To improve communication skills - Improve competence for self-reflection - Peer to peer learning
What type of audience	Pupils/students studying to become a peer support worker
A short summary of the learning material	Practise story telling through roleplaying being a peer support worker
How to use the learning material in practice	Role playing in class or through internet via teams or other devices where you can interact in real time.
Theoretical resources	Mancini MA. Strategic Storytelling: An Exploration of the Professional Practices of Mental Health Peer Providers. Qualitative Health Research. 2019;29(9):1266-1276. doi:10.1177/1049732318821689

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Strategic storytelling for Peer Support Workers

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Introduction to the learning material

What is storytelling for a PSW?

Storytelling is a tool we have used since humans started using language. It is a way to share experiences and share knowledge. In 2019 a research paper on Strategic storytelling was published, which can be helpful for PSW. Strategic storytelling is based on research from Michael Mancini. His research looked at the effect of storytelling for peer providers of mental health services. The findings suggest that strategic storytelling can have a positive effect for persons with similar experience with health issues in the mental health sphere. However, one should be strategic in how you tell the narrative.

What are the basics?

If you start with active listening, then you can assess what your audience needs. One should not uncritically share their life story, one should adapt the narrative and information to what is needed at that time, that conversation. The story becomes more recovery-oriented and meaningful. One needs to think about why I am I telling this part of my story and for what purpose. If the goal is to inspire and create trust, there is information that is not suited for that kind of conversation. It is about the person you are helping, not about you.

Practical methods

There are different methods in how one can become better at storytelling as a PSW. To understand what the person needs one must create a positive relationship. For example:

- Motivational interview with focus on active listening, open ended questions, affirmation, reflection and summarization.

- Another point is to accept the realities of the current situation through empathy and understanding.
- The last point is to use the Socratic method. This means to ask questions and explore how we think, which leads to a greater understanding through dialogue.

Recovery

The narrative should be influenced by Recovery-oriented thinking. Identity, hope, empowerment, meaning, and connectedness, should influence the narrative when you are using strategic storytelling. An example of this is to focus on the parts that built you up during the journey and what makes you want to stay in your new life situation. It is not important to keep a chronological narrative or to go into details, the most important is the message of the story.

Roleplaying

Estimated usage of time: 30 minutes

Part 1: Read the story and get familiar with it

Glenn's story:

Kindergarten and primary school:

Glenn grows up in an ordinary family. He has no siblings, so he is an only child. He grows up with his mum Eva and dad Adam in a small city near the coast. In kindergarten, Glenn meets Simon, who eventually becomes Glenn's best friend. Already in kindergarten, Glenn notices that there is something different about him. Glenn struggles to understand social codes, but the nursery staff see no reason to act. Glenn plays with the other children just fine, and Glenn and Simon inseparable. When Glenn starts school, the difference between him and the others becomes even more obvious for all to see. Glenn eventually experiences being bullied for being different, but Simon doesn't care about him being different. Simon may think Glenn can be a bit weird and shy at times, but no one is as cool and nice as Glenn! The years pass and Glenn gets older. In sixth grade, Simon is Glenn's only friend, but it doesn't matter, they have each other. One day after school, Glenn is invited to hang out with Simon at his home. You see, Simon has a new video game. Guitar Hero: Legends of Rock! This game turns out to be a lot of fun, all summer long. It's also through this video game that Glenn discovers the band Metallica and develops a passion for music, he's hooked. 'For Glenn, Metallica must be the coolest band in the world, they have such cool guitar riffs, solos and that singer James Hetfield has such a cool voice. Glenn is a particular fan of Harvester of Sorrow - it reminds him that he doesn't need anyone to get by, he can get by on his own. Additionally, the song has such a cool opening riff it just rocks!' (oversharing about Metallica) Glenn is actually doing pretty well, though he doesn't have many friends without Simon, but with Simon and Metallica he's coping with bullying and exclusion. 'It's us against them Simon!'

Secondary school and high school:

But then something terrible happens! Simon is moving to a new city. Glenn is suddenly all alone at secondary school and the bullying from primary school continues. Glenn is struggling at school. His grades are low and he's reluctant to show up at the school, but there's hope. The highlight of the week is when the class has a collaborative music lesson. Here, Glenn gets to express himself. He eventually becomes very decent on the guitar. Through the music lessons and guitar playing, he experiences a sense of mastery and gains some respect from his fellow pupils, but the bullying doesn't subside. On the contrary, he's also made fun of for listening to 'irritating music'. Glenn makes it through secondary school, but he doesn't have good enough grades to get into the music program at local High School. Therefore, Glenn ends up in the standard program with no specialization subject. The bullying has subsided, but the scars are deep, and Glenn is still completely alone at school. Even if he doesn't get into the music program, Glenn can still choose one lesson on Music as a freshman. When first year is over, he can no longer take music as a subject at school. It becomes too hard for Glenn and he is not motivated to continue, so he drops out. Glenn stays at home, develops social anxiety, doesn't dare go out in public. 'The thought of meeting people, leaving home, gives Glenn a big lump in his stomach that eventually swells up to his throat and he can barely breathe. The days are long and dark, Glenn gets really depressed and can't cope with anything. Glenn spends his days playing Metallica on the guitar day in, day out.'

The way forward:

Glenn has a support contact who hears about a low-threshold meeting place called Spark. This social meeting place has a music program. After a lot of trial and error and six months of training, Glenn is finally persuaded to visit Spark. At Spark, Glenn gets to know the music therapist Lars. Lars can see that Glenn is struggling to come to Spark, in Glenn Lars sees an unquenchable flame. The flame of passion. Lars and Glenn spend a lot of time in the studio together, where Glenn gets to try his hand at making his own music. It turns out that Glenn and Lars have a lot in common when it comes to music. Glenn trusts and feels confident in Lars. It's got to the point where Glenn turns up two days a week to record music with Lars. Sometimes he's there half an hour early and

lately he's been practicing taking the bus alone. Glenn has made great progress. Lars thinks he sees a desire in Glenn to play in a band, TOGETHER with others. Lars eventually convinces Glenn to try playing in a band, Lars is there to support him. When Glenn plays in a band at Spark, he meets Robert. Robert and Glenn quickly hit it off. They are both avid Metallica fans. After a while, Lars no longer attends band rehearsals. Glenn and Robert eventually formed their own Metallica cover band. The Harvesters of Sorrow, they now meet in their spare time and rehearse. Lars and Robert turn out to be the turning point for Glenn. Harvesters of Sorrow becomes Glenn's start of his own recovery. He belongs somewhere, he has a purpose in life. Glenn dares to go outside on his own. He then starts studying as a peer support and eventually gets a job as a peer support worker at a similar program to Spark, called Flame.

The story is too long to know it by heart in such a short span of time, however, select the main parts and use the following questions as help to fully understand the narrative.

- What are the main parts of the story?
- What is the protagonist's strength and hope?
- What is the turning point and when does it happen?
- What are relevant details and what are less important?
 - Are there parts of the story which is unnecessary to tell?

Estimated usage of time: 30 minutes

Part 2: Dramatization of the story

Now the two of you have gotten familiar with the backstory, it is time to start the roleplaying part. In this scenario, one will play Glenn and one will play a new character named John. Glenn is now a peer support worker and wants to motivate John. He will try this through music, starting a band. After one roleplay session, you will switch roles, so both experience both characters.

Character 1: Glenn

- Will actively try to create a positive relationship with trust
- You have his backstory
- Loves metal
- Thinks they can create a connection through playing in a band

Character 2: John

- Younger than Glenn
- Mostly listening
- Social anxiety
- Loves jazz
- Dislikes metal

The conversation starts like this:

Glenn: Hi John, how is it going?

John: Answers through his body language

Estimated usage of time: 20 minutes

Part 3

1. How did you choose to act, your voice and your body language?
2. What details are relevant from Glenn's story in this roleplay?
3. What happens when Glenn starts talking about Metallica?
4. How did Glenn use his experience with social anxiety to create trust?
5. What do you think is the purpose with this lesson?

Literature

Mancini MA. Strategic Storytelling: An Exploration of the Professional Practices of Mental Health Peer Providers. *Qualitative Health Research*. 2019;29(9):1266-1276.
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