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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CONFERENCE  
APRIL 24 • 26, 2026



# Unlocking the Power of Story: Connect, Engage, and Share

## Strategic Initiatives

April 25, 2026, 10:30-11:45, Rm: Stevenson B



# Your Facilitators

## **Sarah Leeson-Klym**

Facilitator, Educator,  
Network builder

# Session Outline

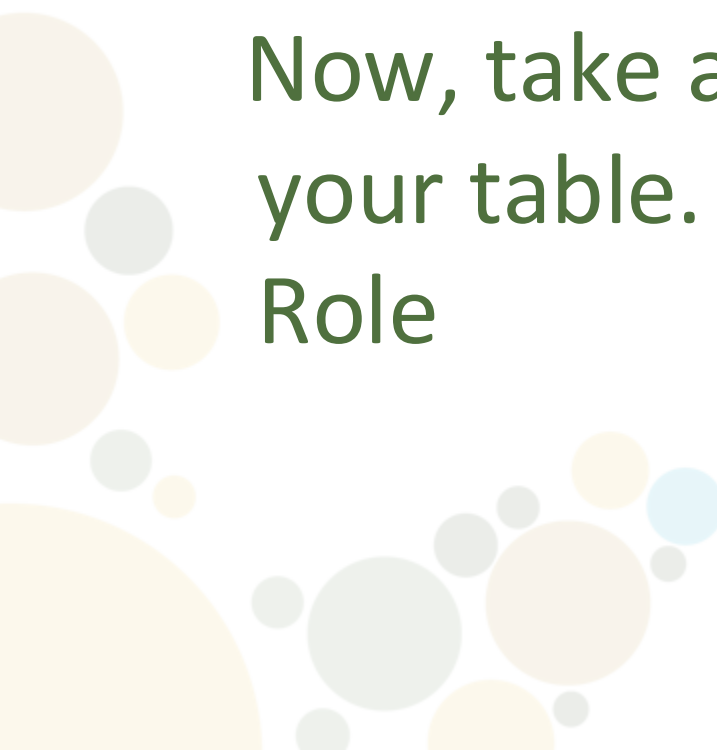
- Welcome
- Introductions
- Why storytelling?
- Activity: Take me to a moment...
- Storytelling: key elements, story catching, ethical storytelling
- Activity: Case study discussion
- Reflection



# Getting to know each other

Raise your hand if....

Now, take a minute and introduce yourself to your table. Name, Community/Foundation, Role



# Why Stories

Stories build connections

Stories make meaning

Stories inspire action

Stories are sticky!





# Activity - Take me to a moment when you witnessed community at its best

Instructions:

Take 2 minutes to develop a quick story using the prompt.

Think about the **DETAILS, ACTION, EMOTION, and MEANING.**

Share your story with a partner.

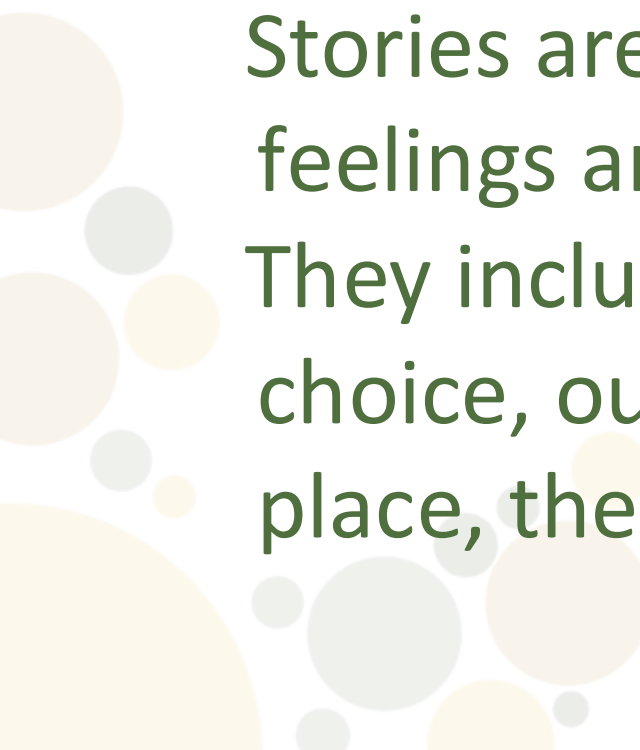


# Elements of a Story

Stories provide an accounting of experiences. They have a beginning, middle, and end, even if they're not told in order.

Stories are often told in moments that include feelings and advances the action.

They include characters, the plot (challenge, choice, outcome), and imagery (the time and place, the moments).



# Characters

Stories are about a character's journey or experience. This is part of what differentiates them from facts or explanations.

Helping listeners know more about the character(s) and their emotions as they manage their challenges makes a story more engaging.

# Challenge - Choice - Outcome



All stories have a plot.

Stories of impact show what changes when the character deals with a challenge. These elements move the story along.



# Imagery

Stories are told in moments.

The more these moments engage the senses by describing the setting or place, the time, and the context, the more evocative the story.

Zooming in and out to add facts, details, or your organization's role.

# Catching Stories

If we hope to hear stories from our community or participants, we have to:

- Listen actively
- Invite stories with new questions
- Bring people to the moments

# Ethical Storytelling

Whose story is it? Do you have permission to share it?

How will it be used? Does the owner know?

Are you telling a true and valid story? Are your characters whole people?



# What questions do you have?

# Case Study and Discussion

Instructions:

At your tables, identify the elements of the story. Discuss what makes this compelling and if there are any ethical considerations.

Designate someone to report back



# Shared reflections

What's one key takeaway or "AHA" that you want to remember?

What are you curious about now?

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## Individual Reflection

What tools & ideas can you take back to your community foundation board?



Thank you

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