NJHI Upstream Action Acceleration Learning Collaborative Session

Storytelling to Support Healthy Communities

Session 2 • November 20, 2019
Presenter and Support Team

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Learning Outcomes

1. Connect NJHI coalition partners with learning and networking opportunities.
2. Learn how to identify and capture good stories to support your healthy communities work.
3. Gain practical experience in developing a compelling community story.
4. Share information about the next Learning Collaborative events.
WHAT

HOW

WHY
What is a Story?

• *Narrative account*
• *Truth*
• *Message*
• *Emotion*
• *Interesting*
• *Descriptive*
Essential Elements

- Clear audience
- Main character
- Character’s problem/conflict
- How you helped
- How person benefitted
- Invitation
- How to get involved
Write a Story

• No more than 5 minutes
• About a problem your work solved; a person you helped
• Include a call to action
• Include anecdote/example, description
Community Story #1

Anytown residents are affected by the social and environmental stressors of cyclical poverty, food insecurity, an unaffordable aging housing stock with low percentage of ownership, and low education attainment. These challenges have caused housing instability and present the need to make significant political and social changes such as renovating and building new and affordable housing stock, educating homeowners, and reducing the cost burden of housing. Anytown has a high tax rate and, like other New Jersey cities, experienced an increase in property values in the early 2000s. These factors have created a city in which many residents spend over half of their annual earnings on housing. To ease this burden, low-income homeowners sublet to extended family and even non-family. According to the Police Department, overcrowding and unsafe conditions are witnessed nearly every time they respond to an incident. A local realtor states, that he sees it all the time when selling houses; it is “subletting for survival” because people simply cannot afford housing costs and take in as many people as necessary to get by.
Community Story #2

A few weeks ago, Jackie walked into our office, grinning from ear to ear. She wanted to share with us that she and her family had rented a house. It has a backyard, she said. Jackie is the mother of three small children. She has struggled with housing insecurity for some time now, moving from one rental to another. In the summer, she confided, with tears in her eyes, that she and her children were living in a hotel room. Jackie and her family are one of the many we work with in our community. Through a community builder, we help families establish goals and we give them the tools to accomplish them. This sounds easier than it is. There are many hardships and obstacles in our community. Poverty, lack of education and opportunity to name a few. Jackie has been diligent in accepting resources that have been offered to her. She told us, pridefully, that she learned how to save and budget her money through the Financial Literacy Program. This helped her to save money to put down her security deposit. Her husband has found steady employment. She feels hopeful. Her kids have a roof over their heads and -- oh yeah -- a backyard. She wanted to share the good news and to thank us for the support. Working in communities where there are many challenges can be hard. And then there are other days. The Jackie days...that make you smile and inspire you to keep it up, to offer that hand and hug in hope of more Jackie days.
Community Story #3

Everyone deserves to be physically and mentally healthy. It’s a basic human right. Yet, not everyone has the ability to exercise this right. Unfortunately, to do so you have to know how to navigate the maze of health information, healthcare systems, and other resources that put your health in jeopardy. In other words, you have to be health literate. Smallville Public Library’s Just for the Health of It is a team of public librarians from diverse backgrounds who travel beyond the walls of the library to bring health information upstream into the community where immigrants and seniors gather in their daily lives. The librarians set up a table of health information and engage the community in conversations about a range of health and social topics relevant to the population. You can find the librarians at senior centers, schools, shopping malls, holiday parades, and other public libraries within the county. Recognizing the need, our coalition partnered with the library to implement a county-wide initiative to address health literacy through the Health Information Library on Wheels (HILOW). In the past 11 months, the librarians have provided information to 6,784 people and responded to 216 requests for information.
Community Story #4

On December 30, 2013, the Washington County Coalition visited randomly selected liquor stores, intending to purchase alcohol. We selected a staff member in his early twenties as the buyer, and although this WCC member was of legal age, he had boyish features and was dressed in a college sweatshirt and sneakers. We did not try to conceal his age. Out of the 11 stores where he tried to procure alcohol, only three store clerks requested identification to ensure the customer was 21 years or older. We found these figures alarming when you consider the study was carried out just a day before New Year’s Eve, a holiday largely associated with excessive drinking. Upon completion of these vendor compliance checks, WCC staff visited their stores to provide educational materials on how to properly check for ID and methods to prevent underage drinking. Since our intent was not to penalize the vendors, but to bring awareness to this problem, we took this as an opportunity to invite and encourage attendance at Techniques of Alcohol Management trainings. We also fostered relationships with the local Alcohol Beverage Commission and municipal mayors so they could become active participants in combatting this problem.
Q & A

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Upcoming Events

In-Person Convenings
• February 12, 2020 in Princeton, NJ
• June 2020
• November 2020

Webinar
• Third Wednesday, December 18, 12:00-1:15 pm
Chat-in your feedback:

+ liked, helpful

- not helpful, suggestion for improvement

Thank you!

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