

## Our Journey

Participation and Leadership using Story and Creative Process

## Our assumptions

- Everyone has a story
- We **all** have something to contribute...
- We are all creative beings – all of us.
- We are all the authors or leaders of our own lives and leadership takes many forms ...
- People participate and engage in things where we feel we can make a meaningful contribution.

## In the beginning...

- The organic process begins...
- Playback theatre
- Participation through Story workshop series

## Playback Theatre

Improvised theatre based on personal story: Community Engagement Strategy

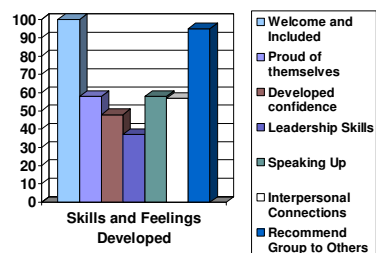
- *"This is one of the most meaningful story telling experiences in mental health that I have had."*
- *"As a supporter of a person suffering from anxiety I have found it very informative and encouraging"*
- *"Lovely people who have been dealt a raw deal but who have found ways to overcome situations"*
- Other comments included *"inspirational"* *"empowering through acceptance"* *"thoughtfully interpreted"* *"very cathartic"* *"wonderful"* *"very, very moving"* *"see it from a new perspective – someone else's view"* *"emotional;"* *"just fantastic!"* *"full of compassion and insight"* *"challenging"*

## Participation through Story Workshop Series:

A group go on a journey over six weeks to find the heart of their story using movement, poetry, voice, song, art, digital technology

- *"Further development of my group skills. Learning more about my strengths"*
- *"Got back my feeling of how important I am to myself and others and speaking out can make change."*
- *"It connected me with a community of people with whom I felt a great sense of belonging. Sharing our experiences led to sharing ourselves and we were safe to do so freely."*

## Participation Through Story - Outcomes

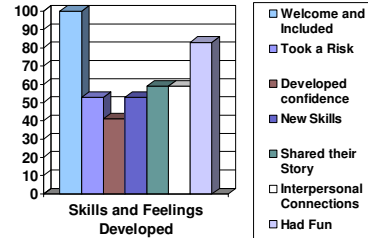


## Half Day "Taster" Workshops -

### Introduced the importance of sharing our story

- "I met new people, learnt new skills, gained confidence."
- "Terrific facilitation respectful, collaborative and fun."
- "Movement and music helped us relax."
- "I learnt that there are many different ways to present your story"
- "I listened to others and their story."
- "It's the essence of sharing even when people don't set out to."

## Half Day "Taster" Workshops - Outcomes



## What next...

- Agents of Change Network (including morning teas and Speaker's Bureau)
- Digital story... MindSite
- Visual arts – The Ripple Effect
- Listening and Story Tent
- Dance of Life forum

## Strategies

Not "special" just good facilitation and inclusive practices

## Overall Outcomes

- Employment
- Agent of Change Network:-  
Speakers and Facilitators
- Skill development  
e.g. facilitation, assertion, speaking
- Speakers
- Connections and Relationships

## Relationship makes the difference!

- A flyer or email not enough.
- Employ someone local with mental health issues who can listen well and engage with others.
- Personal approach ...
- Named written invitations and creative gifts e.g. tea bags, pens
- Make easy to come e.g. details of how to get to venue

## Welcoming and Hosting

- Warm welcome and smile
- Take an interest, find something in common
- Introduce to others over a cuppa
- Be present and sensitive
- Sometimes roles need to be learnt!

## Service is not seen

- Support workers to participate as equal group members.
- There are no “observers”.
- At times, often with good intentions support workers will over protect people ...
- People are not our clients..

## Starting a group

- Culture of creativity, respect and inclusion.....
- Circles not rows
- Connections and checking in feelings.
- How can we assist you to participate in this group?
- Space for all to say something.

## Engaging Head, Heart and Body – all people are creative beings

- Learning cycle experiential...
- Different senses and mediums...sing together, play non competitive games, draw, act, move
- Concretize ideas using coloured cloth, people or objects.
- Use of sociometry to make feelings and connections visible
- Powerpoints are rarely seen

## Tensions and dilemmas

- Fear
- Marginalising creative and inclusive processes
- Gatekeeping and “ownership” of people
- Congregation
- Time and Relationship: Quality and Quantity

## Questions?

- **We all** have something to contribute.
- Warmly welcome everyone.
- People are people are people!