

Storytelling Protocol

Purpose

This protocol is designed to make the storytelling process at WCK comfortable, respectful, and safe for people who participate.

Guidelines

We follow [WCK storytelling guidelines](#) when engaging with people to share their stories.

Beginning the conversation

Be aware of how long ago things happened for them, and what they feel ready to talk about.

If approaching someone about sharing their story, tell them there is no pressure to do so, and that it is only if they feel comfortable and ready. Let them know that we value their story—that it is powerful, important, and inspiring. Ask them for their preference:

1. To write/tell the story themselves
2. To write/tell the story together
3. That we write up/put together the story from an interview we have with them

If they choose option two or three, ask for their preferences for a conversation—day and time, over the phone/Zoom/in person.

Tell them that we will give the story to them to approve before it is published or shared.

People might share their stories through public speaking, informal interviews/conversations at events, social media posts, recorded videos, written testimonials, blogs, and more.

Conducting storytelling interviews

Before the interview

When coordinating a time, remind them that they can change their mind at any point. If a child or young person is involved in the story, see the [Children and young people](#) section below for additional guidance on including them.

Ask them if they would like to see a copy of the prompt questions you intend to use before the interview. If so, send the questions to them as far in advance as possible (as soon as they are written).

During the interview

Agree with them how the notes will be taken—will the conversation be recorded? Will we write notes as they are talking?

Remind them that they get to choose what they share, and that they can take a break whenever they wish. Focus on them more than on your notes. Listen, and validate what they say through your attentiveness.

Don't be afraid to let the person know their story has moved you, but don't make it about you. Be calm and reassuring in response to any tearfulness or distress. End your time with them when they feel settled rather than at a moment of great emotion.

If the interview brings up difficult emotions for you, wait until your time with them is over to debrief with a team member and/or let those emotions out.

After the interview

Once the story is written or put together, send it to them for edits and approval before publishing/sharing. Let them know that they can get in touch at any time to have the story removed from all of our platforms. Tell them when the story is scheduled to be published.

Delete any recordings taken, unless permission was given to share clips from them.

Children and young people

We include children and young people in the opportunity to share their stories, because their voices matter. Children and young people are vulnerable, and it can be harder to gauge their consent to participate when the caregiver may be the intermediary for them.

We want children and young people to feel comfortable, safe, and respected when they're included in storytelling. Here are some ways to make sure this happens:

- For those under the age of majority (age 19 in B.C.), send a video message for them, explaining:
 - ❖ The process—that we will get their words, draft something, send it over for them to say if they're happy with it etc.
 - ❖ Where we might share their story
 - ❖ That they can say “No” or change their mind at any time, even much later on
 - ❖ They can decide which questions they want to answer and what they want to talk about
 - ❖ They can tell anyone in the WCK team if they don't want their story to be shared any more (making it as easy as possible for them to make their feelings known)
 - ❖ That it is totally ok to say “No” or change their mind—reassure them that this doesn't change how awesome they are to us
 - ❖ For older children who have online access, they can also email WCK or message us on social media if they wish to remove their consent
- Ask for confirmation that they have seen and agreed to the content of the video before proceeding.
- If there are any doubts about how the child is feeling about the process, check if there is another way to gauge their consent. For example, if they participate in a WCK program, ask the relevant staff member if they can casually chat with the child about it.
- When sending drafts for approval, check for approval from both the caregiver and the child/young person.

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