



## **AW facilitator resource kit.**

### STORY

#### **purpose.**

The sharing of stories has the power to unite, connect, equalise and entertain us. Humans are wired for connection and AW programs are centred around creating spaces for people to connect and grow. Story is one of the fundamental tools AW uses to foster connection on programs. Story is also a means for sharing wisdom and passing down knowledge, experience and skill.

#### **storytelling.**

The skill of storytelling is critical to AW facilitation. Below are some tips to grow your storytelling skills:

1. Tell stories in the present tense, taking listeners to the time and place of your story, e.g. It's September 3, 1997. I am 14 years old and I'm standing in front of the door of my best friend's house.
2. Use as much detail to describe your surroundings as you can, e.g. The air is warming, but I'm still wearing a light cardigan as I reach out to touch the cold, brass door handle.
3. Describe how you are feeling in that moment, taking the listener there and connecting them to exactly how you are feeling, e.g. I feel nervous. My tummy feels full of butterflies as I think about what I'm about to tell her. My palms are clammy and no matter how hard I try, I can't seem to convince my hand to turn the handle.
4. Speak confidently and not too quickly, allowing time for listeners to really put themselves in your shoes. Be expressive and use eye contact where possible.

NOTE: The actual dates/details/weather etc. are not crucial. What is crucial is that you sound convincing and that there is plenty of detail and descriptive language.

#### **delivery.**

Story is both a process in AW programs and a tool to be woven through the entirety of a program. Where a dedicated process is not included, story will still be used.

#### **STORY AS A PROCESS**

Often on Into Adulthood programs, story will be a dedicated process early in a program to provide an opportunity for deepening connection amongst the group. Below is an example of how to run this process:

##### **STEP ONE: Prime the group**

Gather the group around the fire and prime them with a game of Step to the Fire (level 1)

##### **STEP TWO: Option 1 - Scar Stories**

Once the group is primed and settled, invite them to take a seat around the fire. Use the [Scar Stories activity card](#) to facilitate this process.

##### **STEP TWO: Option 2 – Fireside Story**

Once the group is primed and settled, invite them to get comfortable around the fire and read them the story allocated in the program. Each different story from the [AW library](#) will come with a set of suggested de-brief questions (**currently in development**).



## STORY AS A TOOL

AW programs are full of opportunities to share stories. Facilitators use story to connect participants to each other as they find things in common with each other through sharing stories; to lower their status and increase approachability and relatability; and to inject wonder and fun into a program. At times there will be notes in the program prompting facilitators to share a story, however, mostly it will be left to facilitators to weave story through a program. Some ideas for when to do this have been provided below:

- At the Welcome Ceremony – the camp director may invite facilitators to share a story in front of the cohort as part of the welcome
- Around the fire – any time a group is gathered by the fire is a great time for story. Choose one from our story library, bring one of your own or tell a story from your own experiences.
- When an upcoming activity requires students to focus and/or share openly. Sharing a story can be an effective way to model the depth of sharing required or to give permission to unsure participants about what is appropriate or not appropriate.
- If a group is struggling to connect facilitators can draw on story to grow deeper connections. Invite participants to share stories relating to a particular topic or even challenge them to make up stories in small groups using a single word or prop

### **notes.**

Another motivation for including story as such a fundamental element of AW programs, is that we aim to create safe spaces for young people to share what is really going on for them. Young people can feel isolated or alone in their experience may come to find others sharing similar struggles. Equally important they may find that sharing their struggle is a great service to others who might benefit from their experience. Additionally, sharing our stories allows us to clarify for ourselves the significance of certain experiences.

Story time provides great opportunities for people to refine their effective listening and reflection skills. We often experience 'Aha! Moments' and epiphanies while listening to others share. When we listen and reflect as a group the collective wisdom benefits us all.

Perhaps most importantly as elders, rather than telling young people what to do, when we share stories with them, we step in to the circle beside them. We are not above them, we are equally vulnerable humans making our way through life. As adults we become much more relatable to younger generations.

It is important with story to strike a balance. Our stories teach us about where we come from, allow us to reflect on our successes and failures, process our struggles, and connect to our genius. Stories can also give us hope for the future. But we do need to be careful of letting our past stories define our future. Our vision going forward has unlimited possibilities. It is essential that we don't limit ourselves with the stories we tell ourselves or that others tell about us. Each day we can begin a new story.

### **Key benefits of story**

- Shared experience, shared vulnerability, a sense of "we are not alone"
- Learning from other's experiences. Aha! and epiphanies
- Group reflection and learning
- Clarifying experiences for ourselves as we retell our stories



- Realising our stories significance
- Telling stories but not getting attached to stories

#### When to use story

- Night campfire circles – using the ritual theatre of night and fire. Telling a story helps connect into nature, ourselves, and each other.
- Preparing the group for a deeper conversation, to open a thought-provoking discussion
- Genius and visioning work – sharing inspiring stories of heroes in our lives
- Supporting a young person to stretch in a challenge – stories of fear, bravery, and perseverance

#### Where to find good stories

- Our own lives
- Other experienced facilitators
- AW online resources or Google/You tube story tellers/ROP

#### **success looks like.**

- ✓ Participants show maximum engagement and interest when stories are being shared
- ✓ Stories shared are relevant and serve to increase/bolster learnings for participants
- ✓ Participants show signs of increased comfort to share their own stories following a facilitator-led story
- ✓ Connections are deepened amongst participants and with facilitator following the use of story
- ✓ Desire by group to keep sharing stories after official process is complete