

Story Circle Guide

1. Read the story circle information sheet

This includes everything you need to know about the process. If you have any questions please get in touch with Saoirse (details below)

2. The Invitation

A **story** is a personal narrative (spoken/ written) of a lived experience and has a beginning, middle, and end. A **story circle** is a gathering of people in a relaxed social setting, where they share personal stories to address common community issues and express their experiences creatively.

You are being invited to tell your **story** in a story circle, it should relate to any of the below topics:

- **A story about creativity in youth work.**
- **A story about youth work fostering creativity in young people.**

You are also invited to bring along **one visual prompt** (this is **optional**). Visual prompts can be used to set the scene of a story (integral to the whole story) or be a small moment in the story that acts as a catalyst for action or represents the key moment.

Examples of visual prompts include:

Make an image (use whatever art materials you want to do this)

Bring an object (or a photograph of the object if too big/ delicate/ fixed to another location)

Take a photograph (Be creative with your photograph however if a person is identifiable you will need to ensure consent is provided by them too)



3. How we will work together in a story circle using our group agreement

Purpose of group agreement:

It is important that everyone who participates in a story circle feels informed, comfortable, included and valued. This group agreement aims to set the tone for our session together (how we will work together). It is hoped that by outlining the expectations, we can create and maintain a positive, respectful and productive atmosphere together. Please find the template below with which we will start our session. You will then have the opportunity to amend it, and if you are satisfied, sign it. After that, we can begin.

Areas to cover within the group agreement:

Informed consent to participate

- We have read and understood the information sheet and consent to participate in this research.
- Voluntary participation- We know we can withdraw from the process at any stage of the research (2 weeks to withdraw data).
- Ask Questions- We understand the purpose and process (data collection, storage, use of data) within this research and know we can ask questions at any stage of the process.

Confidentiality

- Privacy- take the lessons but leave the details.
- Researcher responsibility- assurance of confidentiality and the use of data by the researcher (storage & handling outlined in the information sheet and a pseudonym will be used).
- Participant responsibility- respect confidentiality, limitations of sharing (in terms of prompts used (images/ photographs/ objects) and words within your stories and in group discussion), and safeguarding of others.
- Exceptions- Confidentiality will be breached only in cases where there is a legal or ethical obligation to disclose information, such as instances of harm to oneself or others, or as required by law.

Respect

- Valuing individual inputs, backgrounds and personal space- there will be no questions, criticisms, cross-talk, or comments on any story while sharing is going on as every share is welcome. Even if a story resonates with your own experience, or if you were present during its unfolding and recall it differently, it is not acceptable to contradict, correct, or embellish another person's narrative.
- Actively listen, participate, and contribute to discussions (converse don't pitch).
- Be present in the moment- No need to take notes or worry about when it's your turn, or compare your story as there is no right or wrong. Just listen to everyone's story and the rest will take care of itself.
- Stay curious and open to learning by trusting the process.
- Commit to creating a safe space where everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves. We'll refrain from any form of physical or verbal harm.
- Time- start and end sessions on time, respecting everyone's schedules. A timer will be used to ensure that each participant is valued and has an equal amount of time to share.
- Use the storytelling format of beginning, middle, end when sharing.
- Phones- agreement to minimise distractions by using phones only during designated breaks unless otherwise required for the session.
- Flexibility- We'll remain open-minded, respecting diverse perspectives and being adaptable to change within the group.
- Self-care- we look after our own needs (stretch/ get water/ go to the bathroom, etc. if needed) and inform the researcher if uncomfortable at any stage.

Anything missing?

- Do you want to include anything?

Signed by participants: _____

4. Timing of session

8 people max: 120 minutes (2 hrs) followed by lunch/ snacks

- 10 minutes for introduction
- 32 minutes (8 people x 4 min) for sharing of story and visual prompts
- 15 minutes for group reflection and discussion
- 10 minutes comfort break
- 40 minutes for group deeper exploration
- 10 minutes closing reflection
- 3minutes closing
- Food

5. Remember

Creativity is about using your imagination and coming up with something that is novel and interesting – ‘making new things’. These ‘things’ don’t have to be physical objects (although they can be!). They include words, ideas, images, sounds, expressions and performances of all kinds.

Consent, Respect and Empathy

Refer to your own organisational policies and NYCI 's guidelines for the use of photography & recordings of young people (on NYCI webpage)

If you are travelling by public transport hold onto your receipts reimbursement

Let the researcher know if any dietary requirements or supports needed for you to participate

Have fun & look forward to seeing you soon

6. Any questions then please get in touch

Saoirse Reynolds: Conlon

saoirse.reynoldsconlon@mu.ie.

0867794060

7. Give your consent

If you are happy to participate please send your consent form to Saoirse

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research!