



ODE Storytelling Program



Throughout history, storytelling has been a common way of communicating. Stories can transmit wisdom, open hearts and break down barriers, and heal storytellers and their audiences.

In 2011, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) embarked on a "Storytelling Project" that emphasizes the use of personal stories as a means to draw communal attention to mental health and wellness. ODE Storytelling aims to reduce stigma and broaden the definition of recovery. ODE Storytelling programs consider social factors such as racism, discriminations, and poverty in behavioral health and recovery. The stories shared have been, both, personal and powerful. For some, they have created a sense of connection; for others, they have been transformative.

Visit the following website to view stories created with ODE: www.smchealth.org/stories

What is the storytelling program?

The ODE storytelling program hosts a space in which people share their stories of recovery and wellness to make a meaningful impact on themselves and others. Participants engage in workshops that guide them in creating and sharing their stories in different forms. Beginning simply with a story circle or a framing question, participants continue developing their narratives as Digital Stories or Photovoice projects.

What are the different forms of storytelling?

Digital stories are, short, 2-3 minute videos that host a narrative as well as visuals. Participants create their stories using photo, video, and audio to describe their lived experience. Digital stories are created in a 20-hour process administered by trained ODE facilitators.

Photovoice is an 8-hour process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through photography. Final projects exhibit a single-page layout of a photo and short written piece.

What support can ODE provide for your storytelling project?

The Office of Diversity and Equity offers digital storytelling and photovoice workshops and will provide:

- A trained facilitator
- A training to facilitate your own program
- Laptops with editing software
- Cameras to capture stories
- Food (Some participants may also be eligible for a small stipend.)

Contact Siavash Zohoori at szohoori@smcgov.org, or 650-372-3214, to learn more about the program.