



Storytelling Program



The Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) storytelling program empowers community members to share their stories of recovery and wellness to heal and to address issues within their communities. Participants engage in workshops that help them create and share their stories in different forms. Beginning with a framing question, facilitators support participants to share their stories as Photovoices or Digital Stories.

Considering structural impacts on wellness such as racism, discrimination, and poverty, these workshops broaden the definition of recovery and reduce stigma. The stories shared are both personal and powerful. For some, they have created a sense of connection, and for others, they have opened the doors to treatment and recovery. Stories captured in San Mateo County shed light on important social issues including stigma against mental health and substance abuse and support the empowerment of others with lived experience to share their stories.

Visit the following website to view stories and learn more: www.smchealth.org/stories

What are the different forms of storytelling?

Digital Storytelling: 3-minute video that includes a recorded narrative. Participants create their stories using photography, videography, and audio to describe their lived experience. Digital stories are created in a 20-hour process administered by trained ODE Storytelling facilitators.

Photovoice: Single-page layout of a photo and short written piece. Participants create their stories using photography and written narrative. Photovoices are created in an 8-hour process administered by trained ODE Storytelling facilitators.

How does storytelling affect our community?

Storytelling is a universal method of communication. Stories can transmit wisdom, open hearts and break down barriers, and heal storytellers and their audiences. ODE Storytelling reduces stigma, helps with symptoms of trauma, celebrates lived experience, broadens the definition of wellness and recovery, provides insight to policy makers and providers, and supports the empowerment of marginalized communities.

What support can ODE provide for your storytelling project?

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

- Consultation on framing question, outreach, and follow up participant support and advocacy
- Trained facilitator(s) or a training to facilitate your own program
- Laptops with editing software, cameras, and microphones
- Some programs may be eligible for food and small monetary incentives for the participants

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