

NCCIC Is a Service of the Child Care Bureau

10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400 • Fairfax, VA 22030 • Phone: 800-616-2242
Fax: 800-716-2242 • Email: info@nccic.org • Web: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov>

ACTIVITY: TELLING OUR STORIES¹

Suggestions for Presenters

1. Share the following information:

Storytelling. We do it every day in any number of ways without ever realizing that is what we are doing. It is how we express ourselves. Our stories tell us much about ourselves and how we experience the world – if we only stop long enough to listen.

We tell stories about hope, aspirations, calamities and fears. They are all expressions of who we are and they are a filter through which we view the world. We are all witness to the power of stories. This activity will help remind us of their richness and impact – and give us an opportunity to practice effective communication skills.

2. Ask participants to get into pairs and to share a story with a partner about a time they felt surprised (you can use any number of adjectives here – confident, vulnerable, frightened – the point is to get them talking and listening.) Both storyteller and listener are to make note of what comes up for them as they tell their story and as they listen to the story told by their partner. Each partner should tell and listen to a story.
3. After both have shared their stories, instruct them to join another pair. In this small group, ask one person from each pair – in their role as a listener - to tell the storyteller's story as if they were that person. (i.e., tell your partner's story to the other pair.) The storyteller should just listen as his/her story is being told – they should not correct or make additions – simply listen to their story.
4. After each pair has had an opportunity to tell the storyteller's story - ask them to think about and respond to the following questions - sharing with the large group.
 - How did it feel telling your story to your partner?
 - What things came up for you as you were telling your story?
 - How did it feel listening to your partner's story?
 - What things came up for you as you listened?

¹ Adapted from Jourdain, K. (March 2006). The power of stories. *Approaching Change*, 6(7), Retrieved February 15, 2008, from www.co-creatingfutures.com/content.php?page_ID=550. Copyright © MM - MMVI Chrysalis Performance Strategies Inc. Used with permission. All Rights Reserved. Additional information is available at www.co-creatingfutures.com.

- How did it feel to listen to someone else TELL your story?
- What things came up for you as you LISTENED to someone else tell your story?
- How did it feel to TELL someone else's story?
- Would you have listened differently if you knew that you were going to be asked to tell someone else's story?
- Would you have told your story differently? Or, told a different story? Why?
- What have you learned about "telling stories" and listening that will help you communicate more effectively with your partners?