USE YOUR VOICE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

Trauma-Informed Storytelling Practices

Principles of safe storytelling:

Begin by creating a supportive container for stories to be shared. This can be as simple as setting group norms together, acknowledging the diversity of experiences in the room, and agreeing on mutual respect. Safety grows when participants know they are not being judged, but rather heard.

Creating spaces for shared leadership:

Invite participants to take turns leading parts of the session. Leadership can be as small as opening with a grounding breath, reading a quote, or closing with reflections. This distributes responsibility and empowers each person to see themselves as a contributor.

Empowering voices through choice:

Give options for how participants may engage with storytelling: writing, drawing, speaking, or simply listening. Offering multiple forms of participation reduces pressure and honors different comfort levels.

Weaving strength into narratives

Encourage participants to identify strengths or lessons within their story. Even in difficulty, resilience, and resourcefulness can be named and honored. This transforms storytelling from passive reflection into active empowerment.

Reflections & Integration

At the end of the session, allow time for participants to name what they are taking away. A short reflection, whether spoken, written, or kept private, helps integrate the story into personal growth and community connection.

Source: The WA-SEN Guidebook, available from wa-sen.org