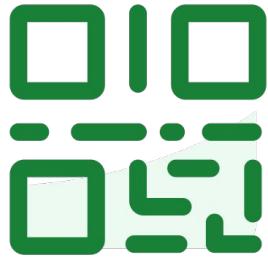


The background features abstract red line art in the corners. In the top-left, a grid of lines forms a triangle. In the bottom-left, a series of intersecting lines create a more complex, organic shape. These lines are thin and red, set against a white background.

*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting.
We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders of other
communities who may be here today.*

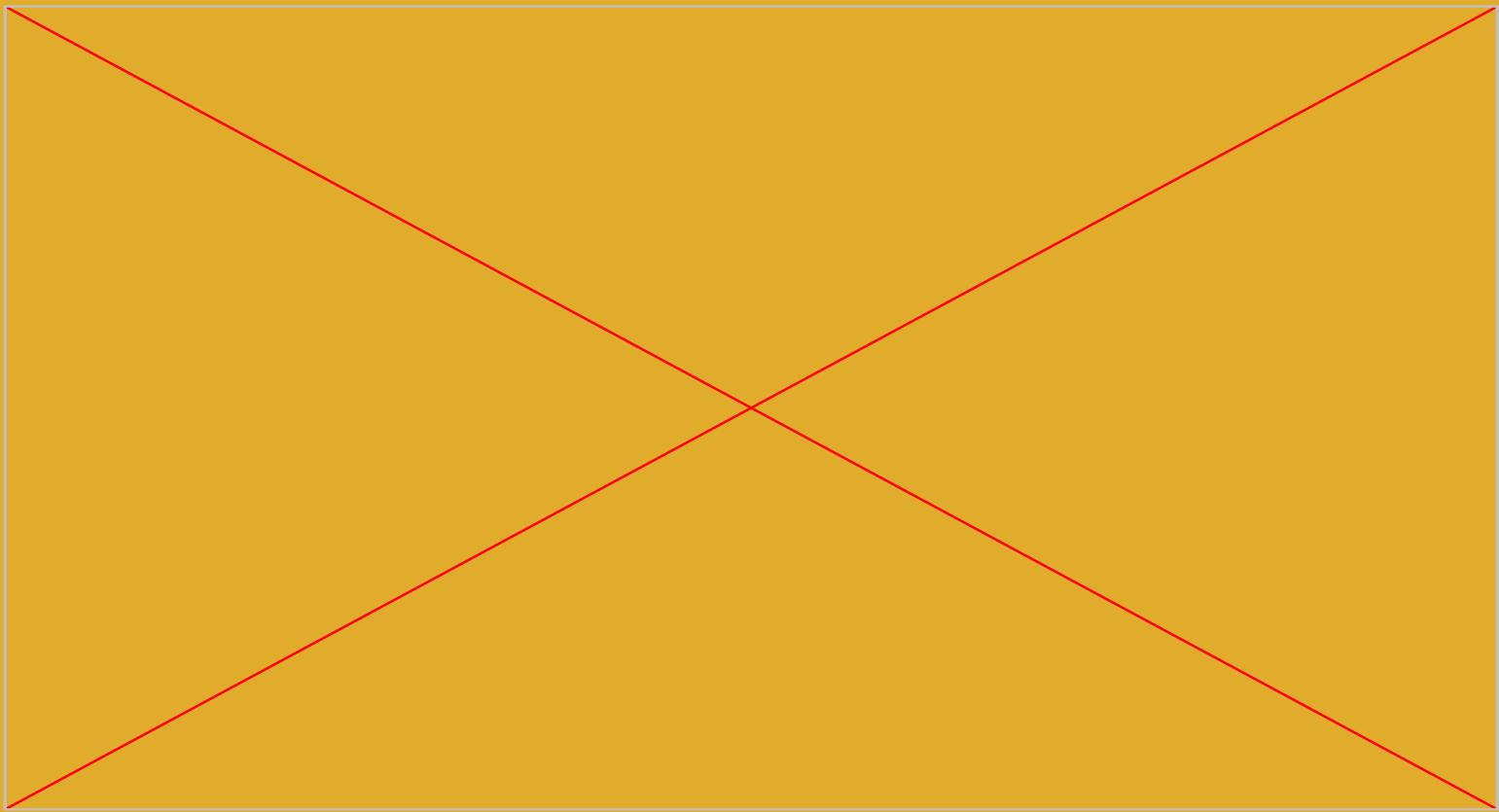
A graphic element in the top left corner consisting of several thin, red lines forming a grid and some diagonal lines, creating a sense of depth and perspective.

We believe language access is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of equity, dignity, and inclusion. Language justice means creating spaces where everyone can fully participate, express themselves, and be heard—in the language in which they feel most comfortable.



Join at slido.com
#1543233

- ⓘ Presenting with animations, GIFs or speaker notes? Enable our [Chrome extension](#)



*Ed Sheeran Meets a Little Boy who Lives on Streets,
Red Nose Day (2017)*



Sevenly + Food for the Poor (2014)



Jodi

Soft White Underbelly (2025)

ARE THESE ETHICAL STORYTELLING?

Ed Sheeran/ Red Nose Day



Sevenly + Food for the Poor



- Celebrity-centered hero narrative
- “Poverty tourism” & savior framing
- Lack of local agency

Soft White Underbelly



- Solution-centric without storyteller voice
- Victim framing without agency
- Transactional storytelling

- Narrative without strategy or support
- Power imbalance & consent concerns
- No narrative arc or accountability



TELLING THE TRUTH WITH CARE

Ethical Storytelling for Equity



WHO ARE WE?



ALVINA VASQUEZ

principal
she/her



MIKHAIL TALLEY

associate
she/her



ELIZABET GARCIA-HERNANDEZ

pr & community engagement specialist
she/her

SE2



Name/Location/Organization Nombre / Ubicación/Organización

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TODAY?

- Get to Know Each Other
- 4-Step Ethical Storytelling Process
- Put It Into Practice
- Leave Here Equipped

Storytelling is never just about visibility.

It can be used to **influence attitudes and behaviors**,
not just feelings.

The most powerful stories come from **real people** —
but they need to be told with **intention and care**.

RECLAIM THE NARRATIVE ACTIVITY



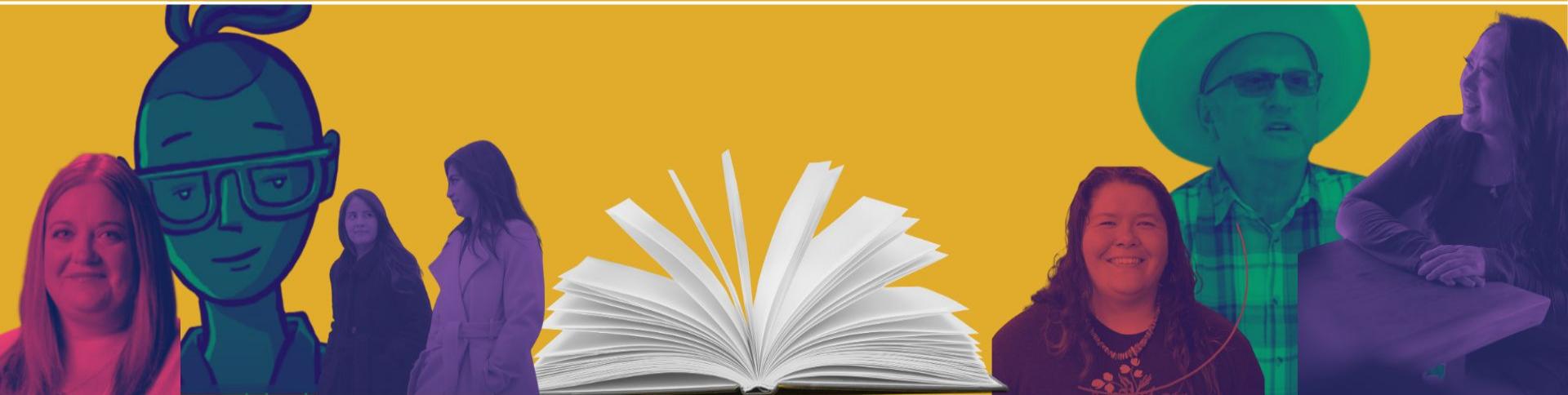
In small groups, plan a story from idea to impact.



4-STEP STORYTELLING PROCESS



The Blueprint for Stories That Ethically Move People & Systems



1. PLANNING



START WITH THE WHY

Get clear on the “*Why*” and “*How*” before the “*Who*”



- Goal
- Audience
- Tone
- Format
- Power
- Ethics
- Storyteller

CASE STUDY: FORWARD TOGETHER



Forward Together, Sahara

- **Goal** → Stories designed to shift behavior, not just raise awareness
- **Audience** → Tailored for Latino, Black, LGBTQ+, and rural youth
- **Tone** → Honest but hopeful, avoiding overexposure or trauma
- **Power** → Stories crafted to reach not just youth, but adults who support them
- **Ethics** → Built-in consent, cultural relevance, and youth-led review
- **Format** → Animation for anonymity, metaphor, and emotional safety
- **Storyteller** → Real youth, unscripted, in their own voice



RECLAIM THE NARRATIVE ACTIVITY



In small groups, plan a story from idea to impact. Use these prompts to guide your strategy:

1. **What's the purpose of this story—and who needs to hear it?**
(Think: behavior change, stigma reduction, culture shift)

Share back 1 insight per group.



2. RECRUITMENT



RECRUIT WITH INTENTION

Build trust from the first ask.

- Open, inclusive prompts:
- Language matters
- Clear on:
 - Purpose
 - Use
 - Compensation

Tip: Don't prescribe. Let people show up as they are.



RECLAIM THE NARRATIVE ACTIVITY



In small groups, plan a story from idea to impact. Use these prompts to guide your strategy:

1. **What's the purpose of this story—and who needs to hear it?**
(Think: behavior change, stigma reduction, culture shift)
2. **Who should tell the story—and how can you invite them with care?**
(Inclusive prompts, clear purpose, consent, and compensation)

Share back 1 insight per group.

What's one strategy you've used—or want to try—to make sure storytellers feel safe, valued, and in control during recruitment?



¿Cuál es una estrategia que has utilizado —o que te gustaría probar— para asegurarte de que las personas que comparten sus historias se sientan seguras, valoradas y en control durante el proceso de reclutamiento?

3. BRINGING THE STORY TO LIFE



CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Let the story lead and co-create with care.

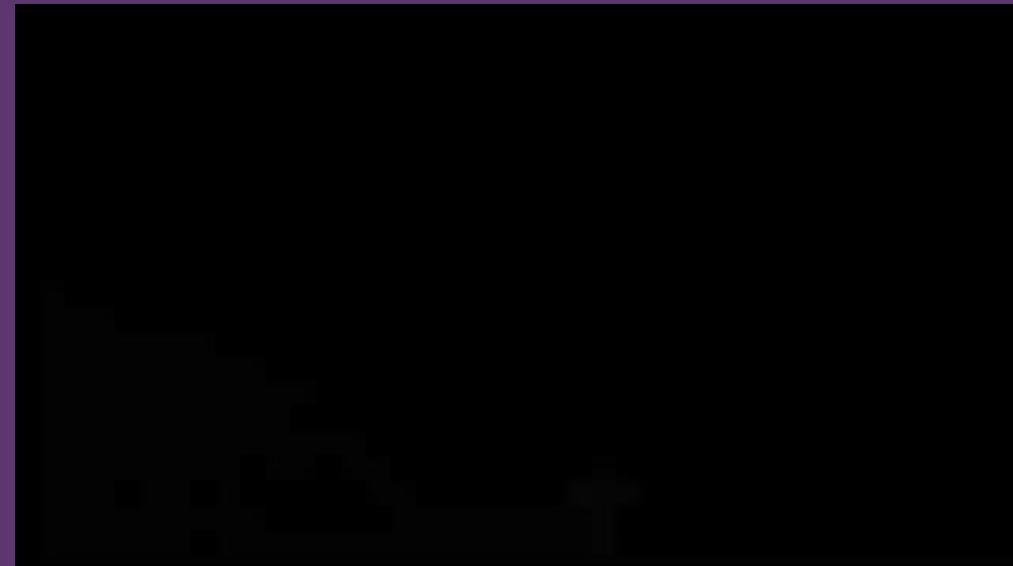


- **Open-ended, values-based questions**
- Storyteller shape the space- **tone, setting, and clothing**
- Stay flexible and curious
- Showcase **layered identities**
- Respect non-verbal truth

CASE STUDY: TOBACCO FREE COLORADO

Told by us, for us.
Honoring cultural truth
through unscripted, community-led storytelling.

Approach: Community-led | Unscripted |
Rooted in cultural expertise



Elder Young, Tobacco Free Colorado

Why It Worked

- Built with the storyteller
- Minimal editing
- Community-led dissemination





RECLAIM THE NARRATIVE ACTIVITY



In small groups, plan a story from idea to impact. Use these prompts to guide your strategy:

- 1. What's the purpose of this story—and who needs to hear it?**
(Think: behavior change, stigma reduction, culture shift)
- 2. Who should tell the story—and how can you invite them with care?**
(Inclusive prompts, clear purpose, consent, and compensation)
- 3. What format and tone would honor the storyteller and resonate with the audience?**
(Consider emotional safety, access, language, and visual choices)

Share back 1 insight per group.

4. REVIEW, CONFIRM, RESPECT



REVIEW & RESPECT – FINAL CHECKPOINTS

Confirm, don't assume.

Before anything is published:

- Share the final story for review
- Offer edits, reminders of use, and time to reflect
- Reconfirm consent—again
- Let storytellers shape rollout or stay anonymous



CASE STUDY: 988 COLORADO

When political realities reshape how we tell the truth



Challenge:

Real risks from stigma, censorship, and backlash

What We Did:

- Centered healing over identity labels
- Used visual cues vs. overexposure
- Adapted tone + rollout for safety
- Safety > visibility — dignity and agency come first.

This video discusses topics related to mental health, which may be distressing or triggering for some viewers.

988 Colorado, Romeo



RECLAIM THE NARRATIVE ACTIVITY



In small groups, plan a story from idea to impact. Use these prompts to guide your strategy:

- 1. What's the purpose of this story—and who needs to hear it?**
(Think: behavior change, stigma reduction, culture shift)
- 2. Who should tell the story—and how can you invite them with care?**
(Inclusive prompts, clear purpose, consent, and compensation)
- 3. What format and tone would honor the storyteller and resonate with the audience?**
(Consider emotional safety, access, language, and visual choices)
- 4. How will you support the storyteller before, during, and after sharing their story?**
(Plan for review, edits, rollout choices, and ongoing care)
Share back 1 insight per group. What shifted for you in this process?



What's one thing you'll do differently in your storytelling practice after today?

Después de la sesión de hoy, ¿qué es una cosa que harás diferente en tu práctica de contar historias?

ETHICAL STORYTELLING FORTIFIES THE MOVEMENT

Closing Tips

- Honor the storyteller no matter what
- Authentic stories release control.
- If you want a script, you don't want a story—you want a slogan.



ETHICAL STORYTELLING FORTIFIES THE MOVEMENT

- When systems fail, stories protect.
- Stories carry our truth when institutions can't or won't.
- They connect, clarify, and keep culture alive.
- You are already doing this work ethically, urgently, and with care.
- Let storytelling honor your people, not perform for power



When the system forgets us, the story remembers. In the absence of justice, our stories still speak.

Q&A

THANK YOU

Alvina Vasquez, principal
Alvina@SE2ChangeForGood.com

Mikhail Talley, associate
Mikhail@SE2ChangeForGood.com

Elizabet Garcia-Hernandez, PR & community engagement specialist
Elizabet@SE2ChangeForGood.com

MEDIUMS THAT MOVE THE WORK

What works and why



IMPACT REPORTS

Finding My Voice – Alex's Story

When Alex' was 12, his family moved to Canada from Southeast Asia. Alex's dad often worked abroad. He had a gambling issue, and when he was home, fights would erupt.



AFTER FINISHING HIGH SCHOOL. Alex began to work and decided to move out of the family home.

After five years, Alex began to feel stuck in his job. He needed to work to survive because he couldn't go back to the turmoil that awaited him at the family home. Alex needed to find a solution because he began to have suicidal thoughts.

Alex decided to take out a student loan and go back to school. At this time, Alex was couch surfing. His mental health suffered, and things began to unravel for him as he failed some courses and his funding was withdrawn. Tension grew

between Alex and his roommate. Eventually, Alex decided to leave the toxic environment.

The roommate had previously told Alex about Covenant House. Alex called and was able to get a bed in the Crisis Program.

"I was terrified," he recounts. "What am I getting myself into? I'm scared. Everything's a lot more mysterious in the dark."

The Crisis Program was a completely different environment than Alex was used to, but he felt safe. "I really liked Covenant House's principles, because I learned to advocate for myself."

Alex spent his first year in the Crisis Program where he was quite involved in activities like hiking and Sunday brunches, because they were a time of community building. Alex then moved into the Rights of Passage program, where he spent the next four years. Alex frequently worked with his clinical counsellor, who helped him work through the trauma from his childhood.

"Before I couldn't dream, but right now I'm thriving. I know who I am, and I know what I need. This is just the beginning."

"I want to emphasize that a big part of my success is because of the wraparound care that I received. It changed the voice that I had in my head."

Today, Alex has found his voice. He has a great relationship with his mom, and has his dad back in his life, but at a healthy distance. Alex is in a relationship, has a place to live, and has a full-time job where he trains other staff.

"Before I couldn't dream, but right now I'm thriving. I know who I am, and I know what I need. This is just the beginning."

*Alex is a pseudonym to protect identity; his story is real

Covenant House BC, 2024 Impact Report

AUDIO/PODCASTS



Queer Out Here



Storycorps

PHOTOGRAPHY/ CAPTIONS



"Sometimes it makes me think, 'Why is it that families can afford [life] and ours cannot?' As a mom, sometimes I cry, just cry. It always makes me feel like I'm not doing good, I'm not the best mom. But then here, all that heaviness, all the stress, I can feel it helps a lot. This place has helped a lot."

Danny, Kalina and their children

Their family joined the Mission's Bridge program at The Crossing in October 2024, just in time for the winter. It was the saving grace they needed to provide their family with a safe place to be as they worked hard to save money and pay off debts.

BLOGS/ FIRST-PERSON ESSAYS

Denver Rescue Mission

EARNED MEDIA



KOAA

NARRATIVE VIDEO



Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

CHOOSE THE MEDIUM

Even with budget limits, your format can follow the story—not the other way around.



Select format last, not first.

Start with the audience, storyteller, and emotional tone—then ask:

- Where will it have the most impact?
- What format feels safest and most empowering for the storyteller?
- Can this work across multiple formats without losing integrity?



Even with limited budget, one strong story can live across channels—blog → social → report pull-quote → presentation. Let the story shape the experience, not just the deliverable. Adapt with care, not compromise.

PAIR UP AND DISCUSS

The most ethical medium is the one that respects the storyteller and moves your audience.

- Which storytelling medium(s) feel most realistic for your organization to use most consistently, and why?
- What's one new format you haven't used, but want to try

STORY STRATEGIST CHALLENGE

You've just been handed a organizational goal. Now think like a strategist—before you cast a storyteller, define what the story should do.

Your Mission (5 min, pairs or small groups):

Pick a real goal from your work. Then answer:

- What shift is this story meant to create?
- Who's the audience—and who should tell it?
- What tone + format would serve it best?
- What considerations (e.g., safety, language, identity) should guide your approach?

REFLECTION: WHAT STORIES ARE YOU MAKING POSSIBLE?

Ethical storytelling begins before a story is told, with the goals we set and the voices we choose to center.

Think about your work or organization:

- What's one perception or conversation you're trying to shift through storytelling?
- Who should be telling that story, and why them?



CHOOSE THE MEDIUM

Let the story's purpose guide the format not the other way around.

START WITH THE WHY

Define the purpose before you tell the story.

START WITH THE “WHY”

Why this matters:

- Storytelling isn't just for visibility
- Lever for **behavior change, stigma reduction, and trust-building.**

Example:

A client says, “We want to reduce stigma around mental health support.”

We ask:

- What should people believe or feel differently?
- How can stories normalize help-seeking and build trust?

Get clear on the “Why” before the “Who”

Best practices:

- Tie stories to **real-world outcomes**, not just awareness.
- Use a behavior change or **narrative shift framework**.
- Get alignment early- **storytelling isn't an add-on, it's part of strategy.**

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

Map your audience, storyteller types, and story goals.

Clarify your core parameters:

- **Audience:** Who are we trying to reach?
- **Storyteller types:** Whose voices carry power and credibility with that audience?
- **Emotional arc:** What do we want people to feel and carry with them?

Don't just "cast"— design.

This isn't about finding one perfect person. It's about defining the kinds of stories that can unlock change.



Tool: Use a **Power Mapping** approach

- Who influences this issue? Where can storytelling apply pressure, offer support, or build momentum?

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

Map your audience, storyteller types, and story goals.

Best Practices

- Don't limit storytellers to a single identity box.
- Think about **tone, trust, and community relevance**.
- Ask: “Whose truth needs to be heard for this campaign to succeed?”

CHOOSE THE MEDIUM

Considerations:

- **Emotional depth?** → Longform video, podcast
- **Fast, wide reach?** → Photo/captioning
- **Low barrier to access?** → Print, subtitled video, blog/written narrative



Tip:

Match medium to the *moment*—not just the channel. Honor the story and its audience in how it's told.



RECRUIT WITH INTENTION

Recruitment is invitation, not extraction.

CENTERING VOICE & MEANING

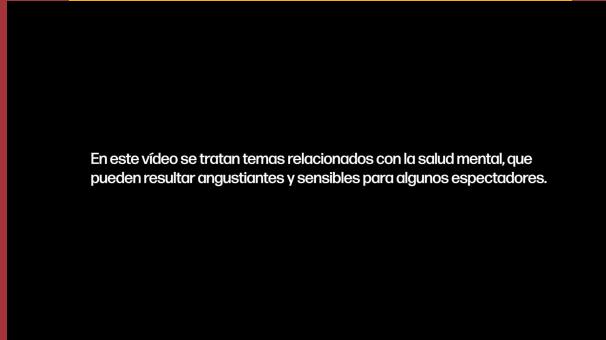
Truth lands deepest in our words

Dubbed Narration



Forward Together, Estevan

Native Narration



En este video se tratan temas relacionados con la salud mental, que pueden resultar angustiantes y sensibles para algunos espectadores.

988 Colorado, Judith

Spanish Subtitles



Tienes que reemplazar ese
hábito de algún modo.

Tobacco Free Colorado, David

RECRUIT WITH INTENTION

Best Practices: Non-Exploitative Recruitment

- Frame storytelling as an opportunity not a transaction
- Lead with trust, transparency, and respect
- Compensate fairly for time and emotional labor
- Check in regularly before, during, and after
- Offer clear opt-outs at any stage
- Avoid over-asking from overburdened communities
- Center the storyteller's language, culture, and safety

Remember: How you invite the story shapes the story itself.

CASE STUDY: BALANCING VISIBILITY + SAFETY

This video discusses topics related to mental health, which may be distressing or triggering for some viewers.

988 Colorado, Romeo



RECRUIT WITH INTENTION

Why Is Recruitment So Sensitive?

Recruiting ethically requires care, not just strategy.

Asking people to share publicly means:

- Emotional risk
- Safety concerns for some identities
- Risk of retraumatization or tokenization

That's why we build trust *before* asking for stories and always provide informed choice and ongoing support.



KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

Map your audience, storyteller types, and story goals.

CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Let the story lead and co-create with care

📌 *There's no “rule”
for length. The story
ends when it's done.*

Best Practices:

- Avoid “see/say” traps (e.g., don’t force them to say “I was anxious”—show it visually)
- Use metaphor and lived reality over labels
- Don’t script outcomes—capture real voice, real language
- Go to them if possible; cover travel costs if not
- Prioritize cultural norms, language justice, and psychological safety
- Avoid over editing—protect integrity and authenticity



Practice: **SHOW, DON'T SAY (WITH CARE)**

How can we visually and ethically tell this story?

What's a real issue that matters to you or your organization?

It could be a public health challenge, a community need, or a cultural narrative you want to shift.

What suggestions can we lend to tell this story visually, how can we depict it with dignity, authenticity, and emotional truth?



Tips:

- Keep it warm, brief, and agenda-free
- Mutual fit > persuasion
- Be honest about purpose and platform
- Compensate anything longer than ~15 mins.

📌 You're not mining for trauma. You're making space for honesty.

📌 You're not casting. You're building trust.

PRE-INTERVIEW

Set the tone, not the script

A short, mutual-fit conversation (≤ 15 min):

- Get to know their story
- Confirm tone + goals align
- Flag trauma or safety considerations
- Clarify that this isn't the full interview
- Used for readiness and respect not recruitment pressure.

REVIEW & RESPECT – FINAL CHECKPOINTS

Tips:

- Pay for emotional labor if possible, storytelling is work
- Recheck emotional safety and boundaries
- Give full agency over sharing, timing, and exposure

 The story belongs to them—honor that from start to finish.

Respect Means Rechecking Consent

When storytellers speak up, listen with gratitude.

Supporting Your Teen's Gender and Sexual Identities



Esther Baldwin Vidal

Boulder

I'm Esther Baldwin Vidal.



Esther, a mother of two LGBTQIA+ teens, agreed to film a video and write a blog but later raised safety concerns about being identified. We adapted by using a pseudonym and switching to audio. Her honesty reminded us that consent is ongoing, not one-time.

REVIEW & RESPECT – FINAL CHECKPOINTS

Confirm, don't assume.

ETHICAL STORYTELLING FORTIFIES THE MOVEMENT

Especially in Volatile Times

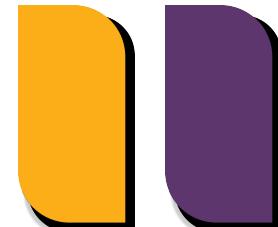
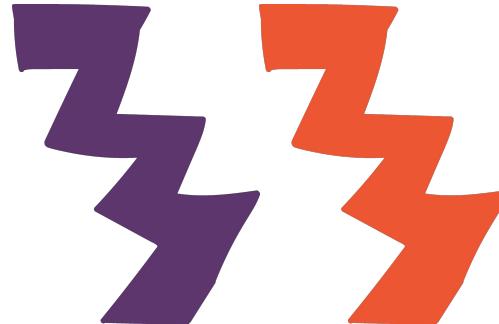
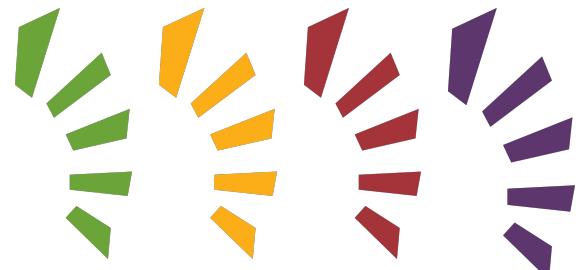
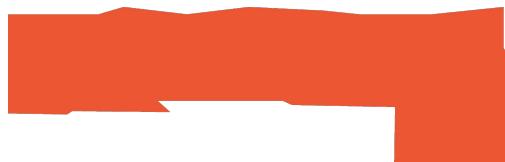
When Done Right, It:

- Humanizes communities under attack
- Reclaims space from stigma + erasure
- Builds trust and sparks lasting change
- Shapes hearts, shifts systems, protects truth

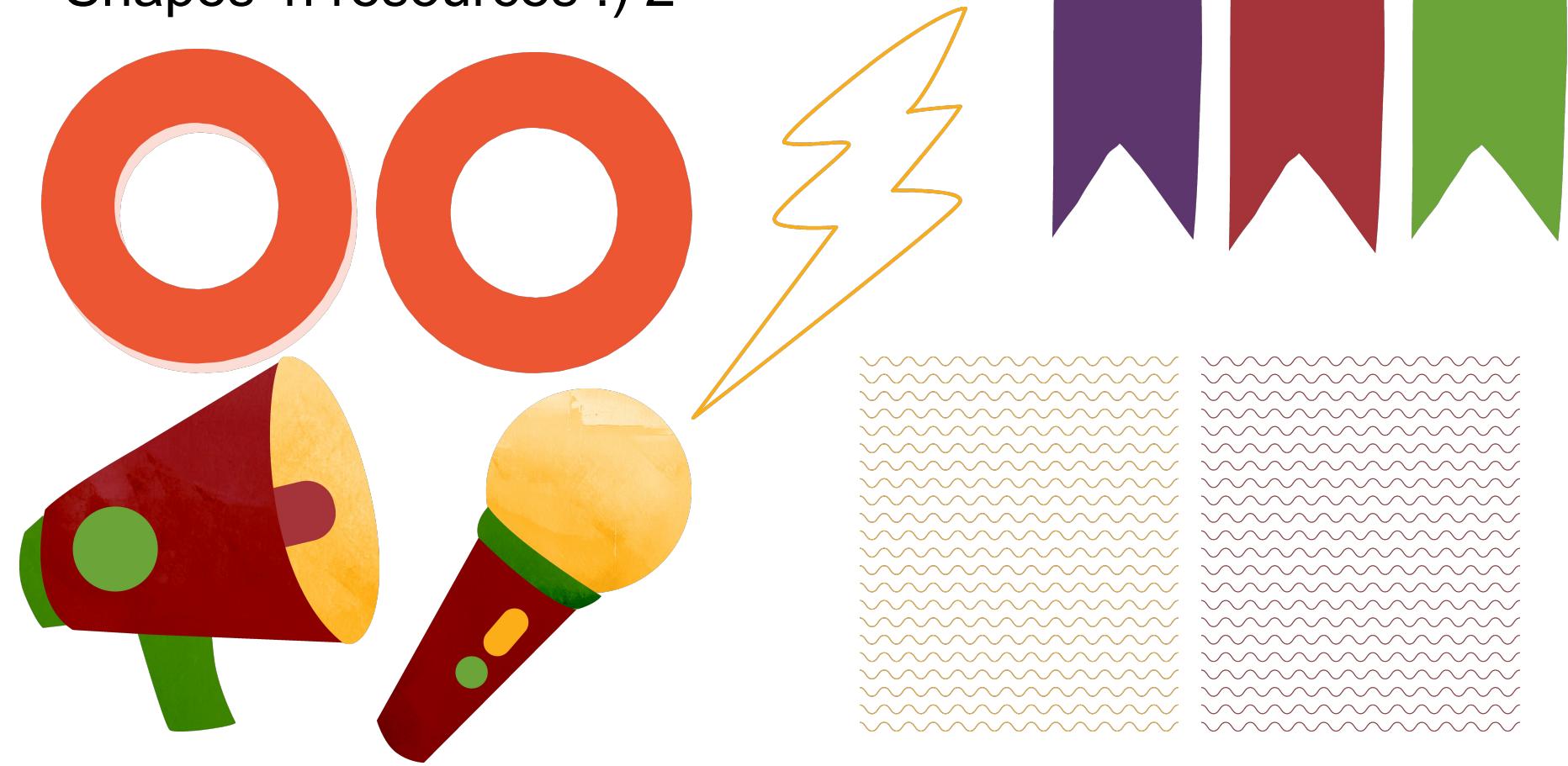
It's more than awareness—it's resistance and restoration.



Shapes 'n resources :)



Shapes 'n resources :) 2



Shapes 'n resources :) 3



TitleExample #1

- Content 1
- Content 2
- Content 3
- Content 4



- Content 1
- Content 2
- Content 3
- Content 4



Title Example #1

- Content 1
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- Content 4



Title Example #1

- Content 1
- Content 2
- Content 3
- Content 4

Considerations:

- Emotional depth? → Longform video, podcast, blog
- Fast, wide reach? → Social cutdowns, reels, quote graphics
- Low barrier to access? → Print, subtitled video, translated storybook

Tip:

Match medium to the *moment*—not just the channel. Honor the story and its audience in how it's told.