



**homeward trust**  
edmonton

# Stories for Transformation

Self-Determination and Empowerment in Sharing Lived,  
Living Experience, & Expertise

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**Participant Advisory Committee**

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# Land Acknowledgement

Homeward Trust respectfully acknowledges our place here on Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional and ancestral lands of many First Nation, Métis and Inuit people. We acknowledge the diverse Indigenous Peoples of this land which include the Cree, Blackfoot, Dene, Iroquois, Anishinaabe/Saulteaux /Ojibwa, Nakota Sioux, Inuit, Métis and many others whose footsteps have marked this land for time immemorial. Those whose stories, languages and culture continue to thrive today. We acknowledge ourselves as visitors living and working in this Territory.

This presentation was collaboratively developed by the Participant Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Group of Homeward Trust Edmonton and represents the work and perspectives of all its' members.



# Who We Are:

## Participant Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Group



# Content: From Exploitative to Empowering



Defining the Problem



Storytelling as a Solution



Safeguarding Your Story



Approaches to Asking for Information

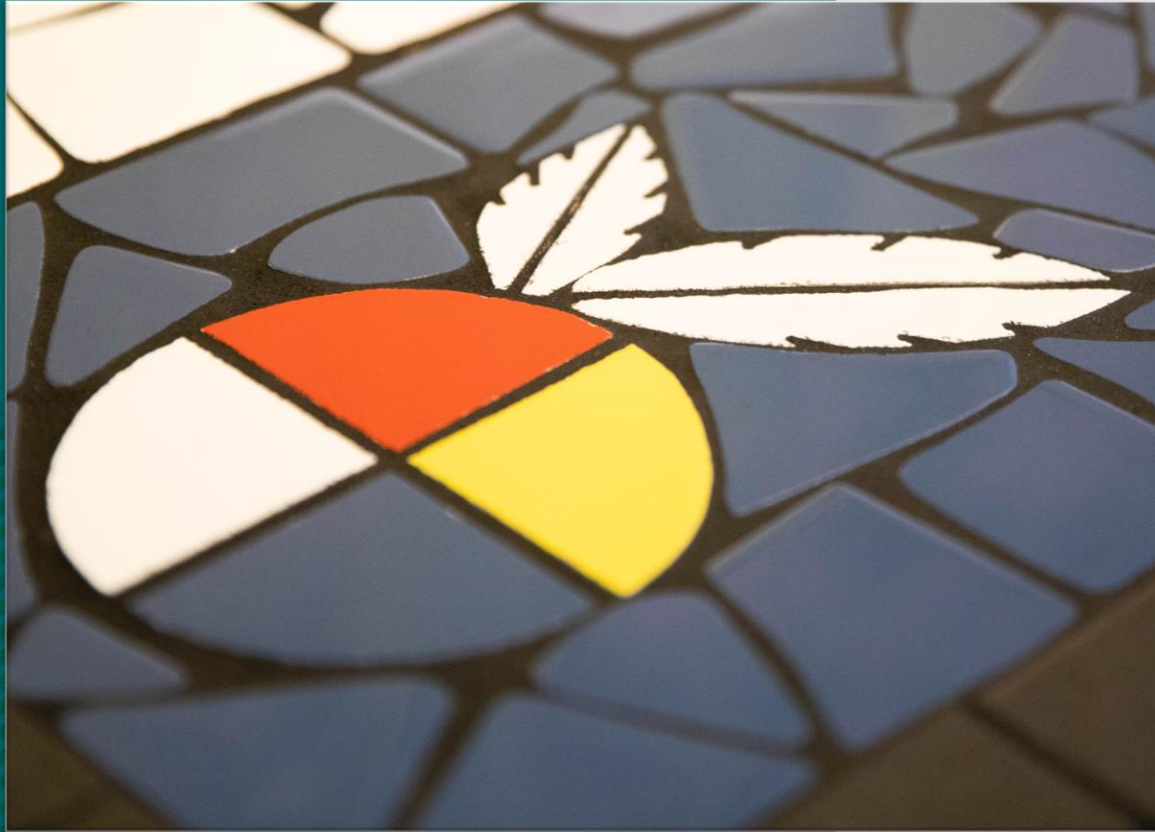
# Defining the Problem



Extractive, information-seeking, practices can be tokenizing and retraumatizing; presenting barriers to accessing essential services or engaging in power-holding spaces.



# How Does Storytelling Present a Solution?



What does the practice of storytelling do?

- The right to self-determination: storytelling makes space for the individual to take ownership and accountability over their lives.
- Healing through storytelling: **“the way you tell your story grows with you, and every time you tell it, it is more healing.”**
- Grow into sharing **“what’s strong, not what’s wrong.”**

# Beyond the Individual: Benefits of Self-Determination in Storytelling Practices

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Choosing to use your story to “walk with someone through their healing”



Storytelling as an exercise in building empathy



Undoing power structures for systems transformation



# Cultural Significance & Approaches

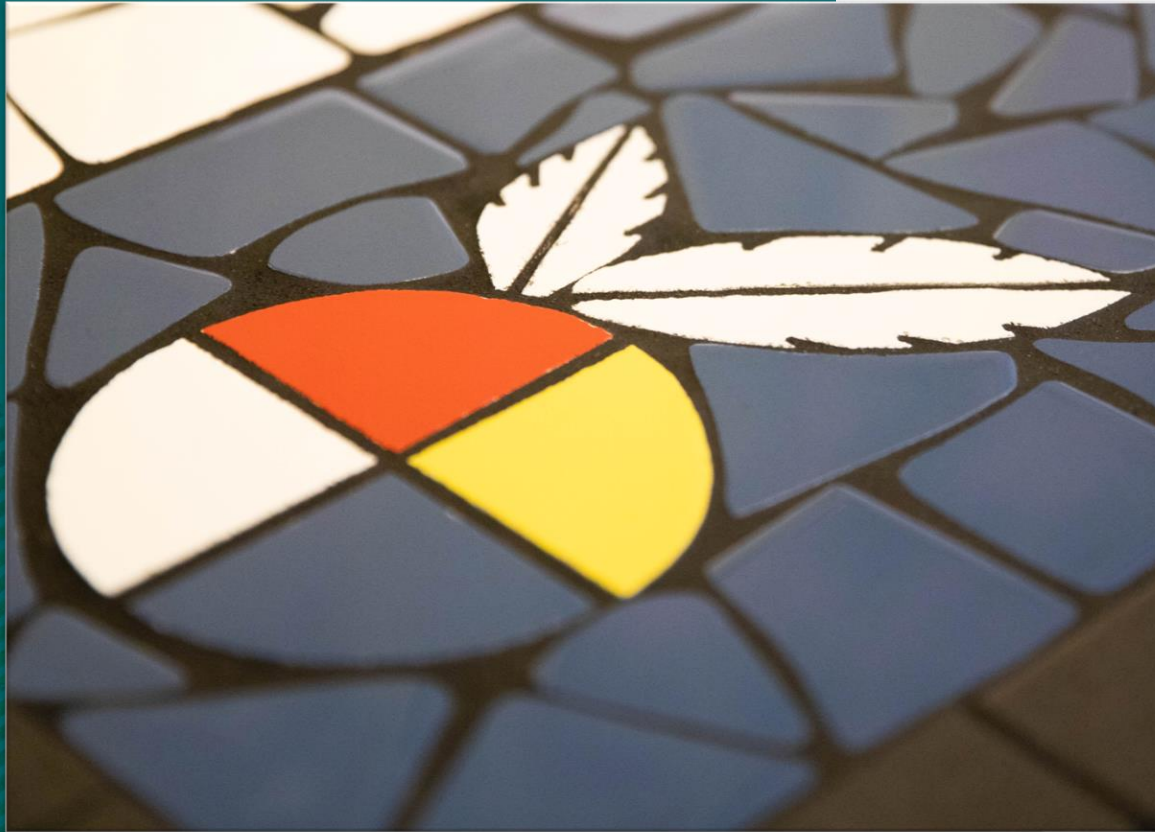


Photo Description/Source:

## The nehiyaw (Cree) way

- Different stories for different seasons
- Kwayask Awihtamihk – Solution Based
  - Keeoukaywin – Visiting
  - Matinamakewin – Offering or Giving
  - Maskihkiy wapoy – Medicine Water

# Safeguarding & Sharing Your Story: Tips for Self-Protection & Self-Advocacy

## Be Accountable to Yourself First

- Know “where you’re at”: listen to and respect your own body and headspace.
- No need to “spill your guts!” – Don’t overshare
- Don’t allow yourself to be tokenized
- Make sure the audience of your story is being respectful to you and your experience

## Telling Your Story for the Right Reasons

- Don’t tell your story for pity or to be looked down upon.
- **“I don’t tell my story to harm you; I tell it to help you”**
- Not for shock factor: there’s a right way to tell your story.

## Your Story Belongs to *You* and Only You

- Only tell what you feel comfortable sharing
- Don’t give in to pressure to share the worst and darkest parts
- Know who your audience is: adjust details and tone according to the relationship (familiarity, mutual respect)

# How to Seek Personal Information in a Good Way?

*Strengths-based, trauma-informed, empowering vs. exploiting*



Making space for *the visiting way* and relationship-based approaches



Empower the participant to self-define and lead their own story



Meet the participant culturally



# Recap: What can you do?

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Create a Safe Space



Offering or Giving



Keeoukaywin - The Visiting Way



Wahkowntowin – Supporting one another, like family.

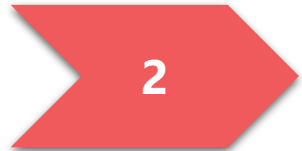
# Conclusion

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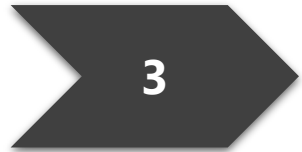
## *From Exploitative to Empowering*



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Storytelling as a Solution



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Approaches to Asking for Information

Questions?



# Thank You!

— Candace Thomas & Sharlene Alook

Participant Advisory Group

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