

My Voice Our Stories: using storytelling data to inform public policy and address unmet service needs

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Introduction

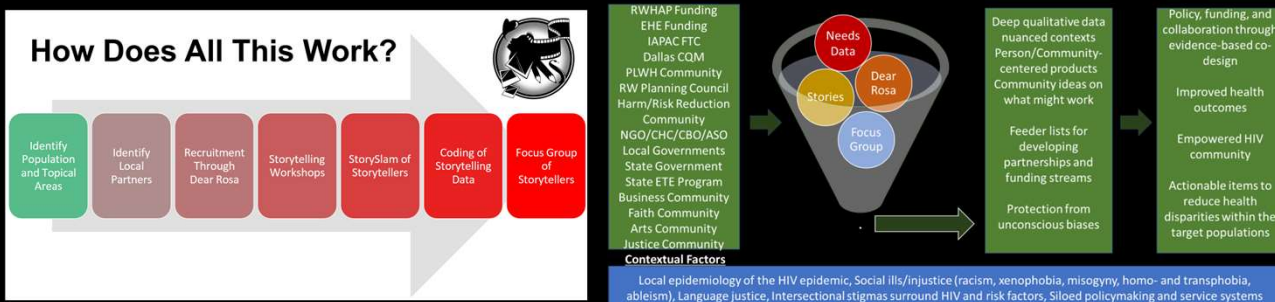
The most important thing in life is people and the essence of a person is their story! We can learn a lot from one another
Quality initiatives are focused on quantitative data, but are lacking qualitative data to understand root causes
We can create a valid means of distilling actionable data points from community storytelling around specific issues

Storytelling data is a unique solution by creating a rich source of information on background drivers of results
Community develops stories, which are coded by experts with lived experience, results are fed back to storytellers

We created this intervention for use in healthcare quality initiatives, but also works for education and environment studies
These activities work for community engagement around sales, developing market innovations, and client satisfaction
People are underutilized tools and resources across a range of needs present across industries and their work

Engaging community like this improves economic resilience, human resource pathways, and creates better change ideas

Methods



Results

We have conducted six cohorts of storytellers
50 storytellers across NJ, range of populations
Each cohort focused on a different unmet need

We were able to prove the local face of issues that have been described in the literature

We have been able to “make real” things that have previously been dismissed as rumors

Incentivizing storytellers along each step is an important factor to maintain engagement

Focusing on “what’s important to people” is an important lens to create storytelling workshops

Sometimes storytellers need anonymity/safety

Cohorts 1-2 Themes (2022)		Cohort 3 Themes (2023)	
Support to help young queer people be their authentic self is needed.		Encouraging positive relationships among girls and young women of color is needed.	
Authenticity and self-love are protective factors that predict health.		Positive relationships among young black women predict later health.	
There are three primary forms of support that predict health/wellness.		There are many opportunities to help girls and young women find community in one another.	
Support from family Support in society Support from an authority figure.		There are many existing interventions that work with black women once they are positive (SISTA, SiHLE, NIA, CLEAR, d-UP, Seeking Safety).	
Absence of these supports and the presence of harmful influences predict increased risks and potential illness over a lifetime.		We shouldn't have to wait until people are sick in order to help them.	
There are many missed opportunities to generate this support for young queer people of color.			
Youth Support Initiatives		Intergenerational Mentorship	
(6/7) energized to protect the youth		(7/7) promotes healing all around	
(6/7) bold education to meet stigma head-on needed		(6/7) give people chance to connect authentically	
(5/7) third spaces needed		(5/7) takes different forms for different subgroups	
(4/7) be better at looking out for risks that send a young person off course		(5/7) learning from people like me is essential	
Stories Help Mitigate Stigma		MVOS Methods Acceptability	
(7/7) people need to know what resources are available to meet needs		(6/7) want to do more storytelling	
(5/7) People in community are isolated		(6/7) appreciate the growth potential	
(5/7) Seeing themselves in others helps drive success in people		(5/7) want to get more involved in this work at different levels	
(4/7) incentivization is essential – gaps in human resource pathway for the HIV community		(3/7) added context to the codebook structure	

Conclusions

Person- and community-first approaches are needed to solve complicated problems in society and across industries.

The public desires to be better involved in examining problems and identifying solutions.

Funders and “system leaders” recognize the power and importance of storytelling to effect change.

People need the opportunity to see themselves in others and it can take time to build momentum for storytelling programs

Storytelling is “very hot” in society, as evidenced by MOTH storytelling hour, PhotoVoice, and other popular interventions.

People find value in getting soft skills, interacting with others, and feeling like they are participating in solving problems

Storytelling information helps identify and firm boundaries of various solution partners in government and industry to prevent overreaching, moral injury, and wasted time and effort.

Storytelling information allows industry partners to identify effective uses of the CSR funds so they can meaningfully be part of the solutions that align with their vision and mission as a corporation

