



Title	Learning from our Stories
Created by	Lisa Handelman, The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington
Intended Audience	Middle School age through adults; individuals with and without disabilities who are willing to share examples of barriers to inclusion
Materials Needed	Flip chart with magic markers *Note – having two facilitators, a leader and a recorder are required for this activity
Program Description	<p>1. Discuss with the group, why it is important to be able to tell your own story. These two quotes can be used to start this discussion:</p> <p><i>“Stories make us more alive, more human, more courageous, more loving.” -Madeleine L’Engle</i></p> <p><i>“If you wish to influence an individual or a group to embrace a particular value in their daily lives, tell them a compelling story.” -Annette Simmons</i></p> <p>2. Ask everyone to think of a time when they felt accepted and included (give everyone a few minutes to think about this)</p> <p>3. Make sure everyone has a partner – for each pair, decide who will be “A” and who will be “B”. At first A will be talking and B will be listening and then the roles will switch. The group leader(s) will be listening to the stories in order to identify shared themes and examples.</p> <p>4. The A partner shares with the B partner a time when he/she felt accepted and included. (2 minutes)</p> <p>5. The B partner shares with the A partner a time when he/she felt accepted and included. (2 minutes)</p> <p>6. The group leader shares some of what he or she <i>noticed</i> when listening to the stories. The recorder writes these shared themes or examples on a flipchart for all to see. Label the sheet of the flip chart “Inclusive Stories”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I noticed that some of you said you felt... - I noticed that some of the places where some of you felt included and accepted were.... - I noticed that some of the people you felt included and accepted by were ... - The group is welcome to add to this list <p>7. Ask everyone to think of a time when they did <u>not</u> feel accepted or included (give everyone a few minutes to think about this)</p>

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8. The A partner shares with the B partner a time when he/she did not feel accepted and included. The group leader listens in on some of the stories being told. (2 minutes)
9. The B partner shares with the A partner a time when he/she did not feel accepted and included. The group leader listens in on some of the stories being told. (2 minutes)
10. The group leader shares some of what he or she *noticed* when listening to the stories. The recorder writes these shared themes or examples on a flipchart for all to see. Label the sheet of the flipchart, "Barriers to Inclusion"
 - I noticed that some of you said you felt...
 - I noticed that some of the places where some of you did not feel included and accepted were....
 - I noticed that some of the people you felt excluded and not accepted by were ...
 - The group is welcome to add to this list
11. The group leader should ask – what can we learn from these stories? How can we all be more accepting and more inclusive? Post the two sheets from the flipchart for all to see. Encourage the group to compare and contrast the two sets of stories and use this information to learn some of what is needed to make someone else feel accepted and included. Ideas should be written on a third sheet of the flipchart for all to see.
12. Return to the first question - why is it important to be able to tell your own story? Encourage everyone to identify one person he or she is willing to tell his/her story to and why they need to hear it.
13. Thank everyone for being willing to share his or her own story. Each story is a gift.