

# **DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

## **Manual for facilitators**



**This is a print version of the original online manual which is published in the project website: [www.digistorid.eu](http://www.digistorid.eu). The print version includes only text and is meant as a tool to run a DS workshop. Pictures, digital stories and appendix can be found in the original online manual.**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Key abbreviations and word explanations

**DS** - Digital Storytelling

**DigiStorID** - Digital Storytelling for up-skilling and empowerment of learners with intellectual disabilities

**People with ID** - People with intellectual disabilities

**Facilitator** - The facilitator is the person guiding and supporting the participants through the process of Digital Storytelling

**Storyteller/participant** - We call the participant of your workshop either storyteller or participant

**Them/they** - We use a gender neutral pronoun throughout the manual

## Background and the basis of this manual

This manual is produced within an Erasmus+ project called “Digital Storytelling for up-skilling and empowerment of learners with intellectual disabilities” (DigiStorID). The main aim of the project has been to develop an innovative learning approach – Digital Storytelling adapted to people with ID.

## To whom is this manual for?

We want to offer an innovative, empowering and fun tool for teachers/caretakers who work with people with ID. This manual will support you in becoming a facilitator of Digital Storytelling, and thus sustain the up-skilling, understanding and empowerment of people with ID that this method can generate.

Manual users are required to have some basic knowledge of using digital devices and editing programmes preferably of the DS method as well. At least, anyone using this method must know their storytellers, people with ID, well enough and have experience in working with the target group. This manual is not a comprehensive guide covering all the aspects, but a supporting material for:

- 1) Teachers, caretakers and assistants who work with people with ID and are interested in expanding their know-how, learning a new working method and applying this method to their work.
- 2) Digital storytelling facilitators who want to learn about facilitating people with ID.

## Easy-to-read manual

In connection with the manual for facilitators, we have produced an easy-to-read manual for the storytellers with intellectual disabilities. The easy-to-read manual follows the building bricks which are developed to be the basic steps for the workshop. These two manuals can be used together in a DS workshop for people with ID: the storyteller can follow the easy-to-read manual and the facilitator follows this manual. Some of our facilitators have found it helpful to give the easy-to-read manual to the participants before the workshop, as they found out it took too much concentration away from the work if they used it during, and it also functions as a very good introduction to the workshop. Some participants have been able to use the easy-to-read manual alone, some have used it only with support from their facilitators, it is up to you to decide what approach to decide. The easy-to-read manual is available in Danish, English, Finnish, Icelandic, Italian, Lithuanian and Slovenian. Links to the different language versions can be found on the project website.

## People with ID in the context of this manual

There are various official classification methods of people with ID. In general, the assessment happens on government level, which then helps to judge how much support the person needs. In this guide we work from the assumption that the facilitators meet each participant as an individual, first without focusing on the diagnosis as a part of a person-centered approach. Classifications can be guidelines, but we want to concentrate on the fact that every person is different and has different needs, desires, interests and abilities.

To meet most of needs, we are presenting a set of building bricks, that can be used to put together the program of your workshop. Each programme point has a few different approach. It is then up to the person (facilitator or personal assistant) who knows the participant to judge which brick will fit best to them. The main principles of this adaption are based on our research and experience through working with people with ID. The building bricks are presented in detail in Chapter 6.

## 2 WHAT IS DIGITAL STORYTELLING?

Digital Storytelling can be understood in various ways, but the method used in this project is called the Berkeley model. It was developed by Dana Atchley and Joe Lambert in the early 90's in Berkeley, California (USA). According to their definition a digital story is "a short, first person video-narrative created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images and music or other sounds". The philosophy behind the method is that everyone has a story to tell.

The method helps people to tell a story, it gives the individual a voice and a possibility to express important aspects of their life. It's a facilitated group process, where the storytellers are heard and respected and where they also learn to listen to each other.

The Digital Storytelling process consists of the following phases, although they naturally flow into each other:

### Creativity

The participants get to know each other and the facilitator establishes a safe space for them to share their personal stories. The participants are then helped to find the story they want to tell through several creative exercises. They also find the imagery and music they want to use in their story.

### Storywork

When the participants have found their story, they start developing their scripts individually. This is followed by the story circle, a central element, where everyone gets to read the rough draft of their script out loud, followed by constructive feedback from the rest of the group.

### Production

When the scripts are done, the participants record their voice-overs which are then imported into a simple film editing program on their device. They furthermore import the imagery and music/sounds they want to use, and start the editing process. If the participants approve, the films are finally shown at a screening and can afterwards be shared online.

## Digital Storytelling is for everyone

We always use simple and free editing tools to keep the method open for everyone no matter what economic and cultural resources they have. A professional product is not the goal but an individual story of a unique storyteller. Digital Storytelling is a powerful form of media expression that enables individuals to bring forth their personal cultures and stories and to explore their creativity. Digital stories can provide everyone a personal voice that gives 'life' to the important issues in our lives and draw people closer to interaction, understanding and personal connection.

## Digital Storytelling supports the development of different types of skills, such as:

- writing
- critical thinking
- self-reflection
- speaking and communication skills
- information literacy
- visual and media literacy
- drama skills
- listening skills
- social skills
- creative skills
- technological skills

## In our understanding, Digital Storytelling is **NOT**:

- a professional product
- fiction
- a documentary film
- promotion
- commercial or PR

### 3 WHY USE DIGITAL STORYTELLING WITH PEOPLE WITH ID?

In the beginning of the DigiStorID project, we carried out a needs analysis which was based on a series of interviews with professionals working with people with ID. All partners in the project conducted interviews in their countries. Our questions focused on the need for Digital Storytelling for people with ID and how the workshop program should be adapted to the target group. All interviewees expressed their support for a method like DS and agreed that there is a need for it. The arguments was that it gives a platform for this marginalized group to express themselves. It humanizes the individuals and shows diversity, which is important, as people with ID are often seen as one homogeneous group. It can thus cherish and promote equality. It gives the participants a chance to have a voice, and as one interviewee said, "It's not about them, it's from them".

The interviewees emphasized the benefits of their clients practicing social skills, to listening to each other and cooperating respectfully, and practicing self-reflection, emotional work and memory work. They found the empowerment extremely important, the self-esteem, self-image and the pride which comes along in the process. The up-skilling in technical skills, creative skills and communication skills were also emphasized.

The interviewees also agreed that there is always a need for caretakers to know more about their clients, and that DS could be very helpful with that. Other interested groups could be family members, friends, school mates, teachers, assistants at school and during free time, people in general who want to know more about disabilities, disability communities and associations as well as decision makers. The small film could also be helpful for the individual participant when it comes to job search. Last but not the least, the interviewees who had worked with the method before, expressed that both clients and parents liked the whole process a lot.

## 4 FACILITATING

We highly recommend everyone without previous knowledge on the method to attend a facilitator training in Digital Storytelling if possible, to achieve your own personal experience of the process. You can find information on where to find a facilitator course on the website of the DigiStorID project.: [www.digistorid.eu](http://www.digistorid.eu)

In general, the people skills that most caretakers/teachers already possess are the most important when facilitating DS. It is good to:

- know your storyteller(s) well
- be open-minded, positive and patient
- be able to inspire and motivate - focusing on the resources of the participants
- be attentive and able to understand the basic dynamics of the group
- understand confidentiality and ethics
- understand when the storyteller is tired or the concentration drops and facilitator is able to react accordingly
- be able to keep your own opinions in the background and keep in mind that you are a tool for the storyteller
- be able to help the storyteller to use the editing program and do the voice recording
- be able to challenge the storytellers without pushing them too much

### The role of the facilitator is:

- to decide what building bricks are relevant to use with the individual participant/the group
- to guide and support the participants carefully through every step of the workshop, explain what is going to happen next, and to provide accurate and understandable instructions/explanations
- to create a safe space, where the participants feel comfortable and at ease, where they respect each other in the group and give each other space to share
- to step in with needed abilities throughout the process. Those abilities can be used as the pen, the hands or the voice of the storyteller

### Choosing building bricks

The idea is to use all the building bricks from one to ten. This will take your participants through the whole Digital Storytelling process. As the facilitator, your role is to choose which "sub building bricks" to use, based on what you judge to be most appropriate for your storytellers, depending on their skills and capacity.

It is desirable that you know your storytellers well to do this, alternatively that you have been briefed about the participants and their abilities beforehand. When choosing the bricks, always focus on the individual. Some parts of the bricks are group exercises, but it is always possible to adjust them to the individual storyteller. If you have a diverse group with different levels of abilities, the participants might be able to help each other. Don't be afraid of trying out the exercises, also if you think they might be too difficult for your storyteller. You might discover skills you didn't know about, or new ways to do the exercises.

## Guiding and supporting

The facilitator is a guide who takes the storyteller through the whole process. The facilitator is not the expert or authority on the story and the facilitator should absolutely not decide how the storyteller should tell their story or decide what is best for them. See yourself as the birth helper. You are there by your participants' side all the time, to help them bring out their story and their personal voice. Be extra sensitive when facilitating people with ID, as there might be a tendency towards helping by doing the things for them. Let your participants do as much as possible themselves, and support them in their choices, even though you might have chosen differently.

## Creating a safe space

The safe space seems to be especially important with our target group if they are to do emotional work and self-reflection. It is important that the storyteller knows their facilitator in order for them to feel comfortable and safe. If they don't, focus extra on the first two bricks which are meant to establish the safe space while you get to know each other.

Build up the safe space from the beginning by respecting the borders of your participants and giving them the opportunity to say no. Respect silence, if someone needs time, emotions and also no emotions. This is particularly important when working with people with ID who sometimes have difficulties expressing their desires and right to self-determination. The facilitator must be aware of the possibility that the storyteller wishes to please the facilitator more than stating their own opinions.

Each storyteller is unique and has their own ideas, beliefs, memories and abilities. Facilitators should honor the individuals through the whole process and treat each storyteller as a unique personality.

Aim towards facilitating a positive group dynamic. If possible, agree on ground rules with the group. That could be to respect each other, not to interrupt and to listen to each other carefully. If someone oversteps the rules, remind them calmly. Facilitators need to be aware of those storytellers who have challenges in their

Behavior, and need to be prepared how to avoid the influence of this kind of behavior on the safe space of the rest of the group. Create comfortable workshop settings, where there is space for concentrated work, but also space for the participants to go aside and spend some time alone.

The group or a single storyteller may need different help, time frame, approach or instructions than you preliminary planned. Respect their needs and desires and be willing to make changes to your plans accordingly.

## Step in with needed abilities

Sometimes a participant will need your help to do something that they are not able to. It could be to help them write, if they have no literacy, or to record their voice over, if they have no spoken language. Always see yourself as a tool of the storyteller, the one that gives them the opportunity to express themselves in the way they want. Make sure that you are not taking over their story, to tell it in the way that you think the storyteller wants to tell it. Instead have them by your side at all times, and make it clear to them, that they are the ones in charge of their story, and that they are making the decisions.

If the participant gets help from friends and family during the workshop, for example to help remembering parts of the story, be extra attentive to the agency of the storyteller. We have experienced that they, in the best meaning of course, tend to take over, and start telling the story for the storyteller.

It is furthermore important to have enough time, especially in the beginning, when doing self-reflection and emotional work. In all parts of the process, we have seen that, if there is little time, there is also little agency. The more facilitators rush, the more they take over the storytelling, as it is often faster if they do it. This is obviously not the intention and it defeats the purpose of the process. Before your workshop think about how much time your individual participants might need and how long they can stay focused, and try to plan the workshop thereafter. We know that it can be difficult to find time enough in different organisations, but think it through beforehand as it might be better to have no workshop than a rushed workshop.

If you don't have any experience with editing software, it is recommended to try and go through the process yourself before facilitating. Try to make your own film in the editing program that you are planning to use in the workshop, and try to record your voice. This will give you the basic skills in the software you want to use, and that is very helpful to have before facilitating. If possible, it can be helpful to empower your participants with basic computer skills before the DS workshop, this can save time and give further opportunity for the participant to be an active part in the editing process.

## 5 BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

### The Venue

Find a place where you can work comfortable with all your storytellers. A room that they already know can be a good idea, as this helps you to create a safe space. You will need tables and chairs for each storyteller and enough space to do energizers or to sit in a circle. It is also an advantage to have a quiet space where the participants can relax or draw back during the workshop and it is furthermore important to have a quiet room for the voice recording.

### Creative materials

It's good to have white and colored paper, pens, crayons, colored pencils, whiteboard markers when using a whiteboard, scissors, glue and postcards for the creative work. As an extra you may have for example musical instruments, wadding, waste material such as goods for clothing, leather, wool, newspapers, different objects from nature (wood, flowers, stones etc.) and other creative materials for the participants to create visuals and audio.

### Technical equipment

#### Device

First of all your storytellers need a device to work on, preferably a laptop or a tablet. It should be able to handle an editing programme without breaking down. For some participants in our target group it's an advantage to work on a tablet, as the direct contact to the screen is easier to access, whereas others might be used to work with a PC. It's also doable to work on a smart phone if nothing else is available, but it of course requires some fine motor skills, as the screen is smaller.

#### Editing software

All participants need an editing program installed on their device. As this is such a fast-developing area, we suggest that you spend a little time researching what is best to the specific device right now. iMovie is for example a good option on Macs and iPads right now, but in a couple of years there might be a new and better option. The most important is that the editing program should be simple to use, easy to get and preferably free. Be aware that many free options has a watermark when you export the video, try to avoid these programs.

In case you are not very familiar with digital devices or editing programs, you should be well prepared for the workshop by making a couple of stories by yourself. Basic skills are enough. If possible, it is always nice to have a person who is good with technical issues in your workshop. Read more about editing in chapter 6 on the building bricks (brick 8).

## Headphones

Each participant needs a pair of headphones as it has to be fairly quiet in the workshop room, for people to concentrate. You also need one set for yourself, to be able to hear the audio of the films. It is also very important to have a split stick which connects two headphones, as it makes it possible for you to listen to the story at the same time as your storyteller, and thus eases the feedback process for you.

## Projector and speakers

For the screening, you will need a projector. Take your time to learn how to use it in advance, and always check if it works properly before you begin the screening. You of course also need a white smooth wall or a white canvas to project to and at least one good speaker. Again, take your time to learn how to connect the speakers and how they work.

## Smartphone

If the participants are not working on a tablet, it is a good idea to have a smartphone for taking pictures and recording sounds for the story.

## Microphone

You will need a microphone to record the voice-over, alternatively use a smartphone or tablet, which can record in really good quality. This can in some cases even feel better for the storyteller, as it's a tool many people use in their everyday life. Just make sure to test it first, to see how the sound quality is. Read more about the voice-over recording in chapter 6 on the building bricks (brick 5).

## Process chart

The process chart shows where the participants are in the process and it follows the building bricks. It's both helpful for you as a facilitator, as you can keep an overview of where the participants are, but it's also a strong tool for the storytellers, who gets a sense of moving forward and the motivation from that. They get a

confirmation that they are successful with their work and they often feel very proud when they can tick off a task. It is an advantage to use pictograms as well as text in the process chart, for those who cannot read or need pictorial support to understand the different phases of the story work.

## Number of facilitators

It is different from situation to situation how many facilitators there should be per storyteller. Some storytellers will need one to one facilitation, as they need their facilitator to aid them in many things, and sometimes these storytellers will have a personal helper around them at all times, who can then step in when needed. If it's a resourceful group there can be up to 6 participants per facilitator, but we always recommend that you are at least two facilitators in a workshop, as it is important to have support in some situations.

Many facilitators will probably find themselves in a situation where they are too few to be around all storytellers, all the time. It is therefore important to find tasks which the storytellers can do on their own, and it is a good idea to establish groups where the storytellers are able to help each other.

The facilitator might also consider to ask friends or relatives to help with the workshop, but it is very important to underline that it is the storytellers' story and that they should keep ownership of it by doing so much as they can themselves.

## Working hours

The amount of time our target group is able to work per day varies a lot, some might be able to work 30 minutes before needing a break, some have a longer concentration span. It is of course also different from organization to organization how much time per week there will be to implement the workshop. The programme is therefore consisting of building bricks which can be fitted to the concentration span and the abilities of your storytellers and to the existing schedule of your organization.

We have experienced that spending a few hours every day in around two weeks is a suitable amount of time for a workshop, but you might need shorter or longer time. Only remember that it is important to have enough time for your storytellers, to help them feel comfortable and to ensure the highest degree of agency to their side. We also recommend that the workshop is not spread over a long time period, as it might be difficult for the participants to remember their work and what they have done, if too much time passes in between.

## How do I find my participants and how do I prepare them?

Everyone is able to take part in a Digital Storytelling workshop, no matter what abilities they possess. It varies how much the participants can do themselves, and therefore it is, as before mentioned, crucial that you know your storyteller well before the workshop, so you can choose the right building bricks and find a balance between challenging and up-skilling and knowing when to help.

It is of course crucial that the storyteller is willing to participate by their own choice. Depending on the legislation of the country you're in, you might also need consent from legal guardians. In any case, it is important to inform both participants and close family members thoroughly about the workshop before it takes place. Here the easy to read manual for people with ID can be helpful, as it explains what is going to happen in the process. Always prepare the participants for the group work: talk about cooperation with other participants, respecting others, listening to others, receiving and giving feedback and other social rules in general.

Make sure that your participants have the time needed for the workshop, so that they don't have to stop half way through.

### The group

As described earlier, it is utterly important that all participants in the workshop are treated individually based on their particular abilities and disabilities. It is difficult to conclude whether to work with a fairly homogeneous group of participants or not, there are pros in doing both. The homogeneous group makes the group work easier. It makes it easier to plan a workshop if the concentration span among the participants is fairly similar, it increases the chance that no one gets bored because they are too far behind or too far ahead and it is easier for the facilitator to handle the sharing situations if there is a similar level of understanding. On the other hand, you cannot overestimate the many benefits of meeting people who are different than yourself.

DS is a group process and the group is indeed an essential element of the process, as it is important also for people with ID to practice their cooperation skills. But as we work with people with special needs, and often need one to one facilitation, it can be necessary to work with only a small group. This of course also depends on the resources available in your organisation.

## 6 BUILDING BRICKS

This chapter describes how you and your participants with ID can work through a Digital Storytelling process step by step. Each brick has different options, and it's up to you, as the facilitator, to choose which and how many options your participants will benefit from. You are meant to challenge your participants, without pushing too hard. Note that it is important to use the bricks where your participants are able to do as much as possible by themselves. Our aim is to give our participants a chance to tell their own story on different levels that Digital Storytelling offers, not to tell their story for them

### **BRICK 1: Getting to know each other/energizers**

#### **Working with: social skills**

The first brick is important if the participants are unfamiliar with each other, or if you as a facilitator are not very familiar with them. It will help create a safe space when the participants slowly get to know each other and start sharing small bits and pieces about themselves. Brick 1 is similar to Brick 2 (where the participants find their story), we use creative exercises and start sharing, and it might be that the participant, already during brick 1, finds the story they want to tell. It's often a good idea to use more of the exercises in brick 1, depending on how well the participants know each other already, and it can also be beneficial to use brick 1 throughout the workshop, as energizers and to continue socializing and creation of the safe space. All energizers or name games you might know are good at this point, but here are some suggestions.

#### **Brick 1a: The wrong name tag. Good outside.**

All participants get a name tag, but it's not theirs! Now it's their task to walk around to each other (at the same time) and ask for names until they find the right person that the tag belongs to. Participants with zero or minor literacy can have a picture added on the tag, or the participants can have their own name written on the chest on another tag, which the other participants can then compare their given name tag with.

## Brick 1b: Draw a self portrait

All participants get a blank paper and something to draw with, and now you ask them to draw themselves. Hereafter it's time to share if they want. They all show the portrait to the others, explaining about the drawing and why they drew it like that. Be ready to ask questions about the drawing, and try to get them to tell a bit about themselves through it. The drawings can later be used in the film, if the storyteller wants to, so make sure to keep them.

## Brick 1c: Circle of sharing

A good way to start the morning and also to exercise listening to each other. All participants and you sit down in a circle. Make sure there are no empty chairs or big "holes" in the circle and sit close enough to hear each other. Now give a question (see further down) that everyone gets time to answer in turn. Many of the questions focus on the positive, but if you want to try and talk about more difficult topics, there are also some questions for that. Remember that there should be time for emotional support if needed, especially if you ask these questions.

Question suggestions:

- Tell about where you live/your room
- Tell about your best friend
- Tell about your favourite hobby
- What is your favourite smell and what does it remind you of?
- If you were an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- Tell about what you are good at
- Tell about your favorite food and when did you eat it the last time
- Tell about your favorite time of the year and why
- Tell about your favorite music and why
- Tell about what you are afraid of
- Tell about something you don't like
- Tell about something you think is difficult

## Brick 1d: The present

Everyone sits in a circle, and one person gives another an imaginary present from an imaginary pile of presents in the middle. The receiver says thank you, opens it, and then uses their imagination to decide what is in that.

parcel. They can show and tell it to the circle. The participant who got the present then gets up and finds another present to give to the person sitting next to them and so it continues.

#### Brick 1e: I like...

Everyone sits in a circle, and then takes turns to make a statement about themselves, for example “I like lions” and then mimes a lion. Then everyone else in the circle who likes lions also stands up and mimes the lion. The one who made the statement then chooses the next one to go on.

#### Brick 1f: Your favorite colour

On the table or on the floor there are many different colours (coloured paper or similar). The participants pick up their favorite colour, and now they should try to find another person in the room with the same color. When they find a person with the same colour, they can talk about it and why it is their favorite (for example “I like blue, because I like the sea...”). Sometimes it’s easier for the participants to express what they like through colour.

## BRICK 2: Finding the story

**Working with: long-term memory, explicit memory recollection, self-reflection, emotional work, creativity, listening skills, sharing skills, literacy skills**

Brick 2 is where we try to activate memory and self-reflection with the participants. We do this through a series of creative exercises and sharing in the group, and hope to spark some memories into life which can be the basis of the story they would like to tell. The exercises work on different levels, and it can be good to use as many as possible. Be aware, though, that it might also confuse some participants if they have found the story they want to tell, and you then ask them to tell other stories (through the exercises). Try to read the participant and judge how many exercises will be beneficial. If a participant has found more stories, you can help them to find the one story they want to tell after the group exercises when you facilitate the individual story work.

It's a good idea to try and observe the emotions of the participants when they tell the story for the first time. This might make it easier for you to help them refine and maybe describe those emotions when the participant writes their script. Be aware that the exercises can be very emotional for some participants, and remember to have time for support if this is needed.

### Brick 2a: Drawing

Give the participants paper and (coloured) pens and ask them to draw their favourite place/their childhood home. They can now show and tell about their drawing to the rest of the group. As a facilitator you can ask about sensuous experiences, smells, sounds, colours, feelings, tastes.

### Brick 2b: Bring a photo

The participants have beforehand been given time to choose one or more (depending on your time) photo(s) of their own. They now sit with the group and in turns share the photo, the story behind it and why they chose it. As a facilitator you can, through guided talk, ask about what happened before the picture was taken, what happened after, what emotions they had etc.

## Brick 2c: The postcard

The participants are given a blank postcard, it doesn't matter what is on the front (you can find free postcards in many cafés). You now ask them to write a postcard to a person who is special to them. They should start with dear ... and then tell a bit about what the person means to them. When they are done, they can read their postcards to the others in the group. With zero or minor literacy, participants still get a postcard, maybe they want to choose the one they like the best and do a small drawing on the backside. When sharing, you can then ask the participants about their drawing, to whom they would like to send the postcard, and what they would like to tell them.

## Brick 2d: An object

The participants are asked to bring an object of their own choice. In the group they then share the story behind the object, and why they have chosen it. It is later possible to use photos of the object in the story, if relevant.

## Brick 2e: Photo safari. Good outside

If the workshop is in a place that is known to the participants, ask them to go for a walk around the premises, find one of their favourite places and take photos of it, with an assistant if needed. They can then share the experience with each other by showing the group the place, and tell the others why this is their favorite place and what they use it for. It is later possible to use the photos in the story, if relevant.

## Brick 2f: Music

The participant choose some music of their own to be played to the others. They then share what memories and maybe emotions it gives them. You can for example ask if they remember when they heard it the first time, who they heard it with or what it reminds them of.

## Brick 2g: Individual facilitated story work

By this time the participants have hopefully all touched upon different memories and stories from their life. It is now the facilitator's job to work with the participants on finding what story they would like to tell. First simply try to ask what story they would like to tell, what story that is most important in this moment. You can use visual support, having the drawings, postcard, object, pictures etc. present.

Then the facilitator can try to ask about the different stories that have popped up during the creative exercises, often it has been clear which ones meant a lot, and which ones a little less. Maybe the participant even touched upon the same story more times? Sometimes the participant wants to tell a totally different story than one that occurred during the creative exercises, and that is of course also fine.

When the story subject has been selected, the task is to try and condense it. It is always a good idea to try and help the participant to find a beginning, a middle and an end. Often stories begin with an initial state of affairs, the middle is some kind of turning point, and the end is a new and changed situation. Try to help find the turning point in the story, and what this turning point has meant to the participant. An example could be:

*"I grew up thinking I was not good at anything, but then I started dancing, since then I have felt much better about myself, and I know everyone is good at something."*

The turning point here is when the participant started dancing, and there is a clear change from the before to the after. Of course it's not always this clear, but to work with it can be a help to structure the story. This might help the audience to understand the story better, but in the end, and more importantly, it can also help the participant's self-reflection.

As a facilitator you can help find the turning point by asking questions. If a participant says "I want to tell a story about dancing", you can ask "do you remember the first time you went dancing?", "why did you start dancing?", "why do you like it?", "what is the best thing about dancing?" etc. To try and help the participant to find concrete situations, and also to facilitate the emotional work that often comes with the storytelling.

Many participants will start out by describing something or someone that they like, "I like dancing, I go every Tuesday with my friends, I'm best at dancing tango and I don't like lambada". This type of descriptive film can also end up to be very good for empowerment and self-recognition. Your job as a facilitator is to help the participant to step further to begin actual story work. It adds another dimension to the story and the participant's self reflection and emotional work.

Working with people with ID, we have often seen that their stories are very positive, they are about the good things in their lives. There is nothing wrong with that, but sometimes it's also beneficial to talk about the more challenging or difficult things in life. DS is a very good tool for that as well. When you facilitate the finding of the

story, you can try to ask questions, which leads your participant in the direction of reflecting on more difficult aspects. Whether they choose to tell their story about it, is of course totally up to them. On this note, we always advise against participants telling a story that is still happening. That means, that if your participant is still going through something difficult, you might encourage them to tell about something else. Remember the tip about the finding the beginning, middle and end. If there is no end, it might not be the right story to tell. If the participant is on the other side of it, though, it can be very beneficial to reflect upon, but be aware that you are not a therapist (unless you are). Always be certain that you can help your participant safely through the process, and if you are working with very difficult stories, consider whether you should have a therapist or another professional available at the workshop for emotional support.

## BRICK 3: Writing script

### **Working with: literacy skills, structure and order of events, self-reflection, emotional work**

No matter how the story is put on paper, a lot of the story work from Brick 2 will interact with Brick 3. Brick 3 is the formation of the story, the setting up of the structure of the narrative. The participant must decide on how to express the story that they have decided on. What order should it be in, in what language should it be expressed, what style and so on. The most important tip here is to keep it simple. The language should be a spoken language, not written. It should rather be like telling the story to a good friend, short sentences and easy words. We invite all participants to tell their story in first person, as this will ensure the focus on the experience of the participant, even though the story could be about someone else.

The script should be no more than 250-300 words, which will result in a film of around 3-5 minutes. If your storyteller speaks very slowly, you can consider to reduce the word count.

#### Brick 3a: Individual facilitated script work

If the participant has a written language, it's the facilitator's job to be there as a support in the writing process. Focus on the content, the story. Grammatical correctness or spelling doesn't matter too much, as the script has to be read out loud anyways (unless, of course, that working with literacy skills is something that you are focusing on). Some participants find it easier to write in hand than on the computer, and that is of course totally up to them.

#### Brick 3b: Writing sentences or keywords

If the participant has little literacy, it's a possibility to write the script in sentences or keywords, which can be a support for the voice recording. Some participants also enjoy coming up with the keywords first and then afterwards work with the facilitator on elaborating the script. When the script is done, it can also be a help to cut sentences out, so the participant can read them one at a time for the voice recording. Keywords can be helpful for the participant to tell the story more freely while their voice is recorded, as they won't be hindered by the reading of the script. There are great benefits in working with a script, so always aim to do that.

### Brick 3c: Storyboarding with photos/story symbols

When the participant has no literacy, it can be helpful to make a storyboard. Perhaps a classic storyboard with squares on a paper, where the participant can do small simple drawings of the storyline. Or it can be bigger, maybe one A4 for each drawing. It can also consist of photos or a mix, as long as it supports the storyteller to remember the course of the story when doing the voice recording or editing the film.

### Brick 3d: Acting as the pen for the participant

As much as we want the participant to do as much as possible themselves, it can be necessary for the facilitator to act as the pen for the participant. Especially if the participant has no language and the facilitator needs to help with the voice-over later on, it can be helpful to have a fuller script for the facilitator to read it out loud. The script should of course be written strictly based on what the storyteller communicates, be that through language, drawings, photos or other.

### Brick 3e: Record the story without script

In some cases it might be beneficial to ask the participant to record the story without script or even record the participant during some of the exercises in brick 2. Without script it might come out more naturally and can also bring forth memories and stories that wouldn't have come up otherwise. It often involves a lot of editing work afterwards, though, as it will typically be much longer than the recommended length, and more important, the participant will miss out on the beneficial storywork that comes with working on the script.

**FACILITATOR TIP:** I helped piece the parts she [the participant] wanted to included in the story into a cohesive narrative, making sure that she was comfortable with how it came together. I read out parts of the script we were working on, asking: "Should this stay or do you want to change it?". I purposefully made mistakes a couple of times to make sure she wouldn't just say "yes" to every suggestion.

## BRICK 4: Story Circle

### **Working with: reading out loud, sharing skills, literacy skills, listening skills, giving feedback, social skills**

The story circle is an essential part in the process of Digital Storytelling. It is now the participants share their story with the others for the first time, and they receive feedback which often leaves them proud and motivated to continue the work on their story. It might be difficult for some participants to give constructive feedback, but it's a good practice, and also develops the positive group dynamic. Make sure to establish a safe space; have a room where you will not be disturbed, sit in a circle with no empty chairs or participants sitting a little outside, agree on the "rules" for the story circle with the participants, that they don't interrupt each other, that they listen and that they are respectful to each other if they give feedback.

#### Brick 4a: Reading script out loud

The participants read the draft of their script out loud in turn. Give them the opportunity to say something before or after if they want. Every participant should roughly get the same time to share and get feedback, depending on their abilities to read. It can be emotional and difficult for some participants, so make sure that they have the right emotional support, also afterwards. Make sure no one interrupts while a participant is sharing. No phones and no open laptops is a rule we always agree on with our participants.

#### Brick 4b: Telling the story from memory

If the storyteller doesn't have a script or is not able to read, they are welcome to tell the story from memory. Make sure that they still stick to the appointed time, and also stick to the one story they want to tell. Maybe with support from storyboard, visuals or the facilitator.

#### Brick 4c: Facilitator reads the script

If the storyteller doesn't have a language or is not able to read, the facilitator can read the script out loud in the story circle. Make sure, of course, that the storyteller is there in the circle, and that the feedback is directed to the storyteller, not the facilitator.

## The size of the circle

The more time and support the participants need for the story circle, the smaller it should be. The number of participants should be two to six. This also applies if there is a short concentration span among the participants. We normally say that the story circle shouldn't be broken up and continued at a later time. This discontinues the safe space, and might be hard on some participants.

## Feedback

If it's difficult for the participants to give feedback, we have experienced that using big emoji cards is working very well (find the ones you want to use online, print them in big (A5) and laminate). Start the story circle by explaining what each card symbolises. Do not use any angry or possible insulting emoticons, but the positive, sad, surprised and so on. They are handed out to all participants, and when a storyteller is done sharing the story, they can be held up, of course using the one that fits their opinion of the story. If someone would like to give spoken feedback, try to make sure that the person giving feedback is either positive and/or constructive, and that they stick to the story that was shared, and doesn't wander off into their own stories. It's important to give an equal amount of time and space to the participants and their stories, no matter if they are the talkative or shy types.

If it's difficult for participants to remember, it is possible to use visuals that symbolise each story. If one storyteller is telling about their grandmother, it could be a picture or drawing of her, that the other participants can look at, while the story is shared. The feedback can then be accompanied by the picture or drawing, which will remind the participants of which story it is.

## BRICK 5: Voice Recording

### **Working with: reading out loud, literacy skills, technical skills**

The voice-over is a personal layer in the film, important to the understanding of the story. It can be frightening to hear your own voice recorded, but we think that it is important that we hear the storyteller, if in any way possible.

The recording can be done with most smartphones with a very clear outcome, and if you don't have a recording app, they are easy to find for free. The smartphone is easy to handle, it is often "safe" and familiar for the participants, and you don't have to invest in extra gear. You can of course also use a microphone if you wish, either with your phone or connected to a computer.

**FACILITATOR TIP:** When recording the voice-over, the learner was very nervous and had difficulties to talk. But then we gave her her own mobile phone to speak into while recording. That immediately helped the learner to talk more fluently, as she was used to talking on the phone and felt safe with that.

Always check the quality of the recording, it can be very negatively dominant for the final film, if you can't hear what is being said because of bad audio quality. If the participant is difficult to understand, it can be helpful to add subtitles later on. For sound editing and sometimes recording we use simple and free software. Some video editing programs also have functions for sound editing, if this is easier for you. Often a few things need to be cut out, this can for example be background noise, participant mistakes, or the facilitator helping.

It is always a good idea to practise with the participant to read the script out loud before the voice recording, it greatly increases the quality of the recording. Then the participant, maybe with the facilitators help, can make notes in the script, when to make breaks, when to talk slower, how to pronounce difficult words etc.

For the recording it's important to find a comfortable, quiet place where the participant feels safe. It can be difficult in some venues, but try to think about this beforehand. It could be that you need to make arrangements with the surroundings, so people don't slam doors, play loud music etc. Avoid bathrooms or bigger rooms as the acoustics will be off, and if you can, build a little "studio" out of pillows, blankets or the like, in front and over the microphone and participant, as this will both increase quality of recording and decrease the background noise.

## Tips for the best audio quality

**Tip 1: Set up a “home studio”.** Sound quality is really important, especially if you have participants who are not speaking very clearly. Find a quiet room, preferably with a lot of heavy stuff, furniture, books etc. which absorbs sound. Check that there is no background noise (ventilators, fridges or the like), and set up so the participant can stand or sit comfortably. Never use the bathroom, basement or other places with echo. If needed bring in extra carpets, pillows and blankets for “lining” of the area around the microphone.

**Tip 2: Relax.** Remind the participant to relax and ask them not to be afraid of using pauses while recording.

**Tip 3: Don’t hold the paper.** If the participant is reading from a paper, find a place for them to put it, where they can still read it. If they hold the paper, it creates a lot of background noise when the paper is touched. If the participant is reading from their computer, be aware that if the ventilation of the computer starts, it will be picked up by the microphone.

**Tip 4: If using a microphone,** check if the microphone has different settings, and make sure it is as directional as possible.

**Tip 5: Always record the voice-over in one take.** If the participant makes a mistake, coughs or if there is a loud noise outside, that is fine, ask them to stop, go back and say the same sentence again while the recording is running. It is easy to cut the mistakes out afterwards. Never try to merge more different recordings, it is always possible to hear the difference when two different recordings are cut together. The voice is slightly different, the emotional tone, the background noise, the distance to the microphone etc. If perfectionism kicks in and the participant wants to record again because of a small mistake it often ends up worse. Try to insist to let it go and accept that you cannot control everything.

**Tip 6: Start and end with 3 seconds of silence.** It’s easy to cut out, but if you end the recording too soon and accidentally cut out some of the voice it’s difficult to mend. The silence can also be used to insert breaks in the recording, or if needed to remove background noise, so it’s good to have something to work with.

**Tip 7: Use a pointer to help the reader.** You can use a pen or the like to point at the words when the participant reads. It can help them to know where they are in the text and help them pace themselves. Just be careful not to make noise while pointing at the paper.

## Brick 5a: Recording script

The participant reads their script out loud. Preferably have the script printed. It should be in big enough letters to be read without problems and in paragraphs to help the overview of the script. Help your participant beforehand to write notes and/or highlight sentences in the script, to help them remember pauses, difficult words etc. It is also possible to divide the text into more pages or to cut out sentences, to make it easier for the participant to read.

**FACILITATOR TIP:** We broke the script down so each sentence had its own line on the paper. The participant then read it out while I used a pen to point to each word to help her keep time and not lose track. If she made a mistake, I used the pen to indicate for her to stop for a few seconds (lifted it up from the paper) and then indicated for her to start again from the beginning of that line, to make editing later easier.

## Brick 5b: Recording the story from memory

If the participant has written the script as key words or in form of a visual storyboard/pictures they can record the story from memory supported by this. Again it's easy to cut in the recording afterwards, so if the participant needs a guiding word or support from the facilitator to remember, that's totally fine, just remove the facilitator's voice afterwards.

## Brick 5c: Call and response

It's also possible to do a call and response with the participant, if they have a written script, but are not able to read it. The facilitator can then read a sentence which the participant repeats and so forth. The facilitator is afterwards cut out of the recording. Make sure to try and have a breath's break between the facilitator and the participant talking, that will make it easier to edit.

## Brick 5d: Facilitator/other person records script

As much as we want the participant to do as much as possible for themselves, it can be necessary for the facilitator or another person to act as the voice of the participant. But even though the facilitator is the one being recorded, always have the storyteller in the room, and if they have any sounds or other alternative communication, record that as well. Again to ensure the highest possible degree of participation and to keep the story personal.

## BRICK 6: Creating Imagery

### **Working with: creativity, technical skills, cooperation skills**

When creating imagery, it should of course fit to the story that is told. It doesn't always have to be shown one to one what the storyteller says in their story, it can also be symbols, ideas or emotions, which add another layer to the story. Have as many creative materials as possible ready for this building brick. Colours, coloured paper, old magazines etc. Of course also think about available time, so if you bring forth for example water colours, make sure that the participants have the time to use them. Ensure that the participant has access to their old photo albums or online photos, and that there is a camera (smartphones are great) which they can use.

#### Brick 6a: Looking for pictures in the photo album or online

Nothing prompts memory as old photos, and they have a wonderful effect in Digital Storytelling. They show time, they show development, they tell the story in another way, and they add a very personal touch to the story. So we always ask our participants to look in their old photo albums or through their photos online, to find some photos that mean something special to them. This single prompt is often more than enough to get participants telling stories, and thus also gives a visual basis early in the process. Own photos are not protected by copyright, and finding photos it's a simple task which can often be done alone by the participant.

#### Brick 6b: Taking pictures/videos

Yet another creative and fairly simple task is that the participants take their own photos/videos. There are of course endless opportunities. It can be of themselves posing for the story, pictures of objects or places in the vicinity. There will always be something to photograph which can symbolise the content of the story on some level. They can ask other participants to be their "actors" or "models", or help them to take the pictures, and it is a very good task for the participants to cooperate. Be aware that the participants are not using too much video for their stories. Most of the freeware editing programs we use are not able to carry the load of a lot of heavy video material. It will make devices crash all the time and cause a lot of frustration.

## Brick 6c: Drawing/paintings

The visuals can of course also consist of drawings. Again a simple and creative task, when the participants are done with the drawing, they can take a photo of it, and it is ready for the film. Many storytellers also choose to make their credits handwritten/drawn, and all this makes great visual material for the stories. It's personal and it doesn't matter the least if the storyteller is "good" at drawing. It comes from the same place (their minds) as their story and will thus convey the same message, no matter how abstract. If it's difficult for the participant to draw, maybe it can help to find a picture to draw after, or the facilitator or another participant can help drawing and then the participant can colour it.

## Brick 6d: Storyboarding

It can be helpful for some to make a storyboard to get an overview of where to put the different imagery. Either a classic storyboard with squares on a paper, where the participant can write key words and do small simple drawings of the story line. Or it can be bigger, maybe one A4 for each drawing. It can also consist of photos or a mix, as long as it supports the storyteller to remember the course of the story and where to put which photos. It can also show where there might be missing imagery, which can then be created or found.

## BRICK 7: Music and sounds

### Working with: creativity, technical skills

Music or background sounds are not a must in Digital Storytelling, sometimes the story stands better with the voice-over alone, but music can underline emotions and atmosphere, and it can also be a creative and reflective process to find it. An important thing to remember is that participants should always find music without lyrics, unless the music is playing while there is no voice-over (during credits or the like). To have music with lyrics in the background of the voice-over creates a very confusing soundscape, and is difficult to understand for the audience. Always make sure that any background music or sounds are put low in the editing. We find that participants have a tendency to put it too high, which makes it hard to hear the voice-over. Another important aspect is of course copyright. If the film is to be shared afterwards, for example on social media, it's important that the participants use copyright free music.

#### Brick 7a: Looking for music online

There are several places online where you can find music that is legal to use in the films (one is [creativecommons.org](https://creativecommons.org)) and if you use iMovie, it has its own library of music to use. Make sure to write down the name of the artist and the place you found it whenever something is downloaded for use. That will prevent hours spent on trying to find it again, when you have to mention the artist in the credits (something we experience quite often). Finding music online is a task participants can often spend hours and hours to do, as there are unlimited various music pieces out there. That can of course be positive, as it is a task which is fairly simple for the individual participant, and might release time for the facilitator to use with other participants, but please also be aware that time can fly by with this.

#### Brick 7b: Create own music or sounds

If you have the time and facilities, it's lovely when participants create their own music, or even sometimes create music for each other. There will be no problems with copyright, and it often becomes very personal and connected to the story. There are endless possibilities, it can be as simple as humming, footsteps, bells etc. and it can also be music played with instruments, a simple guitar strumming, some notes on the piano etc.

## Brick 7c: Facilitator suggests music

If it is difficult for the participant to either search for or create music, it is always a possibility that the facilitator can find a few pieces of music that the participant can choose from. This can also be a good solution if you have limited time.

## Brick 7d: Sound safari. Good outside

Go for a walk with your participant and bring a phone or another microphone. Invite the participant to listen for sounds. What sounds are there that could be relevant for the story. It can either be in the surroundings of the workshop venue or if the story takes place in specific surroundings, and it's possible, it can also be great to go there or a similar place to find sounds. For example, if the story is about a café where a participant works, they could go there and record the sounds of the guests and the coffee machine.

## BRICK 8: Editing story

### **Working with: technical skills, structure and order of events**

The editing process is where the participant put all the layers of the story together in their editing program. The voice recording, the visuals and maybe the sounds and music. It's of course important that it is put together, so that it makes sense to the story. If possible, let your participants work with the editing themselves. A big part of editing is to drag and drop pictures in the order that fits the voice over, and that is a fairly simple task, accessible for many. Many can also adjust the size and duration of the pictures, write text and add transitions. Some participants might need the facilitator to take over the mouse, but as always, make sure your participant sits next to you and participates actively in what you're doing, it is after all their decision how the story should be edited. Many participants find it easier to use a tablet and thus let the fingers directly touch the screen instead of a mouse.

It's beneficial if the participant has the possibility to practice working with computers before the workshop. That, and plenty of time for this part of the process, seems to be the way to the highest degree of agency. It can be very tempting for a facilitator to take the mouse, especially if you don't have a lot of time, but try to keep your hands in the pocket, and instead explain and show on the screen.

We always use simple and free software, but it's an ever changing world, and we therefore won't recommend any specific ones here. There are many different options from extremely simple to very professional video editing programs. But remember, the aim of Digital Storytelling is not a professional film, so no matter how good you or your participants are at editing videos, try to simple it down. Go with the easy programs, this will also limit the time the participants are using on details.

This is also a part of the program that many facilitators are afraid of, especially if they haven't worked much with computers before. It is definitely nice to have someone on the team who knows a lot about the technical part, but you really get a long way with a basic knowledge of computers. Spend some time with the program before you facilitate it, watch some tutorials online, try to make your own test film, and then you will be able to facilitate most editing programs.

There will probably be many situations where you don't know what to do, there will be bugs in the program, and problems with the technology, but a search engine and patience are your best friends! Search for the problem online, and you will most likely find an answer. If computers or programs start crashing, try to restart, take a breath and see what happens.

## Tips for editing!

**Tip 1: Save often!** Some programmes save automatically, some don't. Make sure that the work is saved often and from the start.

**Tip 2: Keep all material for the film in one folder on the computer's desktop.** Voice over, photos, drawings etc. should be kept in one folder from the beginning and not be removed from there. If you move the files after you have put them in the editing programme, many programmes won't be able to find them again, and it won't work.

**Tip 3: Turn the music down.** We unfortunately see very often that the music is too loud compared to the voice-over in the final films. It is a mistake that can ruin the film, as you are not able to hear the voice-over. Remember that it is background music and turn it down. (When you and your participant come to the final edit you have probably heard the voice-over many times, and it makes you a bit numb to the sound of it, so it can be a good idea to ask someone else if the audio levels are right).

## Final edit and export

No matter how far the participants are, it's time for them to let go when it comes to the final edit. Maybe they are far enough to sit with small details, like transitions, fading etc., maybe the most important thing is just to get the last pictures in the right order, but always make sure to have enough time for them to make the credits. These can be written in the programme or the participant can write/draw them on paper which they then take a picture of and import to the programme. If the participant is not able to write, you can help by writing it in hand, which they then might be able to copy, more or less like copying a drawing.

You are now ready for the final export, and be aware that it can take a long time (depending on the programme, and how heavy the files are). So don't leave it to the last moment before the screening. When the stories are exported as a video file, you collect them all on your own hard disk, so that you are ready for the screening.

## BRICK 9: Screening and celebration

### **Working with: social skills, sharing skills, listening skills, feedback skills**

The hard work is done, and it's time for the celebration. First and foremost it is important to ask if the participants are ok that their films are being shown at the screening. We mostly make the screenings for the group alone, but it's also possible to invite other interested, maybe family members, friends or other caretakers. If this is the case, make sure the participants know, and are happy to show their film, otherwise don't show it! Most will be proud to, but some might not be interested in sharing it, and that is also fine. If a participant is not able to be at the screening, don't show their film. It is their personal story, and they should be there when it is shown for the first time. Again, it's about advocacy and participation.

The screening should be set up to be special. Try to make a movie theatre atmosphere, buy some snacks and popcorn, put chairs in rows, darken the place so the films can be seen clearly, and make sure that your projector and speakers work properly.

The screening is not only a long row of films. Please also give the storytellers a chance to say something about their story or the process if they want, and afterwards there should be room for the rest of the group to give feedback. This time only positive, and again only if the storyteller wants it. Have plenty of breaks, so that no one needs to leave the room while a film is shown, and also so the participants get a chance to digest the many impressions. Invite the participants to follow the story circle rules, storytellers can be vulnerable and nervous when their story is shown on the big screen.

The life of the story after the showing is of course also up to the storyteller. If you want to share it online, make sure that you get a sharing agreement, where the participants give consent to have their story published. The storyteller should always have the possibility to get their film removed, no matter what they have agreed on. Remember, the story belongs to the storyteller and it should only be shared with their approval.

## Feedback

If it's difficult for the participants to give feedback, we have experienced that using big emoji cards is working very well (find the emojis you want to use online, print in big, and laminate). Start out by explaining what each of them means. Do not use any angry or possible insulting emojis, but the positive, sad, surprised and so on. They are handed out to all in the audience, and after a film is shown, they can be held up, of course using the one that fits best to the audience's opinion of the story. If someone would like to give spoken feedback, try to make sure that the person giving feedback sticks to the story that was shared, and doesn't turn focus to their own stories. It's important to give an equal amount of time and space to each participant and their story, no matter if they are the talkative or shy types..

## **BRICK 10: Evaluation/reflections with the participant**

### **Working with: self-reflection, emotional work**

It is important to evaluate the different exercises with the participant throughout the process, especially if you want to use the method again and with other participants. The reflection also gives you an opportunity to check in with the participant, and see how they are doing. Some parts of the process can be quite emotional, stressing or draining for the participant and it is your role as a facilitator to give (or give access to) the emotional support that your participant needs. It's also a very good way to tell if the participant needs a break or sometimes are able to work longer than you thought.

Use a guiding talk with sub questions, and also ask if some things were less nice or difficult to experience. Maybe less pleasant memories or thoughts have been brought forth, and it might be good if the storyteller reflects upon this.

There is a little challenge, as we have found that the participants in the target group are often very eager to please, and sometimes will tell you what they think you want to hear. In this case it can be useful to ask "opposite" questions. So even though the participant looks happy, you could for example ask if they feel sad or angry.

It is possible to use emoji cards also when evaluating or reflecting, and it might be easier for the participant to express their emotions through them. In that case there should of course also be cards that express feelings like anger, sadness etc. Cards that wouldn't be used as feedback cards.

A very useful tool is the process chart which follows the building bricks. You can draw it on a big poster and hang it on the wall or on a white board. It should be visible for all. It helps you as a facilitator to monitor where the participants are in the process, but it also helps the participants to keep track of where they are, how far they have to go and also helps them to stay motivated in the process. It's a good idea to let the participant write their name on the process chart themselves, and then, whenever they have completed a building brick, they can go to the chart and tick it off, alternatively make a little drawing which symbolises this part of the process.

Our participants have often been drawing smileys, hearts, stars or the like, give them the opportunity and give them different colours to choose from. It gives the participants a great boost of self-confidence and pride when there is a brick to tick off.

## Brick 10a: Evaluating after each exercise

It is a good idea to evaluate after each exercise/brick, as it can be difficult for the individual to remember the exercises after the whole process. You can set a little time off at the end of each session, and ask a few questions.

## Brick 10b: Evaluating with a picture of the exercise

In combination with brick 10a, you can take photos during the exercise/brick and use them as support for the evaluation.

## Brick 10c: Reflection/check in

During the process it can be good to check in with the participants. How are they feeling, do they think it's too much, are they nervous, optimistic, etc. You can use emoji cards, and you can also draw a thermometer with different scales, maybe from happy to sad, and the participants can tell where and why they are on that scale.

It can also be a good idea to exercise memory by starting process every day with a reflection on what happened the other day, supported by pictures, the participant's manual and the process chart.

# 7 IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF THE WORKSHOP

## Listening

It can be hard for the storytellers to stay concentrated and focused enough to listen to the other storytellers, but we have found it beneficial to practice as it is important to learn to listen, communicate and respect boundaries of others. Visual aids might help; a person who is sharing a story shows a picture that is important for the story.

## Feedback

For some people with ID, it is hard to remember and it can therefore be hard for them to give feedback. They might remember their own story and the stories they like. As a facilitator, you can ask some questions to guide and maybe also show a picture, if a storyteller showed one during the sharing. Feedback to the other storytellers should, in most cases, be kept positive, unless the storytellers understand how to give constructive feedback. Feedback with emoji cards or picture cards is an option. After screening a story or sharing a story in a story circle, the rest of the group gives feedback by showing the emoji card which reflects their own opinion best of the story. Emoji cards should be simple and without too many different options. For example heart, smiley, laugh, thumb up and sad face. Simply find the ones you want to use online, print them in big (A5) and laminate.

## Memories

To recall memories of the meaningful moments in our lives is important for most people. Memory levels vary a lot in our target group. Often they have a well-functioning long-term memory, whereas the short-term memory might be less functional. The use of visuals to memorize is recommended throughout the workshop. Recall memories together with family members if possible. But again, be aware that they don't take over telling the story without intention.

Very often the storyteller finds a topic for their story from these recollections and is eager to make a digital story about it. Old photo albums are filled with memories and you can ask the storyteller questions about the photos to hear more details and emotions about the events in their life. Another good way to memorize is to ask the storyteller to draw something that is important to them or asking them to bring an important item and tell about that. You will find these exercises described in more detail in the chapter 6 of the building bricks.

## Self-reflection/emotional work

Self-reflection and emotional work is generally difficult for the target group, but this can be specially focused on when working with DS. The storyteller should be helped by their facilitator to find a story that is meaningful and important for them. It is empowering for the storytellers to work with expression and communication and to practice describing their longings, desires and emotions. In case of sad or negative feelings, the facilitator should pay attention of making the storyteller to feel better again. Be aware of not to open a wound you can't help to close.

## Creativity

Creative work is important for our target group as an alternative way of expressing themselves and their individuality. So, invite the storytellers to draw, paint and write as much as they can. Invite them to take photos and create their own music if possible. During the workshop it is important to have some energizers every now and then to break off the intensive work. Funny energizers boost creativity and playfulness.

## Communication

Communication skills among the participants can vary from small facial movements to clear language skills. Try to find new ways to communicate and to expand skills. For those storytellers who have no spoken language you can use more photos, ask them to draw, film their sign language and/or record their voice and the sounds they might make. Individuality is communicated through much more than just spoken language. If your storytellers cannot draw themselves, you can ask them to find a picture from a magazine which describes their feelings, dreams and desires.

## Digital competences

It of course depends on the abilities of the storyteller, how much of the editing they can do themselves. It is a very time consuming process, so many facilitators choose the easy way out and do the work for them. But remember that every part of the story is owned by the storyteller, and being actively involved in the editing work will not only ensure their agency, it will upskill, empower and strengthen their self-confidence, and it will encourage their decision making. Many participants are able to arrange the photos in the right order fitting them to their voice-over, and to drag and drop them on the timeline. Some can edit the length and size, make transitions and other effects, and write the title and credits. Challenge your participant, and try to keep your own hands in the pockets as much as possible (except for when you point at something on the screen). If nothing else is possible, involve the storyteller actively by having them sit by your side when you do the

editing. Ask them regularly if the edit is how they want it, share headphones with them so they can hear their voice-over, and if they have the ability, let them point and show you where they want their visuals etc. It is always a good idea to empower the storytellers with some digital skills before the workshop.

## Time management

When sharing with the other storytellers or finishing a part of the process, it might be necessary to give the storyteller a certain amount of time. But not everyone understands what for example 10 minutes is, so time management needs to be addressed specifically. It is important to prepare the storytellers well before and good to have clear rules. It is a good idea to have visual or sound-based aids; it could be a small bell, a visual clock or a board where you can “take away” minutes. For some storytellers it is ok with a little bit of time pressure. Flexibility from the facilitators side is important. It is also important to know how long your storytellers are able to work continuously and be able to foresee when they need a break before getting too tired.

# 7 ETHICS AND COPYRIGHT

## Ethics

In a method like Digital Storytelling, where we ask people to share personal and sometimes confidential stories, it is of course important to be aware of possible consequences for the storyteller and their surroundings. When working with a vulnerable target group, like people with ID, there are more things to be aware of.

### The well-being of the storytellers

As a facilitator it is your responsibility that your participants are feeling well during the workshop, but also before (proper information, that they are comfortable about the idea of participating) and after (follow up if needed). Think both physical, emotional and social well-being. Facilitators must have expertise in working with people with ID, and be attentive particularly to the specific needs of each individual in the group. Make sure that you have the skills needed to run a workshop, such as facilitating a positive group dynamic, supporting the individual through the different activities, teaching digital skills and handling emotionally difficult subjects. The storytelling process can open up for many different emotions and memories, and it is important that you know your limits as a facilitator. If you're not a therapist, don't try to be one, and if professional help is needed, it is your responsibility to ensure it.

### The well-being of the facilitators

It can at times be a draining process to facilitate storytelling, therefore it's a good idea to take measures to ensure the well-being of the facilitators as well. First of all, do not facilitate a workshop alone. It is valuable to have one or more colleagues for support. This can be if you are unsure about something or if a subject is difficult for you to facilitate (you might have been through something similar yourself). We always have a facilitators meeting every day after the workshop, where we go through the day and talk about what has happened. If a participant is reluctant to open up, it is often also a help to ask a colleague to go and talk to them. They might have another connection with the storyteller, who might be able to bring different sides of them out.

## Consent

You must make sure that your storytellers and/or their legal guardians are able to make informed choices about participation in the workshop and also about the use of their stories. Make sure to explain carefully what is going to happen at the

workshop beforehand, maybe with the help of the easy-to-read manual, and provide a consent form for signature. When the story is finished you can give the storyteller/their legal guardian another consent form (see annex), where the participants can decide whether they want to share their story as well as photographs and video material from the workshop. Remember that the story always belongs to the storyteller. You cannot share the story without their consent and they always have the right to get it taken down from the internet, no matter if they said yes earlier. You can never sell the stories, and if the workshop has been funded by external funds, make sure to inform all stakeholders about the ownership of the stories.

You can find more on ethics in Digital Storytelling on StoryCenter's website: [storycenter.org](http://storycenter.org)

## Copyright

Fundamentally, copyright is a law that gives a person ownership over the things they create. It may be a painting, a photograph, a poem or a music composition. The person who created it, owns it and it's the copyright law itself that assures that ownership. The ownership that the copyright law grants comes with several rights that the owner have exclusively. Those rights include the right to:

- reproduce the work
- distribute copies
- perform the work
- display the work publicly

This means that no one can use, for example, copyrighted photos, videos or music without a permission. So, when your participant is looking for material to use in their story, they should never use any copyrighted material without asking permission from the owner. Simply put, they should only use material which is created by themselves, someone they know or material which is free to use.

If they find copyright-free material they still need to be aware that they have to mention the author in the credits. If they are not sure, they should not use it. Some participants argue that they don't want to share the story anyways, and if that is the case they are of course free to use what they want. But be aware as a facilitator, that many will change their mind when the story is done and will want to share anyways. Therefore it's always better to have the story copyright-free and ready for sharing, if you can convince your storyteller about this.

As a starting point, it is your responsibility as a facilitator to make your participants aware of these conditions and make sure as far as possible that they are respected

with in the films. Some storytellers will insist on using a particular song or image that is protected, and since it is their movie and their decision, you can do little more than tell them that in that case, it is not possible for you to share their film (for example, if your organization wants to put the films on their YouTube channel).

## 9 METHODOLOGY AND FURTHER READING

The content of this manual is based on the original Berkeley model of DS, and furthermore on the experience gathered in the DigiStorID project work. Within the DigiStorID, the partnership of six European countries have been working to adapt the original method to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. You will find a more detailed description of the project work on the project website: [digistorid.eu](http://digistorid.eu)

**All the digital stories created during the project are available at the DigiStorID Vimeo channel.**

### Other tips for further reading

1. To get a deeper understanding of the DS and the development of the method, we recommend you to read “Digital Storytelling – Capturing lives, creating community” by Joe Lambert.
2. Watch [this introduction](#) to Digital Storytelling by StoryCenter's Amy Hill
3. If you are interested in how DS has been used with other groups, we recommend you to have a look into these interesting pages:
  - [Storycenter.org](http://Storycenter.org)
  - [Patientvoices.org.uk](http://Patientvoices.org.uk)
  - [arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/silver-stories](http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/silver-stories)
  - [Revisioncentre.ca](http://Revisioncentre.ca)

## REFERENCES

- DigiStorID partnership
- Lambert, Joe: Digital Storytelling – Capturing lives, creating community
- [storycenter.org](http://storycenter.org)
- DigitalStorylab training material

# PROJECT INFORMATION

## **DigiStorID - Digital Storytelling for up-skilling and empowerment of learners with intellectual disabilities**

### **Partner organizations**

Upstream Stories - Denmark

Keski-Pohjanmaan koulutusyhtymä (KPEDU) - Finland

Reykjavík Akadémían - Iceland

A.N.F.F.A.S. Onlus di Pordenone – Italy

Vsl Tarptautinis darbo kontaktu tinklas - Lithuania

Center za izobraževanje in kulturo (CIK) Trebnje - Slovenia

### **Associated partners**

Ás Styrktarfélag – Iceland

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)

Varstveno delovni center (VDC) Novo mesto, Enota Trebnje - Slovenia

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