

About Story Circles

Every Story Circle is different

Story Circles take many forms. At their heart is the sharing of stories and feedback with other storytellers and those interested in storytelling in an informal and supportive environment with the aim of improving our stories and storytelling.

That means activities undertaken in Story Circles can vary as they are determined by the needs and priorities of its members. In the same way, the length of meetings, timing and frequency are also determined by each Circle.

Story Circles can meet in a private home, a public room (eg community centre) or a public space – a café or pub. Some Circles require a small monetary contribution from members to cover the cost of the venue while others may ask you bring some food to share.

Preparing for meetings

The best preparation for attending your first Story Circle is to talk to the host of the Circle. They'll be happy to fill you in on all the details you'll need. Generally speaking, Story Circle members are encouraged to bring something to a meeting they want to work on. If not a story, then the bones of a story, an idea, an anecdote they want to develop – something that would benefit from the feedback of other members. As the purpose of Story Circles is to improve our stories and storytelling, they work best if everyone is able to contribute something. In that way, every member – no matter their level of experience – has the opportunity to incrementally learn and grow and move forward in their storytelling.

Providing feedback to other tellers

Any feedback we give or receive to other members of a Story Circle should be supportive and helpful. Rather than getting into the nitty gritty, let the teller know two things they did well, one thing they could improve on and another thing they did well. These points could be about the story structure, the pacing, language, body language and gestures, tone, how they used their voice, suitability to their target audience etc.

When providing feedback, it is not enough to simply say you liked or didn't like something. This is key to being helpful – say why you did or didn't like something and give examples and suggestions. Eg "I liked your gestures, I could really picture you holding that skull." Or "I thought you went a little fast and I couldn't follow it all. You might want to think about putting some pauses in. When you said *She came home to find her house in flames* for example, you could have paused there to allow us to take in the gravity of the situation."

Above all, remember that the purpose of feedback is to help us learn and grow. It is subjective and should never be taken personally.

Story Circle Hosts

If you'd like to know more about a Circle near you, please contact a host listed below.

Lindy Mitchell-Nilsson Central Coast	0423 417 783	info@storytellersnsw.org.au
Michael Patterson Inner West	0432 678 114	enquiry@ mrbamboozle.com.au
Liz Locksley Inner West	0439 690 207	liz@thrivestory.life
Kiran Shah Blue Mountains	0409 392 881	kiranstoryteller@gmail.com