

Wayfinding

**Creative workshops for
Ukrainians in EU**



Erasmus+

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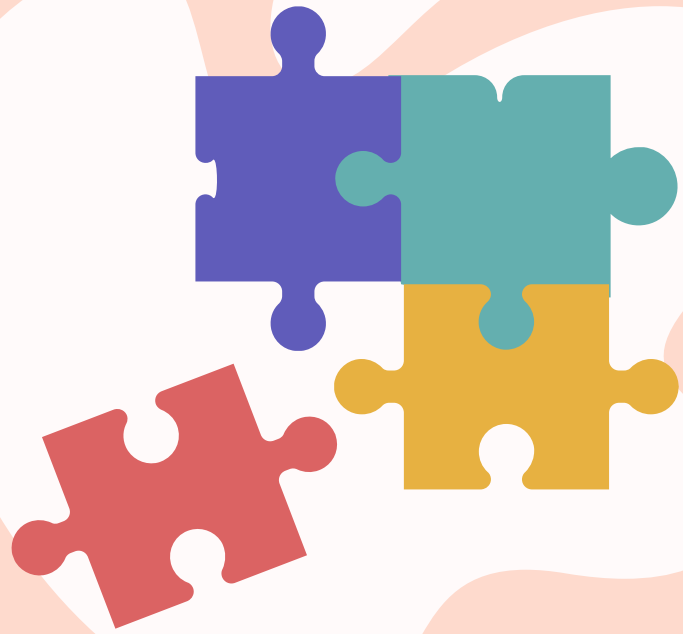
Telling your story of resilience



Why tell your story?

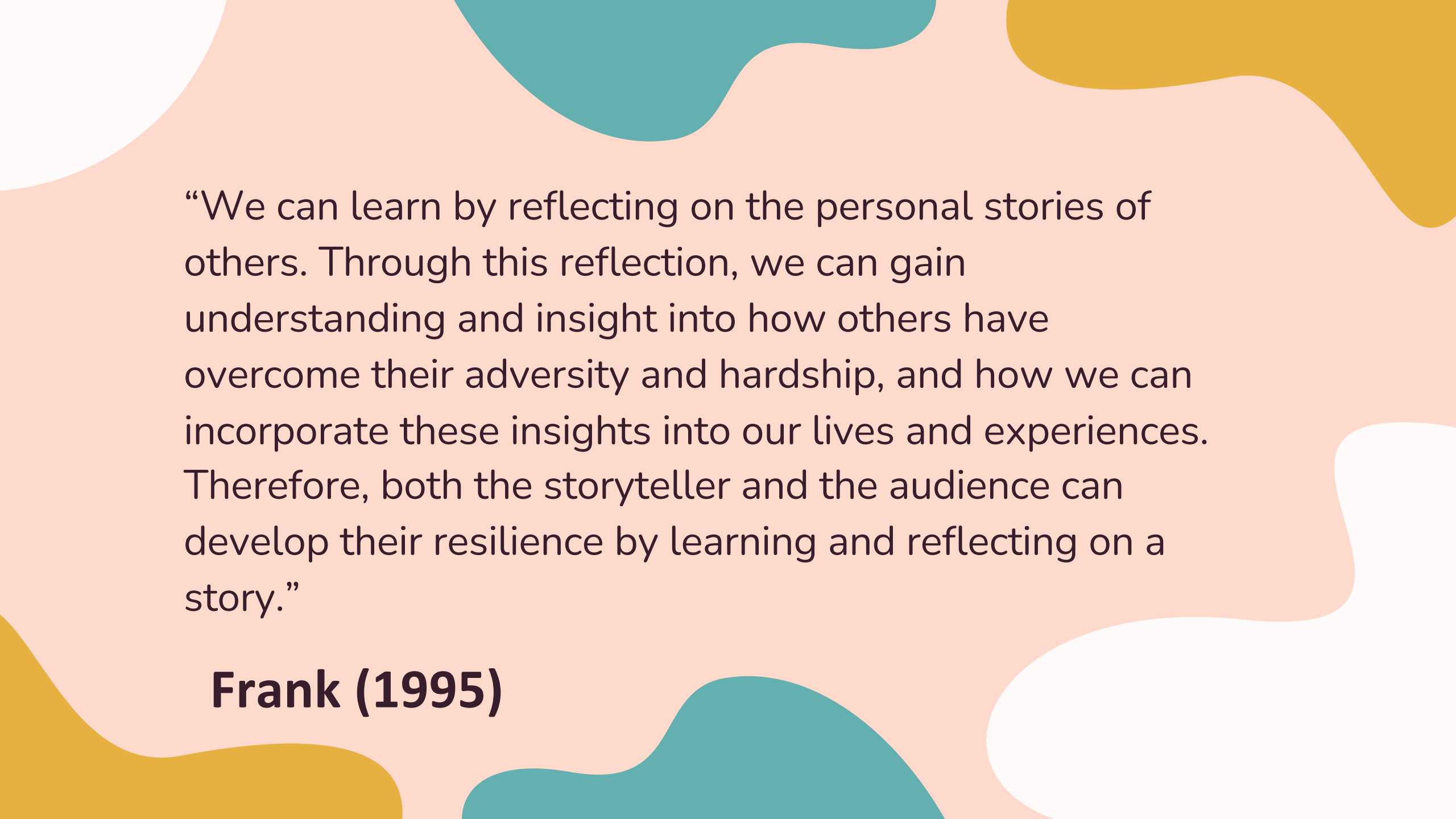
When we tell our story, negative memories and emotions are articulated and become a part of our identity. If the memory was previously blocked from awareness because of its traumatic character, speaking openly about it makes it an integral part of the personality. In this case the negative memory loses its traumatizing effect.

Stories transmit values and emotions, diversity and similarities in our lives. When we share our personal experiences, we create ties with others and build social networks. Storytelling promotes personal resilience and gives opportunity to recognize the tenacity of individuals who share their experiences of difficulties and struggle.



**“We are ready and willing
to shoulder any suffering
as long as we can see a
meaning in it”**

Victor Frankl



“We can learn by reflecting on the personal stories of others. Through this reflection, we can gain understanding and insight into how others have overcome their adversity and hardship, and how we can incorporate these insights into our lives and experiences. Therefore, both the storyteller and the audience can develop their resilience by learning and reflecting on a story.”

Frank (1995)

How telling your story helps to overcome trauma

- Growing (self-)compassion
- The improvement of self-reflection
- The sense of being accepted through sharing the experience
- Help the healing of trauma, grief and loss
- Assisting reintegration into society
- Putting individual life stories in a broader social and cultural perspective



**By sharing our stories
of pain and distress,
we can help each
other to recognize
what is really
important to us**



Storytelling in dealing with trauma

- The process of creating and sharing narratives is a transformational tool for building resilience.
- Communicating experiences, thoughts, and feelings can empower participants in the context of very challenging life experiences.
- Resilience is constructed in relationship with others, rather than as a result of an individual's internal processing of traumatic events.
- Our stories constitute our identity, our values, our memories, and our experiences.
- In the midst of a crisis, the creation of meaningful stories that can be shared with others can help us in reflecting on our experiences and learning from them.
- By sharing our stories, we foster resilience, learn to rely upon communication networks, legitimise our feelings and make positive steps forward.

Principles of narrative therapy

Externalisation of the problem

- Developing a particular definition of the problem
- Mapping the effects of the problem
- Evaluating the effects of the problem
- Justifying the evaluation

Re-authoring conversations

- Helping the person to include neglected aspects of themselves
- Shifting the problem-centred narrative

Actively engage the person

- Renewing their relationships
- Removing the relationships that no longer serve them
- Finding meaning in their story that is no longer problem-saturated, but is resilient-rich.

Building resilience through storytelling

- Pain is a testimony to the importance of what was lost during the war.
- Our pain of loss is a testimony to our values, moral obligations, goals, passions and commitments that we treasure and cherish.
- Psychological pain and distress can be understood as a testimony to our determination to restore our life and make sure that traumatic experience increase our resilience.



How to tell the story

Before

- Know the story as a whole rather than in fragmented portions.
- Practice telling the story to someone else and get feedback.
- Get to know your audience.

During

- Divide the story into clear parts or paragraphs.
- Ask the audience a few questions about the story.
- Continuously assess the audience reaction to improve engagement.

After

- Create a collage or poster based on the story.
- Create a video adaptation of the narrative.

Main elements of storytelling

- Choose the topic and the main goal
- Tell a story through a personal perspective
- Create intrigue or conflict between good and bad, or other binary oppositions
- Explain how the story starts and why
- Use jokes and metaphors
- Use dialogs
- Use characters people could recognize
- Help listeners to imagine it
- Repeat the main idea several to make it stick
- Add a surprise element to your story
- Finalize your story with a takeaway message



Tell your resilience story

- Remember the situation when you used your strength to overcome difficult circumstances
- How did the story begin and why?
- Describe the main characters of your story. What did they see, feel, thought? Add a short dialogue between the main characters
- What was the most difficult for you?
- What resources you used to get out of the situation?
- What help did you get? From whom?
- What did you learn from this experience about yourself and other people?
- Do you feel proud of yourself?
- Do you feel grateful to those who helped you?



Tree of life exercise

Draw a tree with roots, a trunk, branches, leaves, fruits, and soil that the tree grows from. Think of parts of your life as parts of this tree:

- **The roots:** your memories and background.
- **The soil:** your current life – where and how you are now.
- **The trunk:** your good qualities, assets, and talents.
- **The branches:** hopes and dreams for your future.
- **The leaves:** important people in your life, your helpers.
- **The fruits:** special gifts that you have received from the important people in your life (e.g., psychological support, values, beliefs).



Let the story begin!



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