



# TYM



TELL

YOUR

MIND

**Voicing mental health conditions and promoting socio-emotional well-being in secondary schools**



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# Storytelling Handbook - short teacher's guide

## Overall aim

Encourage expression, attentive listening and emotional literacy through structured storytelling activities.

## Duration

4 lessons × 45 minutes.

## Materials

- Projector/screen for a short film about mental health
- A3 paper or large sheets, markers, pens, pencils
- Story cubes (storytelling dice) or printed picture/word cards
- Sticky tape/painter's tape for displays
- Optional: large flip sheet for demos
- Safety & ethics notes for teacher

## Safety & ethics

- Set ground rules for safe sharing: confidentiality, respect, voluntary participation.
- Students may opt out at any time; offer alternative (private writing).
- Tree of Life and related exercises may elicit strong emotions — arrange school support (counselor) if needed.
- Always ask permission before retelling someone else's story.

## **Lesson 1 — Introduction & Connection with stress-related video materials (45 min)**

### Objectives:

Introduce the stress-related topic, create safe environment, practice listening.

### Flow:

- Welcome & rules (5 min) — explain goals and safe-sharing rules.
  
- Film (2 min) — TYM film - proposing Croatian video - YT link to be inserted .
  - Quick reflection about the video
  
- Quiet reflection & pair share (8 min) — 2 min personal noting; 6 min pair share one insight.
  
- The Name Game (25 min) — Pair work:
  - Each person answers three questions: 1) How did you get your name? 2) Are you happy with it? 3) Do you know any deeper meaning?
  
  - Allow ~2 min per person to speak.
  
  - After both speak, partners may (only with explicit permission) retell what they heard — practice listening and asking permission.
  
- Debrief (3–4 min): discuss the importance of listening and how it felt to be heard.

### Outcomes

Students practice expressing personal info in a safe setting and active listening.

## **Lesson 2 — Creativity & Co-creating stories with body image related video (45 min)**

### Objectives:

Stimulate creativity and collaborative storytelling; introduce story structure.

### Flow:

- Intro & aim (5 min).
- Film (2 min) — TYM film - proposing Italian (Carola) video - YT link to be inserted
- Quick reflection about the video
- Warm-up improvisation (10 min) — short pantomime/1-minute improv tasks to loosen up.
- Dice / Story Cubes (20 min) — group task:
  - Groups of 4–6; use 3–4 story cubes or picture cards.
  - Variants: each student rolls and adds a sentence; one student uses several cubes; or group uses a pool of images, and volunteers build.
  - The group prepares 2–3 final sentences to end their story.
- Creating a Story Together (10 min) — chain story:
  - One student gives first sentence (left), one gives final sentence (right). Others place themselves in order where their sentence fits and repeat as the story grows.

### Outcomes

Students experience cooperative narrative building and learn basic narrative flow.

### **Lesson 3 — Active Listening & Web of Association with Decision making video (45 min)**

#### Objectives:

Practice listening modes and gather materials for personal story work.

#### Flow:

- Intro & listening rules (5 min).
- Film (2 min) — TYM film - proposing animated video on high school picking- YT link to be inserted
- Quick reflection about the video
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- Active Listening exercise (25 min) — two rounds:
  - Round A (spontaneous responses): Pairs. Partner A describes a recent small problem (3–4 min). Partner B immediately shares any thoughts/ideas (feedback-style). Switch roles.
  - Round B (reflective listening): New pairs. Listener paraphrases and summarizes without offering advice; speaker confirms accuracy. Each person notes how they felt as speaker and listener.
- Plenary reflection (5 min): What changed when listener did not give advice?
- Web of Association (10 min):
  - Individual or pairs. Put a theme word in center of paper (e.g., “home”, “change”, “friendship”). Branch out associations (places, people, events). Partner’s questions can dig to a memory. Choose one memory to bring to Tree of Life.

#### Outcomes

Students practice non-judgmental listening and collect associative material for storytelling.

## **Lesson 4 — Tree of Life (45 min, adapted) with Anxiety-related video topic**

### Objectives:

Structure a personal experience metaphorically and practice safe sharing.

### Flow:

- Intro & safety reminder (5 min) — voluntary sharing, confidentiality, opt-out.
- Film (2 min) — TYM film proposing YT link to be inserted
- Quick reflection about the video
  
- Tree of Life drawing (25 min) — instructions:
  - Give A3 paper + markers. Draw a tree and fill selected elements (focus on 1–2 if time is limited):
    - Roots: where I come from (family, birthplace, formative events)
    - Soil: what I do now (school, hobbies)
    - Trunk: values and talents
    - Branches: hopes and goals
    - Leaves: people who have helped me
    - Fruits: what I want to leave behind / my contribution
- Prompt students to choose one element they might share.
- Emphasize permission before retelling.
  
- Small-group sharing (10 min) — groups of 3: each shares 2–3 minutes about chosen element; listeners give supportive comments (no advice).
  
- Wrap-up & homework (5 min) — students write 3 key insights; optional: expand Tree for class presentation.

### Outcomes

Students map personal story content and practice controlled sharing and listening.

### Assessment & reflection

- Teacher observes participation, listening ability, and depth of reflection.
- Closing prompt: each student writes one sentence about what they learned and one action they will take.

### **Adaptations & teacher tips**

- If more time: split Tree of Life into two lessons to allow deeper sharing and creative presentation.
- If no story cubes: use printed images, random words, song titles, or newspaper headlines.
- Provide a private writing alternative for students uncomfortable with sharing aloud.
- Have contact info for school counselor available.