Fertilizing the soil: Promoting your Story Circle Event

Now that you have figured out the specifics of your event and have a strong foundation, it is time to consider if you want to promote it and why, how to promote it, who to promote it to, and where!

Promotion may be useful to:

- Encourage participation through a more open invitation in addition to personally reaching out to individuals (this may not be necessary if you are planning an event for a group that you already know, such as a community group you belong to).
- Encourage others to follow your lead and host their own story circle.
- Share what you are doing in collaboration with Gather to Grow and as part of a storytelling movement in the Cedar Valley.

Promotion Tips

Know Your Audience: Stop and think about who you want to be a part of your storytelling circle. Who is your target audience? If there is a certain demographic you are targeting, make sure that it is clear in all your communications. If you want to host a general storytelling circle where anyone can sign up, make that clear as well! (See the section on types of storytelling circles for more information.)

Be clear and concise: Regardless of which communication channels you are using to promote your event, start by explaining what a storytelling circle is and be very clear about what you want the audience to do in response to your message. Make sure that all the basic information about the purpose of the event, location, time, and most importantly, how to sign up is clearly communicated.

Reminders: Even if you have been promoting your storytelling circle for weeks in advance, you might see a surge of interest in a couple of days leading up to it. Make sure that you harness this interest and share frequent reminders in the last few days before the event on all the social media channels that you have been using.

Methods of Promotion:

Community Poster: Another way to recruit participants is to prepare a flier or poster for display in local businesses, at churches, and in community centers. If your audience is unlikely to see events posted online, then posters strategically placed within the community are another option. Make your own poster or edit this template.

Newsletter Story: Newsletter stories can be used to recruit participants and to share the outcomes of a story circle. A recruitment story should include who, what, where, when, and how to register.

Social Media: Using social media can be a way to reach potential participants with minimal effort. Put the word out through your social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Facebook is a popular platform to promote events as the interface allows you to Create an Event and populate the event page with details and information about your Storytelling Circle. Find more information on how to create events on Facebook here. On Instagram, you can use the story feature to host AMA (Ask Me Anything) sessions, share tidbits about storytelling circles, and get your audience interested!
Email: Resist the urge to blast everyone in your contact lists with the same email announcing your event. Instead, segment them under categories like people you want to invite to the Storytelling Circle, people who could help spread the word, and people who could help you get to the audience you want to invite. Then work on unique communication texts for each category. Another way to promote an event through email is to add it to your sign-off. If appropriate, add a line to your sign-off that says “Storytelling Circle Host” and hyperlink it to a page where anyone who clicks on it can find more information, sign up, etc.

Personal Blog: If you have a personal blog or website, don’t be shy about using it to publicize your event. This is especially important if you update the blog/website frequently and have a loyal audience (even if it’s small!)

Hashtags: Create a short hashtag for the event and use it wherever possible, especially on Twitter and Instagram. You can also use hashtags on printed material. It could be something as simple as #bobsstorytellingcircle, #gathertogrow, or #unig2g. Be creative! Hashtags, when used repeatedly in the same context, help anchor your event and enhance its recall value. (However, don’t overdo it! Limit your hashtag usage to one or two hashtags for your event.)

Sources: [https://www.eventbrite.com/blog/creative-event-promotion-ideas-ds0q/](https://www.eventbrite.com/blog/creative-event-promotion-ideas-ds0q/)  
[https://billetto.co.uk/l/how-to-promote-an-event](https://billetto.co.uk/l/how-to-promote-an-event)
You are invited to tell your story!

Gather to Grow: A Cedar Valley Story Circle Project

When: DATE, START TIME-END TIME
Where: PLACE NAME, ADDRESS
Register: LINK OR REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Gather to Grow: A Cedar Valley Story Circle Project is a UNI Imagining America initiative to provide the tools and opportunities for citizens of the Cedar Valley to grow together through shared experiences telling and listening to personal stories through facilitated storytelling circles. Gather to Grow participants will join together in fellowship to tell and listen to each others personal stories. Your host will provide a story prompt and provide time for every person to tell their story without interruption. Through this process, the Cedar Valley will grow together as individuals are valued and heard. Learn more about Gather to Grow here: https://engagement.uni.edu/imaging-america/gather-grow