

# THE NARRATIVE PROJECT



how we  
**THRIVE**

WeavEast



TissEst

**SPRING 2020**

**333**

**PEOPLE**

registered for one or more sessions. Average attendance per session: 58



**SESSIONS**

**10**

90-minute Zoom calls weekly or biweekly  
March 26–June 18

**18**

Including  
Indigenous: 5  
African descent: 5  
Gaelic: 1  
Acadian: 1

**GUEST STORY-TELLERS**



**MUSICAL OFFERINGS**

**10**

Drum, piano, fiddle, song.  
Gaelic, Mi'kmaq, Gospel,  
Improvisation.



**CHOOSING THE STORIES WE LIVE BY**

[www.howwethrive.org/narrative](http://www.howwethrive.org/narrative)

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# What we experienced

From 26 participant interviews and surveys

## What has the Narrative Project been for you?

- Uplifting
- Joy
- Inspiring
- Togetherness
- Diversity
- Reassuring
- Hopeful
- Deepening
- Community
- A new start
- Crackling with connection
- Enlightening
- Waking up to others' realities
- Building ties of understanding & friendship
- A lifeline and portal
- Reminder of ordinary people doing extraordinary things
- Hand touching the earth where I live
- Safe space for learning and examining
- Chance to connect and reflect
- Reminder
- Fresh
- Finding common ground
- Connection when we are all isolated and apart
- Enrich
- Windows into lives of neighbours

## What has shifted for you? (e.g., attitudes, understanding)

- Deeper understanding of other people's perspectives.
- Helped me move through helplessness.
- I shifted back to who I was when I was more open and accepting. I was moved to a place of openness and love.
- I am thinking more about relationships and racism and historic relationships.

- I feel more hopeful to know there is a community of people caring and thinking about all sorts of things that can make this world better.
- Deeper understanding of the "lost roots, emptying of the past" aspect of colonial culture, in contrast with cultures that are still connected to roots and ancestors. Confirmation of importance of oral conversation, being fully present, a way of organizing that allows for nonviolent transformation.
- What DO I DO about Black Lives Matter?
- Renewed inspiration and hope for the future.
- A sense of connectedness with a new group of people.
- I am more aware of the difficulties facing diverse Nova Scotians and how I can be an ally.
- I feel more informed and engaged with parts of the community I wouldn't ordinarily be in touch with.
- It called up in me my responsibility to listen intently, to question, to converse about the many inequalities in our region, and to act! Also, we need to shift and make more space to explore and interact in our region's cultural diversity.
- New imaginings.
- It shifted my cynicism and pessimism about this region towards a much deeper appreciation for the amazing people in the Atlantic Provinces committed to doing important work to support a more sane, healthy, joyful, and sharing society—living new stories of what's possible.
- More deeply committed to learning the stories of Mi'kmaw NS and Black NS. Deepening my care and action as an ally.
- Realizing that many of our stories, especially those of marginalized communities, often are left untold, but are so important.
- This space was good for reminding me of people who care and are thoughtful around this region.
- This was a great example of how to engage people. It showed me how you can create events where people can connect around specific topics. Good learning for me in my work.
- Contemplating where we are headed as Nova Scotians.

- I feel a sense of positivity going forward. It has given me a boost to continue some of the work I have been engaged in.
- Appreciation of root communities.
- A greater desire to be engaged as best I can in what is happening at the local level.
- A deeper respect for people who I normally don't come into contact with. My ears are more open to racism and environmental racism and the serious harm these cause. I want to know more about the (inclusive) history of our province. In the current time of climate change, Corona and Black Lives Matter, there is plenty online about these issues, but not much specific to our region. The Narrative Project provided some local discussion of the current times.

### **What if anything have you done differently as a result?**

- Using care with my words, learning how to push the destructive narratives away. Thinking with friends and colleagues how to reconnect and deal with complex problems. Shifting how I host conversations to ensure that participants learn to listen to each other first before problem solving/work, I'm looking more at what I tell myself, what spaces this closes and opens, what it means to be here in NS during this time. I'm inspired more to work here and not go somewhere else. There is magic here.
- Started learning Gaelic. I've been more active in supporting friends and family members in gardening. I've encouraged more people to watch There's Something in the Water.
- Incorporating learning into an essay I've been writing about COVID and the death penalty in Texas.
- I am looking at all aspects of my decisions and being able to care for myself at the same time.
- Thinking about what my food eats. As a musicologist I was very interested in the choral music bridging two cultures.
- I reached out to contacts in the Mi'mkaq community to set up opportunity for Residential School Survivors to tell their stories to the Settler community.
- Video show for Black Lives Matter for Deep Roots Festival.
- I just joined a community group that is starting some projects that will include talks about our community and ways to engage others and be open to all.
- Started an improv music group.

- I have started talking to my family more about the history and present issues of colonial Canada and how it has impacted / is impacting different peoples in Nova Scotia.
- I am talking with local Happy Communities project as to its method of operating.
- Questioning the questions being asked. Asking, is the problem the problem?
- I have plans to visit some of the people I met in breakout rooms, to learn more about their organizations and deepen the connections.
- Reflected very much on my childhood/upbringing and the segregation that was all around me. And still IS - in so many ways. I've done more visioning about the NS that I want to be a part of and how my daily actions, thoughts and words can help shape that. It may sound sort of "airy fairy" or something, and it feels like a profound shift.
- Used basket weaving in my coaching work as a metaphor.
- I've begun shifting my values to be more local, I am prioritizing learning more about our African Nova Scotian and Indigenous communities. I'm trying to use a more narrative approach in my work.
- I have mentioned the calls to people within my network, and invited them to join. It was nice to slowly introduce people into these spaces who typically are not involved in these level of conversations.
- I was invited into the WeaveEast community and other communities.
- Probably will help me to have deeper conversations with people sooner in our conversations. Sharing and opening up and asking meaningful questions can lead to better relationships.
- More actively seeking out those perspectives in myself. And asking how to share more widely and deeply.
- I'm paying more attention to local race issues, with an eye to growing my understanding and hopefully, my capacity for action. Understanding whiteness means feeling the pain experienced in people of colour and my culturally-trained numbness to it. Feeling this type of pain is necessary and involves a shift in worldview, a dis-orientation.....and is related to trauma. (I'm a therapist.) I've barely dipped my toe into this shift, but my toe, or rather, my heart, is dipped. To have my understanding of the pervasive truth of racism grounded in the place where I live, via the Narrative Project, is important to me. I've identified a local huge tree (basswood), and discovered it is/was used by indigenous people to make baskets....thinking of trying it....hmmm, wondering if Ma'lkit Pelletier teaches? I wonder if the Narrative Project could nurture connections like this? Art/craft as a means to relationship building.

## What would you like to see in Phase 2 of the Narrative Project?

- I would like to see how this project gets grounded deeper into communities. How could narratives be expressed in different ways with art, performance, dance? Could there be offshoot sessions, with local groups, more accessibility, deeper dives into some of the topics? Excited for any kind of continuation— maybe further into food, racism, colonialism.
- I liked all of it. More of the same would make me super happy, I really enjoyed how generative and concise it was. A repeat of phase one, I'd be really stoked.
- Being the change you want to see. Creating a holding space that allows for ongoing story-sharing, healing, learning how to live with difference and conflict. A circle that never ends, becomes institutionalized (wildest dream).
- How can you improve on that? You have incredible diversity. There was diversity on each call. There was an incredible sense of community on each call. I always felt welcome and that I could be myself.
- Maybe small groups gather consistently between the sessions. You pick up where you left off and you can build relationships and trust, so we are not new to each other each time. Perhaps communities of interest meet.
- This is a tough one. Chene said our stories connect to larger stories. We need to unpack colonization and its impact on everyone. When you look at it stories connected with racism, food, cultural loss link to colonization. Also what are new immigrant stories and experience. Is there a way to become more politically active? Provide support to initiatives that will create change.
- To find out what organizations and groups people belong to that I talked to and what kinds of work they are doing and how I might contribute through the arts and possibly through my spiritual community to their work.
- Just more...
- Not sure but I think the diversity component is strong and needed so we can recognize and appreciate how we are diverse and also meet each other and find out how we are similar and how relations can improve.
- Yes. We touched on food, and I believe water and energy could both form a core topic. The basics.
- I would love to hear more from people in various communities about what being Canadian means to them. We can see our differences but also what binds us together.

- Going deeper into themes that emerged that seemed important to all: Decolonizing, being an ally, food security for all, etc. Spend more time on these.
- I would like to hear from new and small businesses, particularly run by young people.
- Possibly looking more deeply at the problems and solutions...also mentoring other or new participants to become leaders in incorporating the Narrative Project's philosophy and skills sets.
- Select a comprehensive range of topics, much like Narrative 1 did, and explore realistic possibilities for new futures in that area.
- Continue with the format and design with more stories and topics AND link the inspiration and connection to taking action, making that an option and providing ways to do it. Create some way for participants to connect outside of the sessions, some way of networking.
- Tea and small conversations. I think it is how we can become ones who care and are connected.
- More exploration of narrative practices.
- Continuing this format of bringing stories forward would be great. Reaching out to other less heard communities for speakers. Finding ways to do it in person, with a live streamed or video aspect (to keep it accessible to a larger audience) would be great. I'd like more opportunities to network and get to know people. Also love the physical participation from Dr. Sahu Omri, ways to connect other than through talking/writing words would be great.
- In terms of presenting the results - it was nice to have a video to have a snapshot of moments, really enjoyed it. Would like to see all the levels of impact; i.e., how many people attended, where from, if that is possible. I could almost see this transitioning into a form of mentorship, or a cohort - where the conversations between individuals builds after sessions, versus having the small breakout rooms with different people each time (i.e., through an online platform).
- Since every session was like an episode and the people in breakout rooms were always different it wasn't possible to build relationships. How about a private FB group? I didn't feel safe with questions like "tell me a story about a time..." and "how do you feel about..." in a group of people I didn't know. It seemed like the questions were not connected to what was presented. For instance, the presentation on the food program in NL. A question for that breakout room could have been "How has food security impacted you during Covid-19?" Questions that create engagement and dialog for further understanding related to the topic might be better instead of more general questions.

- Jamboard, small group writing exercises.
- Weaving the stories, ideas and people together in a way where we can make the stories an even stronger part of Atlantic Canada's current voice moving forward. Maybe a place to share stories, ideas or requests to see what can grow, percolate or be planted from this beginning?
- Year-round continuity in different ways, perhaps of little groups.
- I think there must have been a huge wealth of talent amongst the participants. Some way of tapping that and sharing it would be good, but I am not sure how. As long as we are online this was a good format but maybe could be expanded.
- More and deeper explorations of the same topics: race, food, environment...etc. What is allyship? What is citizenship? If relationship building deepens trust, and trust is social currency that inspires creativity and positive action, healing, etc., how do we continue to build relationships?

## Options for phase 2 from The Narrative Team debrief

