

WORKSHEET #5

RE-STORYING

Re-storying is one of my favourite writing activities. It involves taking the story of something that is not sitting well with you, and re-telling it in a way that brings you peace and comfort. It can be a powerful writing process. During *Placing Unheard Voices*, I met many people who were traumatised by their experiences of being diagnosed. Typically they had been diagnosed in a hurried or cold way, and were not offered adequate information or care at the time. The following exercise is based on re-storying a diagnosis experience, but you can apply it to any experience you'd like to re-story..

Exercise 5: Re-storying diagnosis and other experiences

Step one: To begin this exercise, write a brief description of how your diagnosis unfolded and why it was traumatic for you.

Step two: Write your diagnosis again, this time writing as if your diagnosis was everything you needed and wanted it to be, and left you feeling well cared for.

Step three: Write your diagnosis again, this time write as if you are reporting on someone else's diagnosis.

Step four: The three stories you have now written represent three different voices commenting on the experience of diagnosis. Cut and paste statements made by each voice into one poem by selecting sentences from each story. Don't think too much about the sentences you choose, follow your instinct and choose sentences quickly.

Step five: Read the new collaged story of diagnosis you have written. What is the message in this alternative story – add this message to the beginning or end of your poem.