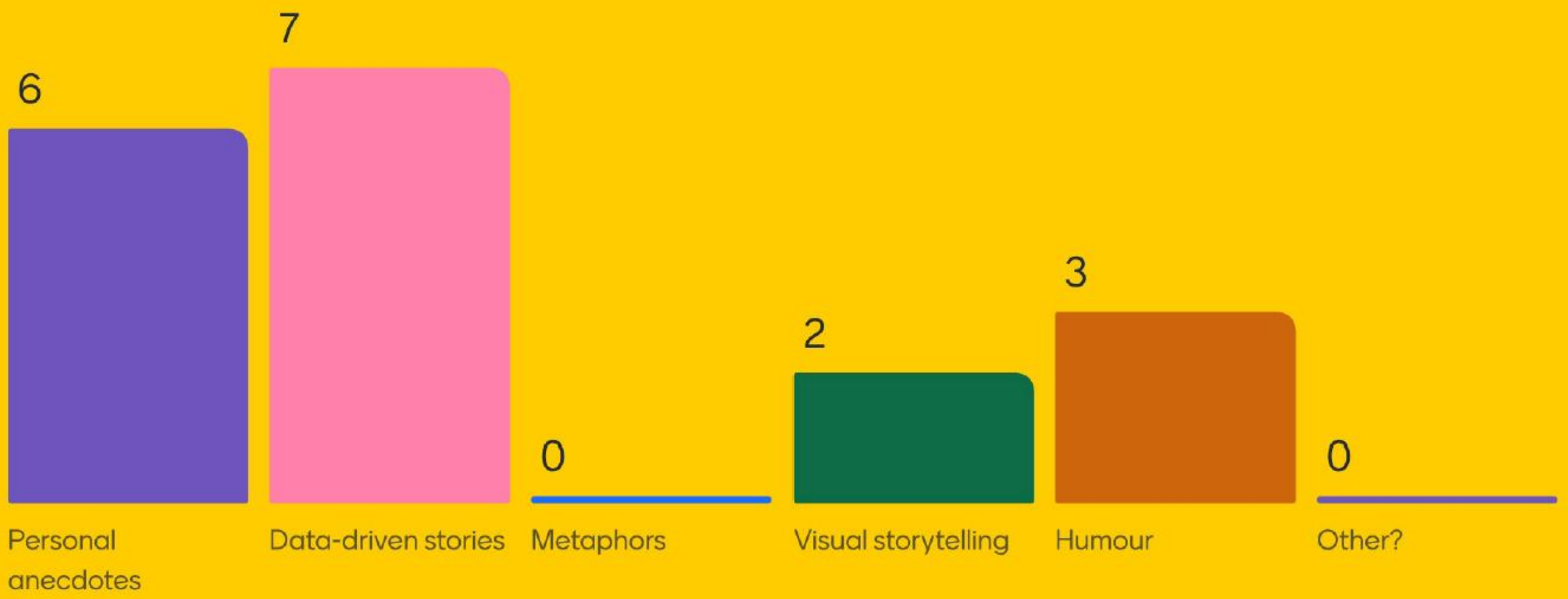
Diverse Voices Storytelling Essentials

Enhancing Leadership Skills through Narrative

With Chris Seymour

Post-workshop resource
Thank you for attending!

What storytelling techniques do you currently use in your leadership role?



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In a short statement, how does storytelling impact leadership?

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How does storytelling impact leadership?

- It can show great authenticity: we all fail, succeed, fail again, feel broken, uncertain.
- Builds trust: sharing personal or organisational stories fosters relatability, which helps build credibility
- Encourages empathetic connections
- Emotionally connect with teams and rally them around a common purpose or vision.
- Reinforce values and cultures (e.g. looking after your mental health)
- Improves communication: makes messages more memorable.
- Drives Action: a well-told story often includes a call to action, prompting listeners to take steps toward a goal.

Example of a story relating to a simple yet powerful concept: 'Defining empathy'

Chris told a story about his experience of working at St Ann's Hospice in his first staff nurse role. He tried his best to be empathetic and kind, but his 'walking in others' shoes' was wearing him down. He described himself as an 'empathetic vampire' taking others' pain/loss/worries away with him. It was only when he received more training, specifically communication skills training, that he built upon his existing professional 'armour'. Therefore, appreciating others' experiences, **not** living their experiences.

What tools did I use through telling that story?

- I showed fallibility - I have learnt through failure
- I am open to support and guidance
- I delivered my story with character and confidence
- I paced the story to ensure clarity
- I included the use of foundation level communication skills

The Power of Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful tool for leaders. It helps to convey messages, inspire teams, and foster connections. Effective storytelling can transform the way leaders communicate, making their messages more relatable and memorable.

What challenges do you face when telling stories in a leadership context?

Fear of public speaking and boring people

Overcoming imposter syndrome

Relatability

Thinking of things on my feet, that are not the same stories every time

not communicating effectively, getting too nervous, tripping over words, waffling

Making sound interesting and relatable!

Revealing too much about myself

Inclusivity - not offending anyone

Keeping people engaged throughout the whole session

Internal doubt

Peoples assumptions and preconceptions

Not being able to respond to a difficult question

Have nothing interesting to tell

Needing to be persuasive but not having an argument prepared

Anxiety

Fear of looking stupid

Demands for 'data' and a disregard/disrespect for human stories.

Sharing stories of errors I made a work could be used against me or can get me into trouble lol

Nervous as people may be looking up to you as a role model

Not remembering the data

Remembering what to say

People are not interested in hearing what I have to say.

Content no one will belowve

Storytelling exercise

Please write a short personal story that demonstrates effective leadership.

Suggestion: Write as a story, or bullet points, or if you want, a poem or list of events.

*If group appears less confident: encourage the groups to allocate a 'scribe' (someone who is comfortable to create/share), they are the only person who writes a story. Then the whole of the group can feedback.

This could be a nice exercise to do with your teams. Ensure you have enough time for everyone* to reflect on an experience they want to write about, or alternatively, they could create a fictional story to inspire discussion.

Encourage friendly peer review/feed back

'Breakout Session'

Discuss your personal stories related to leadership - provide feedback to one another.

Identify key elements that made these stories effective.

If we have time, share insights with the larger group.

Thank you so much for attending this Diverse voices session.

Next up for Chris Seymour is his collaboration with the Mcr Poetry Library.
'Break the silence' is free to attend, **all welcome**!