

Appendix A. Email to Workshop Participants

Subject: Writing Collective Debrief
June 20, 2022

Hello All,

It was great talking with so many of you today about your stories and story ideas. Below are some resources and advice that came up during our conversation which we hope will help you as you complete your stories.

- Framing your narrative around specific memories, incidences, or experiences is important to setting the scene for your story. Some good ones that came up today included: doing a job you never thought you would do (drilling a desk, moving a tutor out of their apartment, managing a fight between two tutors over clothing choice).
- When you are writing about an experience that has been written about before, try to find models to see how others write about that experience.
- Use “artifacts” like email topic chains, quotes from letters, writing feedback, etc. to “frame” your narrative. These can be useful signposting guides for readers.
- Don’t overexplain the day-to-day stuff. We all struggle with staffing (more or less), we all struggle with burnout (more or less), we all go above and beyond in our work (more or less). How do YOU specifically do these things, be specific, show us, don’t tell!
- Try not to academicize your writing. You want to cite, cool, but do so using an APA style which includes paraphrase over direct citation and do it briefly. Cite and then move on to your ideas!
- If you have a unique setting (one person mentioned a creepy abandoned children’s hospital room as their office), use it! Place us in the moment.
- Use examples and then introspect. It is ok to deconstruct your experience but again try not to over-explain things!
- *It is OK to use composite approaches when telling a story. This means putting together several conversations, several experiences, and then creatively restructuring them to make your point. Lots of memoirs create wholesale dialogue. Unless a person has a recorder/records everything (looking at you Alison Bechdel), it is likely that some of that is creatively constructed.

*Of course, this being said, there should be “truth” to your story. Don’t tell other people’s stories without their permission, try not to represent yourself

outside of your identity/experience, and try to stick to the facts as they are creatively engaged with :)

Cheers, Genie and Dan