

# CRAFTING GROUP NARRATIVES - TRACK 1

## What are Group Narratives?

Narratives are stories people tell to reinforce their boundaries, which explain what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for a member of the group. This story shapes people's identity, thinking and actions. This story is reinforced through myths, rituals, ceremonies, rewards and punishments. When confronted with choices or problems, the Group Narrative helps people decide on a particular approach. This story articulates the Group's past and determines the Group's concept of progress in the present and its possibilities in the future. It is the Group's story of the purpose of life and why they do what they do. It defines how they should live and how they should die.

The Group Narrative has 2 key dimensions:

- **Dimension 1: TIME dimension**  
*This is the Group Narrative around how people see and use the past, their sense of what is important to pursue in the present and their relationship to the future.*
- **Dimension 2: RELATIONSHIP dimension**  
*This is the Group Narrative around human relationships: Me, Us, and Them.*

## #1

## TIME dimension

### The narrative of YESTERDAY

*This is the Group's story of the past:*

- 1) What was the intention of the founders and the early members of the group?
- 2) What were some accomplishments of the group?
- 3) What sacrifices did the past members make for the group?
- 4) What was done well? Can it be replicated? Why yes or why no?

### The narrative of TODAY

*This is the Group's story of what is important to attend to in the present:*

- 1) What is important for the group at present?
- 2) What are the successes at present? What are the shortfalls?
- 3) Who is left behind? What happened to one who is left behind?
- 4) Does the group think the successes will continue? Why or why not?
- 5) Is the group happy with the current state of things?

### The narrative of TOMORROW

*This is the Group's dreams and aspirations of the future:*

- 1) Does the group think long-term or short-term?
- 2) What is the group's notion of progress? What does the future hold?
- 3) Can the group shape the future?
- 4) How often does the group talk about the future and plan ahead?

## #2

# RELATION- SHIP dimension

### The narrative of ME

*This is the personal story told by the individual of who they are, what they can and cannot do and the nature and limits of their boundaries.*

- 1) What are the things that an individual can do in the group?
- 2) What are the obligations of the individual?
- 3) Does the group encourage individual self-expression?
- 4) Does the group allow initiatives by individual?

### The narrative of US

*This is the story which defines my Group (Us).*

- 1) Who is included in the group and who is not?
- 2) Who control the flow of information in the group?
- 3) How is information disseminated?
- 4) Does the group feel important compared to the others?

### The narrative of THEM

*This is the story of people outside the Group, those who are not Us. This story gives guidance on how to treat the others and what that relationship should look like.*

- 1) What **values** are guiding your thinking? What is **1 value** you are unwilling to give up? What is **1 value** you believe both Groups share?
- 2) What is an assumption that you hold about the other group? What is the source of this assumption? How could you further test or explore this assumption?
- 3) What does your group say about the other group? What do you believe they say about your group?
- 4) What is something about your group that the other group does not know? What is something you'd like to know about them?
- 5) What is a concern you have in working with one another? What is an aspiration you have?

\* Reference: *Leading in a fractured world* by Dean Williams

*After you have answered the questions, work as a group and transfer your collective answers to the big A3 size worksheet.*

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Narration</b>
TIME DIMENSION: <b>YESTERDAY</b> - <i>Our Beginning</i>	
TIME DIMENSION: <b>TODAY</b> - <i>Where are we today?</i>	
TIME DIMENSION: <b>TOMORROW</b> - <i>Where do we want to go?</i>	

Dimensions	Narration
RELATIONSHIP DIMENSION: <b>ME</b> - <i>What am 'I' in this group?</i>	
RELATIONSHIP DIMENSION: <b>US</b> - <i>Who are 'we' as a group?</i>	
RELATIONSHIP DIMENSION: <b>THEM</b> - <i>How do we as a group see            'others'?</i>	