



ETHICAL STORYTELLING IN ACTION

Creating stories with people, not about them.

The Foundation

Ethical storytelling means centering **consent, context, and shared benefit**, ensuring that every story honours dignity and agency.

It's not about making people look *grateful*, it's about helping them be *seen and heard*.

The 6 Guiding Principles

Principle	What It Means
Informed Consent	Ask before you tell — and confirm again before you share.
Accuracy	Tell the truth, not just the dramatic part.
Collaboration	Co-create narratives with your subjects.
Power Balance	Remove “saviour vs. victim” framing.
Transparency	Be clear about your intent and how stories will be used.
Safeguarding	Protect identities, safety, and emotional wellbeing.

Simple Consent Workflow

1. **Ask** – Explain purpose and platforms clearly.
2. **Agree** – Note what's approved for use.
3. **Approve** – Show the final story or image before sharing.
4. **Acknowledge** – Credit the storyteller and show the benefit to them.

Dignity-First Checklist

Before publishing any story or image, ask:

- Is the person's agency visible?
- Have they approved the final version?
- Does it balance challenge with strength?
- Would they be proud to share it themselves?

The Cost of Getting It Wrong

People: Loss of agency, retraumatization, broken trust.

Communities: Erosion of trust, saviourism, cultural harm.

Organizations: Loss of credibility, damaged partnerships, short-term gain but long-term loss.

Your 7-Day Action

Pick one and start there:

- Audit one story, caption, or photo for ethics.
- Review your consent form with your team.
- Rewrite one “pity-based” story into a dignity-first one.

“Ethical storytelling isn’t just about ethics — it’s about **trust, respect, and long-term impact.**”