Chris Teuton says "Indigenous storytelling traditions describe spirituality, governance, medicine, and the rights and responsibilities that define peoplehood. Stories teach us how to live well together" (Teuton 2019).

Stories have the power to:
- Create space
- Create place
- Create meaning across time

Why call Indigenous storytelling storywork?

Jo-Ann Archibald says, "I needed a term that signified that our stories and storytelling were to be taken seriously" (Archibald 2008, p. 3).

The Power of Stories

"In Cherokee tradition, our language is a direct gift from Unetlvnv, or Creator. Legend says that if we lose our language, we will lose our identity" (Teuton 2019).

Language is Key

Taqʷšəblu aka Vi Hilbert (Upper Skagit) was an elder and renowned storyteller who dedicated her life to revitalizing the Lushootseed language, the traditional language of Coast Salish peoples in the Salish Sea.
Native Voices Matter

Reclaiming Native Truth found that, "78% of Americans polled know little to nothing about Native Americans and a significant portion believe that Native peoples must be a dwindling population because they do not see, hear, or read about Native Peoples" (Dennison 2020).

Survivance

“Survivance is an intergenerational connection to an individual and collective sense of presence and resistance in personal experience and the word, or language, and particularly through stories” (Vizenor, Tuck, & Yang, 2014, p. 107).

Colonial Hi[story]

“According to the settler stories of Indigenous deficiency, our peoples were supposed to vanish into the sunset long ago; our families’ stubborn refusal to disappear has vexed and perplexed colonial apologists for centuries, for, in spite of all their hopes and ambitions, policies and practices, laws and customs, and assaults and editorials, our peoples are still here, as are our relations, as are our stories” (Justice 2018, p.5).

Stories Heal Indigenous Communities

Abigail Echohawk uses storytelling at the Urban Indian Health Institute to listen to Indigenous communities health needs. She says, "Instead of human subjects, we call them storytellers of health" because "we have the answers and it's in our stories" (Echohawk 2018).