

Facilitator's Handbook

How to Host Unfold Your Own Myth Workshops

A Step-by-Step Guide

Fall-Winter 2021



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To the Facilitator

Thank you for signing up to host *Unfold Your Own Myth* workshops! You have taken an important step in helping youth to find their creative voice. Now it is time to roll up our sleeves and prepare for hosting the workshops.

This guidebook is designed to walk you through each workshop session. In it you will find a step-by-step guide for hosting each session, including links to video tutorials, to download print outs, and to evaluation forms.

Don't forget to visit (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-print>) to print out pre- and post-workshop evaluations and other essential material you will need for each session. At this link, you will also find online links to share with participants, if you are hosting your workshops virtually.

Important Considerations Before Starting

1. Make sure to begin the workshop on time, or just a few minutes after the designated start time. The practice of punctuality supports those who are on time and encourages latecomers to be more punctual. Although this can be a hardship for students traveling alone or from a distance, it is a best practice when cultivating expectations with young people.
2. Show the film in full or in large part during the first session, accompanied by no more than a brief introduction to the program (5 minutes) and a brief icebreaker activity (5 to 10 minutes). See the script and talking points for presenting the film below.
3. Mix up the participating groups, so that students who arrived together can collaborate with new folks as well. You might also rotate the groups as you go through activities, if you sense that doing so might facilitate better exchange among the participants.
4. The tutorial videos are meant to be used in such a way that any instructions in the video may be followed by the facilitator and students alike.
5. Limit the sessions to 90 minutes, maximum. Students arrive with a host of attention challenges for a host of reasons — ADD, ADHD, high IQ, low IQ, behavioral challenges, lack of familiarity with the topic/goals etc.
6. Bring the Certificates of Participation in advance of the final session. Please remember to email Laila Khalil at laila@rrstrategists.com the names of all the students in your workshop group after your first session and we at UPF will mail the Certificates to you that will be customized with the names of each participant in your workshop.
7. Avoid adult-provided interpretations of the film, poetry, music, events etc... Student interpretations should completely dominate the interaction.
8. Remember to keep the pace of the workshops swift.

Journaling

Goals of the first session:

1. To discuss and debrief on *Lamya's Poem* (optional if you have watched it prior to the first session).
2. To make participants comfortable with writing creatively.
3. To break participants into small groups, promote familiarity among participants, and facilitate at least one large-group exchange.
4. To practice journaling with a goal of cultivating a long-lasting interest in writing.

Opening and Welcome

Welcome everyone and thank them for joining. Script:

- Introduce yourself: your name and why you decided to bring this workshop together.
- Tell the participants one thing about yourself that they might find interesting. Share a personal anecdote or a story about why you like poetry and the arts.

Introduce *Unfold Your Own Myth* using the information below:

- *Unfold Your Own Myth* is a creative poetry workshop designed by Unity Productions Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting interfaith understanding and greater awareness of the contributions of Muslims in the wider society.
- Over the course of 3 – 4 meetings we will develop our journal writing skills and write poems. We will end by creating a spoken word poem. What you write during this time will have a chance to be published with *KidSpirit*, a partner of *Unfold Your Own Myth*. Upon submission, selected poems will be published in an E-book compiled by *KidSpirit*. These workshops are also an opportunity for all of us to build a community, to get to know one another and to harness our creative spirits. During these workshops, we will sometimes be talking about personal matters; so, it is important to listen closely to one another and build an environment that is safe and full of trust.
- Today we are going to get to know one another, and we are going to learn first how to journal.
- I'd like us to begin with an exercise, to "break the ice."

Here are two icebreaker prompt ideas:

Icebreaker Exercise (option I)

Say your first name and then spell it. Next, provide a single word that begins with each letter of your name and that has some connection to how you identify and/or a story behind it. For instance: M stands for musical. E is for eggplant. G is for gregarious. After everybody has shared, repeat the activity and this time each person can elaborate on one or more of the words they chose - I might, for example, tell my “eggplant” story.

Extension idea: Members of one group might “introduce” each other to the other groups by saying and spelling names and sharing the “stories” they’ve learned about in their group.

Icebreaker Exercise (option II)

Everyone stands in a circle and throws a ball from person to person. When I have the ball I say, “I’m Betsy and I like poetry.” I throw the ball to Laila, and she says, “I’m Laila and I like to dance. That’s Betsy and she likes poetry.” Then Laila throws the ball to Jon, and he says, “I’m Jon and I like speech and debate. That’s Laila and she likes to dance.” Basically, if you get the ball from someone, you must introduce yourself and then repeat the name and fact of the person before you. This Exercise improves the participants’ attention and gives them a chance to relate to one another.

Or:

Everyone sits in a circle and one person in the center says something like “I like Fall better than winter.” Those who identify with the statement get up and trade chairs and the person in the center takes a chair, leaving someone new in the center.

When the icebreaker is concluded, please pass out evaluation forms (or share the link)

- Hand out the evaluation forms to all participants and give them 5 minutes to complete the form. When they are done, please collect them. Go here to share the online pre-workshop evaluation with participant and/or to print out the pre-workshop evaluation forms (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-print>).

Exercise I

First Journaling Exercise (20 minutes)

When finished with the evaluations, you, the Facilitator, will say:

“We are now going to start our first writing activity in journaling. We are going to listen to music and write as we go along.”

This exercise is an invitation to participants to respond to the music of Lamy’s culture and background. This is the music she and her fellow residents in Aleppo might hear on the radio. This exercise is an opportunity for each of you to write about what this music suggests to you and our goal is to start to create a habit of writing in our journals.

“I will ask you questions and will ask some of you to share what you write.”

Listen to music and have participants write.

Play this excerpt of music on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/zHheQvu3OZc>). Then instruct the participants and say:

“I want you to please close your eyes and listen.”

After they have listened to the music for a minute and a half, ask them to “now write 4 adjectives that describe the music we just heard.”

Play another excerpt of the same music and then say:

“Now close your eyes and listen...”

“What story is being told with that song?”

“What mental images does it evoke?”

“If this is the “background” music to a scene, what could you imagine is going on?”

“Write one sentence that is the title of the story being told.”

Give participants 2 minutes to write something.

Ask if anyone will share what they wrote. (Someone might say “Joyful Memories.” Another person might talk in detail about her story. Another might say, “Sadness to Happiness.”)

Play a music excerpt from this video for a final time and ask: what does this third song make you think about? A memory? Maybe the future?” Then elicit examples from what people and written.

Break (10 minutes)

Exercise II

Small Group Discussion and Debrief on *Lamya's Poem* (20 minutes)

If participants watched *Lamya's Poem* prior to the first session, or at the beginning of the first session, now is the time to discuss the film. Start by forming small groups. You can form small groups by counting off into sub-groups of 4 or 5, depending on the size of your overall group. Once assembled, please have each group assign two participants: 1) a note taker and 2) a presenter to the larger group.

- **Prompt:** Who was your favorite character in *Lamya's Poem*?
- **Prompt:** What is going on, emotionally, when we see Lamya, in her modern world, angrily ripping up the poems that Jalal is writing in his own youth eight centuries before? What emotions did you feel watching that scene?
- **Prompt:** What items would you bring with you, if you were forced to leave your home and, like Lamya, you could only pack a backpack and a roller bag?

Facilitator: Once the small groups have discussed these prompts for 10 – 12 minutes, you should encourage a large group discussion by getting feedback from each small group.

Exercise III

Play video *How to Journal* and follow instructions (30 minutes)

In your next exercise, you will play the tutorial video “How to Journal,” in which will walk participants through specific exercises in how to use their Unfold Journals. This tutorial video includes a film clip from *Lamya's Poem* as well as activities for participants to write along the way.

Closing and Wrap Up

Facilitator script for closing the first day:

- I want to thank each of you for taking this step and joining *Unfold Your Own Myth*. I want to offer you an invitation before we leave. I know how busy all of you are, with schoolwork and homework, so my invitation is to take just a few minutes each day and start to journal. Maybe you will find some time to journal on your way home from school, in transit, when you go on a walk to the park, and or at night before bed. Try to find some ways to write about your day and the thoughts that come to you. Sentences add up to paragraphs. Paragraphs add up to pages. You will be surprised to see how with just a few daily entries, your journal grows.
- We will meet again [share details of the time and date of the next session]. Make sure to bring your journals with you to the next session!

Erasure

Goals of the second session:

1. To get participants to begin to think about how they find poetry and writing appealing both conceptually and aesthetically.
2. To further build small group cohesion amongst participants.
3. For each participant to successfully write an erasure poem.

Welcome and Intro

- Welcome everyone back and ask them to form the same small groups they were in last time.
- Ask each person to say one thing that they enjoyed about the first session in the small groups.
- Briefly ask for some feedback from each small group.

Facilitator script:

- We are now going to practice a writing exercise concerning the Muslim poet Rumi, his poetry, and some of the central themes that characterize his poetry and thought.
- Rumi was an important Muslim poet who wrote about love, overcoming loss, and finding God. His longest work, called the Masnavi, is many hundreds of pages. It is considered a commentary on the Qur'an. Many of the lines we hear young Rumi say in the film, *Lamya's Poem*, are from the Masnavi.
- Each of you will receive a specific theme that guides this workshop and the film.

Exercise I

Writing Inspired by Rumi's Poetry (20 minutes)

Hand out the "themes" of *Lamya's Poem* – see cut-outs of the themes on one-line strips of paper. Find the themes to cut out at this link (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-print>).

Start by asking the participants to write something in their journals – anything – on the theme they have in front of them. No rules. Say:

"You can write a song, a poem, an essay, a journal article, or any form you choose. Write down what comes to mind on that theme."

Give them 10 minutes to write. Tell them that once they are done, you will ask for people to share just one phrase that summarizes the topic they wrote about.

Once the time is up, gather 4 – 6 examples from participants. People might say, "I wrote about hope." Or "I wrote about faith." After you get examples, thank everyone for sharing.

Encourage the participants to read the *Unfold Your Own Myth* pamphlet, in order to learn more about Rumi, his biography, experiences as a refugee and his poetry.

Exercise II

Experiencing Loss and Separation (40 minutes)

Facilitator script:

- We are now going to watch an excerpt from *Lamya's Poem* which shows Lamya leaving Aleppo and saying goodbye to her favorite teacher, Mr. Hamadani, as well as an excerpt when Lamya and her mother cross the water. After we watch these clips, we will meet in our small groups.
- Show the clip from this link: (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-workshop-videos/>) Ask everyone to stay in their small groups and discuss the following prompts. You can either write these on the board or say them out loud.
- **Prompt:** Have you ever had to leave your home, or a place or person you love?
- **Prompt:** Was there a saying or piece of advice you heard that helped you deal with that?
- **Prompt:** What was it that helped you cope?

Break into small groups and discuss.

- **Prompt:** How have friendships helped you in the past?
- **Prompt:** Have you ever lost a friend? How have you dealt with that?
- **Prompt:** What's your definition of a good friend?

Large Group Debrief of Discussions about Excerpt – 25 minutes

- Small groups reassemble and share with the larger group.
- Capture just a few examples from each group before the break.

Break (10 minutes)

Exercise III

Writing Erasure Poetry (30 minutes)

Facilitator script:

- Alright everyone, now we are going to learn how to write an Erasure poem. Erasure poetry is also known as “Blackout Poetry.” In this is a form of poetry, the poet takes an existing piece of writing or “text” and erases, blacks out, or obscures a large portion of the text, creating a wholly new work from what remains.
- In this exercise, you will collaborate with the original text featured in the video and in handouts that you will print for them.
- Each of you will create something new out of these poems and pieces of writing.

Hand out the four articles and poem examples from the printout page (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-print>). Be sure each table receives the same article or poem for their erasures.

- We are going to start by watching this tutorial video on creating an Erasure poem.

Play the *Erasure* video

When the video concludes, participants will write their Erasures based on the handouts in their small groups.

Facilitator script:

- Now that you have a better idea of how to make an Erasure, I want to invite you to make an Erasure of the piece of writing you have in front of you.

Give the groups 10 minutes to finish their Erasures.

Facilitator script:

- Now that you have finished your Erasure poem, please turn to a partner in your small group and share your poem with them.

- Ask the following questions – (you as the Facilitator can write these questions on the board or say them out loud):

“Which words carry the weight of the meaning? Which words are aesthetically pleasing? Why did you find them pleasing? Which words helped you create a rhythm to your poem?”

Closing and Wrap Up

Facilitator script for closing the first day:

- Alright that was a great session! How is everyone’s journaling going? Can I get a show of hands of how many of you have been journaling?
- Great work everyone, keep it up!
- We will meet again [share details of the time and date of the next session]. Bring your journals with you!

Workshop Session Three

Haiku

Goals of third session:

1. To introduce participants to Haiku as a form of writing and have each participant successfully write a haiku.
2. To continue to expand the participants' range of writing interests and to continue to cultivate an interest in creative writing.

Welcome and Intro

- Welcome everyone back and ask them to form the same small groups they were in last time.

Facilitator script:

- Today we are going to practice writing haiku, a very ancient form of poetry writing that is fun because it is structured like a formula that you can plug into. I think you will find it very interesting. We will watch a video that walks us through how to write a haiku.
- As you will learn from the video, the Rules of Haiku include:
 - It should contain three (or four) lines of a certain length.
 - It should convey an emotion.
 - It should include a tangible image or thing.
 - It should include some reference to a Season.
- Before we watch the video, let's start with some group discussion of some lines from Rumi's poetry.

Exercise I

Spirituality and Healing (30 minutes)

Facilitator script:

- We are going to watch an excerpt from *Lamya's Poem* that will include the following lines from Rumi's poetry (you can write these lines on the board or verbalize them).

"Hold onto the pain and help other wounded hearts to heal"

"The wound is the place where the light enters you"

"Sometimes the world keeps breaking your heart until it opens"

"Loss is the beginning of all spiritual journeys"

- Go here to get the *Spirituality and Healing* video (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-workshop-videos>)

Break into small groups and discuss these excerpts. Each group should assign one note taker and a presenter:

- **Prompt:** What does it mean that difficulty and pain can open your heart?

- **Prompt:** Can difficulty ever be good?

- **Prompt:** Have you ever learned anything good from a hard experience?

Spend 15 minutes discussing these questions in your small group.

Once the groups reach the 15-minute mark, gather their attention, and facilitate a large-group debrief. Ask for examples from the presenter in each group.

Break (10 minutes)

Exercise II

How to Write a Haiku (1 hour)

Facilitator script:

- Welcome back. We are now going to learn how to write our own haiku poems. First, we are going to watch this video which will walk us through how to write a haiku.

Play the *How to Write a Haiku* video

- At the conclusion of the video, some participants may still be working on their haiku poem. Be sure to give them enough time to finish.

- Once all participants have indicated they're finished with their haiku poem, ask them to partner up with a friend in their group and share their haiku poem.

- Ask if anyone would be interested in sharing their haiku with the larger group – try to get 3 – 4 shares.

Be sure to collect all the haiku poems created by participants.

Conclusion and Wrap Up

Facilitator script:

- Great work today, everyone! I am so happy to see your creative work coming out. How is your journaling going? Can I get a show of hands of how many of you are starting to journal? Has anyone been working on a poem or piece of writing outside of what we have been working on?

- We will see you for our final session [mention date and time].

Spoken Word

Goals of fourth session:

1. Our overarching Goal is to connect the global refugee crisis with social action and justice, using the wider themes we have explored so far in our workshops. The themes are loss, friendship, creativity, and spirituality.
2. To lead each participant to write a Spoken Word poem and encourage group sharing of their work.

Welcome and intro

- Today we are going to work on creating a Spoken Word poem. Spoken Word poetry is different from the sort of poems we have worked on thus far. It is a form of poetry that directly addresses matters of social justice and community. We want to begin by thinking further about one of the major themes that has inspired our coming together for these workshops: the global refugee crisis.
- I'd like to start by showing you a clip about the global refugee crisis, to give us a better idea of the context of the situation.

Exercise I

The Global Refugee Crisis (45 minutes)

VIDEO CLIP: “The Global Refugee Crisis”

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shAB-z01DY&ab_channel=CWS).

Facilitator’s script:

- You will now facilitate a large group discussion on the topic.
- Start by asking the large group what they thought of the video?
- We saw how the theme of displacement and loss informed Lamya in the film and we discussed two sessions ago how this may have affected you personally. But now I want to ask you how can we change it?
- One way to change the situation is by using art to raise awareness.
- I’d like you to start thinking about a topic that strikes you as important and that you have thought about throughout this workshop experience.
- We will now watch a clip from Muslim poet Ali Husain about his experiences as a refugee from Iraq, fleeing the country in the 1990s and landing in America. He is now a poet, and he writes both in Arabic and in English.

VIDEO CLIP: “Ali Husain’s Story” (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-workshop-videos/>)

- Continuing with the large group discussion: what did you find inspiring in Ali’s story? Could any of you relate to his experience?
- Now we are going to take a break and when we come back, together we will watch a video that will help instruct you in how to write a Spoken Word poem and will share several examples of Spoken Word poems.

Break (10 minutes)

Exercise II

Writing a Spoken Word Poem (1 hour)

Play the *How to Write Spoken Word*

- At the conclusion of the video, some participants may still be working on their Spoken Word poem. Be sure to give them enough time to finish.
- Once all participants have indicated they're finished with their Spoken Word poem, have them share with a partner in their small groups.
- Then mention that you would like some volunteers to perform their poems for the whole group.

Final Icebreaker Exercise

Have everyone gather in a circle. Kick things off by saying:

- I am going to start us off by saying one word that I am left with as we wrap up this experience....

After you, as Facilitator, have shared your one-word impression, go around clockwise, and invite everyone to share one word about how they are feeling at the conclusion of this experience.

Spoken Word Sharing

- Have at least one member of each group share their Spoken Word poem. Be sure to give a loud and congratulatory applause to each performer to encourage others to cheer for their peers.
- Once finished you can hand out the customized Certificate of Participation to each participant. You can decide any special way to honor each participant as you see best.

Congratulations – you have finished Unfold Your Own Myth!

- As a final step, don't forget to collect the poems and the evaluation forms on the last day.
- Be sure to send back the physical poems that are eligible for online publication with KidSpirit and have the parents of the participants fill out a waiver form (download here (<https://www.upf.tv/unfold-print/>)).
- Include the first and last name of the author clearly written on each poem.
- Send all the pre- and post-evaluation forms either electronically to outreach@upf.tv or by mail to:

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