



Unfold



Organizer's Guide

Your Own Myth

upf.tv/unfold



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
About Unity Productions Foundation	3
Getting Started	4
Facilitator Registration	4
Register	4
Learn About Unfold Your Own Myth	4
Learn the Steps Involved with Facilitating the Workshops	4
Considerations for Hosting Unfold Your Own Myth in Your Community	5
Facilitator Expectations	6
Facilitator Role	6
Facilitator/Host Responsibilities	6
How to adapt Unfold Your Own Myth to your classroom	6
Resources UPF Will Provide	6
Overview of Workshop	7
Goal	7
Approach	7
Structure	8
Number of Workshop Sessions and Length	9
Overview of the Workshops	9
Screening Lamy's Poem	9
Starting Your Event: Important Considerations	10
Hosting your first session	11
Overview of the Four Sessions	11
What you need to print	12
Release Form	12
Evaluation Forms	12
Holiday Calendar	12
FAQ's	13
Publishing Participants Poems	13

Executive Summary

Unfold Your Own Myth is a nationwide workshop model in self-expression and community reorientation that uses as its catalyst *Lamya's Poem*, a feature-length animated film aimed at teens and young adults as well as adult audiences. The film, a fictional sci-fi genre tale, tells the story of a Syrian refugee girl who is given a book of poetry by the 13th Century Poet, Rumi, that becomes a magical gateway to meet the young Rumi when he was a boy fleeing the violence of his time. Lamya helps young Rumi, "Jalal" to write the poem that 800 years later saves her life.

Unfold Your Own Myth uses the film as a vehicle to leverage the power of story in overcoming trauma and loss among marginalized youth in three struggling communities in America — refugee, immigrant, and Muslim.



About Unity Productions Foundation

Unfold Your Own Myth is a project of *Unity Productions Foundation* (UPF). The mission of UPF is to counter bigotry and create peace through the media. UPF produces films that tell compelling stories for television, online viewing, and theatrical release. These films are part of long-term educational campaigns aimed at increasing religious and cultural pluralism, especially among Muslims and other faiths.

KIDSPiRiT

Unfold Your Own Myth is happy to partner with KidSpirit, a youth-led platform for building community through life's big questions.

Getting Started

Facilitator Registration: Please complete the registration form linked below to tell us more about your workshop: number of participants you expect, location, and the date of the first workshop.

There is no cost to sign up and host a workshop, all resources have been provided through the support of the *Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art*, the *Arthur Vining Davis Foundations* and the supporters of UPF.

Register: <https://www.upf.tv/unfold/workshops/>

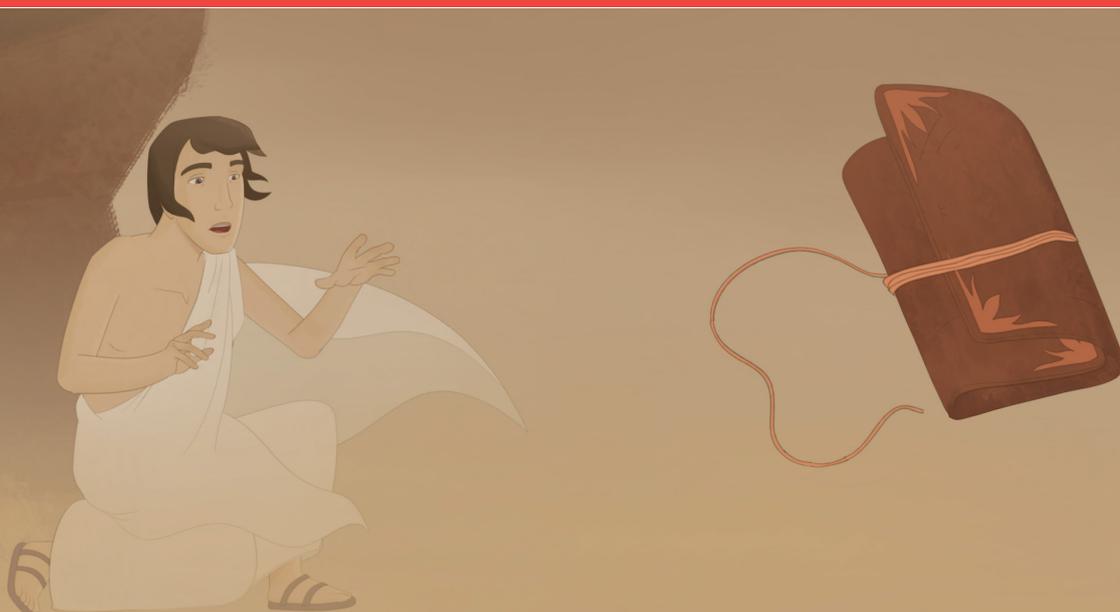
Learn About Unfold Your Own Myth

Watch the introduction and orientation to *Unfold Your Own Myth* from the UPF team and educators Susan Douglass with *Georgetown University* and Betsey Coleman.

Link: [Intro and overview of “Unfold Your Own Myth”](#)

Learn the Steps Involved with Facilitating the Workshops

Once you sign up and register your workshop, we will invite you to the next upcoming live training event where our team will present the steps involved with hosting a successful workshop.





Considerations for Hosting Unfold Your Own Myth in Your Community

Here are items to consider when determining a fit for your community:

- 1. Workshop:** The workshop will consist of 2-3 sessions of 1.5 to 2 hours for each session. A means to watch the 90-minute film ahead of the workshop sessions will be provided that can be streamed for participants at a specific time, remotely, or streamed at your venue in-person. Educators have the ability to adapt the workshop based on classroom periods and current curriculum.
- 2. Audience:** The workshops are targeted to Youth between the ages of 12-17 years. The workshop encourages a diverse group of youth who will immediately connect with the themes of the film and the project. The key target audience are thus refugee youth, children of immigrants, and Muslim youth. The workshop is open to all, however these three audiences are our priority as we launch this project. We expect you to bring between 12-25 participants together for the workshops. If you have more than 25 participants, a co-facilitator is recommended.
- 3. Space Requirements:** A room that is conducive to learning; i.e, quiet, private and has the ability to view the excerpts of *Lamy's Poem*. Ideally you will also have access to small tables for small group work.
- 4. Facilitator:** The workshops work best when the same facilitator(s) conduct the series. Please read below for further information.

Facilitator Expectations

Facilitator Role: Facilitators may be teachers, community organizers, leaders of after-school or weekend programs, scouting troops, and religious schools, among others.

The facilitator plays a crucial role in the success and execution of the program. No need to feel intimidated, one doesn't need to be an expert poet or writer to facilitate! Your most important role is to be able to create a safe and inviting space for participants to feel comfortable enough expressing themselves on personally sensitive issues and other difficult social issues. Facilitators should be good listeners, timely, and culturally sensitive. It would be ideal if the facilitator is someone that already works with the audience of the workshop. This can be a youth coordinator, mentor, teacher, a dedicated volunteer or the like.

Facilitator/Host Responsibilities:

1. 12 to 25 participants (recommended) between the ages 12-17 years old.
2. Diverse base of youth. But if you are teaching at an all-Muslim school you do not need to identify students outside of your school.
3. Ensure a physical space is available to host the workshop that is accessible to the youth and provide a comfortable space to explore together. The physical space should include a projector/screen/sound setup to play clips from the film.
4. Lead a series of 3 to 4 workshops of 1.5 to 2 hours each. The workshop duration can be adjusted in a school setting.

How to Adapt Unfold Your Own Myth to your classroom

We understand everyone has different time restraints, especially in a classroom setting. As a teacher, you know your students best. Please consider using this Guide and the accompanying Facilitator's Guidebook flexibly and feel free to adapt the exercises and instructions there as you see fit. There are four minimum requirements that must be met:

1. Screening specific excerpts of Lamy's Poem. (Will be specified in the Facilitator's Guidebook).
2. Presenting the 4 different styles of poetry: Journaling, Erasure, Haiku and Spoken Word.
3. Submission of some poetry written by youth participants.
4. Completion of facilitator evaluation.

As long as those 4 minimum requirements are met, the length of workshops, specific prompts, and overall flow of the workshop is flexible.

Resources UPF Will Provide

1. A virtual facilitator training session (2 hours)
2. Facilitator Handbook
3. Organizer's Guide
4. Access to screen *Lamya's Poem*
5. Participant Pamphlets with more information on the project, poetry, the Syrian refugee crisis and the poetry of Rumi
6. A writing journal for each participant and facilitator
7. A customized certificate of completion for participants with their name
8. Guidance from workshop coordinator Nausheen Razvi
9. Opportunity for participants to publish their work on *Kid Spirit* website and possibly in the *Unfold Your Own Myth* book collection
10. Assessment Surveys to evaluate the outcome of the workshops.

Further needs can be discussed with the workshop coordinator, Nausheen Razvi at unfold@upf.tv



Beyond the Workshop

The impact of *Unfold Your Own Myth* will go well beyond the workshop. We have partnered with *Kid Spirit* to publish a compilation of select featured poems from the *Unfold Your Own Myth* series of workshops to further inspire others.

Facilitators will receive:

1. A “Writing Workshop” Certificate to use for further professional development
2. Reference letter from UPF (upon request)
3. Acknowledgment in published *Unfold Your Own Myth* book and on the Kids Spirit website, upon permission to release from student and guardian of student.

Overview of Workshop

Goal: Through writing and the sharing of writing in a safe, small group setting, participants will be introduced to the power of poetry, composition, and literary discussion as a means to gain agency over experiences outside their control—including war, societal collapse, alienation and exile-- that compromise or impair their sense of self.

Approach: As an initial catalyst participants will watch *Lamya’s Poem*, UPF’s feature-length animated film that dramatizes the experiences of a Syrian refugee girl. The film can be seen in its entirety (90 minutes) or shown in shorter clips during the workshop.

Lamya’s Poem is appropriate for an audience of teens and young adults. Its storyline and plot feature challenges and resolutions that speak in a specific setting to experiences that many different groups of disaffected teenagers share.

In the film, a young girl and her mother flee a chaotic urban setting of Aleppo, Syria. This could as easily be San Salvador, Bamako in Mali, or Kabul, Afghanistan. Lamya’s favorite teacher gives her a book of poetry by the 13th Century Poet, Rumi. The book quickly becomes her prized possession. As the pressures of fleeing home mount and confuse her life, the book also becomes an escape hatch and then a magical gateway to a dream world, in which she meets and embarks on adventures with the poet Rumi when he was about her age.

As in his real life, Rumi is a boy in the company of a parent fleeing the violence of his time. In other words, these two have much in common—a love of poetry and a world turned upside down, where they will need to learn to live. The parallels with the participants in our workshops will be clear. Like them, the characters in the film are finding strength and resolution in the culture they bring with them, using poetry and companionship to revitalize their lives.

Following this screening of the film, participants will take part in self-directed small group activities and facilitated large group discussions (see the “Facilitator Guide” which will walk you through these activities). The small groups will be self-directed by the participants themselves, who will respond to various prompts from an adult facilitator. After each smaller, break-out group activity, participants will reassemble in the larger group for discussion phase. The debrief and discussion are the program’s most important elements.



Structure

In general, the structure for each session will include:

1. An icebreaker, group discussion time, small group work and writing exercises. For each session a substantial portion of the time will consist of a guided series of writing exercises that will be led by a tutorial video on four forms of writing: “Journaling”, “Erasure”, “Haiku”, and “Spoken Word.”
2. At the end of each session, the facilitator will reassemble the groups. The presenters will talk about what they discussed, after which the session facilitator will lead the larger group in a debrief and discussion about the different ideas and sentiments presented.
3. On the last two days of the workshop experience, participants will be encouraged to share their poems with the entire group.



Number of Workshop Sessions and Length

Unfold Your Own Myth is composed of four sessions total, including screening of Lamyā's Poem. Each session will be no more than two hours in length. If sessions are held in a classroom setting or in another venue where time is limited, each session can be broken into two parts, or otherwise tailored to meet the setting's requirements. Or three sessions can be held instead of four sessions as long as the final session includes Spoken Word given that exercise is the most team-oriented and collaborative.

The sessions may occur weekly over one month, or bi-weekly over the course of two months. They may also be conducted sequentially over several days.



Overview of the Workshops

For the in-depth breakdown of each session please refer to the “Facilitator’s Guidebook” which we encourage you to print out and bring with you on the day of your workshops as it contains a script as well as several links to download group activity exercises.

Screening Lamyā’s Poem: Remember to email Nausheen Razvi to receive a link to view *Lamyā’s Poem* on Sprout.

Starting Your Event: Important Considerations

1. Make sure to begin on time or 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 a far distance, it is best practice when cultivating expectations with young people.
2. Start the first session with only a brief introduction to the program (5 minutes / script provided in Facilitator's Guidebook) and a brief icebreaker activity (5 to 10 minutes).
3. Mix up the 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 might facilitate better exchange amongst the participants.
4. The tutorial videos are meant to be used such that any instructions in the video are followed by the facilitator and students alike.
5. Make sure each session is 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. Prepare certificates in advance of the final session.
7. Avoid adult-provided interpretations of the film, poetry, music, events etc... Student interpretations should completely dominate the interaction.
8. Ask students for feedback that can be collected easily and briefly (ex: use of Likert Scale questions).
9. Remember to keep the pace of the workshops swift.



Hosting your first session

Goals of first session:

1. To get participants comfortable with writing creatively.
2. To get small groups to get to know one another a bit better and to facilitate some large-group exchange.
3. To practice journaling and to cultivate a long-lasting interest in journaling.

Start every session of the workshop with a small group activity that warms up the group

Overview of the Four Sessions

Session 1: Journaling

Session one will introduce the method of writing known as “journaling.” Journaling is informal prose: almost like a diary in a way, (you know, “Dear Diary...”). Journaling is writing that tends to be in first person: the personal voice, I saw this and I felt that about it. Journaling present thoughts & feelings, not just a photograph of what we saw.

Session 2: Erasure

Session two will introduce “erasure poetry,” also known as blackout poetry. This is a form of poetry where 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 session, participants will collaborate with the original text of existing and provided poems as featured in the video and in handouts you will print for them. They will create something new out of these poems and pieces of writing.

Session 3: Haiku

Session three will teach participants how to write a “haiku” poem. Haiku emerged in Japan nearly 500 years ago. Today, haikus are written all over the world and in as many languages as you can think of. Millions of haikus have been written over the centuries. Haiku is beneficial for young poets just starting to write because it presents a formula for creating a simple and elegant poem.

Session 4: Spoken Word

The final form of poetic expression we will focus on is Spoken Word. Spoken Word poetry uses rhyme, repetition, improvisation, and word play. Spoken word poetry frequently refers to issues of social justice, politics, race, and community. It can draw on music, sound, dance, or other kinds of performance to connect with audiences. Participants will write their own Spoken Word after watching several examples and going through exercises in small groups.

What you need to print

For your first session you will need to print the pre-evaluation forms, the release forms and other designated documents for group works as indicated in the “Facilitator’s Guidebook.”

Release Form: A release form will be issued asking for permission from the youth and their guardian in order to publish their work.

Evaluation Forms: Each facilitator and youth participant will have to complete evaluation forms.

1. [Click here](#) to print out or share the link to the online evaluation forms for the pre-workshop evaluation forms (print for as many participants as you expect and administer on the first day you meet before you get started. Can also share online evaluation prior to watching the film).
2. [Click here](#) to print out or share the link to the online evaluation forms for the post-workshop evaluation forms (administer on your last day after the Spoken Word sharing).

Holiday Calendar

When planning your workshop please keep 2021-2022 holidays in mind to ensure strong attendance.

2021

Monday, September 6th- Labor Day
 Thursday, September 16th- Yom Kippur
 Monday, October 11th- Indigenous Peoples Day
 Sunday, October 31st- Halloween
 Tuesday, November 2nd- Election Day
 Thursday, November 11th- Veterans Day
 Thursday, November 25th- Thanksgiving
 Monday, November 29th- Hanukkah
 Friday, December 24th- Christmas Eve
 Saturday, December 25th- Christmas Day
 Sunday, December 26th- Kwanzaa
 Friday, December 31st- New Years Eve

2022

Saturday, January 1st- New Years Day
 Monday, January 17th- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 Sunday, February 13th- Super Bowl
 Monday, February 14th- Valentines Day
 Monday, February 21st- Presidents Day
 Thursday, March 17th- St. Patrick’s Day
 Sunday, April 3rd- Ramadan Begins
 Sunday, April 10th- Palm Sunday
 Friday, April 15th- Good Friday
 Saturday, April 16th- Passover
 Sunday, April 17th- Easter Sunday
 Tuesday, May 3rd- Eid Al- Fitr (Tentative)
 Thursday, May 5th- Cinco De Mayo
 Sunday, May 8th- Mother’s Day
 Monday, May 30th- Memorial Day
 Sunday, June 19th- Father’s Day & Juneteenth
 Monday, July 4th- Independence Day
 Sunday, July 10th- Eid Al-Adha (Tentative)

FAQ's

Q1: To be a facilitator do I have to be an expert writer or poet?

A1: No, there will be training given on how to facilitate and videos to lead the prompts and discussions.

Q2: Who do I contact for help or further questions?

A2: Nausheen Razvi at unfold@upf.tv

Q3: What is the release form for?

A3: The release form will only need to be filled out if the student's poem has been chosen. We will contact you for permission before release. The poem will be released to *KidSpirit* publications to be apart of their E-book.

Q4: Do I have to screen the full-length film before I start the workshop?

A4: No you do not have to screen the full film if you feel pressed for time. There will be clips of the film and you can also show the trailer of the film during your first session. The pamphlet each student receives will also describe the film in some detail.

Q5: Do I have to conduct each workshop in 1.5 hour timeframes?

A5: No, as long as minimum requirements are met, the time frame is adaptable to accommodate for classroom periods.

Q6: Do my workshops have to be in person or can they be held on Zoom or online?

A6: It can be in person or virtual, at the discretion of the organization or school. If you host your workshop online you may have to adapt some of the group work activities and icebreakers and you will have to familiarize yourself with how to create "break-out rooms" for small group work.



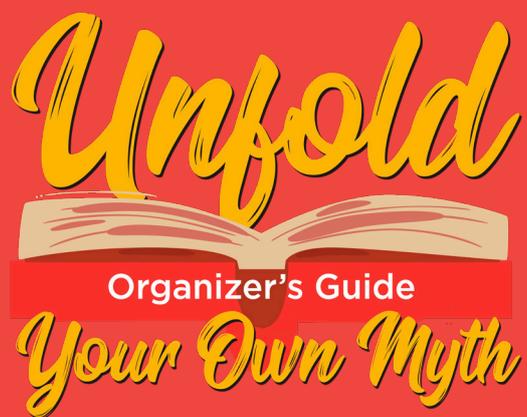
Publishing Participants Poems

As we indicate in the Facilitator's Guidebook, we encourage poems that participants would like to have submitted for consideration to be published to be mailed to our offices. You can collect all of the poems with the names of the author clearly written on a separate sheet of paper or on the paper where the poem is written itself.

Please mail all submissions to:

Unfold Your Own Myth
 Attn: Daniel Tutt
 823 Sheridan St. NW
 Washington, DC, 20011

To email scanned poems please email outreach@upf.tv



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