Reframing the Narrative: Transformative Storytelling Skills for Social Justice

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YWCA Madison 2018 Racial Justice Summit

- **History**: from the Bay Area in the 90s to UW-Madison in 2009
- **Evolution**: from a South Asian American feminist group to a radical & diverse collective
- **Our future**: a touring ensemble, workshops, and guest directors from the community
Storytelling as Creative Resistance

- The art making process
  - Peer feedback & critique
  - Drawing from pre-existing skills & talents
  - Developing an artistic practice

- The final project
  - Celebratory
  - Loving
  - Healing

- Building an intentional artist community
  - Other projects and collaborations
  - Professional opportunities
Praxis, or turning theory into practice

- **Education**
  - Peer-led, political, radical

- **Collaboration**
  - Sharing access & resources
  - Doing the work in our own communities

- **Communication**
  - Harm reduction
  - Restorative

- **Solidarity**
  - Centering the margins
  - Promoting self-care
Telling Your Story

● Group exercise...
  ○ What are some of your favorite stories?
  ○ What made them so compelling (elements, genre, etc.)?
  ○ How did they affect you and why?

● Exercise in pairs...
  ○ The origins of your name; 2 minutes each.

● What story do you want to tell today?
Constructing a Story

Important elements to keep in mind...

- Establishing setting, characters, conflict & resolution.
- Story should have a beginning, middle and end.
- Know your audience & appeal to their values.
- Develop a “grab,” or the key phrase that will establish a connection between your story and the audience.
Value Setting in Storytelling

● Quite simply; what does your primary audience value in a story about your work?
● Examples:
  ○ Funders = fund stewardship;
  ○ Community partners = shared vision/mission;
  ○ People served = autonomy, safety, & empowerment
Responding to and Evoking Values

- “We are grateful to be part of a thriving ecosystem of community partners who share our vision of amplifying youth voices.”

- Key values: Teamwork, humility, self-determination, acknowledgement.
Navigating Impact

- Consent informs authenticity, safety and respect.

- Consent is ongoing (asking participants each time their story is shared verbally, in print, digitally, etc.).

- “Can I share your story?” and continue the conversation from there.
  - Assessing participant boundaries (e.g. What is off limits)
  - Respecting these limits, as the storyteller.