

# Connection and Story: Dismantling White Supremacy One Authentic Relationship at a Time

Overcoming Race Conference 2019

St. Paul, Minnesota  
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# Land Acknowledgement

Today, we acknowledge and hold that we are engaging in the activity of learning and growing on Dakhóta (Dakota), and Očeti Šakówin (Sioux) land. Occupied ancestral land that was not and has not been ceded by Indigenous caretakers and stewards of the land. We have and continue to benefit from the fruits of their labor. We honor the Ancestors and Elders of the land and verbally acknowledge that while colonization and genocide have taken a significant toll emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally, and economically, the terrorism of neither colonization nor genocide have been completed.

We now take a moment to individually acknowledge and hold this.





# Attention In & Out Bags

At each place there is a bag containing a variety of objects to aid in focus & release. The bag and its contents are yours to keep.





# Justice During Our Workshop

**Interrupting Language Oppression**

**Interrupting Audism**



# Please Note:

We **WILL NOT** have the time to thoroughly explore this topic today. Today we will only skim the surface, get it started.



# Today We Will...

- ❖ Meet each other
- ❖ Explore the power of story & connection
- ❖ Learn with and from one another



# Goals for Our Time

I hope that you will:

Enhance your understanding and/or appreciation of the power of story and connection

Practice holding space for another and allowing another to hold space for us



# Agreements

respect **R** risk

open **O** ouch/oops

participate/pass **P** perspective

escuchar **E** experience

sensitive **S** safe



# Let's Connect

## Six-Word Stories

Grounding exercise

At the tables there are half sheets, in exactly six words—no more, no less—write your narrative

Introduce yourself: Name, Your 6-Word Story, 1 to 3 words about this activity





# Who is LaKesha?

I am:

- ❖ An advocate for healing, renewing, and transformation
- ❖ Mom, daughter, aunt, educator
- ❖ A baker, kind-of knitter, bibliophile, writer

I believe:

- ❖ That we are living out the legacies of historical harms and traumas that impact all of our lived experiences
- ❖ In the power of story
- ❖ In the power of connection

My 6-word story:

In a state of continuous creation



# What is Connection?

Connection is the foundation for relationships. A series of intentionally woven points of connection have the potential to lead to authentic relationship.



# How Does Connection Aid in Dismantling White Supremacy?

White supremacy, like all systems of oppression, needs disconnection to survive and thrive. Intentional connection, with self and others, disrupts this. It helps us hold our collective humanity.



# How Does Connection Aid in Building Authentic Relationship?

Authentic relationship happens when each person can fully be, walk in, and express their lived experience—their truth. Connection aids this by allowing for the building of trust, leading to healthy and full relationship



# Activity: Speed Connecting

We're all going to stand up

Find a partner

Take turns responding to various prompts



# What is Story & Why is it Important?

**Story/Narrative:** A description of events. A description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events. Your narrative is the weaving together of these events.

Story is important for many reasons. It makes visible what was invisible & it is a pathway to healing



# How Does Story Aid in Dismantling White Supremacy?

The ability to tell our own story, and have it heard, dismantles White supremacy by bringing other voices into the space. Sharing our stories and holding the stories of others interrupts single-sided, created narratives that have and continue to be used to uphold systems of oppression.



# How Does Story Aid in the Development of Authentic Relationship?

Being able to hold our own narrative and hear and hold the narratives of others leads to the deepening of connections, leading to each person being able to fully be who they are, without apology. Our stories humanize self and others and bring us closer together in relationship.



# Story and Healing

Embracing and sharing our narrative is healing. We heal as we tell our story. Not only do we heal, we create space for others to heal. Your story is speaking to someone, and is what they need to embrace their healing journey



# How Authentic Relationship Dismantles White Supremacy

Authentic relationship interrupts White supremacy by creating the conditions for each of us to hold and cherish our humanity. We cannot actively engage in the oppression of others when we hold their humanity and ours.



# ACTIVITY:

## Investigate \* Interrogate \* Challenge

*(select something about connecting with yourself or others/about story that you need to investigate, interrogate, and challenge in order to heal, grow, connect, share your story or hear and hold the story of others)*

**--or--**

## Heart \* Mind \* Body

*(thinking about your narrative, what do you know in your heart, your mind, and your body? How does this help you hold and tell your story and hear and hold that of others?)*



# Listening Activity

## **What you need:**

- ❖ A speaker
- ❖ A listener
- ❖ A timer

## **Guidelines:**

- ❖ Equal time
- ❖ No interrupting
- ❖ Confidential
- ❖ No criticism
- ❖ Speaker speaks in heart language

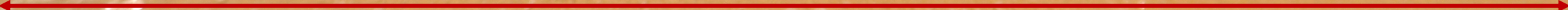
## **Why?:**

- ❖ Safe release
- ❖ Safe space to explore & create alternate/new meaning; to process
- ❖ Create space for healing to begin & flourish



# Prompt

Think back to your six-word story. Why did you choose these six words? In this brief time, what would you add?



## **Remember:**

Honor silence

Listener is 100% attentive

Honor confidentiality

Refrain from referring back

Refrain from interrupting

Refrain from criticism



# Let's Reflect, pt. 1

What did it feel like to listen without agenda (to respond, etc.)?

What did it feel like to be listened to?


If you experienced holding silence, what did that feel like? (connection in silence)



# Let's Reflect, pt. 2

1. Please fill out the reflection form (write a letter to yourself), place it in the envelope you have been provided and seal the envelope.
2. Address the envelope using an address where you would like to receive this correspondence (will be mailed 45-60 days from today)
3. Leave sealed envelope with LaKesha





*Your story is  
important. It is  
a critical piece  
of the fabric of  
humanity.*



Oppression thrives on disconnection. It requires, in addition to other things, disconnection to survive—disconnection from self and others. When we are disconnected from self and others, we are unable to genuinely hold our shared humanity. When we can hold our shared humanity, we cannot willfully engage in the collusion of oppression against others because we know that to collude with the oppression of others means to collude with our own oppression.

L. Kimbrough





# Thank You & Survey

Thank you so much for your time, energy, and participation. Please take a couple of minutes to let the Conference Committee know your thoughts on this workshop.

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You can also find me on LinkedIn, Facebook,  
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