

STRANGERS NO MORE: STORYTELLING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING OUR SELVES AND CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

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Background

The StOries (Strangers to Ourselves) Project was a federally-funded virtual program, dedicated to exploring the intersectional and embodied experiences of migration and multiculturalism through reflexive, sensorily-engaged creative writing. Connecting graduate students across Canada, this interdisciplinary program uniquely prioritized lived experiences of students whose identities may be situated both within and between the Global North and South. Modeled on the StOries Project, this workshop will explore conference themes using similar methods, to promote the integration of key learnings with personal/professional identities through storytelling.

Aims/Objectives/Issues of Focus

A key objective of the StOries project was to leverage storytelling as a tool to normalize the lived experience of migratory stressors and pathways often narrativized in the Global North. Facilitating a culturally safe(r) environment was therefore critical. Offering similar tools and strategies, workshop participants will become familiar with practical approaches to exploring the in-betweenness and fluidity of trans-migratory identity through narrative.

Methods/Proposition

Facilitators will first introduce principles and strategies of The StOries Project and will invite participants to write reflections on key conference themes. Participants will then integrate themes using interactive writing and sharing activities intended to elicit embodied experience and build community.

Results/Potential Outcomes

Through welcoming and respectful conversation spaces, we will hear our embodied experiences more loudly, potentially transforming them in the process. Integrating conference themes with lived experiences may also serve as a catalyst for clearer, reflexive stories of self, and for intentional witnessing and reconnection across diverse communities.

Discussion / implications

Forging new relationships by bridging transcultural experiences may deepen understandings of the in-between spaces we find ourselves in as we migrate between socially constructed worlds and versions of ourselves, past and present. We hope the workshop will challenge static

perceptions and social categories imposed upon particular identities and may stimulate new narratives about migration, identity, and healing.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Participants will be able to identify key principles and strategies for creating collective reflection and embodied personal narratives.
2. Participants will be able to apply these principles in order to engage themselves and others in oral and written storytelling.