

## Climate and Culture Open Forums

### **Rationale –Storytelling for Social Justice:**

As a multicultural society, the United States is rich with the stories of the diverse groups that make up this country. Not all stories are equally acknowledged, affirmed or valued. Many stories survive through resistance in the face of a status quo that marginalizes, and often silences, their telling, thus diminishing their truths. Through candid dialogue, [\*Storytelling for Social Justice\*](#) explores the stories we tell ourselves and each other about our society. Based on feedback from staff, faculty, and students, there is a need to engage in a dialogue about the climate and culture in our school.

The upcoming open forums use *Storytelling for Social Justice* to ask students, staff, and faculty to consider what we lose when stories of and by diverse groups are concealed or lost, and what we gain as a community when we listen to and learn from the multitude of stories available for our consideration. The project also invites participants to tell their own stories, through telling identify the challenges they face, and articulate their visions for a future that offers inclusion, equity and justice to all of the diverse people who make up our school community.

### **Definitions (These will be provided via email to participants in advance):**

- The open forum stories will focus on **culture and climate**. When we use the term “culture” we are referring to the complex system of beliefs, values, and norms that define “how we do things.” Climate can be the result of culture, and is often described as “the way it feels” when someone enters an organization. It is an atmosphere, a mood, a tone that we collectively set, whether or not we know we’re creating that climate.
- Story Types:
  - **Stock stories** are the stories we hear all the time, true or not. They are the accepted narrative about an organization’s culture and climate, and often reproduce bias. They are transmitted explicitly and implicitly.
  - **Concealed stories** are in the shadow of stock stories. These stories can be hidden and not shared explicitly. They often disrupt stock stories, or provide different perspectives.
  - **Resistance stories** are stories that may emerge from concealed stories. These are public or known stories that challenge the status quo about what is stock and what is concealed.
  - **Transformation stories** have not been heard before. They are stories that intentionally envision a future culture and climate and suggest change. These stories emerge from thoughtful analysis and careful study of culture and history that point toward action/change.

### **Process:**

1. **Communications:** The Dean for Med Ed will send out communications to ALL with details about the open forum storytelling sessions, including the link to sign up.
2. **Sign-up:** Individuals can sign up via link. They will be able to identify what session they would like to attend.

3. **Pre-work:** Once participants have signed up, they will receive an email with detailed information re: pre-work instructions: rationale for using storytelling, definitions of culture/climate, expectations re: participation, definitions of story types, instructions to submit stories (google form and during session) and use of the stories/next steps.
4. **Open Forum storytelling session (see write up below):** Participants will convene to engage in a dialogue about the stock, concealed, resistance, and transformation stories. Transformation stories will be documented and collected to be given to the Racism and Bias Initiative (RBI) Guiding Coalition.
5. **Follow up (participants only):** Follow up communications will go out to all participants thanking them for their participation and encouraging them to share stories via google forms (link will be provided)
6. **Recommendations:** All transformation stories will be shared with the RBI Guiding Coalition, where they will develop recommendations to be shared with Med Ed leadership.
7. **Closing the loop:** Med Ed leadership will close the loop by communicating recommendations and approaches to address issues.

Purpose	<p>To create a space in which different aspects of our school climate and culture and the connections between our individual stories and group experiences can be openly explored.</p> <p>To generate data in the form of stories aimed at catalyzing and defining action.</p>	
Time	1 Hour	
Activity	Time	Description
Ground Rules	5-7	<p>Start by saying “the lawsuit triggered a need to engage in a dialogue about the climate and culture in our school. We will not be discussing the lawsuit. We will be creating a space together in which different aspects of our school climate and culture, and the connections between our individual stories and group experiences, can be openly explored. The stories or experiences that you share will be deidentified (we aren’t attaching any names to the stories) and will be captured and compiled with the other open-forum session stories in order to help assist the Racism and Bias Initiative (RBI) to identify recommendations for enhancing the climate and culture at Mount Sinai. These recommendations will be submitted to the Strategic Leadership Collaborative (SLC) in the Department of Medical Education for review and approval.”</p> <p>In order to have this conversation, we need to have the following agreements (<b>post on chart paper</b>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What happens in the room, stays in the room.</li> </ul> <p>Disclose to the group that stories that involve sexual misconduct, violence, or abuse must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator and</p>

		<p>that those involving physical harm or the risk of physical harm must also be reported to either HR or Compliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accept what others have to share.</li> <li>● Everyone treats everyone else with respect.</li> <li>● One conversation at a time.</li> <li>● Participants may share as much or as little as they like.</li> </ul> <p>Ask the group if they would like to add any more agreements. If there are additions, add them to the chart paper.</p> <p>Facilitators should check in periodically to make sure the discussion is adhering to the agreements.</p>
<p>Ventilation and Icebreaker</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Go around the room and invite each person to share their name, and “given this moment in time, what brought you here to this conversation?”</p> <p>Review the definitions of culture and climate that were already distributed:</p> <p>Culture is a system of beliefs, values, norms and systems that define “how we do things.”  Climate can be the result of culture, and is often described as “the way it feels” when someone enters an organization. It is an atmosphere, a mood, a tone that we collectively set, whether or not we know we’re creating that climate.</p> <p>We will explore both our culture and our climate through 4 types of stories.</p>
<p>Stock and Concealed Stories</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Hand out the <b>graphic organizer</b>, which gives the definitions of concealed, stock, counter/resistance and transformational stories, as well as space for participants to write. Participants will also have been given these during pre-work via email.</p> <p>Remind the group of the definitions of stock stories and concealed stories. Stock stories are the stories we hear all the time, true or not. They are the accepted narrative about an organization’s culture and climate, and often reproduce white and male privilege and other bias. Stock stories are transmitted explicitly and implicitly. Concealed stories can be hidden, and not shared explicitly. They often disrupt stock stories, or provide different perspectives.</p> <p>Ask the group to personally reflect on the stock stories and/or concealed stories they know about our organization. Stories can be personal, or something participants have heard about or seen. Give the group time to jot down thoughts.</p> <p>What do these stories reveal about our culture or climate? What is</p>

		<p>hidden? What is dominant? What stories are left out or included? What is not mentioned at all? What is invisible or visible? What cannot be said?</p> <p>The facilitator should take note of the stock stories on <b>chart paper</b>.</p>
Resistance Stories	10	<p>Define resistance stories. Resistance stories are stories that may emerge from concealed stories. These are stories that challenge the status quo about what is stock and what is concealed.</p> <p>What resistance stories have you experienced or heard about? Give the group time to jot down thoughts.</p> <p>The facilitator should take note of the stock stories on <b>chart paper</b>.</p>
Transformational Stories & Closing	20	<p>Define counter, or transformational stories. These stories have not been heard before. They are stories that intentionally envision a future culture and climate and suggest change. These stories emerge from thoughtful analysis and careful study of culture and history that point toward action/change.</p> <p>What are the transformational stories we would like to see? Give the group time to jot down thoughts.</p> <p>The facilitator should take note of the stock stories on <b>chart paper</b>.</p> <p>Give each participant a <b>stack of post it notes and a pen</b>. On these post-it notes, ask the participants to write their ideas for how these transformational stories can become reality. These post-its, along with the chart papers, will be shared with the RBI to make recommendations to the SLC.</p> <p>Thank participants for engaging and sharing their stories. Instruct participants to go around the room and state ONE word that describes any insight (high/low) that they are walking away with having participated in this open forum.</p> <p>Finally, give each participant the link to a <b>Google Doc</b>. Invite them to share any more stories or suggestions they like.</p> <p>Also, let the group know about other reporting resources for stories they might not have shared.</p> <p>If anyone would like to report sexual harassment or abuse, they can contact:  TitleIX@mssm.edu  sandra.masur@mssm.edu  212-241-0089; cell: 646-245-5934</p> <p>If anyone would like to receive confidential and informal assistance, they can contact:</p>

		<p>the Ombuds Office, which is for confidential and informal assistance, not reporting</p> <p><a href="https://icahn.mssm.edu/about/ombuds-office">https://icahn.mssm.edu/about/ombuds-office</a></p>
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