



ROOTS TO ROUTES

A CALL FORWARD

THE GLASGOW GROUP

January 26-28, 2026
Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

Challenging Colonial Legacies: Skills for Facilitating Liberation Dialogues with Love and Humanity

Natalie Thoreson

Founder and Lead Consultant, rEVOLution

Facilitating liberation and anti-oppression dialogues in schools and communities requires courage, humility, and practice. Discussing “isms” (i.e. ableism, heterosexism, racism) often surfaces tension and discomfort among students, families, colleagues, and even within our personal communities. This workshop builds facilitation expertise for groups, classrooms, and one-on-one conversations and includes identity exploration to examine power and positionality. Participants strengthen their ability to face truths about the construction of oppression in education and society, lean into discomfort, build relationships across differences, and respond to conflict with courage and care.

We center humanizing connection, dignity, and love as counters to colonial legacies of disconnection that continue to shape schools and communities. Participants practice approaches that foster accountability and care when disagreement emerges in classrooms or communities. The work traces colonization as the root of oppression and examines how colonial structures shape dialogue, power, and community within independent schools.

This institute benefits anyone seeking to navigate hard conversations and build connections across differences.

Through facilitation modeling, interactive lecture, pair-shares, small group and large group dialogue, and facilitated Q&A, participants will learn to:

- Use group agreements to support student and participant safety.
- Pause in real time to surface power, bias, and inequity in decision moments across classrooms, meetings, and partnerships.
- Facilitate values-based dialogues that surface tension without avoidable harm.
- Hold challenging/uncomfortable spaces with clarity, compassion, and accountability.
- Integrate a love ethic and right relationship into their facilitation.

This workshop is for educators and administrators.

Natalie Thoreson is the founder of **rEVOLution**, where they *center the LOVE in revolution*—exploring love as a powerful tool for dismantling oppressive systems and nurturing transformative change. With more than 25 years of experience designing and facilitating liberation-focused workshops, Natalie brings lived experience, scholarship, and deep humanity to their work examining settler colonial capitalism and systemic oppression. A sought-after keynote speaker and facilitator, they create spaces that are welcoming, authentic, and grounded in accountability, interdependence, and joy.



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You Belong Here: Thriving as an Early Career Independent School Educator

Maxime Sinal

Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

Independent schools are incredible places to teach and grow - full of purpose, promise, and opportunity. They can also be confusing, intimidating, and at times a little exclusive, especially when you are relatively new to independent schools and still figuring out school culture. You Belong Here: Thriving as a New Independent School Educator is a space to keep it real, laugh a little, and do the work of grounding yourself in community and purpose.

This three-hour session helps early-career and newer independent school educators - those who have been in schools for less than 5 years - root themselves in belonging while developing the tools to lead with confidence and cultural responsiveness. Through storytelling, reflection, and collaborative learning, we will unpack how identity, power, and privilege show up in schools and what it means to teach and lead in ways that affirm everyone's humanity.

Participants will:

- Reflect on their own identity and professional "why."
- Learn strategies for building belonging through culturally responsive practices.
- Develop tools to influence curriculum, culture, and systems with an equity lens.

This workshop blends humor, honesty, and practical strategy. It is part pep talk, part toolkit, and fully focused on helping early career educators move from surviving to thriving. You will leave with new ideas, new connections, and the reminder that belonging is not given. It is created. And yes, you belong here.

This workshop is for educators and administrators.

Maxime Sinal currently serves as Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (Philadelphia), following his role as Diversity Coordinator and English Department Chair at The Wardlaw-Hartridge School (New Jersey). With more than 15 years in independent school education, Maxime brings deep expertise in cultivating culturally proficient school communities. He is an Ed.D. candidate in Education, Culture & Society from Rutgers University. A trained facilitator who served the NAIS Student Diversity Leadership Conference for almost a decade, Maxime empowers students and educators alike to lead with authenticity, equity, and belonging.



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Story Bridge: Cultivating Connection and Belonging through the Power of Story

Jennifer De Leon & Adam Stumacher, Story Bridge

In this workshop, participants are guided through a step-by-step process to explore compelling stories from their own lives. After supporting you to identify a particularly meaningful story, we help you shape, refine, and share these narratives, both in small groups and as a whole community. Participants then work in groups according to school role to develop a plan for leveraging the transformative power of story in their work.

Participants will:

- Engage in a storytelling workshop that they can implement in their role to foster community in teams, classrooms, and schools.
- Develop their storytelling ability as an essential communication and leadership skill
- Develop strategies to cultivate communities of belonging and connection
- Build authentic connections, and practice building a culture of empathy and listening, where all members of a community feel comfortable bringing their full selves.

This workshop is for educators and administrators.

Jennifer De Leon is an award-winning author (including young adult novels *Borderless* and *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From*, and the essay collection *White Space*) and former teacher who holds a BA in International Relations & French from Connecticut College, an MAT from the University of San Francisco, and an MFA in Creative Writing from UMass–Boston. She serves as Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Framingham State University and is faculty in the Newport MFA Program at Salve Regina University. As founder of Story Bridge, she creates inclusive spaces where people of all backgrounds shape, share, and harness their stories for transformation.

Adam Stumacher holds an MFA from St. Mary's College (Moraga, CA) and has taught writing and public policy at institutions including the University of Wisconsin, MIT, and the Harvard Kennedy School. His storytelling and nonfiction work have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Granta*, *Narrative*, *The Southern Review*, among others, and he's received the Raymond Carver Short Story Award and the Sontag Prize in Urban Education. Through Story Bridge, he has helped educators and leaders bridge divides, craft narrative power, and build empathetic communities.



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Collaborative Inquiry on the Anti-DEI Campaign and the Impact on Educational Outcomes

Dr. Ali Michael

Executive Director, Educating for Equity

Participants will delve into the history of the anti-DEI campaign, waged both culturally and politically over the past five years. We will also examine the White Paper from UCLA and NYU (entitled *The Limitation Effect*), in which researchers have demonstrated that anti-DEI policies in Florida have led to educational restriction for all students. Participants will strategize ways to navigate this anti-DEI campaign so as to continue to expand educational opportunity while rooting their schools in their missions and values.

The goals for participants include the following:

- To develop a comprehensive understanding of the anti-DEI campaign waged over the past five years
- To identify the anti-DEI trends and pressures in their own school communities
- To examine the overlap between allegations of antisemitism and the anti-DEI campaign
- To learn to differentiate between good faith and bad faith critiques
- To understand the dynamics of high conflict in order to keep conflict healthy
- To examine the case study of Florida, in which anti-DEI legislation has created a limitation effect on educational opportunity for all students
- To strategize ways to navigate this anti-DEI campaign so as to continue to expand educational opportunity and root our schools in our missions and values

This workshop will be grounded in informed, research-based inquiry, with participants engaging in individual and collaborative exercises so that they can better understand this historical moment and make decisions with the knowledge and skills required to navigate it.

This workshop is for educators and administrators.

Dr. Ali Michael is the Executive Director of Educating for Equity and the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Race Institute for K–12 Educators. She earned her PhD in Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education and currently teaches in the Diversity and Inclusion Program at Princeton University. A nationally recognized scholar, author, and facilitator, Dr. Michael has spent over two decades helping schools and educators build the skills and courage to talk about race, deepen racial literacy, and create equitable learning communities. Her publications include *Raising Race Questions*, *Our Problem, Our Path: Collective Anti-Racism for White People*, *The Guide for White Women Who Teach Black Boys*, and *Teaching Beautiful Brilliant Black Girls*. She brings both rigorous research and deep humanity to her work, guiding educators toward reflection, accountability, and action.



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CPR: Reviving the Art of Meaningful Conversations: A Pre-Conference Workshop for Students
Kyle Williams, Chief Empowerment Officer, A Long Talk

A Long Talk About the Uncomfortable Truth is a national anti-racism activation experience for schools and universities designed to inspire reflection, dialogue, and action. Through guided conversation and collective learning, it empowers communities to confront racism, unlearn bias, and work together toward building an anti-racist America.

This impactful, interactive 3 hour session is designed to equip students with tools to navigate challenging topics effectively with peers and adults. Through learning the CPR Protocol (Clarify, Probe, Redirect), participants will gain skills to engage in meaningful conversations, address ignorance constructively, and promote positive change within their school and home communities. This experience fosters a culture of constructive dialogue and understanding.

Participants will:

- Learn the CPR Protocol as a means of sharpening their conversation and facilitation skills
- Practice artful responses in challenging situations
- Connect with other participants and explore various viewpoints and perspectives
- Learn tools for helping to build a positive school culture based in constructive dialogue

This workshop is for high school students.

Kyle Williams is an educator, community leader, and Chief Empowerment Officer of *A Long Talk About the Uncomfortable Truth*. With more than 25 years of experience in education, leadership development, and social justice work, Kyle has devoted his career to empowering students and adults to lead with purpose, clarity, and courage. A former classroom teacher, school leader, and head of a community-based charter school in Washington, D.C., he brings a deep understanding of how education can transform both individuals and communities. Through his work with *A Long Talk*, Kyle uses dialogue, reflection, and collective action to inspire truth-telling and equip communities to disrupt racism and inequity together.