Advocacy through storytelling is a program that focuses on story telling as a means of influencing community change. Often times marginalized communities data and overall narratives are utilized to paint a picture in which members of the community are viewed as victims or at worst perceived as the cause of their own challenges.

The belief is that if we provide the community with the skills and tools to authentically share their story, through engaging story telling highlighting their perspectives and challenges then we can create a message that is rooted in their truth, showcases their own resiliency and removes any stigmas associated with sharing the vulnerable parts of their journey.

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you.” Maya Angelou

WHAT DID WE DO?

1. Created a culturally congruent storytelling and systems change training program, utilizing practical training techniques to improve user understanding and application of the material.
2. Provide 4 cohorts of storytelling and systems change training, combined participants 32
3. Through the training participants identified which domain they wanted to utilize their stories to influence change.
4. Participants created power statements and calls to actions relating to their specific domain of change.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. We utilized pre and post surveys to tracks participants understanding of the elements of telling effective stories, how systems impacts BIPOC communities and practical call to actions to initiate a cascade of systems improvements.
2. We assessed participants previous community leadership and advocacy experience, and monitor participants readiness to serve in community leadership and advocacy roles once they completed their training.
3. Participants were invited to film their stories and testimonials from the training and receive additional support to move from training to active advocacy.
4. During the 10 weeks, participants received one-on-one coaching that allowed for addressing any specific concerns, messaging refinement, but more importantly processing their own feelings associated with sharing vulnerable parts of their story, and sharing their story in a way that allows them to retain their dignity.

Outcomes

• Five participants filmed advocacy digital assets for use in various community engagement and outreach events
• Six participants increased their participation in coalition initiatives in the domains, of homeless services, mental health and health services
• One participant accepted a community leadership role in a health initiative
• The collective training participants have identified future programmatic and policy solutions to improve community outcomes.

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