

HOW WE TALK ABOUT US



[A ZINE BY SNAP CO. & FRIENDS]

Setting the Stage

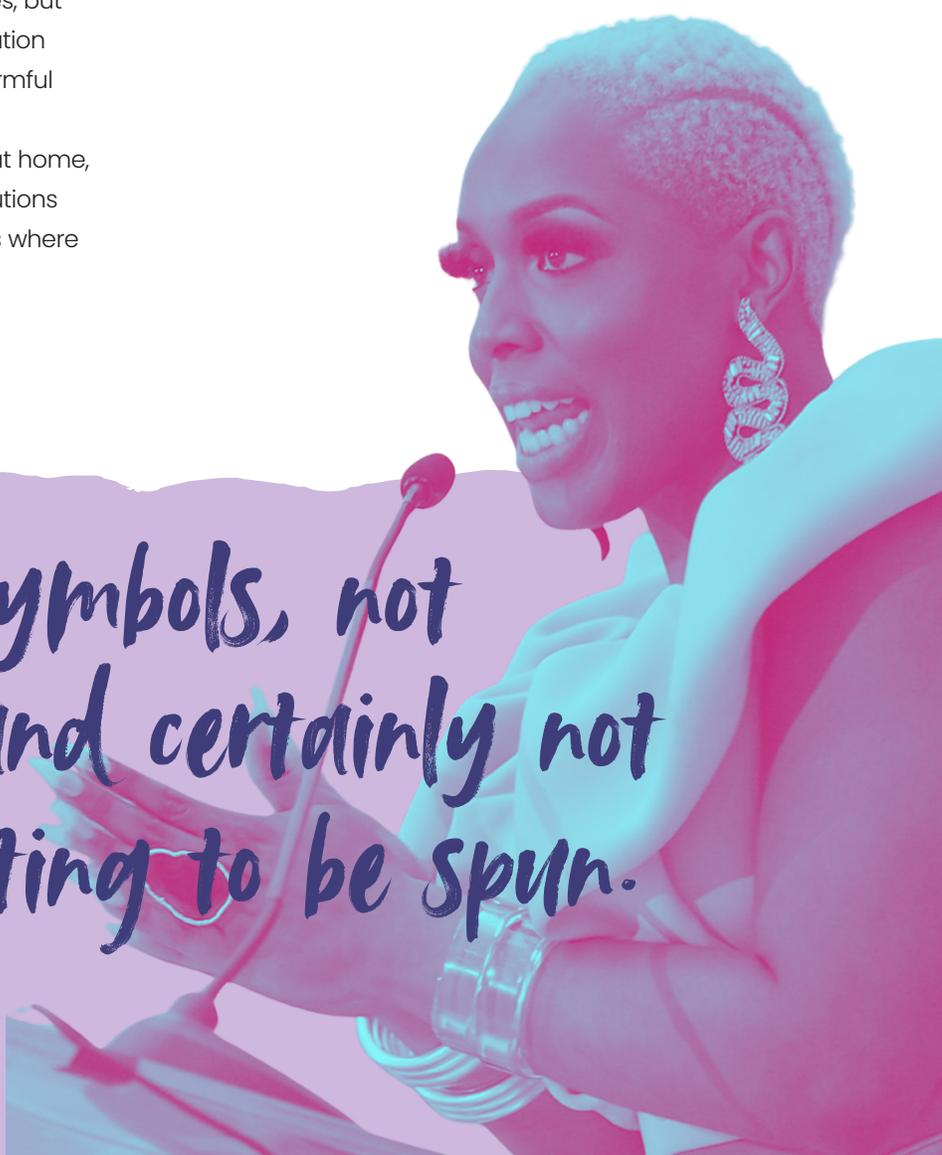
Meet the Real Stars Behind the Headlines

This is not your average pull-up-a-chair conversation.
This is a reclamation.

How We Talk About Us was birthed through real-life conversations about difficult realities and hard-fought wins. It is an extension of the Deeper Than Visibility Summit, held in March 2025, and a continuation of years of Black Trans-led organizing, research, and strategy. The Summit was created with a clear intention: to ensure that the conversations, analysis, and collective wisdom shared in that space would live on. In a moment defined by escalating anti-trans policy attacks, this zine exists to help people understand not only what is happening to trans communities, but why and how stories, narratives, and misinformation are being used to fuel violence, erasure, and harmful legislation. It is meant to offer context, data, and strategies for challenging transphobic rhetoric at home, in the media, our communities, and inside institutions like City Hall, state legislatures, and other spaces where policy is made.

This is a living, breathing document, filled with the voices of Trans folks explaining what it means to be the arbiters of our own future, shaped by our voices and our leadership as Trans people, standing in the full embodiment of our self-determination. It's a message and resource for our allies about advocacy that speaks with, but never for, our community.

Let this project be a reminder that our lived experience gives us the expertise. We are the storytellers. We are the real stars behind the headlines, and we are doing the talking now.



We are not symbols, not scapegoats, and certainly not statistics waiting to be spun.

Episode 1: Meanwhile the Villain Edit

In our book, a villain is defined as anyone cruel enough to get in the way of someone just living their life joyously and honestly, which makes transphobes the ultimate bad guys. From the rise in anti-Trans policies and violence to the rise in anti-Trans rhetoric in the news and media, you're not imagining things. There is a targeted attack against Trans people. Whether for political gain or simply irrational bigotry, there is a systematic campaign of hatred that fuels the dehumanization and violence against Trans people.

Rise in Anti-trans Policy and Violence

During the first Trump-Pence administration (2017-2021), federal agencies rolled back protections for LGBTQ+ people across health care, education, housing, immigration, and military service, **more anti-LGBTQ policies than any previous administration in U.S. history.**

Now, under a renewed Trump era and a broader right-wing mobilization, the attacks are even more intense at the state level.

TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE ON THE RISE

Between 2017 and 2021, the number of trans people murdered in the U.S. nearly doubled.

100%+

INCREASE IN TRANS DEATH

(Source: Congress.gov)

FBI data show that hate crimes based on gender identity are rising even as overall crime decreases. (Source: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov))



850+

ANTI-LGBT BILLS INTRODUCED IN 2025

This is the most in U.S. history, with the vast majority targeting trans people specifically.

(Source: Truthout)

400

Fatal violence cases since 2013

Nearly 400 cases of fatal violence against trans individuals documented. (Source: HRC)

78%

Murdered trans women are Black

Black trans women accounted for 78% of trans women murdered. (Source: [CHPRC](https://www.chprc.org))

RISE IN ANTI-TRANS RHETORIC IN NEWS AND MEDIA

Trans people are less than 1% of the U.S. population, yet trans issues now dominate prime time cable news.

Fox News produced almost 1,000 anti-trans articles in 2025

1000

ANTI-TRANS ARTICLES IN 2025

(Source: Congress.gov)

One analysis found The New York Times failed to quote a trans person in 66% of its anti-trans legislation articles. (Source: [GLAAD](https://www.glaad.org))

This is the climate in which **How We Talk About Us** is being created: A time when trans identity is a political wedge issue.



Episode 2: Flipping the Script

NARRATIVE POWER AND RECLAIMING THE MIC

The thing about narratives is: somebody's always telling a story. The question is, who's holding the pen?

For too long, our stories have been cast without our consent. Trans folks, especially Black folks, have been written into the background, edited into stereotypes, or framed as danger, confusion, or pity. And while the media's been busy airing their scripted drama, we've been out here living whole lives in full color, no cue cards needed.

Flipping the Script is about reclaiming that narrative power. To win, we must call out the lies and show what's real. Because the truth is, we're not just surviving, we're directing, producing, and starring in stories that matter.

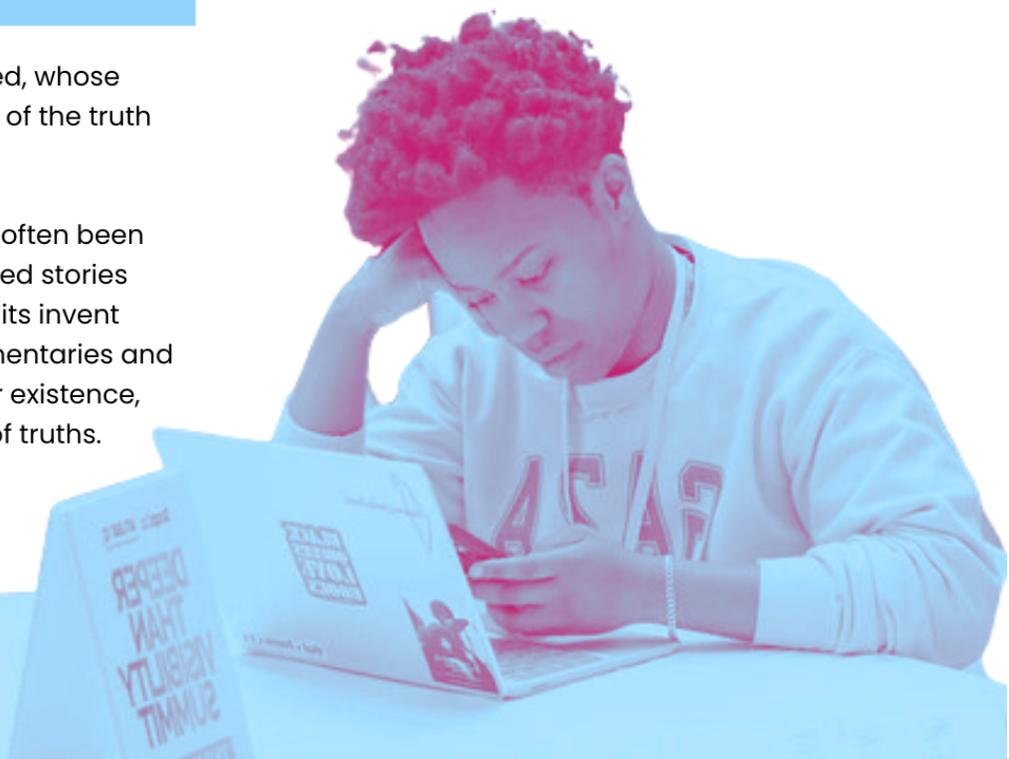
In 2025, analysis from GLAAD illustrated that less than 30% of media coverage across seven Georgia based outlets actually included the voices and perspectives of Trans people when writing about Trans issues.

Narrative power defines who is believed, whose reality is validated, and whose version of the truth becomes power and policy.

For Trans people, narrative power has often been weaponized. Politicians push fear-based stories about us to pass restrictive laws. Pundits invent chaos for views and headlines. Documentaries and news segments often "both-sides" our existence, treating our lives as debates instead of truths.

These stories don't just live on the screen or the page. They shape policy, public opinion, and perception.

- When a law says a Trans child can't play sports, it's not just a rule. It's the result of a narrative that says Trans girls are cheaters or not real girls.
- When doctors deny care, it's because they've absorbed stories that claim Trans people are unstable or incapable of making decisions about and for themselves.
- When affirming a Trans child becomes criminalized in the classroom, in the home, and within the medical world, it is because of falsehoods perpetuated that deny the autonomy of children, more specifically, Trans children.
- When we're murdered or attacked, the media still misgenders us, sending a message that even as victims, our names and identities are up for debate. And when you're dehumanized in this way, it can be seen as a justification for our death.



Receipts, Baby!

The truth doesn't lie, but misinformation does.

For every viral headline rooted in fear or distortion, there's a truth grounded in lived experience and backed by real data.

- **Gender-affirming care saves lives.**

A 2022 study in JAMA Pediatrics found that access to hormone therapy is linked to a 73 percent lower risk of suicidality in Trans youth.

- **Cisgender people benefit from gender-affirming care.**

Gender-affirming care for cis people ranges from cosmetic surgery to critical hormone therapy. This form of care for cis people is accessed at much higher rates across age groups and cisgender identities. For example, based on a 2019 study in JAMA for adults, 80% of Breast reduction surgeries were performed on cisgender adult men, and for minors, nearly 97% of Breast reduction surgeries were performed on cisgender boys.

- **Trans athletes are not dominating sports.**

There is no reliable evidence showing that Trans athletes are winning at unfair rates. A review by the Women's Sports Foundation found that these bans are solutions in search of a problem.

- **Violence against Trans people is real and rising.**

According to the Human Rights Campaign, four out of five Trans people murdered in the U.S. are Black Trans women. These deaths are often misreported, with law enforcement and media misgendering victims.

- **Most Americans support Trans rights.**

A 2023 Pew poll found that 64 percent of U.S. adults support laws protecting Trans people from discrimination in jobs, housing, and public spaces.

- **Trans people are not new.**

Cultures around the world have recognized gender-diverse people for centuries. Indigenous nations in North America, for example, have long honored Two-Spirit identities. The disruption came with colonization, not queerness.

So next time someone tries to say we're dangerous, confused, or "too much," tell them: we have the receipts.



5 Core Anti-Trans Tropes Pushed in Media

1. "Trans people are sexual predators."

We are framed as a danger to women and children, especially in bathroom and sports debates.

Reality: There is no evidence that allowing trans people to use facilities that match their gender identity increases safety risks; multiple studies and law enforcement reviews confirm this. *Statesman*

2. "Trans people are violent or unstable."

Our identities are pathologized as mental illness, used to argue that we shouldn't own guns, shouldn't be parents, or shouldn't be trusted with our own medical decisions.

Reality: There is no evidence of escalating or trending increases of violence at the hands of LGBTQ+ individuals. Instead Trans individuals are more than four times as likely to be victims of violent acts, a notably underreported number. *Poynter*

3. "Transness is a new, dangerous trend."

We're framed as evidence of "woke ideology" or "gender ideology" infecting schools and culture.

Reality: Gender-diverse people have existed across cultures for centuries; what's new is the scale of organized backlash, not our existence. *American Civil Liberties Union*

4. "Trans kids are being rushed into irreversible decisions."

Politicians and pundits push the idea that children are being "fast-tracked" into surgeries.

Reality: Most gender-affirming care for youth is social transition and reversible puberty blockers; surgeries for minors are rare and already heavily regulated. Major medical associations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, recognize gender-affirming care as medically necessary. *PMC*

5. "The Deceiver Myth"

Media narratives routinely portray trans people as dishonest about who they are, framing gender identity as deception rather than identity.

Reality: Transness is not a costume of deception. Trans people know who they are. Trans people have the right to disclose when and how they want to. This myth enables violence, reframing harm against trans people as retaliation.



"FanFiction? No Baby, Real Life"

How non-Trans people create fantasy narratives about Trans lives.

Call it what it is: fiction writing. From lawmakers to media execs, there's a whole machine of people out here building fantasy worlds about what it must be like to be Trans. And just like bad fanfiction, these stories are full of plot holes, flat characters, and zero research.

Episode 3:

WELCOME TO THE
CUNTIVERSE

MEET THE
CUNTS

The Plot Twist

See Yourself Represented in the Cast

So what's the plot twist?

We're not waiting for the mic. We're flipping the script mid-season and taking control of the whole damn show.

In the **How We Talk About Us zine**, we explore how narratives about trans people are constructed, manipulated, and weaponized. The **CuntiVerse** flips that script. Instead of allowing others to define us, we claim our own language, our own power, and our own cast of characters.

The **Cuntiverse** is a playful but powerful universe of characters inspired by the real leaders, organizers, culture workers, and community builders who shape our movement every day. These characters represent the types of energies and leadership necessary to win the narrative, cultural, and political wars that trans communities are navigating right now.

Some of us are warriors. Some of us are strategists. Some of us are healers, storytellers, protectors, or disruptors. Each of these archetypes play a role in how we survive, how we organize, and how we transform the world around us.

SnapCo. hopes that you see yourself represented in the cast.

Royal Teadda

A visionary leader. They imagine expansive futures and move people toward them with strategy, charisma, and style.

Superpower: Vision



Professor Flex

Professor Flex turns vision into action. They organize, strategize, and execute the plans that move movements forward.

Superpower: Vision



Luna

Luna keeps movements coordinated and disciplined, ensuring people move together toward safety and justice.

Superpower: Coordination



Shi

Shi represents quiet resilience. Their depth and reflection bring wisdom to the movement.

Superpower: Inner Strength



Pea'chez

Pea'chez pushes movements to stay bold. They challenge complacency and demand liberation that is unapologetically radical.

Superpower: Disruption

Wondaa

Wondaa embodies bold confidence. She reminds us that trans people deserve joy, glamour, and abundance.

Superpower: Self-Worth

Kitty

Kitty embodies transformation. Turning lived experience into scholarship, they reshape systems with knowledge.

Superpower: Wisdom



Thee Kyng

Kyngs lead with grounded authority. They show the power of self-determination and embody leadership rooted in dignity and strength.

Superpower: Presence



Legislary NBae

Legislary NBae confront injustice directly. They are fearless truth-tellers who refuse silence when systems try to harm or erase trans people.

Superpower: Courage



Mudra Mamas

Mudra Mamas teaches transcendence through the body. They remind us that joy, sensuality, song, and healing are part of political and spiritual freedom.

Superpower: Authenticity



Sista Peacock

Sista Peacock is the movement's voice. With charisma and storytelling, they rally the community and make sure everyone knows what's happening.

Superpower: Communication

Sonnet LaFemme

Sonnet LaFemme transforms struggle into art. Through poetry and storytelling, they shift culture and open hearts.

Superpower: Alchemy

Naybor Lee

Naybor Lee supports connection. Helping to resource how and what we build together.

Superpower: Connection



BE Cunt, SPEAK Out:

What's happening in the Universe

The hatred of us as a community is not organic, it's being financed by white Christian nationalist organizations. They see us joyful, happy, and cunt. And they want to take that away because they can't take it.

Bentley Hudgins

I think the true power of our stories is that they create windows and mirrors. Windows for those who don't look like us so that they can get a better understanding, and a mirror for those who desperately need to see themselves reflected back at them in some way.

Mark Travis Rivera

We are in a moment of deep, deep change and the opportunity for transformation. And if a person can decide to transcend the gender binary, then it could mean that a whole community could decide to transcend the need for police. And so it's not just. That [we] are joyful and beautiful and gender fabulous, it's that you're leading the movement to tear shit down and build something new. And that's terrifying to fascists.

Che Johnson-Long

It's not just about visibility, but about how we protect ourselves, and sometimes that protection is just Black joy, seeing iterations of yourself in the future by seeing older Trans people, seeing the growth in yourself by seeing younger Trans people. [It's] just loving on each other, being in solidarity with each other, [and] knowing you're not alone.

Kabir Amari

We need national coordination and national strategy. So let's start talking to each other. We at least need to be coordinating strategy together.

Jaelynn Scott, M.Div



Episode 4:

Who's Got the Greenlight?

Representation in Policymaking & Culture

The power to influence policy has long been in the hands of those who are rarely impacted by it. When it comes to Trans issues, particularly for Black Trans people, decisions about our lives, our healthcare, and our access to basic rights are still being made by people who have no lived experience of the struggles we face. Yet, these decisions shape every aspect of our existence, from the workplace to the streets to the medical system to the most intimate aspects of our lives. But who exactly has a seat at the table?

Who has the green light to determine the laws, the structures, and the systems that impact our daily lives? This episode explores the power dynamics in policy-making spaces and challenges the notion that change and progress can occur without the necessary voices and experiences guiding them.

The After Show

We've dragged the false narratives, spilled the receipts, and reclaimed the mic, but this isn't just a media moment. It's a movement. If we want a world where Black Trans lives not only matter but lead, it's time to act accordingly.



Pull Up a Chair

Demand that Trans people, especially Black Trans people, are not just included in policy conversations, but centered. Call your reps. Show up at town halls. Ask who was at the table.

Run the Receipts

Challenge misinformation when you hear it. No matter if online, in the group chat, or at the dinner table, use your platform to uplift Trans-led sources and voices.

Secure the Bag (and Share It)

Donate to Trans-led mutual aid and advocacy orgs. Regularly. Loudly. Sustainably. (Include QR codes or links to orgs like: For the Gwols, The Okra Project, House of Tulip, Black Trans Advocacy Coalition, etc.)

Pass the Mic

Are you a journalist, educator, artist, or organizer? Make space. Cite Trans voices. Hire us. Include us in the budget. Not just for Pride. All year.

Tell Your Story, On Your Terms

Whether it's a tweet, a zine, a TikTok, or a testimony, your voice is power. Own it. Share it. Archive it.

"Cancel Culture vs. Accountability"

How do we hold power and hold each other responsibly?

Let's be real, 'cancel culture' didn't start with us. Black trans, queer, and nonbinary folks have always had to navigate what it means to survive harm while still holding space for each other. We come from a lineage of accountability; of pulling folks aside with love, naming harm with care, and rebuilding trust brick by brick. Somewhere between the call-outs and the quote tweets, we started mistaking visibility for justice.

When we "cancel" someone, especially another Black trans or queer person, we often replicate the same disposability that this world already hands us. The system already tries to erase us; we don't need to do its job for it. Accountability isn't about punishment; it's about possibility. It's the sacred work of saying, "I believe you can do better, and I'm still here to see that through."

Calling someone in doesn't mean excusing harm. It means we see their humanity even when they mess up. It means we know growth is messy and that healing doesn't happen under shame's spotlight. It means we ask: how do we repair, not just react?

Community care isn't cute talk; it's survival. It's how we stay alive. We can hold each other accountable and hold each other tight. We can demand repair without discarding people. We can be firm and still be kind. We can choose transformation over cancellation, because that's what freedom looks like when it's rooted in us, Black, trans, queer, and still believing in each other.

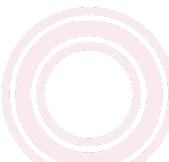
"Uninvited Guest"

The harm of being spoken about instead of to.

One of the most glaring problems with how policies are shaped is the practice of speaking about us without speaking to us. It's not enough for policymakers to sit in rooms and make decisions that impact Trans lives when they fail to include those they're affecting in any meaningful way. Instead, our struggles are discussed as statistics or theoretical problems. This is where the harm is done. We're talked about as if we are distant objects to be studied and analyzed rather than complex human beings whose lives are at stake.

Consider the way identity, documentation, and immigration policy are being discussed and enacted by lawmakers today. The language may sound procedural, but the impact is immediate and disruptive. On February 23, 2026, Kansas passed a law that invalidated the IDs of trans people overnight, and recent changes to the Diversity Immigrant Visa program now require applicants to list their "biological sex at birth," even when it conflicts with their documents. These policies are presented as technical, but they have created real fear of targeting and profiling among trans people in the United States and those seeking asylum. That fear comes from real experiences with discrimination. This is what happens when policy is made without listening to the people it affects. The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention warns that these patterns can point to the early stages of genocide. We're not just being left out of the conversation. We're being written out of recognition.

This dynamic continues the historical erasure of Black Trans people's needs from political spaces, while also reproducing harmful stereotypes about our lives, our struggles, and our capacity for agency. The problem isn't that policies exist without our input; it's that the very existence of Trans people in these spaces is actively ignored.



"We Said What We Said"

Visioning: what would just policy look like with Trans people at the table?

So, what would policy look like if we, Black Trans people, had a seat at the table? What would it mean for us to be more than just footnotes in a bill, to have our lived experiences inform every aspect of the policymaking process? A just policy would start with recognition that Black Trans lives are valuable, that we deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and that our unique experiences require specific, tailored solutions. It would look like healthcare systems that not only provide gender-affirming care but also understand the specific medical needs of Black Trans individuals. It would be a world where workplace discrimination is not just a conversation about "gender identity" but also addresses racism, ableism, and economic inequities that disproportionately affect Black Trans people.

In a vision where Trans people are genuinely included in policymaking, the process would be collaborative. We would not simply be "consulted" when convenient, but rather integrated into every stage of decision-making. From grassroots organizers to legal advocates, the voices of Black Trans people would shape policy from the ground up, ensuring that the solutions created reflect our realities and offer real protections. We would be seen not just as "other," but as full participants in society, worthy of safety, opportunity, and justice.

In this ideal world, policymakers would not only speak to us directly, but they would create opportunities for Trans people to lead, setting the agenda, pushing for structural changes, and shaping a future where our voices are as central as anyone else's. In the end, true representation means not just a seat at the table but the power to influence what's on the

Next Season Preview

What's next for our movement?

The story does not end here. How we talk about us is how we imagine us. Every word we speak about one another builds a record of who we are and who we hope to become. The language we choose shapes our futures; it teaches the world how to see us, but more importantly, it reminds us how to see ourselves.

We have the chance to rewrite the narrative in real time. To tell stories that do not start with pain and end with erasure, but begin in truth and unfold in joy. To honor the ways we show up for each other, even when the world refuses to. To make space for our contradictions, our softness, our brilliance, and our becoming.

The next part of this movement is about creation. Building networks of care, making art that holds our complexity, and insisting that we deserve futures built on ease and abundance. The work is not only resistance; it is reimagining. It is dreaming out loud, together.

So we keep talking about us, not just to defend who we are, but to celebrate it. To write our stories before anyone else tries to. To speak love into our names until the world learns to echo it back.



Readers Guide

Narrative Disruption Tactics

This exercise invites you to identify a harmful or inaccurate narrative, understand how and why it operates, and intentionally create a new storyline that opens space for truth, dignity, and possibility.

Step 1: Identify and Examine the Narrative

Identify a narrative you encounter frequently that feels harmful, inaccurate, or incomplete.

Reflect on:

- What is the narrative, and how is it commonly stated or implied?
- Where does it appear, and who is telling it?
- Who is this narrative about?
- In what ways is it inaccurate or incomplete?
- What truths, histories, or perspectives are missing?

Step 2: Understand Its Purpose and Harm

Harmful narratives often persist because they serve a function.

Reflect on:

- Why does this narrative exist?
- What systems, fears, or assumptions sustain it?
- Who benefits from this narrative being believed?
- Who is harmed and in what ways?
- How does this narrative shape behavior, relationships, policy, or what feels possible?
- How have you personally experienced or witnessed its impact?

Step 3: Create and Practice a Disruptive New Storyline

Create a new storyline that challenges the old narrative and offers a more truthful and expansive way of understanding.

Reflect on:

- What is a more accurate and humane truth?
- Whose voices and experiences should be centered?
- What values does this new narrative affirm?
- How does this storyline expand dignity, agency, and possibility?
- Where and how could this new narrative be shared, practiced, or embodied?
- What actions, language, or relationships could help reinforce it?





Grab Your Pens Madlib Activity

1. We are the _____

Name Your Cuntiverse Crew.

Today, we are coming together as a team to fight against _____
Choose 1 of the Anti-Trans Tropes.

_____ **led by** _____

Name the person using the trope.

They hold power to _____

Explain why the trope is not true.

We know that this is wrong because _____

How are they spreading misinformation?

We are combatting this narrative by sharing a story about _____

Choose a story, statistic, or

anecdote to disrupt the false narrative.

Final Word

We are not a debate. We are not an "issue."
We are not background characters in someone else's drama.
We are the scriptwriters, the main characters, and the
producers of our futures.
And we're not waiting for anyone's permission to take the
lead.



The Credits



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