

HOW TO TELL TRANSFORMATIVE STORIES

Transformative stories challenge harmful pervasive narratives and show that solutions are possible. These stories help us empathize with the characters, and as we hear their story, we have hope and belief that seemingly overwhelming problems are solvable with collective action.

Telling these kinds of stories requires that you understand and challenge prevailing harmful ideas that make it difficult to build support for solutions.

- 1 Who is this story about?
- 2 What is the challenge they face?
- 3 What are the harmful ideas or mindsets that affect how people think about this problem? These might include zero-sum or fixed-pie mindsets, harmful stereotypes, bootstraps mentalities, or harmful ideas about “deservingness.”
- 4 Where can you add rich details and context that replace stereotypes or harmful assumptions?
- 5 Can you include characters in the story who hold these mindsets and those who do not?
- 6 How do conditions change for the central character in this story?
- 7 What actions do they take that demonstrate agency?
- 8 How can you show the collective action of many in resolving the challenge, including mundane or “boring” details?
- 9 How does this story activate emotions that **research tells us** are associated with agency and action: hope, awe, and/or parental love?

