



# ELGIN RE-IMAGINED

A STORY WEAVING

FACILITATION  
GUIDE

for Community Conversations

*"Our true power being our connection to ourselves, and our true power being our connecting to our ancestral ways and indigenous practices." ~Atoi Glennette*

GRAND VICTORIA FOUNDATION

# AN ELGIN RE-IMAGINED

The purpose of this facilitation guide is to encourage reflection & imagination about a racially-just Elgin Reimagined. While there are many significant issues and themes in the stories, this is not meant to be a guide to dive deeper into those areas. We do encourage you to do that exploration on your own and in community. Please utilize this guide as little or as much as is helpful for your group.

**Facilitation Note:** For those who will be facilitating this conversation with both BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and non-BIPOC community members, we ask that you consider how you can center BIPOC voices in the conversation. It may be beneficial to have a BIPOC community member lead or co-lead the facilitation. It is also important to not expect a BIPOC group member to speak/share or to take their thoughts and feelings as representative of a whole community.

For non-BIPOC community members, here are suggestions:

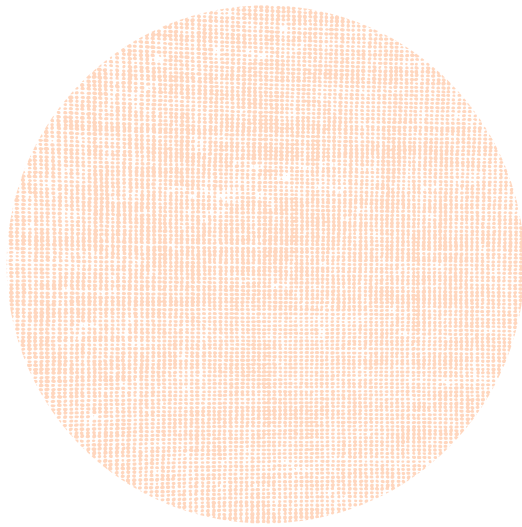
- Be mindful of your “airtime” and appropriately step back to make room for others
- Do not speak for BIPOC community members, but rather speak from your own experience
- Interrupt any harmful language (racist, transphobic, xenophobic)
- Clarify your expectations around confidentiality in order to ensure a safe space.

**Content Warning:** Before screening Elgin Reimagined, it's important to recognize that the following stories include examples of harm, violence, and struggle that are related but not limited to racism, transphobia, xenophobia, and anti-Blackness. We recognize that many of us hold deep trauma and ask that you proceed with love and care.

*"Before I started transitioning, I felt like I was not born yet. Now that I have been able to transition, I feel I am living the life I have dreamed of having since I was a child. Now I feel free. As a Latina trans woman, I believe that there should be more programs that benefit us and that provide us with the health care that we need in order to live a happy and fulfilled life."*

*~Deborah Ruby*

# CENTERING PRACTICE



We recommend that you engage in a centering practice with your group before you start the film viewing and discussion. A centering practice helps the participants connect with their bodies and become present to the activity they are about to engage in.

## **Three Intentional Breaths**

Instructions:

1. For our centering practice today, we are going to take three intentional breaths to help us come back to the present moment and connect with our body, mind, and feelings.
2. Make yourself comfortable where ever you are sitting.
3. Feel free to close your eyes if that feels comfortable or keep a soft gaze.
4. As you take your first intentional breath, notice how your body feels in this moment.
5. Inhale and exhale.
6. As you take your second intentional breath do a check-in with how you are feeling today.
7. Inhale and exhale.
8. As you take your third breath notice what is on your mind in this moment.
9. Inhale and exhale.
10. When you are ready, you can slowly open your eyes.

Centering practices can be as simple as the above breathing technique. Check out this link for some additional centering practices you can try:  
<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>



# AN ELGIN RE-IMAGINED

## Discussion Guide

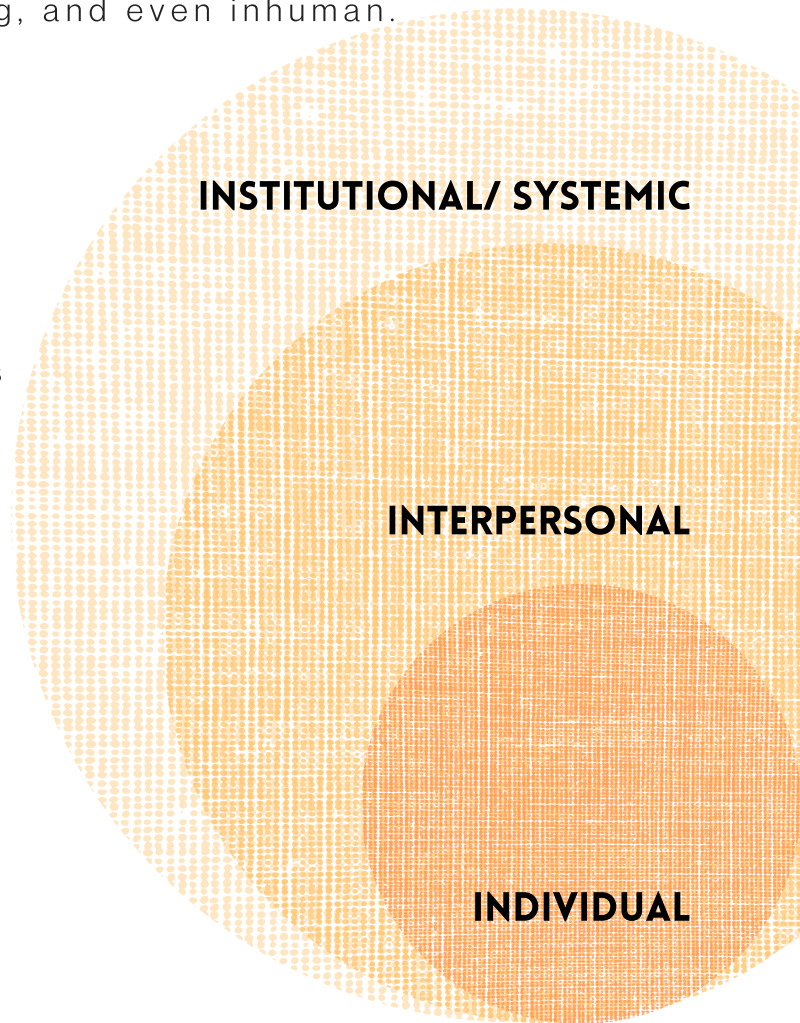
Now that the film is over, take a couple of minutes to reflect on the stories that you heard and the intellectual, emotional, physical responses you may have experienced throughout the video.

- Either with a partner or in a large group, share one feeling, thought, or reflection on either the experience of watching the stories or a particular moment/story that left an impression on you.
  - Please utilize “I” statements, I feel, think, etc.
- Reflection Question: Have you heard these stories or stories like these before? If so, where/when? If not, why do you think that is?

Investigating the Inequity: While these powerful stories were shared by individuals, we know racial inequities extend beyond the individual and interpersonal relationships (i.e. that person is racist). In fact, the Elgin Re-Imagined stories reflect how institutions and systems (healthcare, education, religion, etc) can reinforce inequitable outcomes and an oppressive culture (values, beliefs, norms, etc). These institutions and systems can be harmful and cause trauma, including messages that BIPOC communities are unwanted, undeserving, and even inhuman.

Either in groups or individually, reflect on one of the institutions presented in an Elgin Re-Imagined story or reflect on your own example of institutional racism.

- Why would our storytellers or others not feel empowered to share their experience as it's happening?
- What policies & procedures may be reinforcing the harm?
- What cultural values and traditions may be reinforcing the harm?
- Who is and isn't leading and making the decisions?
- How is money budgeted or not budgeted to address the harm?



# AN ELGIN RE-IMAGINED

## Discussion Guide Cont'd

A Racially Just Reimagining: Now that there has been an opportunity to investigate the issue, it's time to reimagine these institutions! The following exercise requires paper and a pen/marker/pencil but can also be done through conversation.

- Either as a large group or in smaller groups/individuals, draw your radically reimagined institution. For example, if you talked about institutional racism in education or a school, draw a reimagined school.
- Utilize the responses from the previous question to reimagine & draw the racially just policies, values, traditions, leadership structure, budget allocation, and other elements that would make for a racially just institution. For example, a drawing of a reimagined school may show books that reflect a culturally relevant curriculum and signs in multiple languages.

**Let your creativity flow & share your visions!**

Final Reflection: Each of our storytellers shared their vision for an Elgin Reimagined. Often times, grassroots BIPOC community members are not recognized and trusted to lead policy solutions and design strategy, instead being included simply for a story, cultural diversity, or feedback. Also, BIPOC communities are often viewed through a deficit model and reduced to **those** people who need to be educated, need to change their behaviors, and/or need to be saved. Sometimes, community members are blamed for a lack of engagement when it is actually the terms of the engagement that affect their ability to be involved (time, language/culture, childcare, compensation, trust).

- What are the benefits to Elgin when decision-makers of social services, schools, government, etc. center the experiences and wisdom of BIPOC community members like those in Elgin Re-Imagined?
- What is the cost when they do NOT?

Debrief of Conversation: As a closing “check-out,” you can use the following simple prompt below. Ask everyone to hold their own & each others reflections.

- "BEFORE this conversation I felt/thought [complete the phrase], and NOW I think/feel [complete the phrase].