

Roundtable on Values and Justice

Catalyzing a new narrative of community safety and reimagining justice in Oklahoma

Co-hosted by The Education and Employment Ministry and the Justice Lab at Columbia University

Roundtable Agenda

Day One: Wednesday, November 29, 2023

6:00 PM COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND NARRATIVE ORGANIZING STRATEGIES IN OKLAHOMA

A conversation between Cece Jones-Davis and Jabee Williams

Citizen Potawatomi Nation Heritage Center, 1899 S Gordon Cooper Dr, Shawnee, OK 74801

Day Two: Thursday, November 30, 2023

Chickasaw Nation Community Center, 4001 NW 39th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73112

8:00 AM BREAKFAST AND CHECK-IN

8:30 AM NARRATIVE NORTH STAR PRESENTATION AND PANEL

Narrative Initiative and Square One Staff

Narrative Initiative, a national nonprofit that collaborates with social movements to shape their government, economy, and culture, has been working in Oklahoma for the past two years with local stakeholders of the ProsperOK network to build narrative power for deepened collective impact. In this panel, participants of their process will reflect on the lessons learned, including core prevailing narratives in Oklahoma, and launch the "Narrative North Star"- a guiding light to anchor both collective and individual work against the carceral system.

9:45 AM BREAK

10:00 AM WELCOME AND LIVING LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Melvin Battiest and Yvita Crider

10:30 AM ROUNDTABLE FRAMEWORK

Kris Steele

10:45 AM INTRODUCTION

Michaela Clarke

A diverse group of Oklahomans with unique personal and professional backgrounds have been coming together for the past year to interrogate fundamental flaws in the criminal legal system, reckon with historical harms, and dream of a new future of justice for the state. Everyone sitting around this table today has either been a part of these conversations or exposed to the process. What has brought you to this work and what do you bring to this work? As you sit here today, are you optimistic, pessimistic, hopeful, or discouraged (or feeling something else entirely?) for the future of justice in Oklahoma? Why?

12:00 PM LUNCH

1:15 PM CREATING A NARRATIVE CHANGE INFRASTRUCTURE

aurelius francisco and Tiffany Crutcher

According to Narrative Initiative, "Narratives reflect shared interpretations of how the world works by embedding themes and ideas in collections of stories. Who holds power and how they use it are both revealed in and supported by dominant narratives. Successful narrative change shifts both power and dominant narratives." Over the past two years, Oklahomans in Square One have identified narratives around punishment and harm that shape the current criminal legal system, in order to develop new narratives that center community safety and healing. What are some of these existing narratives about crime, punishment, and safety in Oklahoma? What are some of the untold, or nondominant narratives, around these topics? What new narratives could we use to promote human dignity and socially integrative responses to harm? What actions could Square One stakeholders take to catalyze narrative change around community safety and violence? How do different types of audiences influence tactics and messaging around narrative change?

2:45 PM BREAK

3:00 PM THE ROLE OF VALUES AND FAITH IN OKLAHOMA'S CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

Clarence Prevost

Oklahoma's criminal legal system disproportionately targets women, people of color, and other marginalized groups of people. Not only does Oklahoma incarcerate women at one of the highest rates in the world, but also, of the 25 people who have been sentenced to death in Oklahoma since 2020, nearly all of them have significant vulnerabilities (mental illness, child neglect and abuse, youthful age at the time of the alleged crime, etc.), and people of color are disproportionately represented on death row. What roles do faith and values have--or not have--in driving such high rates of incarceration in Oklahoma, especially of marginalized people? What role might faith and values play in decreasing the reach of the criminal legal system in Oklahoma? What role can faith and values play in healing and accountability in the future?

4:30 PM THURSDAY WRAP-UP
Kris Steele

Day Three: Friday, December 1, 2023

Chickasaw Nation Community Center, 4001 NW 39th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73112

8:30 AM BREAKFAST

9:00 AM GROUNDING & REFLECTIONS FROM DAY ONE
Yvita Crider and Kris Steele

9:30 AM ACCOUNTABILITY, PUNISHMENT, AND REPAIR
Francie Ekwerekwu and Tyler Fisher

When harm happens, people often seek to hold someone to account. In Oklahoma, accountability is often pursued through police and the courts, which ultimately results in prison sentences, community supervision, or fines and fees. However, Oklahoma locks up a higher percentage of its people than nearly any democracy on earth. Are police, courts, and prisons effective tools for achieving accountability? How do we hold these systems accountable themselves? How is accountability similar or different from punishment? What role do (or don't) Oklahomans in the broader community have in these accountability processes--in the short-term? In the long-term? What is the role of the governed in holding government and powerful leaders in the community accountable?

11:00 AM RECKONING IN ACTION AND CREATING A CULTURE OF REPAIR
Cece Jones-Davis and Kym Cravatt

*Reparations and land back movements are gaining momentum as many communities across the country think meaningfully about repairing past harms of chattel slavery, indigenous genocide, and ongoing racial violence through the criminal legal system and beyond. Yet these concepts are far from commonly accepted; for example, in Oklahoma, there is continued resistance to reparation for the harms of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and to compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court's 2020 ruling in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*. Oklahomans have lived with these wounds, and their long-lasting infection continues to cause pain. What are the symptoms? How has this infected other parts of Oklahoma's history and present state? What does justice and healing look like for the Tulsa Massacre survivors and Greenwood community members, or for the millions of indigenous people who experienced mass genocide and forcible removal from their homes? How does reckoning with history connect with reimagining the criminal legal system in Oklahoma? Can we reckon with history to repair past harms and also commit to a future that responds to harm with healing rather than punishment?*

12:30 PM LUNCH WITH PERFORMANCES BY POETRY AND CHILL YOUTH

2:00 PM IMAGINING NEW SYSTEMS OF SAFETY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Justin Jones and Tina Brown

While Oklahoma ranks as one of the highest incarcerators in the world, it is among the lowest in resourced public services, such as education, housing, food security, and healthcare. How does incarceration impact community safety? What do you need to feel safe and connected to your community? What does it look like? How do social services create community safety and reduce harm? What is the role of philanthropy, government, businesses, faith institutions, and social sectors in fostering community safety and social connection? What are the systems of safety that currently exist in Oklahoma? What new systems are yet to be imagined?

3:30 PM BREAK

3:45 PM THE FUTURE OF JUSTICE IN OKLAHOMA

Aisha Elliott and Yvita Crider

The Square One Project in Oklahoma brings together diverse groups of stakeholders who are committed to reimagining the criminal legal system and shifting the dominant narratives from punishment to community connection, healing, and justice. We are inviting this coalition to continue this work by making commitments to yourselves, your neighbors, and the broader Oklahoma community to advance a new and sustainable vision of justice. What commitments are you willing to make to advance narrative change in your work, community, and personal lives? What is your vision for justice and community safety in Oklahoma? What commitments would you like to see from folx at the table? From the Oklahoma community at large?

Activity:

Respond to any of the questions above on your provided cards. Place your card on the collective art piece puzzle.

4:45 PM CLOSING

Kym Cravatt and Michaela Clarke

5:00 PM RECEPTION

Chickasaw Nation Community Center Lobby