

# 2021 CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE



## Listen, Learn, Act!

Fighting for Justice in our Schools  
and Communities

**SUTTON HIGH SCHOOL**

**March 24, 2021**

# CONNECTIONS TEAM



## WELCOME TO SUTTON HIGH SCHOOL!

Welcome to Connections Conference 2021!

While we look forward to seeing you all in person next year, we are excited to spend the day virtually with you today. We have an amazing group of presenters - college professors, nationally recognized non-profit groups, local groups doing amazing work in their communities, and most impressive - youth groups - all excited to share their passion and expertise with you. The theme of this year's conference is "Listen. Learn. Act! Fighting for justice in our schools and communities."

The last year has shown us how important it is for all of us to begin advocating and fighting for the changes we want to see in our communities. We need to LISTEN to the stories of people who have been the victims of systemic oppression or the target of hate. We need to LEARN how we can use what we have to become better advocates and allies to those folks in our community who need our support. Most importantly, we need to ACT where we are to make our communities more just and equitable, and we don't have time to wait!

We hope you have a great day, and you are inspired to take what you learn at today's conference back to your schools and communities to make them better places for everyone. We look forward to seeing everyone in Sutton next year!

Have a great conference!

The Sutton High School Connections Team

# 2021 Keynote Speaker

## Dr. Jamila Lyiscott



Jamila Lyiscott aka, Dr. J, is a community-engaged scholar, nationally renowned speaker, and the author of *Black Appetite. White Food: Issues of Race, Voice, and Justice Within and Beyond the Classroom*. She currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Social Justice Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she is the co-founder and co-director of the Center of Racial Justice and Youth Engaged Research. Dr. J is most well known for being featured on TED.com where her video, '3 Ways to Speak English,' has been viewed over 4.5 million times, and for her commissioned TED Talk, '2053' in response to the inauguration of the 45th occupant of the white house. She has delivered keynotes and workshops at 100s of institutions throughout the nation where she works closely with youth, educators, and communities towards racial healing, equity, and justice.

Dr. J's scholarship and activism work together to explore, assert, and defend the value of Black life globally. As a testament to her commitment to educational justice for youth of color, she is the founder and co-director of the Cyphers For Justice [CFJ] program, apprenticing NYC high school youth, incarcerated youth, and educators into research and activism through hip-hop, spoken word, and media literacy.

Dr. J serves as co-editor of the highly acclaimed journal of *Equity & Excellence in Education*, and holds faculty fellowships at the University of Notre Dame, and Teachers College, Columbia University. She is the recipient of the 2019 AERA Outstanding Public Communication of Education Research Award and the 2019 Scholar-Activist & Community Advocacy Award. In her active efforts to disrupt the bounds of the academy, she has also been featured in Spike Lee's '2 Fists Up,' on NPR, *Cosmopolitan*, *NowThis*, and many other media outlets nationally and internationally.



# Agenda

**8:30 - 9:00 Welcome & Opening Activities**

**9:00 - 10:00 Keynote Presentation: Jamila Lyiscott and Q&A**

**10 mins Screen Break**

**10:10 - 11:25 Workshop Session 1**

**11:30 - 11:55 Lunch Break**

**12:00 - 1:15 Workshop Session 2**

**1:30 - 2:00 Individual School Reflection & Planning Time**

# Workshop Descriptions

**Key:**

**All - All audiences welcome**

**MS - Intended for middle school students**

**HS - Intended for high school students**

**T - Intended for faculty, teachers**

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## **Act to Include: Building Inclusive Spaces**

*Kerry Weir, SUNY Old Westbury*

Bias against people with disabilities - ableism - happens in our classrooms, schools, and communities. In this workshop, participants will confront examples of ableism, challenge their beliefs about people with disabilities, and identify actions they can take to build inclusive spaces in their schools. **[ALL]**

## **Activism in the Suburbs**

*Susan Nugent & Lindsay Rosenman, Acton Boxborough Regional High School*

ABRHS A World of Difference [AWoD] and AB Students for Equality and Justice [ABSEJ] will be conducting a workshop addressing the differences between broad-scale activism and suburban activism. Activism does not have boundaries: systemic problems must be fought on all levels, local, national, and even international. Big picture activism is categorized as joining large groups or coalitions and making connections with large groups of people. On the other hand, the suburbs are notorious for hate being deeply normalized; they hold true to their historical origins and closely consider tradition. This makes invoking change in the suburbs a different and more individual process. We will be discussing these differences and what allyship can look like in suburban communities.

**[MS,HS]**

## **Affinity Groups for Students of Color: How/What/Why**

*Kelly Norris & The Diversity and Culture Club, Minnechaug High School*

Students and their advisor will share the reasons why an affinity group for students of color is important, what kinds of things it can accomplish, and how to go about starting and organizing one. Participants will be invited to start imagining/planning such a group in their own school, and time will be allotted to ask questions. **[ALL]**

## **An Introduction to Racial Identity Development**

*Michele Leong & Dave Bennett, Newton North High School*

An important element of anti-racism work involves understanding where one is in terms of one's own racial identity development [RID]. This workshop will introduce educators to the concept of racial identity development [RID], so they can begin or continue to examine where they are in terms of their own RID, in order to better support their students, whether they are Black, Latinx, Asian American, Indigenous, Multiracial, or white. Participants will learn about different models of RID for specific racial/ethnic groups, as well as apply these models to their own lives and classroom settings.

**[HS,T]**

## **Become a Unified Champion School**

*Kathleen Lutz, Unified Interscholastic Sports Manager Special Olympics MA*

Come and explore the Inclusive Mindset and what it takes to get there.

We know that bringing students together and providing a shared experience is a pathway to understanding and friendship.

Our Unified Champion School program brings students with and without intellectual disabilities [ID] together and challenges them to be agents of change.

Students learn inclusive leadership skills and apply them in and out of the classroom, in assemblies, extracurricular clubs and activities, and especially in inclusive Special Olympics unified sports teams all with one central goal: to create a culture that respects the dignity and gifts of every student.

**[ALL]**

## **Becoming a Social Entrepreneur**

*Katherine V Montero, Global Deeds*

In this workshop attendees will learn about the process of creating societal impact as a Social Entrepreneur. Social entrepreneurs target unsustainable and highly unjust systems, and work diligently to design business ventures and nonprofits that bring overall balance to society. **[ALL]**

## **Bold and First: Identifying and Supporting First Generation Students of Color in Higher Education**

*Wes Boucher and Kayla Berrios, Wheaton College*

While applying to an institution of higher education can be a difficult process for any student, this is especially difficult for students navigating it from the intersection of being a First Generation, student of color. Through this session, we hope to highlight and demystify the college search and integration process. In this presentation, students will be able to discuss the elements of the college search that may be particularly important to a first-generation student of color. Teachers/ Staff/ Administration will be able to identify ways in which they can assist their students in this search process and proactively identifying need areas for their students to consider. **[ALL]**

## **Building an Equity Lens to Approach Your Work**

*Kerry Akashian, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

The session will focus on how to develop an equity lens to be utilized in your professional and civic life. The session begins with a definition of an equity lens and how it can be used to support day to day decision making. Discussion will continue with different types of equity lenses. Finally, the session culminates in strategies to help you to develop your own equity lens. The session is for educators and students. **[ALL]**

## **Building Inclusive Youth Led Spaces**

*Nakia Navarro, Building Audacity*

Building Audacity Founder, Nakia Navarro, will lead a workshop sharing how folx can build inclusive spaces by sharing norm building, naming practices, and other tools that can be used to build equitable spaces. **[ALL]**

## **Cambridge Families of Color Coalition (CFCC)**

*CFCC Core Organizers*

The Cambridge Families of Color Coalition [CFCC] is a coalition of parents and caregivers working to represent the needs of Families of color across the city of Cambridge. COVID-19 continues to exacerbate many of the existing racial disparities in our education system. CFCC will present the organization's origin story, current work, and strategies to invest in and increase equity and anti racism in education. Caregiver of Color organizers will engage and interact with students and educators at the Connections Conference around barriers to racial equity and how they manifest in our schools so that we can dismantle systems of oppression together. **[ALL]**

## **Colorism and the Beauty Industry**

*Sarah Wagner & Anagha Babu, Innovation Academy Charter School*

The beauty industry is built on the principle that we, the consumers, are not attractive enough unless we buy a certain product. These products are often marketed to help consumers fit societal beauty standards, but these standards are often Eurocentric. They cause a lack of representation for darker skin tones, further contributing to the idea that a darker skin tone is less desirable. While in recent years we have seen more activism in the beauty industry, it is still very colorist and racist. In this workshop, we will share how this issue is prevalent in the industry, positive changes that have occurred, and the actions we can take to change it. While personal care products may seem like a relatively insignificant detail in our life, they can have a significant impact on how we perceive ourselves. **[ALL]**

## **Connections: How We Built a Social Justice Group In Our School and How You Can Too**

*Sutton High School Connections Team*

In this session, members of the Sutton High School Connections team will talk about how we went from small group conversations with students about social justice topics to hosting a state-wide social justice conference, and why we believe so strongly in this work. You will have a chance to ask questions and problem solve how you can re-energize this work in your own school or maybe even start a Connections Program of your own. **[ALL]**

## **Chemistry and Social Justice in a High School Classroom: Creating Opportunities for Student Empowerment through a Green Chemistry & Sustainability Lens**

*Kena Awuah-Peasah, Raksmeey Derival, Bella-Kay Ndouop, Vishwa Patel, Jabela Tilahun, & Cassera Anton, Innovation Academy Charter School*

Chemistry and social justice topics are explored in multiple ways in a high school chemistry classroom. Students explored ways to determine the safety of chemicals in their personal care products. They develop the practical application skill of interpreting a chemical's safety data sheet and by using a popular app to screen their personal care products for safety warnings. After learning of the harmful effects of chemicals in hair care products marketed for curly and coily hair types, students were empowered to create their own safer alternative. Students created a hair mask product made of safer chemicals and that worked well. Students were also encouraged to analyze the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] and consider ways to leverage green chemistry principles to solve sustainability problems. Samples of student work reviewing the progress of the SDGs towards their 2020 benchmark and of the connection between systemic racism and the Flint water crisis will be shared. Audience members will learn about ways chemists can help solve social justice problems and practice safety analysis skills in this workshop. **[ALL]**



## **Diversity Liberates and Inclusion Heals**

*Luis F. Paredes, Ph.D., Bridgewater State University*

Join me for an in-depth discussion of diversity and inclusion dynamics in our educational platforms. Our conversation will detail important social movements led by students to activate inclusion and intentional diversity programs. As we rethink the future of higher education, we should continue to interrogate systems and structures that often impede progress or change. **[T]**

## **Don't say That!?**

*Melissa Soleimani, Boston College*

Many words that are commonly used are not inclusive or have a dark history. This activity will explore many of our everyday words and provide students with new inclusive alternatives. Students or faculty will be given the opportunity to research words and find out the history. This activity will show the impact of language and the need to incorporate inclusive language into our everyday vernacular. **[HS,T]**

## **Drugs & Detention: The Role of Educational Inequity in Addiction**

*Alexa & Mollie Morgansteint, Sutton High School Alumni*

It's no secret that opioids are an epidemic in the US. By September 2020, there were 1,517 opioid related deaths in Massachusetts alone. We've all heard news reports of white middle class kids getting addicted after taking doctor-prescribed opioids for wisdom teeth or a sports injury. However, this narrative isn't true for the majority of those who abuse substances.

In this session, we will unpack how educational inequity- and its institutionalized racism, classism, and ableism- leads to substance abuse. As we confront our own biases about addiction, we will collaborate on how to make change in our schools and communities. This session is facilitated by Alexa [MA Special Education] & Mollie Morganstein [BA Public Health], sisters and SHS alums passionate about social & racial justice and community health. **[HS,T]**

## **Exploring Ways to Become Active Allies for the Transgender Community**

*Beryl & Vernon Domingo*

The purpose of this workshop is to explore ways that you can become an active ally for the trans community. Using our family's "coming-out" story to illustrate our journey towards acceptance and active allyship, we explore gender variant identities and the challenges faced by transgender people and their families. Together we'll discuss ways to create an inclusive and welcoming environment in a school setting and in the larger community. These will include advocacy, promoting trans rights, active bystandership, and ways to celebrate trans lives. The presentation will include activities, videos and slides, and a discussion in chat. **[ALL]**

## **How to Intervene in Racist Situations**

*Elea Zegdoun, Hope Coleman-Plourde, Karina Camacaro, Sadie Coleman-Plourde, and Thalyta DeMatos, Innovation Academy Charter School*

Interrupting racism when you see it can be so hard! Attendees of this program will learn about three types of interpersonal racism and ways to intervene in a range of situations. You will be encouraged to interact with other participants to discuss, brainstorm, and investigate ways to be more anti-racist within ourselves, our schools, and wider communities. **[ALL]**

## **Helping Teachers Support Traumatized Students**

*Taylor Stewart Seegars, Boston College*

Teachers play a critical role in supporting students who have experienced trauma and are often expected to perform in roles for which they have not been formally trained. Although trauma-informed schools are intended to provide emotional support for students, little information is available concerning the emotional support or needs of teachers who provide such services. This workshop will share findings from our 2019 study which provided more insight into [1] how teachers in an urban high school support themselves psychologically while providing daily education and support for students who often are experiencing trauma and [2] strategies teachers utilize when supporting marginalized traumatized students in an urban high school setting. This workshop will offer suggestions for educational practice that will aid teachers in working traumatized students. **[T]**

## **Institutionalized Racism in the Healthcare Industry and its Impact on Healthcare Professionals and their Patients**

*Manu Hegde & Spencer Evans-Cole, Innovation Academy Charter School*

Every day, people make decisions based off of someone's race implicitly, or without conscious knowledge. Although this may seem trivial, this issue becomes significant when these decisions affect the wellbeing and treatment of others. Racism has been a severe issue in the United States for centuries, and recently, there's been a push to address the implicit bias exhibited within the healthcare industry. With racial issues being exacerbated by the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, people of color feel increasingly discriminated against by the healthcare staff, with many cases of prejudice or inadequate treatment being brought to light by the media. In this workshop, we explore this issue of institutionalized racism by interviewing healthcare professionals themselves, ultimately modeling this systemic conflict and our conclusions through Systems Thinking models. Our goal is for all listeners to be able to reflect on their own biases and prejudices and understand their role in helping solve this issue of inequality. **[ALL]**

## **Intersectionality: Understanding yourself and others**

*Amy Gebo, Rural Justice Network Nonprofit*

Intersectionality is the understanding that people's identities intersect in many aspects of life and can make life more challenging and more filled with prejudice. In this workshop, we will be doing a deep dive into ourselves and how the world treats us. We will also be learning how the world treats others with more marginalized identities than us. Learning about how other people live in this world will help us understand others and fight for them! **[ALL]**

## **Igniting Change: Turning Vision(s) into Community Action**

*Eve Abraha & Alex Lein, Building Audacity & Tufts University*

Igniting Change started out with what seemed like a simple mission: use the funds and resources we had to cook and prepare meals to deliver to groups of people experiencing homelessness on Massachusetts Ave, in downtown Boston.

We strive to work with the communities we are supporting, and learn from, listen to, and advocate for the individuals with whom we interact. Our goals and results-driven approach are rooted in mutual respect, and an ability to adapt: whether it is adjusting the food that we have served over several months or starting to offer support in other forms -- we listen and build relationships wherever we can.

In our workshop, we hope to focus on how community members can organize as effectively and compassionately as possible, and how personal resources and connections can be put into action. Our focus is hyper-local, and we want to involve people who genuinely care about the communities to which they belong. From our view, this starts with young and high school-aged folx who are moving into and around these communities. **[ALL]**

## **LGBTQ History: Intersections of Race & Gender**

*Debra Fowler, History UnErased, Inc.*

This interactive, multimedia workshop engages participants with empowering content and conversation that explores LGBTQ history through the lenses of race and gender. **[ALL]**

## **Is AI Racist?**

*Colaberry team: Pawan Nandakishore, Sathwik Vangari, & Kristina Alessi*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming more and more prevalent in our lives. Tools like facial recognition in Google photos and voice recognition in Amazon Alexa are commonplace. These tools use AI to automate tasks that would take a human hundreds of hours to complete. Such speed opens up amazing new possibilities, but it also comes at a cost. Numerous well-documented cases have shown how human bias permeates AI systems.

In the workshop, we will explore why our own biases get into AI systems, the very real consequences of such biases, and steps we can take to promote the design and creation of ethical tech. Participants of the workshop will gain a general understanding of AI algorithms, how biased tendencies infiltrate these systems, and how we can mitigate this amplification of existing societal issues for a more just world of tomorrow. **[HS,T]**

## **Mental Health & Social Justice: The Impact On Academics & Athletics**

*Geoff Cushner, LICSW, Revidas, Athletic Mental Health and Wellness & Chris Johnson, M.ED, Boston Day and Evening Academy*

While the focus of school and sports is performance, 1 in 5 students have mental health issues that are organic and/or as a result of traumatic life experiences. This workshop will detail the challenges impacting students in their community as well as the role of race and ethnicity. We will co-present from the lens of a mental health practitioner and as an experienced teacher in the Boston Public Schools working with at-risk youth between the ages of 16-22. **[HS,T]**

## **No KKK, No Fascist USA: African American Activists Fight Fascism, from Black Power to Black Lives Matter, 1960s-2020**

*Ousmane K. Power-Greene, Clark University*

Since the 1960s, Davis and other black activists have considered racism as a fundamental component of fascism, and thus, conjoined the terms when describing the black struggle toward liberation. Building on activist-intellectuals, such as W.E.B Du Bois and Louise Thompson Patterson, black activists involved in movements for Black Power, against South African apartheid, mass incarceration, and police violence have called racism and fascism two sides of the same coin. This workshop explores a half-a-century of black American activism by exploring what Angela Davis called the fascist tendencies beneath public policies and cultural expressions -from "state-slavery" in the form of mass incarceration, white supremacist and police violence, and state policies, such as forced sterilization and re-segregation within urban cities in order to show the contours of antiracism and antifascism within social and political movements for racial justice. **[HS,T]**

## **Out (of High School) and Proud**

*Bret Jacob & Jess Motyl-Szary*

Join Mr. Gay Rhode Island 2019 and Mx. Bisexual Rhode Island 2019 in an interactive workshop to talk about how to keep your LGBTQIA+community strong after you graduate from high school. During this time we will talk about the many ways you can be involved with the community, ranging from drag & gender bending performances to international activism. **[ALL]**

## **Only the Weapon of Love: Kingian Non-Violence through a 21st Century Lens**

*Hallie Martin & Pablo Fernandez, The Resistance Center for Peace and Justice*

This workshop will engage participants in a discussion of Dr. Martin Luther King's philosophy of non-violence. We will review and discuss excerpts from Dr. King's works. Participants will be asked to think critically about non-violence in the context of protest in today's society. Specifically, we will be keeping in mind the Black Lives Matter movements of this past summer and the riot at the Capitol in January. Participants will leave with a greater understanding of non-violent resistance and how to carry on his legacy. **[T]**

## **Patriarchy Harms Everyone; We Can All Heal Together**

*Fitzgerald Pucci, Rural Justice Network*

Our world is full of grief, confusion, and trauma- in this moment more than most others. To gain some crucial tools to help us process this heaviness, it will be crucial to develop an awareness of the conditions of power, and the forms of violence enforcing it, that have led us to this tumultuous moment. One central component of power and violence affecting everyone is patriarchal violence. This course will shed light on what patriarchy is, and the ways it harmfully effects men, women, and non-binary folks alike across cultures. We will discuss the ways violence upholds this dynamic, and learn to identify the forms of violence that aren't as immediately recognized. With this information, we can come envision together, as a community, how all of us can develop practices that disrupt patriarchy in our lives, and support one another as a community in healing. **[MS,HS]**

## **Stigma: Breaking Down the Barriers**

*Amy Breton, College of the Holy Cross & Jess Szivos, Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

We plan to discuss stigma as it pertains to disability. We will take a look at public, institutional, and self stigma. We will also address intersectional activism and the breakdown of stigma through social justice agendas. College students will share some relevant experiences and we will compare experiences and how they differ from middle school, to high school, to college, and beyond. **[ALL]**

## **Supporting Asian American Students During the Pandemic**

*Michele Leong & Charlene Beh, Newton North High School*

One of the starkest realities of the current pandemic is the way COVID-19 has highlighted the deep racial disparities in America. Many Asian Americans have experienced these disparities as a heightening of racism and xenophobia directed against them. Since March 19, 2020 there have been over 1700 reports of coronavirus-related discrimination against Asian Americans, and complaints of anti-Asian discrimination filed in New York City are up 92% in a three month period compared to the same time last year. Across Massachusetts, Asian American students have experienced instances of COVID-19 related racism directed at them before and during distance learning. This workshop will explore the historical roots of this current iteration of anti-Asian American racism, discuss the underlying stereotypes at work, and examine ways for educators to support their Asian American students. **[HS,T]**

## **Talking About Privilege**

*Tara Cole, South Hadley High School*

The conversation regarding privilege can come in all sorts of ways – and is not always about race, religion, culture, etc. Privilege can even happen within the walls of your school. Throughout this session, keep in mind that many types of privilege exist. In other words, people can be privileged based on their racial/ethnic group membership, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or [dis]ability status. Oftentimes, these groups are referred to as the ''isms'' and are considered protected classes and groups that have been oppressed.

Everyone experiences receiving privilege or the negative outcomes of not receiving privilege. Understanding privilege will help society provide equitable support to help everyone succeed. Prejudice and privilege still impact our society today. Conversations like this help everyone learn how to end it. **[HS,T]**

## **The Road to Antiracism**

*Ysabel Cruz Goutier, Gale Stafford, & Rhoda Kaddu, Innovation Academy Charter School*

Between June and August 2020, a small group of faculty members and students from Innovation Academy, a small charter school located in Tyngsboro, MA, gathered to organize for action. Within that time, they developed a student support group with an anti-racist initiative, proposed the formation of a multi-stakeholder Racial Justice Committee, organized a community forum for students and staff of Color to share their experiences with racism within the school, and demanded change. Join us for an interactive session of sharing to hear about the start of our school's journey, how we are continuing this work, and brainstorm how we might connect it with yours. **[ALL]**

## **The Persistence of Hate: Exploring and Combating White Nationalism**

*Dustin Tenreiro, Facing History and Ourselves*

The terrorist attack and murder of eleven Jews at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018, as well as the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6, 2021 underscored and drew attention to the rise of right wing extremism in the United States. Increasingly, white nationalists are targeting young people for recruitment online, and white nationalism has been linked to bullying, threats, and violence in schools. This session is designed to help educators better understand the growing threat of white nationalism. Educators will explore resources and engage in conversation around promoting thoughtful dialogue around this threat as well as ways to respond. By creating safe spaces for reflection and questioning and by offering context and lessons from history, teachers can foster a school culture where everyone feels valued, and where students grow to be engaged citizens of an inclusive democracy. **[T]**

## **Transformative Approaches to Advancing Racial & Social Justice In Our Schools**

*Phil Fogelman & Danika Manso-Brown, Anti-Defamation League*

This interactive workshop will focus on tools to help educators of various academic disciplines prepare, initiate and continue conversations about race, racism, and social justice. Through small and large group conversations and action planning, participants will explore, Considerations to create brave spaces for honest dialogue, How to set solid historical and contextual foundations for discussions about social justice, and the Language for responding to challenging situations. **[T]**

## **Using the Tool of Self-Awareness in Anti-Racism work: Finding and Turning your Strengths into Actions**

*Amanda Finizio, Wellesley Middle School*

Being an active anti-racist requires concrete action and outer work, but it also requires a lot of inner work. In order to do anti-racism work well, you need self-awareness, resilience, and humility. You need to be able to identify when you are feeling emotionally challenged, and who/ what is a safe outlet to process those feelings without doing harm to others. You need to know when you are feeling defensive, frustrated, or ready to give up, and you need to be able to work through those emotions so you can strengthen your ability to be of service to others and to society. In this workshop, you will tap into self-awareness as one of your most important tools in anti-racist work. You will identify the supports that help you reflect and build self-awareness, and you will assess your personal communication strengths and how you can use these strengths to build or improve the concrete anti-racist actions you want to take. **[ALL]**

## **What do you want from YOUR city/town?**

*Dr. Thomas Conroy, Sarah Adams, Gemma Wilkens, Joanne Jaber Gauvin & Dr. Adam Saltsman, Worcester State University & Central Mass Regional Planning Commission*

In this multiphase workshop, participants will engage each other in collaborative teams to solve real-life issues facing Central Mass cities and towns. In doing so, they will glimpse pathways toward municipal/regional planning, public management/administration, and community development careers through which meaningful change can occur. They will interact with experts in the field and be encouraged to tell what they want from their cities and towns as a first step in a planning process. Resources for careers in planning, administration/management, and community development will be available.

Participants will also discuss the creation of a network of high school clubs/groups, a possible annual planning/community development contest, and ways to continue their peer connections beyond the Connections Conference. **[HS,T]**

## **You Belong Here: Discovering Identity through Poetry**

*Krishna Algoto and Alisa De Los Santos, Libraries for Liberation*

Ever read a poem that just SPOKE to you, ya know? Like someone gave words to an experience that you haven't been able to articulate before? In this workshop, we'll get to know ourselves through encounters with the written and spoken words of modern poets of color, queer poets, and voices who revolutionized the genre of poetry. You'll be invited to bring your full, unapologetic selves to a space where you are empowered to express your truth. Let's explore our identities through reflection, conversation, and writing! **[ALL]**



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**See you next year!**



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