

Lessons from community organizers

Notes from a July 31, 2020, conversation hosted by America Amplified and moderated by Sandra Clark

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Sandra Clark
WHYY



Venita Griffin
re:power



Amber J. Phillips
AmberAbundance



Terryn Hall
Writer, consultant

ON POWER

- Explore the narratives in place and who benefits from those narratives (ex. Black women voters are not saviors of a campaign or election)
- Ask who is missing from this conversation? Ask who is in power?
- Unpack relationships with institutions. Are you putting experts at the center of the story or real people?

ON BIAS

- No one is completely objective. The bias is already there. Consider who your friends are, where you live, who you follow, read, etc.
- Acknowledge bias because you can't undo something you're not willing to name
- Being part of a community is how you can acknowledge bias and begin to undo it
- Read [Wesley Lowery's NYT op-ed](#) on mainstream media's racially coded "objectivity"

ON TRUST

- Be authentic by sharing your connection to the issue
- Be vulnerable enough to admit when you don't have a connection and say you are there to listen
- Be clear about your role: Where is your focus? On institutions or the people?
- Reporters should regularly talk to their local community organizers, not just for stories

ON STORYTELLING

- Dive into perspectives that are not your own
- Find the deeper story than what you see on the surface
- Use digital platforms: It's where communities can control narratives, and where people find community. Learn the best ways to tell stories using tools of the platforms
- Stories are the start. Be deeply curious and continue to learn. It's an iterative process