So You Want to Talk About Race Banned Books Festival

February 22, 2026 Bishop Arts Theater

Experience the transformative power of storytelling at Bishop Arts Theatre Center's Banned Books Festival, an electrifying evening of theatre inspired by Ijeoma Oluo's groundbreaking book ***So You Want to Talk About Race***. This year's festival features six bold, original short plays penned by visionary local playwrights who dive fearlessly into the complexities of race, identity,...

After the play Dale Godby, PhD, Melissa Wallace, MD, and Angelica Tratter, PhD will host a Social Dreaming Matrix followed by a Median reflection group for any interested audience members.

Some ideas on how to set the stage for the SDM and dialogue to begin:

After the plays...

Invitation from the stage.

Teresa said that after the plays she would invite me up to the stage and we will invite anyone in the audience upstairs to reflect on what we have just experienced. She and I may have a brief conversation about past banned books post play discussions in which we had

rich discussion around the issue that white folks get to do civil rights on the weekend but for Black folks it can be an every day chore.

I'm not sure what you will say Teresa but you have great stage presence and I'm sure you will give a warm invitation to further reflection.

I might say after Teresa has spoken something like. I will be joining Teresa upstairs with colleagues who have experience in reflective citizen's groups. We have conducted these reflective groups in areas where conversations are difficult. Places like Israel and Palestine, and in the Balkans with Serbians and Croats. We will be working to create a safe space where we can listen and learn from one another about the issues the plays have highlighted.

Once upstairs the chairs will be arranged in a circle facing one another. If we are lucky we will have 20 people. I might be happy with 10 and we could have 5 or 6. All depends on the courage of our audience.

I will introduce Melissa and Angelica as colleagues. Teresa, I am not sure about this, and you can advise but I lean towards just using first names and not saying doctor. This is because I think it may make for a more relaxed atmosphere and also make it less performative.

Melissa then might say something like, "Talking about race is a difficult conversation. We plan to start in a new way. In a minute we will turn our chairs around, lower the lights, and for the next 20 minutes ask you to share with the group a dream that comes to mind after watching the plays. It may be a dream or dream fragment from last night or from any night that you remember. As you hear the dreams we'd like you to associate to them. (give an example). We have found this method helps us to think new thoughts and listen to one another at a deep level. One of us might add, we are not interested in the personal meaning of the dreams but what they say about our present cultural context. The dreams are gift to the group and speak to one another. After we arrange the chairs one of us will say. What is the first dream.

Angelica, then might say after we have shared and associated to our dreams and we have rearranged the chairs so they are facing one another, let's enter into a dialogue about any of the themes that have emerged in listening to the plays and the dreams they have stimulated. Let's listen and reflect with one another, thinking in new ways about the difficult topic of race in America.

These are just some rough ideas that I think we can work from. I think if we can just speak a few things like this and talk back and forth to one another in a spontaneous fashion, it will set the stage for dialogue.

Previous example of instructions we used:

Below is what to expect during this hour-long meeting. For the first 30 minutes, we will begin by asking the audience to share their dreams. We call this a Social Dreaming Matrix and it is a unique way to move towards new understandings. You can share a dream from last night or any night that comes to mind. As you listen to the dreams, feel free to share any associations you have. Someone may share a dream about the eclipse, which elicits an association to the sense of awe you had as a child when you witnessed your first magic trick. This process loosens the boundaries of concrete knowledge and helps connect us to the creative processes of our unconscious mind. We are not interested in the individual meaning of the dream or the dreamer. We consider our dreams as a gift to the group. The dreams speak to one another. Thinking together about our dreams and associations can open us up to new thinking. We will then leave the world of the dream and for the next 30 minutes we will discuss any themes that emerged from the show and the social dreaming matrix. As we close, we will ask for any applications you hope to make in your life as a result of experiencing Fannie Lou Hamer's life and work.