

My Name, My Story **Tool Kit**

Each participant is given up to five minutes to talk about their name. They begin by stating their full name. Participants then talk about their name using the questions below as a guide for telling their name origin history.

This exercise has been designed to start the thinking about our own identities and shared experiences of erasure and reclaiming our heritage. Participants are encouraged to further explore the topic and spark conversations about identity. The intention behind these conversations is to recognize that there are countless meanings, complexities, and nuances of what it means, and can mean, to be an American.

Questions:

- What is the story of your name?
- Who gave your name and why was it chosen?
- Did you or your ancestors take on a westernized name? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about your name?
- Did people make fun of your name, mispronounce, or misspell it? Share a memory of when this happened and how it made you feel.
- If you don't have a westernized name, do people still ask if that's your real name?
- If you have a more western name, do you wish you had a name that reflects your ethnic and racial identity?
- If members of your family have ethnic/non-western names, what stories do they share about their name?

Follow Up Activity (Journaling)

What questions weren't asked but you find important to tell the story of your name?

What questions would you add to ask others?

These questions can be used for guiding discussion with peers, colleagues, affinity groups, and others. This is a personal experience that can also be shared with loved ones to spark conversations or can be used for personal reflection in a journal.

Toolkit Credit: Vancouver Film Festival *Reclaim My Name*