



This template offers a structured approach to introducing themes, guiding discussions, and reinforcing key concepts during a speaker series viewing of **“Using Comedy to Heal Trauma”** by D’Lo

D’Lo Bio

D’Lo is a queer/transgender Tamil-Sri Lankan-American performer, speaker, and writer whose work spans keynotes, workshops, stand-up comedy, solo shows, poetry, and storytelling. Rooted in social justice, his presentations blend humor and activism, sharing his journey as a queer/trans artist raised in an immigrant family and shaped by hip-hop, feminist thought, and queer elders. His acclaimed solo shows, including “Ramble-Ations”, “D’FunQT”, “D’FaQTo Life”, and “To T, or Not To T”, have toured nationally, and he is a frequent speaker and performer at colleges, companies, and community events.



As an actor, D’Lo has appeared in “LOOKING” (HBO), “TRANSPARENT” (Amazon), “SENSE 8” (Netflix), “MR. ROBOT” (NBC), and “BROS”, among others. He also starred in “The Syed Family Xmas Eve Game Night”, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2021, and recently featured in “Quantum Leap.”

D’Lo is a recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, including the Artist Disruptor Fellowship, the Cultural Trailblazer Award from Los Angeles, and the CTG Sherwood Award for Theater. He is a Senior Civic Media Fellow at USC’s Annenberg School of Innovation, supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

His writing has been published in academic journals and featured in “The Los Angeles Times”, “The Guardian”, NBC, “The Advocate”, and CNN. The award-winning documentary “PERFORMING GIRL” centers his life as a trans artist. D’Lo also created the “Coming Out, Coming Home” writing workshop series, offering a space for LGBTQ South Asians and immigrants to share their personal stories through public readings.



Key Terms & Concepts + Notables Quotes

Terms & Concepts

Bi-cultural:

Relating to or including the influence of two distinct cultures, often experienced by individuals who navigate between both.

Community Healing:

Collective processes through which a community addresses trauma, injustice, or harm, aiming for recovery and restoration of well-being.

Elders:

Respected older members of a community who hold wisdom, experience, and knowledge, often serving as cultural custodians, advisors, and role models for younger generations.

Empathy:

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, recognizing their emotions and perspectives without necessarily having experienced the same thing.

Immigrant:

An immigrant is a person who lives in a country other than their birth country, often moving to seek better opportunities, refuge from conflict or persecution, or to reunite with family.

Land Acknowledgment:

A formal statement recognizing and honoring the Indigenous peoples who are the original and ongoing caretakers of the land being occupied or used.

Patriarchy:

A social system in which men hold primary power, and dominance is exercised in roles of leadership, moral authority, and social privilege, often at the expense of women and marginalized groups.

Queerness:

A term that encompasses non-normative sexualities and gender identities, often used as a self-identifier by those who reject traditional labels of sexual orientation and gender.

Social Justice:

The pursuit of fairness and equality in society, ensuring that individuals and groups have access to the same rights, opportunities, and resources, particularly in the face of systemic inequality.

Storytellers:

Individuals who use oral or written narratives to communicate history, culture, values, or personal experiences, often playing a key role in preserving community identity and tradition.

Survival Tools:

Skills, strategies, or resources developed by individuals or groups, often in marginalized communities, to cope with and resist systemic oppression and adversity.

The Brain Drain:

The emigration of highly skilled or educated individuals from one region or country to another, often in search of better economic opportunities, leading to a loss of talent in their home country.

Trauma:

A deeply distressing or disturbing experience that can have long-lasting emotional, psychological, or physical effects on an individual or community.

Vulnerability:

The state of being open to emotional exposure, risk, or harm, which can lead to growth, connection, or healing when shared in safe and supportive environments.

Walk With Vulnerability:

A metaphorical phrase meaning to approach life or relationships with openness and honesty, embracing one's weaknesses or emotions rather than hiding or suppressing them.

Notable Quotes

“Some of the perks I would say are that I’m happier now, I’m physically stronger, and people listen to me.”

“Comedy is a tragedy plus time.”

“If anyone is trying to come at you, just nod your head and keep it moving, because that, for immigrants, is survival.”

“Being a jokester almost made you untouchable.”

“Neutralize the acidity that comes with judgment.”

“I was one of only a very few people of color I knew, so I was just kind of worried, like, where are the reflections back to me that this is okay?”

Resources

Please visit the following link to learn more about D’lo and content discussed today.

<https://www.dlocokid.com/>

Conversation Outline

Facilitator:

Welcome

“Good [morning/afternoon/evening], everyone! Thank you for joining today’s dialogue. It’s my pleasure to guide us in a discussion about **“Using Comedy to Heal Trauma”** presented by D’Lo.”

Facilitator: “To enhance your learning and engagement with today’s topic, we’ve provided digital and printable activities and tools. These resources are designed to deepen your understanding, increase your comfort level, and help you apply the concepts discussed during the session. **The activities and tools are intended to be used while viewing the Speaker Series**, encouraging attentiveness and focus on the content. **Please feel free to choose the tools that best support your learning experience.**”

Activities + Tools

- **Activity/Tool 1: Bingo Card**

A bingo squares have key terms, phrases, quotes, and concepts listed in squares, folks can ‘play’ while they watch the Speakers Series to heighten engagement.

- **Activity/Tool 2: Feelings Card**

A card divided into three sections (beginning, middle, end) with feeling words listed in each. Participants circle or highlight the feelings they experience at each stage of the video to practice introspection and assess comfort levels throughout the engagement. This can be completed while viewing the Speakers Series.

- **Activity/Tool 3: Crossword Puzzle**

The crossword puzzle consists of key terms and concepts to increase learning and understanding of the topic. This can be worked on during the Speakers Series to heighten understanding of concepts and ideas.

Warm-Up Questions

Below are optional warm-up questions that facilitators can use to introduce key themes and help participants feel more comfortable with both the topic and the session structure. These questions serve as a useful tool to break the ice, encourage engagement, and set the stage for deeper discussions throughout the speaker series. **These are optional and can be used if time permits.**



Warm-up Questions

“To start us off, let’s dive into a few warm-up questions that will introduce the key themes of today’s event. These questions are designed to get us thinking about ***Using Comedy to Heal Trauma***”

Facilitator:

- **Question 1:** Can you share examples of how humor has helped you cope with difficult situations in your life?
- **Question 2:** What does community healing look like to you, and what elements do you think are essential for it to happen?
- **Question 3:** How have you used empathy in your work or personal life to better understand others, and can you share an example where someone leaned into empathy to understand you?

Discussion Questions

Facilitator: “Let’s move into some discussion questions to deepen our understanding and begin a conversation. These are intended to help us process the content and resources we’ve learned about in the today’s Speaker Series viewing.”



- **Question 1:** What do you think it means to be in ‘survival mode,’ and how does this manifest in your work?
- **Question 2:** Reflecting on the quote, “I was one of only a very few people of color I knew. So I was just kind of worried, like, where are the reflections back to me that this is okay,” how important is representation for individuals in diverse communities?
- **Question 3:** D’Lo uses poetry and character work to tell stories that contribute to his healing. How do you express or share your own story, if at all? How do you support people outside yourself in tell their own stories?

Closing + Concluding Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts

Facilitator: “Thank you all for your participation in today’s dialogue. It’s been a pleasure exploring the topic of **“Using Comedy To Heal Trauma”** together. As we wrap up, I invite any final thoughts or comments you’d like to share.”

(Allow 5-10 minutes of closing thoughts or remarks)

Closing

“I encourage you to stay curious, keep learning, and continue growing in your efforts to advance racial equity and **heal trauma through comedy together**. Your dedication to this work is vital in creating more inclusive and equitable communities. Let’s keep the conversation going and carry these lessons forward in everything we do.”