**“Belonging Begins With Us” Story Capture Guidelines**

*Sharing real and relatable stories is one of the best ways to inspire empathy. As you interact with staff and community members, consider capturing their own stories of belonging to share from your channels (like on social media with hashtag #BelongingBeginsWithUs, in blogs, employee newsletters, and more.)*

*As you capture stories you can also email them to* [*belonging@adcouncil.org*](mailto:belonging@adcouncil.org) *for potential amplification across the campaign’s website and social channels.*

*As shown below, please make sure you secure permission from any individuals to share their stories, including permission for any identifying details or photos. You can also ask your legal advisors about whether you’ll need to have participants sign a waiver to appear in content on your channels.*

**CHOOSING WHICH STORIES TO SHARE**

* Stories of belonging center on individuals who once felt like outsiders but made connections across differences and were embraced by their community.
* Focus on shared and relatable experiences; not on stories of extreme hardship or extreme achievement.
  + Shared and relatable experiences might include sports, faith, food, music, and other mutual interests or hobbies.
  + Check out the stories featured on [BelongingBeginsWithUs.org](http://www.belongingbeginswithus.org) for ideas – like an expectant mother who got to know other moms in her neighborhood through an online list-serve, or a newcomer to the area who made new friends by cooking and sharing recipes from home
* Share stories from a diverse range of individuals, not just from people born in other countries or other oppressed groups. To ensure you can represent a variety of ages, genders, ethnicities, and more, consider “banking” several stories before beginning to share them.

**SUGGESTED CONVERSATION PROMPTS**

* Can you describe a moment when you struggled to belong, and how you felt in that moment? (Think about experiences you've had as an adult such as at work, in your neighborhood, in a club or team, at your child’s school, etc.)
* Who helped you overcome that feeling, and what did they do that made you feel welcome?
* Do you have a photo of an object, person or experience that represents how you began to feel like you belong? Tell me about what it represents to you.
* After having this experience yourself, are there ways that you now try to help others feel like they belong? Tell me more about that.
* Is it OK if we share your story publicly -- which could include **[customize as needed]** on our blog, in our newsletter, and on social media? If so, can we share:
  + Your first name?
  + The town you live in?
  + Your age?
  + Your country of origin?
  + Your religion?
  + Your photo?
* Thank you for sharing your story. We will let you know when we share it publicly!