

# Theatre in Action (TiA)

## PERFORMANCE / COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Theatre in Action is an Applied Theatre troupe based in the University of Miami Department of Theatre Arts. Founded in 2015 by cfrancis blackchild, the troupe uses Forum Theatre techniques to stimulate community dialogue around sensitive issues as a means of fostering cultural and social change. Performances are designed to take place in both traditional and non-traditional performance spaces. They are interactive, and audience members are invited to problem solve the issues presented as an opportunity to “rehearse for life”.

The goal of the Forum Theatre process is to foster understanding across differences, help people function effectively within differences, and build social engagement skills. TiA’s presentations are examples of embodied research i.e. research presented through performance. Scripts are created from published research, and by engaging with the community that is affected by the particular social issue being explored. They are written to include a multiplicity of views, often opposing, from a variety of stake-holders, so that community members can see their perspectives and engage with opposition in a dispassionate way. Since the community is often interacting across differences, grounding TiA’s scripts in research is an important element that obviates the likelihood of unfamiliar views being dismissed.

Theatre in Action is a part of the Department of Theatre Arts community outreach. The troupe began working with the Counselling Outreach Peer Education (COPE) in the spring of 2015, and it has been an integral part of the University of Miami’s new student orientation on campus sexual assault intervention program since fall 2016. TiA also offers performances to the high schools and organizations in the greater Miami-Dade region upon request.

### The Process:

An Interactive performance usually contains several parts

- 1- An introduction to the process,
- 2- A traditional theatre performance of a research based scene,

- 3- Audience talkback with characters to gain insight into the conflict and to better understand each character's motivation,
- 4- An opportunity for audience members to intervene and change the outcome of the scene,
- 5- A debrief on the effectiveness of the intervention,
- 6- De-rolling and introducing the actors.

#### Available Forum Theatre Scripts:

##### *Party* (Bystander Interventions in Campus Sexual Assault)

It is the wee hours of the morning, mid-Fall semester at Zach and Ronnie's Gable University off-campus house. The party is winding down when Murphy, a relative stranger to the group, voices concern about a dangerously intoxicated student who may need help but has disappeared. The group goes back and forth as they try to decide if this situation requires them to intervene.

##### *Dorm* (Bystander Interventions in Campus Sexual Assault)

Claire and Bobbi are cramming for their chemistry test in the wee hours of the morning in the dorm lounge when Anna enters complaining of being "sexiled" by her roommate Lisa. As Anna describes her interaction with her severely intoxicated roommate the women become concerned for Lisa's safety and question whether there is a need to intervene.

##### *Gentrification* (Urban redevelopment)

An empty plot sits at a prime location in a neighborhood with early stages of re-development. A developer is interested in the plot, and a respected member of the community has called a meeting with several community stakeholders in an attempt to create a shared vision for the community's future.

##### *Nutrition 101* (Media, Body Image, and Food)

A group of students meet to put the final touches on their class presentation. Conflict builds within the group as two members suggest that the lead presenter be removed from that position because she does not meet the aesthetic ideal of a spokesperson. As the scene unfolds questions

emerge regarding the effect of media, views of body image, and the politics of food on the self-concept of undergraduate students.

Pictures of TIA:



