The power of a story: Translating our ways of knowing to make positive change
Lesley D’Souza, Western University (Ontario, Canada)

Data storytelling is set to become an essential skill set that all Student Services’ professionals need. We have learned to collect data in a variety of ways, but do we fully recognize how to consider equity and social justice in how we approach assessment? Once we have our data, do we think deeply about how to share the truths we learn in our data in powerful ways? The idea that emotions and logic are opposites has led to disastrous efforts to effect change that can end up accomplishing the opposite of what we want. The true path to change is forged with empathy. Using storytelling as a vehicle to generate empathy, we can motivate people to act together and collectively solve problems. Come hear more about strategies you can use to craft powerful stories around your data that will activate empathy and support positive change. In this workshop participants will practice telling powerful stories using sample data.

Presenter
Lesley D’Souza, Western University (Ontario Canada)

Lesley is a student affairs assessment professional who specializes in storytelling with data. Currently, she is the Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing in Western University’s Student Experience division. After focusing on assessment and storytelling in her two previous roles, Lesley is exploring how stories can help us intentionally shift culture in positive directions. She is also interested in how narratives and design thinking approaches can be blended with the assessment cycle, and how we can broaden our understanding of assessment best practices in support of decolonization.

Lesley has been involved in the Canadian Association of College & University Student Services as the Co-chair for the Research, Assessment & Evaluation Community of Practice, as a member of the ACPA Commission for Assessment & Evaluation Directorate, and Student Affairs Assessment Leaders.

In 2006, Lesley completed her MA in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University, and is a mom to two little boys.