

National Skillshare Series – Workshop with Vikki Reynolds and What’s Next for the Courage to Act Project, August 18th 2021

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Interviewer: My name is Farrah Khan, I’m the co-director of Courage to Act, the project to look at addressing Gender-Based Violence on campus and today we’re welcoming Vikki Reynolds. So I’m going to start, I think we’re kind of ready to go. I hope people are OK about that. And we’re just going to make sure that people recognize the fact that we’re at the National Skillshare. And the National Skillshare is a project that Courage to Act is doing.

We’ve had conversations for the past year, you can be a part of those conversations by going online, onto our website and looking at all the amazing conversations that we’ve been having around Gender-Based Violence on campus and how we can address and prevent it. Today we’re going to be talking about lots of amazing things about self care and about trauma exposure, but I’m really thrilled that we’re here with Vikki Reynolds, you can see her in that corner.

And before we begin, a little note on language and accessibility, you can view the captions by clicking a link in the chat. You can also listen to the session in French and that’s really important to know, you just have to look at the interpretation, little button there and you can change it up. You can also keep your audio and video off during the presentation just to respect the whole group.

And today’s session is being recorded so if you’re like I’m really engrossed, I don’t want to take notes right now, that’s OK. We are recording it, you can listen to it again in your bed, different times of the day. And we have an amazing dry and change here to do a graphic recording of a conversation.

And of course this National Skillshare is a part of Courage to Act and Courage to Act is a two year, but actually been expanded to more, initiative to address and prevent Gender-Based Violence at post secondary institutions. It builds on the key recommendations within Possibility Seeds by the report, Courage to Act: Developing a National Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence on Campus.

And the National Skillshare is a key feature of this work and we’ve been having these amazing conversations and it’s a part of a caucus learning opportunity which is really great and it is made possible, all of this is made possible by the Department of Women and Gender Equality and Federal Government of Canada. We’re so excited that they have given

us this money for the past few years and funding for the next two which we're going to talk about.

And you're all connected to a network. There's people that have been working on this project with us for the past few years and more that have been working hard to address and prevent gender-based violence on campus and looking at these issues from an intersectional lens which is really what we want to be doing. And speaking of that, I think for us around the land acknowledgment, there's lots of ways to have these conversations right now, I really encourage you if you don't know the land that you currently occupy as a settler if you are one, please go to nativeland.ca, they have an amazing piece that you can find more information on.

I really appreciate the work of Dr Sarah Hunt, she has been monumental in really shaping the conversation about rape culture on campus from an intersectional lens and understanding. And she says, "So if we have conversations on campus about sexual violence, you must remember that indigenous people enter in the space, student, staff and faculty with an existing relationship to rape culture. Sexual violence is just one manifestation of a continuum of violence robbed by colonialism. Indigenous women, two-spirit, trans and queer people have been resisting colonial rape culture for years, mourning their lives whose lives have been taken in a country in which their deaths are treated as unexceptional."

I sit with that and these words and these conversations as a part of how actually how we do this work and our commitment and recognizing the fact that violence in the land is connected to violence on bodies and that when we talk about consent we have to make those connections. I really urge you if you haven't looked at Dr Sarah Hunt's work, I really, it is the work that has really shaped these conversations.

If you are looking for some self care support today, super fine, this work is really challenging and this conversation I think will be really uplifting which is why we're really excited to have Vikki here. You can visit the Courage to Act self care page, there's information. We also, I'm now going to pop in the chat, a self care room that you can go to if you need space and time to have a moment.

If you want to share online how you're feeling about these conversations please go to GBV, use a hashtag, #GBVNationalSkillshare. You can follow Vikki, I know she's on Twitter. You can follow Possibility Seeds, but also just say like this is a conversation I'm having, we need to have this conversation. Because what we heard in the research and the conversations that we know that are a movement in these university and college spaces, there's a lot of trauma and trauma exposure and we need to have safe spaces to talk about it.

And it's not going to just be one conversation it has to be many. That is leading us to our amazing conversation we're having today. So we're so excited to welcome Vikki Reynolds who is doing tremendous work across Canada on the issue of trauma exposure self-care, has worked in downtown east, and I'm going to read her amazing bio. I'm just encouraging you, you can enter questions in the chat box, please do throughout her presentation. She'll be answering them at the end of the presentation.

Afterwards CJ and I are going to share a little bit about what's happening next. I don't know if people heard about the really exciting announcement that happened two weeks ago, but we're going to talk about that. And at the end of the house we're going to get a link for the valuation form. It really means a lot to us when you fill it out. It means that we can be accountable to the community and do our work better and serve you better.

And I'm thrilled to announce and introduce Vikki Reynolds. Vikki is an activist and therapist whose work bridges the world as social justice activism and community work and therapy. Her experience includes supervision and therapy with peers and the workers responding to the opioid crisis.

Vikki: OK I will start again and just introduce you again. I'm so thrilled to introduce you to Vikki Reynolds. She's an activist and therapist whose work bridges the world of social justice activism with community work and therapy. Her experience includes a supervision and therapy with peers and other workers respond to the opiate catastrophe for refugees and survivors of torture including indigenous people who survive residential schools and other state violence.

Sexualized violence counsellors, mental health and substance abuse counsellors, housing and shelter workers, activists and workers alongside gender and sexual diversity communities. She's also a professor and has written and presented internationally. We're incredibly excited and grateful for her to be here today. I'm going to pass it on to Vikki now and I'm going to shut down my slides. Thanks everyone.

Vikki: Oh thanks so much for having me. I want to thank CJ Rowe and Farrah Khan in particular for helping to frame this to try to be useful to your community. Also Kelly, Anoodth and Sam for trying to make this better and capturing it, really appreciate it. I'm humbled and honored to be here and to be presenting for Possibility Seeds especially in this series alongside so many amazing community presenters. So the bar is high and I hope to deliver.

We're going to talk today about solidarity, collective care and sustainability, how we're responding to Gender-Based Violence. So my work is inherently collaborative. None of this comes from academics. Having a PhD and being a professor is not what qualifies me. It's decades

of direct action activism and being mentored and laterally mentored by the people get called clients, by students and people I've supervised and mostly, like I said, from social justice movements.

And so I want to start with a land acknowledgement of my own. This work and my work has been supported in what gets called Vancouver. I have lived and worked for three decades on a territory, the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, but right now I'm actually at my sister's house in Mississauga. Sorry, in Oshawa which is the land of the people of the Mississauga and the Scugog First Nation. So that's a kind of welcome. I appreciate it here.

I love this graphic, it's from a handbook on decolonizing the non-profit sector which I wrote with Riel Dupuis-Rossi was the first author and Charlene Hellson who is also Indigenous and I just love this picture. Often settler people are welcomed by pictures of beautiful orca and you know, I like this fierce, young, indigenous person who is speaking through the silencing and that's the kind of welcome that I appreciate

I think we're in a time that we have to kind of be able to stand still and disrupt ourselves and disrupt anything going forward with the uncovering of the undocumented and unmarked graves that started in the spring with the Tk'emlups nation finding the bodies of 215 children. These are undocumented, unmarked graves.

As an activist who's worked with amnesty international three and four decades ago I was working, trying to get accountability for undocumented and unmarked graves in other countries in this world knowing, as a white settler, I was standing on land where children were buried, where they were undocumented, where they had been killed by state violence. So I want to honor the 215 children of Tk'emlups, but also thinking about the thousands more bodies that have already been found.

There are 139 residential schools in this country, there are more graveyards than that. So I just think nothing can go forward without being arrested, being stopped, being held in place in this shattering moment and trying to hold solidarity for the pain and destruction of this. In my work I talk about it as justice doing, that's what I'm trying to do, and I come from, I'm trying to have a decolonizing practice and my intention is for justice doing, I think about my work very much as an anti-perfection project.

What I mean by that is not that I don't want to be held accountable for what I've done, but that I feel that we can't have perfect relationships when we're on land that's soaked in the blood of genocide, we can't have equal relationships in a society that has got so much structural oppression in it. And so all of our work is going to be an anti-perfection project which does not mean that it's not absolutely required, that we have a rigorous critique with each other.

When I talk about my intention to be decolonizing, I'm really informed by Gord Hill who is an Indigenous warrior. He wrote a beautiful book called Three Hundred Years of Indigenous Resistance. It's a graphic novel. But Gord Hill's analysis is that settler colonialism follows this pattern of invasion, occupation, genocide and then assimilation. Settler colonialism is different than other kinds of colonizing factors because when Europeans came to these territories in Turtle Island after we invaded, we didn't just come to steal all of the resources and extract all of the mineral wealth and all the other wealth and people, we also came because we wanted all of the land.

And so then you have an occupation and then after the occupation of course you have to get rid of the people of the land and that's genocide, the wilful killing of nations of people. So that's what happened in these territories. Some of the elders where I live in the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Wututh territories tell me that 95 percent of their families were murdered during this time.

And genocide of course, as we know, from Patrick Wolf's analysis, colonization is not an event it's a whole structure right? And so I really appreciate Riel Dupuis-Rossi who is a Two-Spirit person I work alongside, they always talk about genocide as ongoing and attempted meaning it is never over. It's not an event that's gone, it's part of the structure and also that there's always resistance to this genocide.

And then after that massive amount of genocide, you have assimilation which has to kill the Indian and the child which is to, as the Canadian state would say, solve the Indian problem. So I think about colonization and I think about Franz Fanon. It's interesting, a Black Martiniquan psychiatrist I never heard about in 27 years of school which is just erasure in anti-Black racism in the academy.

But Franz Fanon wrote The Wretched of the Earth. He wrote this in about 1950, a decade before I was born. And what he talked about is how psychology always pathologizes Indigenous people and colonized people and says that they are somehow mentally unwell when what we should be looking at is the mental unwellness of the colonizer. And that is something that, as a settler person, I am trying to hold attention to.

I'm also informed by Makungu Akinyela, a Black professor in the United States and therapist who talks about decolonizing therapy, that any kind of therapy or counselling must always attend to decolonization. And Dr Ken Hardy, black therapist also from the United States, who talks about the soul wound of colonization and of slavery and the interconnections of the anti-black racism in these struggles.

This is Gord Hill's analysis that I think it's important to have about colonization being invasion, occupation, genocide and assimilation. And I'm really informed by Eve Tuck's work with K. Wayne Yang that decolonization is not a metaphor. I am one of the academics who was

really informed by that critique and this idea that when we talk about having a decolonizing stance, what we need to be talking about is land return. Like colonization is always about land, that's the settler thing people keep erasing and that we're talking about a commitment to Indigenous governance.

And Harsha Walia, a very important activist, woman of color who has been under direct attack for her solidarity with Indigenous people has taught me that in my direct action activism I must be led by Indigenous people. So when I talk about decolonization, there are the commitments that I've made. It was lovely, Farrah, to hear you talk about Dr Sarah Hunt who has of course also educated me. In her article in speaking around the decolonizing of rape culture, she speaks of the history of consensual relationships. Creating a consent culture is not a new idea, it's an Indigenous thing that's gone on since forever.

So she talks about the history of consensual relationships, thousands of years of consent between people, lands and water in these relationships right, before violent relationships were imposed upon Indigenous communities under colonialism. She talks about, and chronicles, the deeper laws of consent that were held and talks about how colonization has transgressed against Indigenous bodies, lands and waters.

So whenever we're talking about rape culture, we're not just talking about bodies, we're talking about the rape of mother earth right? And Dr Hunt engages with these decolonizing principles and her own responsibility as someone who's participating in academia, myself also as an adjunct professor, that it's our obligation to transform academic settings so that students who visit do not have a fear of sexualized violence.

She is talking about the routes of settler colonialism. Colonization of course being a structure and not an event as Patrick Wolf talks about, embedded in all of socio-political structures. And she talks about, in particular, I think this teaching that violence against Indigenous women is absolutely intrinsically connected to the creation of the Canadian settler state right?

And that Gender-Based Violence is central to the dispossession, dislocation and erasure of Indigenous people and always a reminder that Indigenous struggles to resist heteropatriarchal colonial violence predate feminism. This is nothing new so I want to honor those teachings in particular. I'm also informed by Stephanie Allen, Black woman who is part of the Hogan's Alley Society in Vancouver.

They're trying to do something about the purposeful erasure of the Black community in Vancouver. Stephanie Allen identifies as a Black woman and says she is a stolen person on stolen land. That language, that's talk that sings. That arrested me and reminded me of course of the diversity of

accountabilities. As a white settler I have a different accountability to Indigenous territories than Stephanie Allen has as a Black woman, right?

And then thinking about always as a, because I'm speaking from my location as a white settler, about staying implicated in the ongoing catastrophes of white supremacy, colonization and genocide and I'm interested again in Eve Tuck, Indigenous scholar Eve Tuck, who talks about settler moves to innocence.

How I could like you know, show you this little booklet on decolonization that I co-authored with Riel Dupuis-Rossi, Two-Spirit person and Charlene Hellson who's Indigenous. This is evidence I'm a good white person. This is evidence I'm a good white settler. And what Eve Tuck would say is no Vikki Reynolds, you are not a good white settler. You're not a bad white settler, it's not about you, it's about collective accountability. And there's no acts that you can do that prove your innocence. We are inextricably linked to the benefits that we receive.

So as a settler responding to Gender-Based Violence, I acknowledge how much colonization and white supremacy have provided me access and power to address Gender-Based Violence. It's why I get to be a professor, it's why I get to talk now, it's why I get to be an international presenter. All of our institutions are based on the intersectionality of oppression, violence and colonization and we need to dismantle this or we will replicate it. Right?

This is a caution from all social justice movements and direct action activism that we must organize and work in ways that are accountable to the world that we want to present in order to resist replicating the very things we're trying to transform. When talking about my work as just doing, I'm talking about something so much bigger than anti-oppressive practice. I always think the bar is pretty low there, just don't be oppressive for a day. It's like that's not the goal, I didn't come here to not oppress somebody. I actually want to deliver some justice with people.

So when I think about justice doing, I'm thinking about respect and dignity, not accommodating people to suffering. I think about how many, how much trauma therapy, in particular in private practice, is aimed at in particular say women, trans women, Two-Spirit folks who have been, who have suffered sexualized violence, rape or other violence doing some modalities of trauma therapy on them and then throwing them back into rape culture right? We're accommodating people to suffering. We actually need to use our collective power to change the systems of oppression that cause suffering.

So as I lay out some of my, some of the background of what I'm standing on in my work to deliver justice to people, I have respect for your ethical stance and I invite you to consider your own location, your own intersectionality and the complexity and specificity of your work

addressing gender-based violence as you listen to this with this double listening.

So look for points of connection and solidarity. It will be there, but there are also going to be very important differences because I have my lived experience right? So think about what is different? How your hearing is different, what does not fit for you, what are the erasures, what am I missing? And think about the fact that we do not want to annihilate our differences. We want to make space for those so it will be great if you thought about those things.

When I think about the context that we're in, I'm continually asked, because I'm a trauma therapist you know, wow Dr Reynolds you know, all of these problems. Is it addiction? Is it mental illness? Is it trauma? Again, you know using this categorization. You know I remember what Angela Davis says, as soon as we're categorizing people we've got a hierarchy. We're not enacting feminism right? And I'm like no we're not responding to addiction, mental illness or trauma, we are responding to mean and hate filled politics. You know this COVID-19 pandemic has got everybody thinking that they're the oppressed when in fact we are not all in this together right?

It's a very difficult time to be unhoused and not be able to wash your hands, not be able to isolate. This is happening in obscuring the opiate catastrophe which Donald McPherson, the head of the Canadian policy alternatives on drugs, says that every death in this opiate catastrophe is a death by bad drug policy. We could change this tomorrow.

And gendered violence, white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, these are the forces beneath this, but we're standing on the territory that's saturated in the blood of genocide. We have to make things right. We have to flip this and get all of the resources, money, attention and care that's coming to COVID, let's start and approach genocide and the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit people with that level of commitment, money, resources right? Yeah I think we have to just, we have to turn these mean and hateful politics on their head.

I'm inspired always by one of my personal heroes, Judith Butler who has written a book called Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence. This was her response and analysis from the events of 9/11 in the United States. And she talks about what lives are actually worth mourning and I think the quote that Farrah read at the beginning from Dr Sarah Hunt speaks exactly to this, that the deaths and murders of Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people have not mattered right? This is what Judith Butler is talking about in Precarious Life. Like which lives are going to be worth mourning?

I'm also informed by Achille Mbembe's work on necropolitics. Necropolitics is the subjugation of life to the power of death. It's the passing of policies that actually kill people. I think about Alberta because a

lot of my work is responding to the opiate catastrophe. And in the province of Alberta, you know the decision to not refund overdose prevention sites you know, and many peers responded by saying there will be corpses. This is not a consequence of this necropolitics, this is an actual plan. So I think we need to, it's more than mean and hate filled politics, I think necropolitics actually named something that's going on.

And then I think about how often, especially in the anti-violence sector have we been told that a woman dies or children are apprehended or a woman loses her housing or is sent to prison. And that they slipped through the cracks, there just weren't enough services for them. There were gaps in services. All of this language I feel is really unaccountable language and it's purposefully obscuring our responsibilities. This is someone, a woman does not slip through the cracks, this is structural abandonment.

And so I think these ideas of like necropolitics structural abandonment better represent what is happening in our inability to give the people that were working alongside the resources that we need when we're resisting Gender-Based Violence. This is a group of real diversity of women that I have such an honor to work alongside, these are women at Sister Space, the overdose prevention site run by Atira in Vancouver. It's the only women's only supervised injection site that we know of in the world. I believe it's open 24 hours.

What's amazing about these women is they're peer workers and we use that language of peer worker so we can pay people less, see them as less professional. What these folks are running is a rape crisis center. You are never not responding to gender-based violence. I remember when I started as a professor teaching the trauma course in the masters program and I had students saying, I don't need this course Dr Reynolds because I'm not going to work with rape and I can't work with rapists so I don't need the trauma course.

And I was like, who do you think you're going to work with? How did you get here? If you came on the bus you were on the bus with people who've experienced gender-based violence. You were on the bus with people who have perpetrated and coerced and participated in gender-based violence, you don't get to be outside of this right?

I am very inspired by Black Lives Matter. And a colleague of mine, Sasha Madinay who is a Black man, gave me the language of uprising. In terms of social movement theory, Black Lives Matter is not a movement, but an uprising because it's actually resulting in structural change. And I'm thinking about in Canada in 2020, in one three months period six people were shot dead by the police in Canada on mental wellness checks.

So we've gutted social services and the people who are responding when someone is distressed are police officers with guns. And you know there's many calls to defund the police, these are not new moves, but in what

situation would I be in distress where someone showing up with a gun is going to be something that's going to be helpful to me. I can't think of one, right, in terms of a response for a wellness check.

So the head cop in Canada, Commissioner Lucki, was asked about this and about the fact that during the same time that six people who were racialized, people of color were shot dead by the police on mental wellness checks, no white people were shot dead. The police were able to keep themselves safe from white people who were having mental distress. And Commissioner Lucki's response is that there's no systemic racism in Canada.

And I know that you've all heard of the shooting of Chantel Moore, Indigenous, young, Aboriginal woman whose ex partner called and said he was concerned about her mental health. More than one police officer responded to her. She had no weapon and they shot her dead, right? And then we have, you know we have these kind of comments like there's no systemic racism in Canada.

Of course the UK also had a response to the Black Lives Matter and the naming of anti-Black racism. They had a united, the UK had a royal commission that just came out, presented its findings in 2021, you will be surprised to know that the UK has no systemic racism. No systemic racism. This is against all evidence where people are more likely to be stopped, harmed and shot and incarcerated by police systems. In fact in the report they actually used this language which I believe is just fascist. They said that the UK is actually a model white majority country. This is incredulous right?

When asked about the reality that Black people are shot more by cops, more likely to be harmed by police, more likely to go to jail, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said white people make poor life choices. This is in direct opposition right, to Dean Spade, critical trans theorist who says oppressed people have limited life choices. And this is a picture from a Black Lives Matter event in Ucluelet in British Columbia. I love this sign, Chantel Moore, George Floyd.

And you know, Chantel Moore is the Indigenous young woman shot dead during a mental wellness check. George Floyd of course is the Black man lynched in the middle of the day by a white police officer in the United States. This sign does everything we need in terms of showing the interlocking systemic oppression right, that there's solidarity and cultures of resistance.

And I'm informed and inspired and encouraged of course by Angela Davis. Her work in abolition, feminism and decarceral feminism, talking about the fact that feminism is always against hierarchy and that she herself was a political prisoner in prison as part of her work as a Black Panther. And talking about how feminism is required to resist the prison industrial complex from the intersections of gender, race and a class

analysis. These ideas to defund police, which are maybe new in some movements today, Angela Davis has worked for this her whole life alongside many other activists.

And I'm inspired and unsettled by my work alongside Felix Gilliland who talks about a queer anti-violence movement. Right, that feminists can make repair with trans people by using principles of a queer anti-violence movement. This is on the edge of my knowing, these are some of the thinkings that have me inspired about what might be possible and what might be next.

So I want you to think about the context of the work that you are in, the specificity of where you work and your own intersections of how you come to this right? Given that context, the heaviness of this work and the hardship of carrying it, why are you here? What is at the heart of your work? And one of the questions I ask everybody in supervision is what is the best use of me? What is the best use of me?

So what is at the heart of your work? What are the values and ethics and commitments that you hold precious and that are important to you in this work? In all of the work that I do I'm always trying to shoulder up workers, this is what I've done in supervision for the last over three decades and I'm informed about caregiver trauma, these ideas of vicarious trauma, compassion, fatigue, burnout. All of these ideas. I think it's a great idea to look at the way as people who are responding to oppressed and suffering others that we are hurt in the work, but they're already really problematic terms. They're informed by psychiatry, psychology and by the trauma industry.

So vicarious trauma is the idea, not just that you are experiencing trauma, but that it happens to you vicariously. A direct quote from a psychiatrist who was part of creating vicarious trauma is that clients infect us with their hopelessness. Clients infect us with their hopelessness. I think that's totally unethical. My clients at the Rape Crisis Center, they don't harm me, hurt me, break my heart, they transform me, inform me, question me. Compassion fatigue is interesting.

I was working, compassion fatigue is something that's gotten a lot of language over the last decade and research money and stuff. I was working in India in Dharamsala at the Center for Survivors of Torture with Tibetans in exile who had been tortured long term. And they talked about, when I asked them what do you do about compassion fatigue, they couldn't understand what I was talking about.

Finally a monk brother came back to me and said, "Victoria, you cannot fatigue compassion. Compassion is a generative force right, the more compassion you do, the more compassion you create." This is about capitalism and the commodification of human experience. The commodification of compassion is if you have a certain amount of compassion and after you've given it out you've spent it you know, now

you have to go do something else when in fact compassion is absolutely generative.

When we talk about compassion in the work that we're doing, we're not talking about a liberal notion of compassion, we're not talking about sympathy. We are talking about a compassion that's very complex, that's embedded in our lived experience and our analysis from diversity of feminism right? We're thinking about compassion that says I have also known struggle, I have an analysis of the structures behind the suffering, I am committed to you and I realized that this is your struggle and that I will not abandon you. That's the hard work of compassion that we do. It's such a different project in thinking about how our compassion is fatigued.

And then these ideas of burnout. This idea that you're in the work a certain amount of time and you get harmed in the work and the individualism of it. You might be an individual who is strong enough for this or you might not be. You might lack some inner quality and I don't, individualism I think is a very patriarchal white idea. And this idea that burnout is a mental illness, that people who are harmed in this work that we talk about as if somehow they're not mentally well and that the antidote always for burnout is self-care.

You know something horrific happens in a hospital setting that I was in based on really poor care being given to somebody and absolute classism and I was outraged about it and you know the response, when I was speaking to my boss was, "Wow Vikki, you look really agitated. Is that decaf you're drinking because you don't look like you need any more caffeine. Are you still swimming?"

You know so I am talking about something that was unethical and unjust and what the response is, oh you're going to burnout, you better do more self-care, you better swim more, you better drink more decaffeinated coffee. I believe in self-care. It's absolutely essential, but self-care does nothing to change the social determinants of health and the systems of injustice that we're working in. So if I don't think it's vicarious trauma or burnout or compassion fatigue you know, what is it I think is happening to people?

Well here's what I believe after like almost, yeah over three decades of supervising folks. I believe, and being in social movement struggles, if what we are doing is ethical, if we can stay in line with the ethics that are at the heart of our work, remember I asked you first what are the values, ethics? What are the things you are committed to ethically? Right, if we can walk those things we can have sustainability even though our hearts will be broken.

The goal is not to not have a broken heart, like that's not, you know I'm heartbroken, I'm alive in this world, but my clients did not break my heart. You know I think about my work against the death penalty, I worked for 20 men on death row in the United States, every one of them was executed. I

still have sustainability because I know that I behaved ethically you know. I treated all of them as if they were human beings. I know they faced death differently knowing there were witnesses to them that said you are still a human being and the state ought not to be able to kill some of its people. And as Angela Davis will tell you it's only going to be poor people right?

That sustainability is something that I spend a lot of time and energy on. I'm not that interested in burnout, I'm really interested in sustainability. An ongoing aliveness, a genuine connectedness with people across your lifespan in your paid and unpaid work and a spirited presence that you can offer yourself as a human being yet again despite the fact that your heart has been broken in this work. That sustainability is so much more than not burning out right?

But if we are not able to work that is ethical, if we are required structurally to do things that are unethical, if we participate, lose track at the heart of our work and respond unethically to people, what we're going to feel is not burnout, it's spiritual pain. I think for example of some housing workers who work so hard to get indigenous women housing who were living in cars in the downtown eastside of Vancouver, the poorest part of Canada that's not a First Nation reserve.

And these outreach workers worked to get this woman housing so she and her two children could come in. But what ended up happening is social workers got her address, there was increased surveillance and her children ended up being apprehended because she came in to get housing. What those workers experienced was not burnout, going to the gym isn't going to make you feel better about that, that's spiritual pain, that the very ethics, the things they were trying to do, the very values that called them to this work, they got transgressed. And we get hurt by that. That's what I think happens to us is this spiritual pain or ethical pain right, when we act against the things that are very much at the heart of our work.

So how do we respond? I think that has to be collective care. I think self-care is extremely limited, collective care is something that can bring us solidarity. That solidarity is the heart for me of our sustainability and our ability to transform the structures. Remember what I said about justice doing? We want to use our collective power to actually transform the structures. And that solidarity does not mean unity, we are not going to agree on all things nor should we.

Like I said, even in this talk I've already pissed some people off, erased other things, not paid attention to what was of value to some people because I've got a lived experience, I'm informed and transformed. Solidarity is about looking for points of connection where we can actually move things forward and paying attention to those really important differences. Like I said, we don't want to annihilate our differences.

I think about anarchist theory and direct action theories around groundless solidarity and infinite responsibility. I am always thinking about the fact that it's never centered on one location of oppression, it's never just about gender, it's never just about race, it's never just about class. In this context, in this moment, who do I have to be in solidarity with? And then infinite responsibility. Thinking about who am I not in solidarity with in this action right? This comes from the scholarship of Richard Day, an anarchist philosopher.

And then I think in our work against Gender-Based Violence, I think about the ambient trauma we're, there's just an onslaught of gas lighting of us that we're liars. You know the Ghomeshi trial that that man is innocent and all women are spurned loves and liars. Right, just a massive, crazy making of that ambient trauma. Dr Allan Schore talks about ambient trauma and it's something different than event trauma, like abuse or neglect.

It's something where you have this like just the shaking of the ground. It's ambient, like white noise, it fills all of the space. This gaslighting, that we're wasting our time, that there is no real problem, that there is no gender-based violence, that it's not structural. These kind of crazy making forces. And I think that solidarity and collective care, for me that's a sanity making project. I think of Possibility Seeds as participating in a sanity making project. When you're online with 200 people who are not going to agree on everything, but we do agree that we're not crazy right? That this is actually a true representation of some of the structural oppression in this world. That's a sanity making project.

And I think about the power and oppression of the self-care vicarious trauma industry, how psychiatry and the trauma industry just passes for normal as if they're just talking about facts. One of the vestiges of trauma therapy is this idea about self-regulation. Self-regulation. You know I don't really believe in self-regulation. I don't think we self-regulate. We co-regulate. We are relational beings. We are also co-regulating with mother earth, with all the forces around us and with the political structures we're in.

So I think about understanding the possibility of self-regulation as just an enactment of privilege. You know I just think about workers who are Black. During some of the Black Lives Matter protests and trying to explain it to other workers who are not black and then being told you know, with those racist responses of tone, policing and other stuff. Like just don't be so angry about it right?

You can't, you know you are seen as a poor, not as mentally well worker, not as a professional worker if you can't self-regulate and yet some communities are consistently under attack if you're white and privileged you know, with all of those intersections of privilege, self-regulation becomes a possibility. I don't think it's a mark of how professional we are or how together we are. I think it's a mark of privilege and possibility, how

much we're not paying attention or how many struggles we are not in, we have the privilege to not pay attention to.

I also think there's a tyranny of balance under capitalism right? That you're supposed to have some kind of balance between your work life and your home life. I don't have that, I don't work with anybody who's doing justice who has that. At best there's a tension, there's a fluidity of it. But this reminds us that balance is an ideal. It's perfectionism which is always white supremacy right?

So you know we need to resist that which doesn't mean that we don't need to have other moments in our lives, but capitalism says there's your work and there's your home life. I think there's so many more domains of life tasks like the spirituality task, the connection task, the existential task of finding meaning in life, like there's a lot of things going on that are outside of capitalism and paid work.

And then thinking about things like vicarious trauma scales, or burnout scales, be careful about taking those kinds of measures. What do they actually measure? You know there are people who do fantastic self-care practices, take a great amount of time off work, eat entirely organic food and go to work and treat people like shit, are very disrespectful to people right? They're going to test out great on a vicarious trauma scale. It doesn't measure how well you're able to treat people, it measures how much privilege you have in your life.

I think about some of the peer workers at Sister Space you know, they live pretty precariously, they're housed pretty precariously, a lot of them have criminalized pasts, they've suffered a lot of state violence. If I were to give them a vicarious trauma scale they'd measure not well enough to come to work and yet they come to Sister Space and they treat everybody like gold. For me the measure is not how mentally well does white supremacist psychiatrist say you are, for me the measure is how well do you treat people? Can you get out of your own experience and make other people at the center right?

So that's what I think about self-care. Self-care is absolutely essential, but essentially inadequate. I do plank every morning, I get into my physical body every morning because I know as soon as I pick up my phone, I am going to hear about deaths at some overdose prevention site or in the community. That's going to happen. So I have to do self-care so that I can become embodied. But the point of the self-care is so that I can get myself out of the way so it can actually be about the other person right?

And these self-care knowledges, practices and strategies, they're essential. Like they're super important, but again they don't do anything to stop sexualized violence. They don't do anything to address anti-Black racism in the academy right? So when I think about our collective care strategies you know, who and what shoulders you up right? Who keeps you alive in this work? In the heart of this work, who is it and what and

what's our connections, what's our community, what's our solidarity, what is our collective care like?

So I think about this as revolutionary love. This is from the work of Paulo Freire and you know the public, the population education movement right? That revolutionary love is a commitment to others and a solidarity with their cause. I think about this sometimes because in 27 years of school in "psychotherapy" I never heard the word love. They only talked about love as mistaken love, battered women who couldn't tell the difference between love and violence.

I think love, you know one of my commitments is to love and to name love in all of the work that I do. Revolutionary love is a commitment to others and a solidarity with their cause. That's what we have with each other. So one of the things, you know when I started working with survivors of torture I knew I couldn't do this work alone, I knew I needed to build a solidarity team. I needed to have people alongside me who could love me, hold me up, offer me a critique, people who had a moral courage to offer me a critique instead of what you all hear right? Oh my God, Vikki, I could never do what you do.

That doesn't help me, that doesn't help me be more useful. That doesn't unmask my anti-Black racism to me. That doesn't help me see how being cis-gendered has privileged me. I need someone to offer critique. I need more than that. My solidarity team, one thing on my solidarity team is this big octopus tattoo. When I was young in university I was poor because I had to pay for school.

I was safe when I was with my community, but when I went away to university I had to take a lot of precarious jobs in bars and stuff like that. And that's where I was sexually assaulted and violated the most in my life. And I was held down several times and I became really claustrophobic. So that's why I have this octopus on my arm. I don't know if you know this about octopus, but watch YouTube on octopus, you cannot trap an octopus, it will get out of anything.

So I have this octopus tattooed right on my forearm so that when I'm in a session with someone, a woman, anyone and they're telling me about sexual assault, about torture, about the stuff that gets called suicide and I get as afraid as the person, my octopus is looking me right in the eye and he says, "Vikki, you have been stuck so many times in your life and you've always gotten out, you're not going to die here. You're not stuck here. You're getting out of this and you're going to bring this person out of this."

So I think my own history of resistance is part of my solidarity team through that tattoo. I also have Sasha Medina I've talked about, a Black colleague who, you know I was his professor and now we're colleagues and we laterally mentor each other. Sasha is the one who offered me a critique and gave me the language of, that it was a lynching that had

happened to George Floyd, not just a murder. So Sasha is important in my team for the spaces I can't see.

Terra Danger is a queer, non-binary community worker who has the moral courage to continually offer me critique and make me more useful in community, but also to love me and hold me up. This ring is an anchor. Terra and I have buddy tattoos of this, but I have this ring to anchor me, to her and to collective solidarity with other people right?

So think about your solidarity team. Who is on your solidarity team? It can be your grandmother who's passed on. It can be more than your colleagues and certainly more than your lovers and friends. I think you need a solidarity team of people who share your analysis, who get the work, who you don't have to explain things to. And what's your history of solidarity with these folks, these ideas, these places? Where else have they really shown up for you right? And what qualifies them to shoulder you up?

Like I was saying, Terra Danger has the moral courage to lean in and offer me a critique, that's what I need right? And how are you going to invite them into your solidarity team? How are you going to make them useful to you? Having a conversation with people sometimes there's someone you want to call. Sometimes people come right over. Sometimes you just need to think about somebody and they help you hold on to your ethics right?

And then the other thing to think about, what might it mean to them to be invited to be useful to you? You know the work that you do is so important. It's so specific, it's so heartbreaking, it's so skilled right? It's so nuanced. So many people have great respect for you, but they don't know, you know they don't know how they do what it is that you do but imagine what it means to them to know that their solidarity with you helps you do the work that you do. This is not a cost, it doesn't cost anybody to be on your solidarity team, it gives them an opportunity to shoulder you up and you are worthy of that kind of collective care right?

And I think the other thing you need on your solidarity team is you need to have a person that you can howl at the moon with. You need to have somebody you can talk to that you can call when you are what I call bat shit crazy. You know the times that somebody might just get out a suicide check list and just decide that you're over the edge. You need somebody that you have a pre-existing relationship of solidarity who they now look at.

No matter how wild I sound I am not going to kill myself, don't call 911, I don't want a mental wellness check. Someone who is not going to see you as crazy. You need somebody who is not going to pathologize you and say "Wow, Vikki. This sounds a lot like anxiety. You should talk to the doc, maybe this is depression." You know it's not anxiety, it's dread because when I respond to the overdose prevention sites and people are

dying by bad drug policy, that is going to happen and that is dreadful. I don't have anxiety. It's real.

And then the other thing is, I don't want to be rescued. I don't want someone to say "Wow Vikki, you turned 60 this year. You've been fighting for five decades. Time for you to kick back and write books at the university." I don't want to be rescued. When I howl at the moon I want a person who's going to create an ethical container that's just going to hold a space for me to put the broken pieces of my tender heart together alongside this person.

You need a howl at the moon person and you need to set this up before you need them because remind yourself, when we're "traumatised" we are our least creative, right? You're not going to come up with it in a moment, have a conversation ahead of time with people about how they might be useful to you. And make a commitment to each other. So I'm also, of course I'm really into solidarity teams and solidarity groups and these kind of actions.

Dean Spade talks about mutual aid projects, all of these are the same kind of things. I was talking to another supervisor about what could we do for people who are working in the overdose catastrophe? What more can I offer? Something more than just talk therapy in a supervision. It was Sabine and she said what's at the heart of what you want to offer? And I said I want to invite people to the warmth of a fire. And she said you should have a fire.

So in the neighborhood, Sam, Brad and I live in the east end of Vancouver, I rent a junky old house with a great landlord and he lets me have fires in the backyard. So I started to have a fire once a month in my backyard and all kinds of people responding to gender-based violence or the opiate catastrophe, all kinds of things, would just show up once a month and we'd have a fire.

Sometimes people wanted to witness, sometimes people read poetry, sometimes people burned something, people brought instruments and sang. It was the warmth of a fire. It was a mutual aid project. We've had to can it because of COVID, but we'll get back to it, maybe without the fire part. But just think about your collective care practices. Like what is it that you do that are actually in line with mutual aid projects right?

And then I think about doing solidarity with other workers, resisting blame you know, looking for the ethics of the other person, leaning in to them. This requires so much, this is so much more than calling in, leaning in and I've written an article about some of the strategies of this from direct action activism. Leaning in requires that we start creating relationships of respect and dignity with each other before transgression and that when it happens we look for the ethics of the other person and then we see wow, this is spiritual pain you're in. I have this ethic that I want to be respectful, but

what I've just done is disregard a person. Help with that right? Resisting blaming and leaning in, looking for the ethics of the other.

I think in our movements resisting gossip is just one of the most important things that we need to do. I can't tell you how many teams I've been brought into where the real harm has come from this negative gossip. And then contesting cynicism. Cynicism can get quite seductive right, this idea that everything is screwed up, everything's institutional. You know this place sucks, policies suck, nothing can change. That cynicism, that's an unethical position. You can be critical, but we're required to be able to work for change.

And I think about strategic acts of resistance. Look at this there's a wolf down at the end of this path people. You know the times that you were being asked to defend your work so they were, yeah [Gameshe? 00:54:14] all those women hey, they all lied huh? Yeah. You don't need to get into that conversation. You don't need to defend your work. Resist debate. Debate is a patriarchal style of communication that is based on annihilating your enemies argument. There's no feminism in it right? A dialogue is a totally different thing, but if you're being invited into a debate, you're actually being asked to your work.

And I'll tell you something as a professor of psychology. Everybody doesn't get defensive because they weren't breastfed long enough, sometimes you get defensive because you're actually under attack. This is an attack against your sustainability. You owe this person nothing, do not feed the trolls, think about all of the energy and spiritual and emotional harm you're going to experience that's going to cost you and it's going to take you, that's energy and love you want to give to each other in solidarity right?

Just part of my hope for the care of you collectively is having these strategic acts of resistance. You are not required to take oppression on publicly every time you see it if you're going, you know we're not here to get your head cut off right? You need to think strategically about your acts of resistance right so that you can be sustained. This is a very important sustainability principle. I think in every supervision session I ever have with someone working against gender-based violence, I bring this up.

We have to hold power and responsibility in attention. You can only be responsible for that which you have the power to deliver. You don't get to decide this woman's going to have her day in court. You don't get to decide that this person's going to get housing, you don't have the power to deliver that. We want to be held 100 percent accountable for all the power that we hold, but no more. This is a tough one, work with your solidarity team on this, make this public, talk about this with each other right?

And then another thing is to start to pay more attention to immeasurable outcomes. You know we're funded for measurable outcomes. And if you

look at what your funding is for and you look at your job description, that question I asked you at the beginning about what's at the heart of your work, it's probably not even there right? What's at the heart of our work is usually immeasurable outcomes, doing dignity with people, structuring safety with people.

And unhappenings, unhappenings are all the things you can't measure because they don't happen right? Women who do not attempt suicide because they feel belonged. That never happens, we don't get funded for that. That's an unhappening right? Think about paying attention to the immeasurable outcomes of our work. We have to be creative that way. If we just look at measurable outcomes and numbers, we're going to think that we're not doing our job right?

And then I think about the fact that you know, as an ethical position, it's our job to be the bringers of hope so that the very, the stuff I started with you know, the idea that vicarious trauma, by definition, is that clients infect us with their hopelessness. So there they were, in a refugee camp, and I've worked in several refugee camps in this world. Alongside death row refugee camps are the most hopeless place I've ever been.

And so in a refugee camp, doctors, nurses and psychiatrists started to feel traumatic effects and they were like oh my gosh, we have hyper arousal, we have avoidance, we have numbing. Well it can't be us because we're the well and the good, we're the professionals. It must be, you know we're the well and the good and they're the broken so it must be that they are infecting us with their hopelessness right? I think that's unethical. I think in these situations whose job is it to bring hope to this relationship? It's my job right? It's my job to bring a believed in hope.

And I don't mean hope as positivity or optimism, I think a white person talking about hope is a pretty white supremacist idea. Believed in hope are those small acts that are actually believable. Acts of resistance, acts of justice doing that get witness that are, you can put it on the ground and believe in it.

So I'm going to end by reading you a story of believed in hope. And I want to thank Sarah Anne Mitchell, a young indigenous woman for letting me use her name, she wanted her name used in this and she actually got up at a workshop of mine and told this story. She taught this so I want to thank Sarah Anne Mitchell. So here's a story of a believed in hope. A story of hope in unexpected places.

I'd just returned from a cross country tour speaking about the opiate catastrophe trying to promote harm reduction in dignity driven practice across many communities in Canada. I was exhausted and stretched. I had a desperate call to meet with a team of Aboriginal workers who were working alongside Aboriginal mothers to help them navigate the oppressive structures required to maintain their housing and resist all their

kids getting apprehended. And despite the jet lag and being very tired I knew I had to respond with action and showing up.

People who've survived torture and political violence the traumatic thing is not the torture itself but rather having to find refuge and leave their homeland. The real torture is living without your children. Canada has more Indigenous children in state care than during the period of residential schools. To enact my own commitment decolonization I knew I needed to respond to this team of Aboriginal workers and mother led families that they support.

But I wasn't just tired and jet lagged, I was also devastated. I'm also connected to a team working in a live-in program for youth of all genders struggling with substances, exploitation and oppression in their lives. A youth who was in our program the previous year had died this day of an overdose. This youth died because recovery is not linear and because there was no overdose prevention site in their community. The team was overwhelmed with grief as was I. I was trying to respond on many fronts, it was a long, dark, sleepless night.

I woke fitfully and as I'm preparing to meet with the aboriginal workers I'm screening to be the bringer of hope. I do my self-care practices of plank and stretching as I try to become embodied. I drink decaffeinated coffee and water. The program's workers are dedicated and skilled, but they have also caused harm to each other and to the Aboriginal mothers. I have no prior relationships with these workers and I'm very aware that I'm yet another white woman professional showing up with a PhD and prestige, bolstered by white supremacy. Hope is hard to find.

I arrive early and overprepared. To my surprise I am met with a circle of about 15 workers all earlier than me and they are nearing the end of a smudge ceremony. They're already enacting the willingness and vulnerability I'll need to be able to invite responsibility in an act of repair which gives my believed in hope a place to start. A young worker approaches me and non-verbally invites me to smudge. I am hesitant to engage in spiritual practices not my own, but I've also been mentored to participate in accountability when invited into sacred spaces and to be careful what I take out.

When the young workers finish brushing me down with an eagle feather she puts everything aside and then she comes to me and says kindly, "Vikki, do you know who I am?" And I say she's familiar, but I don't remember where we know each other from or her face. And she says, "You were my therapist at that program." And she says, "You saved my life." She introduces herself as Sarah Anne Mitchell which is her real name which she wants me to use. She tells me she has 20 years free from drugs and that our program and the workers are part of how she got her life together.

She also says she has five children and none of them are apprehended by the government. I feel elated, joyful, full of hope. I ask if we can take a selfie on my phone and we do. I send it to the youth substance misuse program where the workers share this story of hope, how the youth we've worked with can and do find liberation and meaningful lives. We can hold this hope in the tension alongside the heartbreak and rage of the youth who has died. Sarah Anne says to me, "The creator sent you to us and our families today, Vikki." And I say, "The creator also sends you to me today."

So I want to thank Sarah Anne for sharing that, for being that person in my life. And I want you to think about your own believed in hope and the stories other people are telling about you today. I think that we are all that we really have in solidarity and I invite everybody to think about the fact that we might just be enough. Thanks so much for having me. I hope this was useful. I'm looking forward to the talk back and questions that folk have. Thanks so much.

CJ: Wonderful, thanks so much, Vikki. Very inspiring, I, as always, walk away from your talks and your sharings of knowledge with pages of notes even though I recognize this session has been recorded. And we have a fantastic workbook that I think all of today's attendees received a copy of in their emails this morning. We'll be packaging up the talk and the workbook and send you all a more comprehensive toolkit in the coming weeks. Looking at the time I think we have, we had initially planned on moving into some breakout sessions, but I think at this point, given the timing we'd like to welcome any questions from those who are joining us today. Vikki would you mind coming back online and answering anything that may arise?

Vikki: Sorry I didn't know that I had abandoned you, CJ. Thanks. I was gone right?

CJ: Welcome back.

Vikki: Yeah I'm totally open to any, in particular reflections of what people are thinking from their own location.

CJ: Yeah so please do enter any questions you might have for Vikki in the chat.

Farrah: I'm going to start us off because I'm just going to start us off. And so I think, Vikki, it'd be interesting to hear what you would recommend are ideas about what we could do as frontline workers? I'm a frontline worker with GBV survivors. What are some ways that we can be in solidarity with our other colleagues in this field? So do you suggest, you know people always suggest group counselling or doing group supervision together, but are there other things you see that are concrete ways that we could build that kind of solidarity with one another?

Vikki: Yeah, thanks for that, Farrah. I think that's what I mean by mutual aid projects. You know I think one of the things that's great is to struggle with each other. I think it's great for everybody to go to the homelessness march. It's a great time to hang out. Go do something so hopeful. Like engage in direct action activism together maybe in a domain different than our work, you know but that meets the intersections of where we are. I think that's so hope filled.

Like I said, I have fires in my backyard and sometimes people pass a bottle of brandy and sometimes people read poems. And people are in different sectors, Farrah. It's interesting, a friend of mine, Raven, has just published, I just forget their last name? Salander. Thank you. They just published in CJ's partner's book around being a sex worker. And so they read one of their poems at this fire, but they also worked at the overdose prevention site. But also at the rape crisis center and the same struggle.

You know, so there's these points of connection. I think one thing is build solidarity, not just in our sector. Look to the intersecting movements. And I think if you listen to Angela Davis together and just have a conversation about how are we enacting that? But Angela Davis talks about how you know, it's really important that we start to envision something non-hierarchical that's at all the intersections and we don't have to have agreement on this, I think what's been useful for me is activism with other people, howling at the moon with other people, getting together.

You know Sam Brad was just saying before this that you know yeah they're not doing great, but they're going to go see some whales you know? I think any connections together with mother earth, but I think it's about collective care. Like you know and I also, I do, I have been running a solidarity group in Vancouver for all kinds of folks from different organizations who are responding to gender-based violence and I think those things are useful, but I think, like I said, talk therapy and supervision is very limited. It's required, but it's just one thing.

So I think anything that inspires a believed in hope right? Somebody else is doing this really lovely stuff and I think it was connected with Sarah Anne's story because we published that in an article and people started to write stories to each other and collect stories of hope, things that mattered. I think anything that floats your boat, like get outside, the self-care industry, get outside, the vicarious trauma industry telling us we're broken and we need, we're not broken we're under attack right? So I don't know if that answered your question, Farrah and I am curious what other people on this call, what they're doing for collective care, what they're doing as mutual aid projects right?

Farrah: Thanks for that, Vikki. I also want to note that there's some really lovely notes of thanks and accolades in the chat for you in appreciation for what you've shared. We do have time for one more question. Can you talk a little more about the concept of revolutionary love and critical hope?

Vikki: Oh great. OK well if you're really interested in this I'm just some kind of nerd like CJ. I've just published an article on believed in hope and vicarious resistance. Like there's all of this conversation about vicarious trauma and no industry at all from the trauma industry or academics on vicarious resistance. I am such a different person for having worked with survivors of torture for the last three decades. I can't tell you. I have practices of gratitude that have come to me because everybody thinks that working with survivors of torture and death row and the opiate catastrophe and rape, you know that I'd be like some burned out thing at 60 and I'm not.

And so I had to write this article because I think it's, I hope it's the last thing I ever publish, because I think I've put my stuff out. You know I want to make room for other voices and I am a white voice, we've got me. You know the last decade I've only co-written with you know queer, non-binary folks, Indigenous people, Black people, trying to get these voices out. So Riel Dupuis-Rossi who's a Two-Spirit trauma therapist and Travis Heath who is a black trauma therapist from the United States who very much does decolonizing therapy, I wrote an article about believed in hope, it's my answer to the question about why I'm not burned out. What is it that floats my hope and I talk about believed in hope as a practice?

This has worked, it's not easy. It's not optimism. You've got to be very careful that it's not optimism and it's not positivism or any of that shit, it's something absolutely real, on the ground. Like Sarah Anne coming to me the day we lost a young person to an overdose I met someone I was the therapist for 20 years ago who is not using and has five Aboriginal kids that are not apprehended. If that's not believed in hope you're losing it. That is worth twenty thousand sessions with a therapist.

So we wrote this, I wrote this article called I don't know, Believed in Hope and Vicarious Resistance. And then Riel Dupuis-Rossi wrote a critique. And it kind of started by saying, easy for white people to talk about hope, I don't talk about it. Here's my hope, my hope is that white people get their shit together and start to be accountable and dismantle colonization and address genocide. That's my hope.

And then Travis Heath started to talk about how he only hears white people talk about hope, that that's nothing that he's talking about in his community and he talked about on the ground, how he brings, like how there might be some enactment of justice doing that he could see connected to a believed in hope with a really great amount of very real scepticism right? So I think yeah so I think that believed in hope is something I've thought a lot about because most of the writings on hope are they're white, they're middle aged and they're liberal.

And I think we shouldn't surrender hope, I think we should hold onto hope and it's got to be this believed in hope that's tied to this. Revolutionary love is just so transgressive. You know when I first talked about revolutionary love in the academy because so many people here are

working in academia right? When I talked about love in my trauma classes I got reported, you know you're not allowed to talk about love. Like that's transgressive for therapists, we're not allowed to love our clients.

Well I think in the absence of love we would not be here. Revolutionary love speaks to that commitment to others, the wedding of our intersections with each other, that is the doing of love. Chilean biologist talked about the biology of love, that love exists at a cellular level and that human beings created language because we had something to say to each other and the thing that we had to say was love. And yet here's psychology that says you can never name that. I think we've made, I think that's a massive white supremacist patriarchal transgression in our profession that you can track the terror and violence of right?

So I think we need to find ways, you know we need to discern love from eroticism, when I say I love my clients I do not mean I'm having sex with them. That couldn't be consensual because of our power differences so that couldn't be sex. But I think we have to find ways to name the love that we are enacting. It is present and I think that's part of a revolutionary struggle to transform things. You know science says the limits of my language are the limits of my world. But what does it mean when a whole profession is not allowed to talk about love and we're in the "caring" profession? I don't know. I could go on endlessly, CJ, you know that. We're good.

CJ: Now I have about a gazillion and five more questions for you, but I'm cognizant of time and I really appreciate that you stepped in to support us in this conversation today. For all those who are present, Vikki has provided us with a list of resources so for those of you who want to dive in deeper into any of the topics that she's covered today, she's provided us with a rich list of resources.

So all of that will be coming to you sooner than later. So with that I want to say thank you very much, Vikki, for being our keynote for this very exciting and months long Skillshare series. Farrah thanks for introducing us. I think Farrah and I are going to shoulder up together and talk a little bit about what's to come with the Courage to Act project, but Vikki thank you very much, much appreciated. Then I'll circle back with you to continue these conversations about hope.

Farrah: Yes it was so wonderful and Vikki, thank you so much. I think it really sets the tone of how we want to see the next year go and hopefully we'll continue to have these kinds of conversations as we move into year four and five of Courage to Act. But before we start talking about the future we just want to talk a little bit about the project up to date and hopefully y'all get excited about the next steps of it. CJ I'm going to leave it to you, but I am, as I said before my name is Farrah Khan, I am the co-director of Courage to Act.

CJ: And hi everybody, my name is CJ Rowe and I'm the other co-director of the Courage to Act project. I've had the pleasure and honor of working alongside Farrah for, we're going on three years now.

Farrah: It was the best thing that we made choices on.

CJ: So to kind of set the stage we thought we would share a little bit about a lot of the work that you probably are already aware of because so many of you I think on today's call were a part of the foundation of the work that we've been embarking on and are to continue traveling through. So thank you everybody who was a part of writing and really helping to inform the Courage to Act report. This was released in, I guess fall 2019 and is really the foundation upon the work in which we've engaged with over the last two years.

We talked to over 300 people within the post secondary sector who are working with the gender-based violence field. And through that we were able to develop this pretty nifty report. It ended up being much longer than we had intended it to be. In fact I think in the years after that we've realized how much longer it still needs to be. So thank you for being in these conversations and for continuing the conversations and the growth of this work.

Coming out of the report we were able to move into a second phase of the project which we are celebrating the close of next month. So over the last two years we worked with 150 of you to develop 25, in fact I think a few more than 25 tools that we could all use in our work. So really what the focus has been on is what are the tools that are needed for those who are doing frontline work within post secondary settings, within the response and support frame, within the education and prevention framework and within the complaints process framework.

And with that we had three key working groups who were working on and developing tools. I think we've probably reached out to many of you to ask you to fill out different surveys as well as be a part of different communities of practice, to help inform really the foundation of the harmonized national framework. I have to say a big thank you to all of those who are a part of the various communities of practice. You've helped forward conversations, knowledge building as well as we're able to build a national network of folks who are doing work together.

Those communities as we learned in the development of the first project and I think were clearly strengthened by Vikki's conversation today is that we need to be in these conversations together. We do need to have opportunities where we can pick up the phone and call someone on another coast to find out how we might be able to think through and do things differently. So thank you to all those engaged, you're really helping to inform what comes next.

National collaboration. This has been and has always been. We strive to always keep this project in a way that's being operationalized and creating touch points for different communities to connect from coast to coast to coast. We have really tried our hardest to have a core project team who are situated in different lived realities, whether that's having had experience working as a student at activists who have someone who has decades of work in the violence prevention. Our Communities of Practice members have really been the heart of the last two years. You've helped teach us, learned alongside us and I'm just so proud of the work that we've done together.

We've also tapped into some external reviews who haven't been a part of some of the more, I would say core conversations and teams so that we're making sure that we're just not falling into group speak, but we have external folks who have been coming in and leaning in and sharing their expertise in order to strengthen the work.

And I think one of the things that makes me really proud about the last three years of Courage to Act is that it's strengthened because of how we lean into each other, because of some of the accountability practices that I think we've strived to engage with that Vikki has brought us into a more deeper understanding of so I'm sitting here to say thank you because this really moves us into what's to come over the next two years. I'm going to throw it over to Farrah because I think you have a few things to share.

Farrah:

I also just want to name and want to thank the core project team and CJ Rowe. CJ and I connected over a random phone call three years ago and I was so honored for CJ to join us as a co-director in this project. It has been quite the ride and I think the core team has done exemplary work on this as well as the community of practice and the whole Courage to Act team. We have really exciting news. So we are going to be releasing and piloting the tools in phase three.

And phase three was just announced two weeks ago. The federal government has awarded Possibility Seeds to lead and coordinate two million dollars to address Gender-Based Violence on campus. It's very exciting and it's going to be forming objectives. We're going to increase awareness and application of tools, policies and procedures that were created in year two and three by piloting them, consulting about them and having community engagement strategies around them.

We're also going to improve knowledge and resources on GBV prevention and education through even more tools which you all have already named. You're like we need a tool on this tool. That's great, we're going to work on it. We're also going to do two evidence based tool creation specifically about sexual harassment through experiential learning which is a huge issue that exists and very few, if any, research has been done on it in North America.

And we're also working with Sandy Jung and Jesmen Mendoza which is very exciting and they're going to be actually creating a key risk assessment on Gender-Based Violence for PCI's. So that's really exciting for us. We're also going to be continuing to build collaboration and capacity building through PSIs through our National Skillshare and Knowledge Center. So we're going to keep having these conversations because we need them, we need to keep building together.

In September there'll be 19 tools that will be available to download via the Courage to Act Knowledge Center. They are publicly available and free of charge to download. There is going to be a slack channel that you can talk to your peers once you've downloaded it and be like this worked, this didn't work, give feedback. We really want to hear your feedback because these are living documents, you've created them, let's put them out in the world. It's really exciting.

There are 19 tools include answer calls for justice within PSI it's from the national enquirer of missing and murdered Indigenous women, the national database on campus sexual violence prevention and support offices, environmental scan around GBV policies and law. There's also promising practices for online work, taking courageous actions. There's also a tool about dealing with anti-Black racism on campus, anti Asian hate and also supporting 2S LGBTQ folks. There's also a number of pieces coming in from the francophone work group would have done around evaluation, around engaging faculty and staff and actually doing initiatives to address sexual violence on campus. Very very exciting.

We also are going to have an amazing tool on looking at alternative responses to campus Gender-Based Violence so non-punitive accountability, institutional complaints process, learning hubs so there's actually going to be a learning hub for people to learn more about complaints processes. There's also going to be a piece around engaging men and preventing sexualized and gender-based violence on post-secondary campuses. Are y'all getting excited because I'm really excited that these are going to be happening, all released in September.

Also there's going to be a tool that's going to be released about supporting international students affected by GBV and it's a customisable tool that you can shift for your institution. And there's also going to be a tool that's going to come out about key principles of gender-based violence investigations at PSIs, a guide for workplace investigations. So excited.

And then in 2022 there'll be more tools and tool kits that will be available via the Courage to Act Center after they've been piloted and they're publicly available and free to download. And things like campus complaints guide will be available, education and training tool kit, preventing gender-based violence on campus. There's also going to be a huge amount of support and response, 15 tools coming out of that project. There's going to be something about just specifically a workshop on navigating power dynamics and boundaries for graduate students. And

also support for campus as a whole, a tool for working with people who caused harm. Very, very exciting.

And so if you are like I still want to be involved with Courage to Act, we really want you to so we're going to have an overarching project and advisory committee and there'll be an application that'll be coming out at the end of August. There's also an opportunity to be a part of a research advisory committee to give feedback throughout as their research is created with the community risk assessment. Also an opportunity to be a part of the experiential learning advisory committee on that research project.

We're also looking for communities of practice and they're a little bit different than last time. They're going to be about reviewing and piloting tools. So looking specifically around frontline gender-based violence practice to look at a number of the 15 tools that are going to be coming out to get to review them and kind of dig them and say this is good, this is not good, let's fix this. And also getting to work with the educators communities of practice. Jennifer Flood is coming on to work with us next year. She already worked with us the past two years, but really excited about her being with us next year in different capacities.

And that is kind of what we're seeing in terms of the next year. And if people have questions or people are excited or people want to know pieces let us know, but CJ and I are just so honored to be a part of this project. CJ will be a part of the project advisory committee, leading that, co-leading it with hopefully a really amazing person that applies. And we'll be moving in different places as a group, but we just can't thank you enough for being a part of the Courage to Act project for the past two years and we really look forward to year four and five with you as we continue to build a world that looks, addresses and knows that we need to end this violence.

OK I think that's it, if you have any questions you can pop them in. You know this is the time to ask those questions or you can definitely send us an email if you're like I have questions about year four and five. We do too, we'd love to talk to you about them. So please let us know, the announcement came really quick to us and then the election happened so there's lots of things happening at this moment, but just know that we're really committed to addressing this work. And working in collaboration and continuing to build this conversation with communities. I'm really excited to continue to work with Anoodth, a member of the project team on this.

I want us to take a moment to look at the amazing Drawing Change graphic, if we can highlight, we're going to put a spotlight up for everyone and you can see it and I'm going to stop sharing so we can all look at this. It's just really exciting to see how this is coming together and see a beautiful image. CJ and I. That's so great. I love Drawing Change, I'm so grateful for them. So that's the end of the conversation today. I want to thank again, Vikki Reynolds. You know you've really set the tone of how

we want to see this coming next two years of the project and also just personally my own work and thinking how I continue to build solidarity with communities. So thank you so much Vikki. You do tremendous work and we really appreciate you.

Vikki: Thank you so much, honored to be here.

Farrah: And I want to say thank you to CJ. This is CJ's last webinar with our team and we cannot, I will get emotional if I talk about it too much so I'll just say we love you CJ and we're so glad that you're a part of this project and you're just an amazing human. And year Farrah is in her feelings so we'll just move on for a second. Yeah and we're just so excited to be a part of this project and we just want to thank everyone and I think that's it. There's an evaluation form. Kelly who is the silent hand behind a lot of things, thank you Kelly for all your work and getting all the Skillshare done because you've actually been leading this for so long. So if you want to know Kelly's face you should know it because Kelly's been doing such things behind the scenes. Thank you Carina, thank you Anoodth, thank you Andréanne. See everybody later, have a great day. Bye everyone.