

WomenatthecentrE Presents

WE Webinar: Leading with Abundance: Transformative Justice as a Framework for Change

Monday, February 28th, 2022
12:30 - 2:30pm EST

Welcome to WomenatthecentrE's WE Webinar Series where today we will be discussing Transformative Justice as a framework for change!

Co-hosts: Rena and Fian: WomenatthecentrE Placement Students

WomenatthecentrE Presentation: Alison Morrison, WomenatthecentrE Project Coordinator and Nikki Plant, WomenatthecentrE Placement Student

WAWAW Presentation: Felix Gilliland, WAWAW Manager of Social Change

Panel Facilitator:

Nneka MacGregor: Co-Founder and Executive Director, WomenatthecentrE

Panelists:

Dr. Rachel Zellars: Lawyer, Senior Research Fellow, and Assistant Professor at Saint Mary's University in the Department of Social Justice & Community Studies. As an organizer for the last 20 years, Dr. Zellar's community work is committed to supporting survivors of GBV through transformative justice approaches to healing and responding to harm.

Marlihan Lopez: A Black feminist community organizer tackling issues surrounding anti-Blackness, gender-based violence and its intersections. She is currently co-Vice-President for la Fédération des femmes du Québec and Program and Outreach Coordinator at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute. She is also cofounding member of Coalition to Defund the Police, based in Montreal.

Dalya Israel: Executive Director at WAVAW, Dalya began her journey at WAVAW in 2002 as a volunteer and later went on to join the Victim Services Program in 2005. Dalya has been supporting survivors as they navigated systems after sexual violence and harm while amplifying survivors' voices in circles of influence in order to make substantive changes.

Jeff Carolin: A criminal defence lawyer, conflict transformation facilitator, and father of two small children based in Toronto. Jeff's practice was initially dedicated to defending clients who had been marginalized due to poverty, mental health differences, and racism, and has since broadened to include a focus on restorative and transformative justice.

WELCOME!

Rena Kim

Okay, so, welcome to our Leading with Abundance: Transformative Justice as a Framework for Change webinar. My name is Rena Kim, pronouns are she/her and I'm a student at WomenatthecentrE supporting in the facilitation of this webinar today, along with Fian, also placement student at WomenatthecentrE.

So we'd like to start off with a land acknowledgement. So, too often land acknowledgements are presented as something to cross off a checklist or done performatively to be politically correct. So it's very important to take time to honor and recognize each of our individual relationships with the land, otherwise the words we speak in a land acknowledgement hold no meaning. So it's important to remember that only certain people have the right to welcome you to this land, but anyone can do a land acknowledgement. WomenatthecentrE asks you all to take a moment to think about your own relationship with this land, whether settler or arrivant and your responsibilities to honor this land and Indigenous Peoples. WomenatthecentrE acknowledges that the land on which we operate is a territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Anishnaabe Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederation, the Métis, Inuit, and the Mississaugas of the Credit and was taken without consent. Today, this land is still home to many First Nations and Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. An inherent part of our work is taking action to disrupt and dismantle the embedded impacts of colonialism. And so we stand in solidarity with Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirit people and call on the government and everyone living on this land to address the genocide against them, by implementing 231 imperative changes from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Fian Poon

Due to the nature of the content discussed, we are offering a trigger warning, and this presentation involves discussion around gender-based violence. So please only listen if you're available, you're able to do so. If while listening, you feel you need support, please reach out to your local support network. We would like to have the community agreement together. Language is powerful, so be critical of the words you choose, the history, intent, and impact. Respect the space, time, the voice and experience of others. Lead with compassion, empathy and love and lead with curiosity. I will emphasize that we believe survivors, therefore, be present and thoughtfully engaged in the moment. Deeply interrogate your identities and the ways that they can impact those around you. Truly listen to one another. We also believe that survivors of gender-based violence are the experts, to call in rather than call out, so be gentle and kind with yourself. And lastly, remember that learning happens when conversation and thoughts are openly expressed.

Rena

So kind of looking at the brief schedule overview, it'll begin with a TAJI presentation presented by WomanatthecentrE, followed by a WAVAW presentation and then we'll have roundtable discussion with panelists and a Q&A session to end off. So quick introduction about WomenatthecentrE. WomenatthecentrE is a unique nonprofit organization that works to eradicate gender based violence against women, gender queer, 2 spirited and trans people. And it is the only survivor-led organization in Canada dedicated to ensuring the voices and expertise of survivors are central in the implementation, and development of policies and programs aimed at eradicating all forms of gender-based violence. And with over 4000 members across the world, engaging in personal political and social advocacy, WomenatthecentrE thrives on membership engagement and shared experience that come together to create valuable change in our communities.

And with that, I would love to introduce two amazing individuals from WomenatthecentrE, Alison Morrison and Nikki Plant for the TAJI presentation. So Alison, pronouns she/her is a project coordinator at WomenatthecentrE primarily working on WomenatthecentrE's Transformative Accountability and Justice Initiative. She joined WomenatthecentrE first as a placement student in January of 2020 while completing her MA in criminology and social justice, and Alison is inspired by the values of transformative justice and is passionate about learning through collaboration. Nikki, Nikki Plant is a placement student with a WomenatthecentrE and she is currently

completing the social service program at Sheridan College, and plans to continue her work with survivors of gender-based violence, and now pass it on to them.

Alison Morrison

Thanks, Rena, just to make sure that I got everything spotlighted.

So, hi everyone, as Rena introduced I am Alison Morrison, I work for WomenatthecentrE and Nikki and I are thrilled to be here to speak to you a little bit more about our work on our Transformative Accountability and Justice Initiative, which began with our Declarations of Truth report, documenting insights from survivors of sexual violence, where we were funded a few years ago to conduct research in our community based survivor led participatory manner with survivors of sexual violence to learn more about their experiences navigating the legal system, and what their vision for Justice and Accountability looked like for them.

So to begin, as an organization, as Fian mentioned earlier, we recognize the importance of language as a powerful tool and have made conscious decisions on the language that we use. And so I want to highlight the following terms. So to start, we use the word survivor, as opposed to victim because the word victim contributes to the idea that people who have experienced violence are weak or passive, among other descriptors, and so we purposely use the term survivor, because we recognize that people formulate and practice powerful tactics as violence arises which are essential to their survival. We use the term declaration in place of stories because "story" can imply that survivors made things up about their experience and we believe survivors so that using the word declaration is an act of resistance in the face of systems trying to silence survivors. Similarly, we use the word reported, instead of alleged to refer to reports of sexual violence, because alleged reinforces that idea that survivors are making up the violence that they experience. We use the term accomplice instead of ally to focus on direct action and willingness to put your body on the line for people who are directly impacted by systemic violence, for the purpose of challenging and dismantling oppressive systems. So being an accomplice goes beyond being an ally. We also use the term strangled, not choked, to refer to the deliberate act of restricting airflow through someone's airways. Our organization has been involved in some of the first, maybe still the first, research on survivors' experiences of strangulation, non-fatal strangulation, in the context of gender-based violence. And through that work, among other things, it became very clear the importance of naming strangulation as a deliberate act as opposed to choking, which can be accidental and on an object. Finally, we use the term aggressor, not perpetrator when referring to folks who commit violence perpetrator is a

term of the criminal legal system and we wanted to use a term that was separate from that. We also use aggressor as a way of demonstrating that folks who cause harm are the aggressor in that instance, and are therefore, it doesn't label someone as someone we should ostracize from society.

Nikki Plant

Survivors of sexual violence often feel that the criminal legal system failed them when they reported their sexual assault. It is frequently said that the process re-traumatizes them as they feel that they are not believed and are made to feel that they are the ones on trial and not their aggressor. This often prevents survivors from even reporting their assault. This image from "Limits of a Criminal Justice Response: Trends in police and court processing of sexual assault" by Holly Johnson with data from Stats Canada is the sexual assault attrition pyramid. This data is meant to give you an understanding of the disproportionate numbers regarding sexual assaults that are reported and the resulting convictions.

Starting with the largest section at the bottom of the pyramid, we can see that the true number of sexual assaults that occur will likely never be known as so many survivors do not tell anyone what happened, let alone report it in any official capacity. The number of sexual assaults that were reported to the General Social Survey on victimization was 460,000. Of that number, only 15,200 of these sexual assaults were reported to police. This number has been adjusted for 15% declared unfounded. Note the drastic disparity in these numbers. This means that 444,800 sexual assaults happened, but were never reported and the aggressors were never held accountable. Of these 15,200 that were reported to the police, 13,200 were recorded as a crime, meaning that 2,000 survivors reported but never received justice. Of these recorded as a crime, only 5,544 charges were relayed meaning that 7,656 cases did not result in any charges being brought against the aggressor. Yet only 2,824, which is a little more than half of these cases were actually prosecuted, and only 1,406 of these prosecutions resulted in convictions and the aggressors being held responsible. The end result of this data is that 0.3% of aggressors of sexual assault were held accountable and 99.7% were not. The criminal legal system is inherently flawed and not a place of justice for survivors of sexual assault. WomenattheCentre wanted to know more about women's experiences with reporting as well as the reasons for not reporting sexual assaults.

So to do this, we did some primary research, which we are calling our kaleidoscope of data. In order to gain insight into survivors' experiences, we developed a multi-pronged approach to the primary research, and it consisted of five components. Our first was through our Court Watch program, where we observed 13 Sexual Assault trials in

Toronto courtrooms that took place between April 2017 and November 2018. This gave us incredible insight into how survivors are treated inside the courtroom, especially by the defence teams and the judges. We also use data from the Canadian legal information Institute, which is also known as CanLII. And we audited trial judgments from sexual assault cases adjudicated in the past five years in Ontario. We also conducted ethics-approved one-on-one interviews with women who did report their sexual assault to police. We interviewed women from both an urban setting as well as a rural one. Five women were from Toronto and eight women were from Renfrew County. We also conducted ethics-approved focus groups which are comprised of women who did not report their assaults to authorities. These women were from the same communities. We also did a media scan in an effort to develop a complete picture of the social landscape around sexual assaults, and how the discussion around sexual violence was shifting. Working together as a team, we recommended television shows, movies, podcasts and news articles, and would reconvene to discuss what we had seen and identify common themes. This research was being done at the height of the #MeToo movement, and we realized that this was an incredible way to be witness to real unfiltered declarations from survivors via social media hashtags and posts. We then combined all of this information together with each piece aiding us in painting an accurate picture of the social landscape.

Alison

So following the kaleidoscope of primary research that Nikki just described, the team embarked on secondary research, including a comprehensive search of publications and models, including specialized sexual assault courts. And so it's important to note at the same time, the team was also engaging in CourtWatch at the specialized domestic violence courts. And based on that work, we were not overly optimistic for the potential of sexual assault courts to respond to sexual violence in an appropriate way. And so that led us to investigating alternative models of justice that were outside of the criminal legal system based on secondary research as well as the interview and focus group feedback from survivors. So restorative justice, as some of you may know, is a model based on Indigenous forms of justice, that have been implemented in Indigenous communities for hundreds of years. Transformative justice is a model developed by and for Black and trans women, disability activists and community organizers in the US, who were responding to the fact that the systems of "justice" and they use quotes on purpose, were built on and reproduce white supremacy, racist and transphobic violence against BIPOC and trans communities specific. So we looked into this work, specifically, including the work of INCITE! a network of abolitionist feminists of color organizing and state violence for over 20 years, led by the incredible Beth Richie, and Mimi Kim. And so

we really identified with the fact that creating transformative justice frameworks was and is an act of resistance against a system that continues to perpetuate the harm against BIPOC and trans communities. So in our work, we really ensure that we're keeping that history at the center of what we're doing.

So through the work that we did some common themes emerge that have helped to shape the way our framework has moved forward and so we call these the six C's of gender-based sexual violence. And in our work, these inform our Transformative Accountability and Justice Initiative that we're talking about today, as well as our C6 peer based counselling program that we run for survivors. So the six Cs include context, consequence, communication, care, culture and control. And so these help to sort of give a comprehensive contextualization of gender-based sexual violence, including, you know, as you can see on the slides, the who, what, where, when and why. Unpacking the social, legal, physical and emotional, sorry, the social, legal, physical, emotional and financial impacts on the survivor and aggressor, as well as focusing on the various interventions adopted by survivors during and after the violence. And so the way that we developed this framework was to be a 24-month series of engaged or, excuse me, 24-week series of engagement. And in our pilot, we've sort of modified that timeline as we adjust, to piloting and the way that our pilot has been structured, but the C's really ground our framework, and they're based on the themes that came out of the research we were doing. So the model that we've developed is like, it's a six stage process. So we have six phases, as you'll see on this slide. So it includes initial outreach, whether that be to community partners, community organizations, through our membership program with over 6000 survivors globally to identify if folks are interested in transformative justice and how we can support survivors in achieving justice and accountability. We also work with referral process, again, whether that be from community organizations that we're close with, or we have some incredible connections with a Crown Attorney, who may be here. So if she's here, I'll give you a shout out, Cara, in terms of ensuring that we're presenting this as an option for survivors who may have initiated processes within the criminal legal system, and then want to stop those, and that has been a bit of a barrier, but in cultivating those partnerships, we're working to support survivors in that way. We also have screening. So that's a really important tool for us. And we'll talk about it a little bit later as well. But we know and recognize that this isn't going to work for everyone. And so, in presenting it as an alternative, we want to ensure that folks are supported in if this is what they want, and then also supported, if this isn't what they want, we just want to make sure that we're keeping survivors and their needs at the center of what we're doing. And so the orientation phase we'll talk about a little bit earlier, but once folks are screened in, there's sort of an orientation process to what the

engagements can look like and what the goal is for survivor and aggressor participants. And then Phase Five, which is the one that we wanted to highlight is the engagement. And so on the following two slides, we're going to pull that out a little bit more specifically and talk about what engagement looks like for survivors and for aggressor participants. And then all of this is really grounded in a feed forward type model. So throughout the process, we really value the feedback that we're getting from survivor and aggressor participants, community partners, the volunteers, incredible volunteers that are working with us to do this work. And then we can use that information gathered to guide anything and adjustments that we need to make moving forward. And so I'll pass it off to Nikki to talk about the survivor.

Nikki

Thanks, Alison. This slide is an introduction to the TAJI engagement process for the survivor once they have been screened in. It is important to note that the foundation of this transformative justice initiative is to wrap the survivor in support and kindness while meeting her where she is currently at on her healing journey. The process is survivor centered and trauma informed. After the screening process the survivor will be introduced to her survivor support team consisting of two to three people which will include survivors for peer support, and community members who have been trained in our framework. The team will then work to identify and determine the survivors initial priorities, urgent needs, safety needs, emotional supports, etc. and how they can best make her feel safe throughout this process. The survivor will go through the transformative accountability and justice engagement which will consist of a series of workshop like sessions that will incorporate such things such as education on social conditions that enable male-perpetuated violence, activities to help the survivor articulate what Justice may look like to her, counseling and healing strategies, access to resources and more. The survivor's support team will also support the survivor to develop her justice and accountability statement, which is where the survivor will identify what they need the aggressor to do to take accountability for their actions and to begin making amends. The survivor's support team will also support the survivor to identify and implement strategies and resources to assist her on her healing journey. This will be compiled over time and is known as her personal transformation statement. The survivor support team will liaise with the aggressor support team. It is important to note that the survivor does not have to meet with the aggressor at any point throughout this process. However, if the survivor wishes to meet with her aggressor and thinks that this will aid in her healing, it will be facilitated through the collaboration of both support teams to ensure that it is done in the safest, and least harmful way possible.

Alison

And so, the aggressor engagement sessions are quite similar, and we sometimes call it parallel to the ways the survivors are engaging with this process. We want to note as well that what we heard in our research was how the system was failing and perpetuating pervasive attitudes of victim blaming, bringing up survivors' sexual history and questioning their credibility. And so it was not a place for Justice and Accountability for survivors. And in the same vein, the response to throw aggressors in prison and sort of ostracized folks from society, we also recognize is not providing meaningful opportunities for taking accountability, if you've caused harm. And so that informs the way that our aggressor engagement sessions are also survivor-centered, trauma informed and coming from that place of support, kindness and compassion, to ensure that we're supporting folks to address why they maybe used violence as a response and also how we can set them up for maybe different responses in the future. And so similar to the survivor engagement sessions, it starts with the screening in process. We want to make sure we're meeting people where they're at, is there anything that might impede the way that an aggressor could show up in a meaningful way? And is there something that we can do to support that need so that folks do feel supported in showing up in an accountable and meaningful way. And so the team that the aggressor works with is called the accountability and support team and they work in a very similar format to the survivor support team. And so that's made up of community members who are trained in our framework, and as we move through this work, we're also hoping that aggressors who maybe have gone through the program, the engagement sessions, and have felt supported and taken meaningful accountability can offer that kind of peer support to other aggressors as well. And so the workshop series is again based on our C6 programming. And so it's really designed to help folks unlearn the social conditions of gender based sexualized violence, focus on consent, where they might have heard about it, where they may have not heard about it, what their understanding of that is, understanding toxic masculinity, building empathy, and those sorts of things along with the same access to resources, depending on their individual needs. And so in order to demonstrate accountability, like Nikki mentioned, the survivor is supported to identify their justice and accountability statement. And if there are any terms or conditions of that, that need to be communicated with the aggressor in order for the survivor, like, in order to make sure the aggressor is aware of what the survivors priorities are, those will be navigated with the support of the accountability and support team. And so that includes engaging in developing strategies for implementation within the time period of the engagement sessions, but also really focusing on ways that that can be sort of embedded moving forward so that there's success beyond the engagement sessions that we can facilitate. And then the aggressor is also supported to develop a similar

internal facing statement called the personal accountability and transformation statement, which is to demonstrate ways that they can show accountability for the harm that they caused. And I think an important thing to note is that we aim to have it include steps to maintaining healthy relationships with partners, and just people moving forward so that that can really set folks up for success moving forward outside of the engagement sessions. So where we are now with this work after the Declarations of Truth report was published, we were grateful to receive additional funding from the Canadian Women's Foundation to conduct a small pilot of the model in Ontario. So that's, again, with our incredible partner, the Sexual Assault Center of Renfrew County, we've been working to sort of build out the framework a little bit more understand what maybe trainings or resources we need to have, in order to support folks who come to us and want to be on support teams and things like that in a volunteer basis. So participation for survivors and aggressors are both free. And we're in the process of developing a more accessible volunteer training as well for this initiative. So if anyone is looking for more information, we encourage you to look at our website or you can reach out directly to us. And that concludes our section of the presentation. So I'm going to pass it off to the wonderful Felix from our partner WAVAW out in British Columbia from yet to introduce themselves. And yeah, take it over from there.

Felix Gilliland

Awesome. Thank you so much. My name is Felix, my pronouns are they/them. I work at WAVAW rape crisis center as you can see here. So WAVAW is on the unceded territories of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh folks. We're a rape crisis centre, so we come from, we're not quite 40 years old, but almost 40 years old. And we come from that long and brilliant history of rape crisis centers doing awesome feminist work, supporting survivors, shifting society is kind of the work that we do. Um, so if I could ask you guys to unshare your screen so that I can share my screen. Great. Thank you so much. I'm just going to share a way, sorry folks bear with me. Okay, great. So let's start here with a land acknowledgement. So WAVAW acknowledges that we have the great opportunity to learn and create change, be of service and employ folks on the unceded, ancestral, occupied, traditional lands of the Musqueam, Tsleil-Watuth and Squamish Nations of the Coast Salish peoples. So we're abundantly grateful to the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island who have been the caring and thoughtful stewards for these lands since time immemorial. We deeply honour the incredible resistance, resilience and strength of Indigenous Peoples in the ongoing, er sorry, in the face of ongoing dispossession and colonial violence. So unceded land was never given to settlers, it was stolen through the doctrine of discovery and continues to be occupied and governed by settlers today. We believe it is important to continue reflecting and

speaking about this ongoing colonial violence, and to keep it in mind as we learn, respond to and heal from sexualized violence, the enforced gender binary and all other systems of domination. So I like what you folks from WomenatthecentrE said earlier about the way that land acknowledgments can often be like a box sort of ticking moment. And so when I was thinking about a land acknowledgement for this presentation, I, I really think that there's a lot of deep questions for us to ask around, like decolonizing and Indigenizing, and the way that we're approaching transformative justice. So you know, it should be really uncomfortable for someone like me, for a settler to stand up here and talk to you folks about like, justice and like how we can transform justice or achieve justice or even think about justice, in the context of a, like a colonial society that we still live in. I think we have some really deep and uncomfortable questions to ask about the way that we have, especially from feminist anti violence, traditionally made monsters out of people who have caused harm, especially again, for me sitting here as a settler talking about how other people are monsters, I think that, you know, there's something really deeply uncomfortable that comes up inside of me when I think about that. And I think that, you know, as feminists, that's a that's a feeling that we need to sit with. And I think we also have a lot of questions to ask about the way that Indigenous practices of justice have often been appropriated within especially restorative justice. You know, there's a lot of talk about how restorative justice can be based in Indigenous practices, but you know, when it's led by settlers, us settlers like to do a lot of picking and choosing the parts of Indigenous culture that we'd like to engage with. So I think we have a lot of work to do to be really, I think, releasing the strings of power and how we decide what restorative or transformative justice is going to look like to really be centering Indigenous folks, and really leaning into the practices that have already exist on this land.

Okay, so here's a little bit about what we're working on. Um, so at WAVAW, we're lucky enough to be working on our TJ pilot project, so we get to try it out. *Laughs* And just before we started this panel, someone was saying very smartly that, you know, we're kind of in this moment with TJ, where the thinking and kind of the brainstorming around, it has gotten a little bit ahead of the practice. So we've all got a lot of really great ideas about TJ and haven't really had the chance to put them into practice just yet. So we get to do that. So we are working on five TJ cases over two years. And we made the decision that our TJ was going to be very survivor directed in the outcomes, which is to say that we don't have like a very structured like steps that folks can go through, or we don't have any, like predetermined outcomes of what it might look like. And the reason for that is simply that, you know, justice is such a nebulous and difficult to define concept. And we're really finding that it's different for everybody who accesses. So for

some folks, justice might look like having a circle or some kind of encounter with the person who caused harm. For other folks that looks more like community pieces, you know, we want our community to be doing better talking about sexualized violence or to look at the way that community can be complicit in sexualized violence. For other folks that looks like art projects, you know, it's all kinds of different things and so we're really letting survivors lead the way in deciding what that's gonna look like. And the other cool thing that we get to do is our national TJ project. And so what that is gonna look like is creating a learning space for, I'm calling it "TJ-curious" anti violence organizations because like I said, I don't think any of us have it too figured out, what its gonna look like just yet. But creating a learning space for us all to come together and talk through some of the the stickier and trickier pieces about what TJ in sexualized violence is gonna look like.

So, these are our values as an organization. And I should point out as well that our brilliant Executive Director, Dalya Israel is here as well. So Dalya is going to be around for the Q&A portion later in the panel. And so Dalya and I were kind of putting together these slides a couple of days ago when she had the thought that we should talk about our values as an organization here. And the reason for that is that, so these values are actually relatively new to our organization, we recreated them back in 2018. And for, I feel like, a lot of nonprofits back around that time and continuing on, are kind of in this moment of like, reckoning with what it means to really embody intersectionality as a nonprofit. So one of the things for us, and this is just one of the things, but we were doing a lot of intentional work at the time, and continue, around creating our trans inclusive services. So we offer specialized services by and for trans folks. And we also have our Indigenous specialized programs, and kind of all these different areas in which we were being asked to, like, embody intersectionality, more and more. And so in 2018, we all sat down as a group and kind of created our new values that were going to lead us forward. And when we looked at them all and kind of stepped back and looked at the whole picture, it became pretty clear that these sets of values really ask us to start leaning into TJ. So our values are we are accountable, we're non judgmental, we're inclusive, we're visionary, and we're survivor centered. So all those things, when you put them together kind of created a pretty clear path to TJ. And I'm not going to talk through all of them. But I do want to talk through the first one there that says we're accountable. So, you know, we, we've been around for a while, WAVAW been around for almost 40 years, as I mentioned and we really needed to name the ways that we are striving towards being accountable of like the learning that survivors have shared with us. So of course, one of the things that we've learned is that criminal justice is not working very well for survivors. We've known that for a long time, and moving towards TJ as a way of

being like accountable to the learnings that we've had. Another thing that we want to be accountable to is the way that we know that the sort of the nonprofitization of feminism has really directed the way that feminism has come to be so wrapped up in criminal justice. And so what I mean by that is, you know, the folks who are nonprofits, probably very familiar with this, um the way that nonprofits have a way of picking up really radical movements like feminism, or trans rights, or sex worker rights or anything like that, and plucking them down into a nonprofit system that asks us to work within things like government funding systems, for feminist anti violence, that has meant a lot of working closely with criminal justice. And that has the impact of like watering down our politics. So for feminist anti violence that has traditionally looked a lot like, you know, our politics getting watered down and aligning more and more with this idea of like white feminism, or like cis-het feminism. And so if we think about like, the very radical asks of feminism, it really is more about, like pushing back against systems like criminal justice, but through this nonprofitization, you know, we've come to be very in bed with criminal justice instead. And so when I say we need to be accountable, that means like recentring the more radical asks of feminism, which is to move away from those systems rather than to continue to buy into them. And when I look at the rest of these, these values, the other thing that comes to mind, for me is the way that they really ask us to be not prescriptive for survivors. So it's only just now though, you know, when survivors are showing up and saying, Hey, I have these justice needs, because folks do usually have justice needs after sexualized violence, you know, there's a real need for us to be creating new pathways outside of criminal justice to get those needs met in a way that's not going to be prescriptive, and that there's only one way to think about achieving justice.

Okay, so let's talk about building a new table. And so I mentioned earlier that, you know, back in 2018, and before that, and beyond that, we've done a lot of really intentional realigning with trans community with sex worker communities and BIPOC communities. And so for myself, you know, my current position at WAVAW have as a manager social change, but as I mentioned before, that I was working primarily in our trans inclusion work, and kind of one of the things that we learned over and over and over again, that is that it doesn't actually make sense to think about inclusion in terms of, you know, we're going to pick up these groups of trans people or like other equity seeking groups and plunk them down into services that are actually not meant for them. And so, you know, this is, this is a phrase, you know, we talk about, like, don't just invite us to a seat at the table, but we actually need to build a new table. And that's what I'm talking about here. So what I mean by that is, like not making sense to plunk people down into services that aren't meant for them, the asks of like trans inclusion, or actually go a lot past inclusion,

and actually towards thinking about like, what would it mean to build services that actually make a lot of sense for communities that have traditionally been left out of feminist anti violence? So one of the things we were asked by all these communities over and over and over again, is to start creating TJ and so here we are doing that. And the reason I mentioned that is, you know, we get asked a lot to come into different organizations and talk about things like inclusion, you know, how do we open the doors wider to these different groups that aren't well represented? And, you know, one of the questions that I often critically ask is, like, open the doors to what? so we can open the doors wider and wider, wider to all these different people, but if folks are showing up to services that don't necessarily make sense to them, there's going to be a real limitation on how much different equity seeking groups want to engage with our feminist anti violence. Okay, so I'm only gonna spend a moment on this because I feel like in this group, folks are probably pretty familiar with what I'm talking about. But in our work around the, the National piece, so I've been doing quite a lot of digging into kind of what happened between restorative justice and anti violence. And one thing that we found is that, you know, there was a moment when these two sectors were kind of starting to touch around the 90s. And, you know, they kind of like sniffed noses a little bit and thought, no, this isn't really working and kind of split ways again. And so the critique of restorative justice from feminist anti violence is that it's not very survivor centred. And to be honest with you folks, like I feel like there is truth to that, like, I feel like restorative justice kind of has a ways to go in being survivor centred, like having that sort of systemic or structural understanding of sexualized violence. But here's the thing. So, when feminists divested from restorative justice, and what happened was, we like started reinvesting in criminal justice instead. And so feminist anti violence has spent many years now trying to work within criminal justice. And we talked a lot about like making change from within the system and having survivors feel seen and heard and like achieve justice, in terms of like jail time through criminal justice. And what we haven't done is really invest the same energy and resources into developing TJ, that we have been putting into developing or into reforming criminal justice system. And again, like the impact that that's had over time is reinvesting in white feminism, reinvesting in feminism that's designed for like cis het, white women, kind of at the expense of everybody else. So my ask for the folks here is to be thinking about how can we invest in TJ the way that we have spent the past couple decades investing in criminal justice? Okay, so paradoxes in TJ. So as we start kind of wading into TJ, you know, we're finding that there's a lot of uncomfortable stuff here. And there's these these feelings that come up, you know, we holding multiple truths. So talk about uncomfortable, you know, talking about, let's talk about exile doesn't work, we know that exile doesn't work, when we kick people out of community. We, we often find that there's not actually much more

safety created, cycles of violence continue all that stuff that folks here know, and then on the other hand, you know, we often hear from survivors that, you know, when we exile people from community, you can actually create a bit more safety for them. So I might feel safer knowing that my abuser is behind bars, or they're like, not allowed back in the town, or whatever it is. And similarly, you know, we know that we can care for everyone, including people that caused harm, we know that there's not a huge difference between people have caused harm and survivors of harm, and that in fact, those two groups usually touch. And we know that survivorship is centred in everything that we do. So the good news is that TJ invites us to lean into these paradoxes in a way that allows us to like kind of open up systems and understand in a more nuanced way how harm happens. The bad news is that I don't have any answers for any of these. So I think it's important to kind of centre the understanding that, like, criminal justice really has a way of asking us to simplify, you know, criminal justice or carceral thinking is the idea that there's one truth and that it's our job to go out there and find out what that truth is. Whereas transformative justice really seeks to like complexify and add nuance to things. So if folks are feeling curious about TJ, my best advice right now is to get comfortable with being uncomfortable, to get comfortable with holding multiple truths inside of us at the same time, and then let go, or letting go with that, sense that we need to kind of get to the bottom of things. Okay, this is the last thing I'm going to speak to before I pass it back to our hosts, um, so, as I mentioned earlier, I feel like nonprofits right now, we're kind of at this moment where we're starting to feel very curious about TJ, I'm starting to think about what it might look like. And I think that we have some responsibility here to kind of know our place as a nonprofit. So there's pros and cons to doing TJ in a nonprofit setting. And some of the pros are that, you know, we tend to have a lot more resources than communities. We have the time to sit around and develop this know-how and kind of good practices around doing TJ. And the other thing that I think we really have to offer as a nonprofit is, like, in comparison to the way that TJ is often taken up in communities, you know, we have an opportunity to be really equitable in who we invest in for TJ. So I'll speak from coming from my community of queer people. Queer people like to experiment a lot with TJ and have made like really amazing advancements in doing TJ. And we can tend to see over and over and over again, that the folks who get invested in with that much community capacity tend to be folks who already hold a lot of social capital. Whereas folks who hold less social capital are usually not offered a TJ process or usually not invited, like back into community. So as nonprofits, we have, I think, a bit of space to do better there. But there are cons to doing TJ nonprofits as well. So things like you know, we're always going to be answerable to things like outcomes. We're always going to be constrained by like, what's available to us within the nonprofit industrial complex. And so as I said, it's really

important that we be, kind of, aware of the pros and cons. I'm being a little bit cheeky with my picture of a parachuter there. So what I'm trying to say is like, let's not parachute into communities. And we need to be cognizant of our role and we need to be cognizant of not co-opting Black, Brown and Indigenous TJ into the nonprofit industrial complex. So as we're all starting to get curious about doing TJ as nonprofits, I think one ask that I have of us as a sector is to be really aware of the the capital and the social currency that we can hold. And you know, from WAVAW, we're really making a commitment that we're not going to come in strong as saying, like, we have figured out the way to do TJ. Because as we've talked about, like when things kind of get looped into nonprofits, it tends to get more removed from community and over time tends to get watered down. And so we're really thinking about our relationship as a nonprofit, to community based TJ and trying to think of ourselves as being complementary rather than we're gonna figure out the way to do it. Okay, that's it for me. So I'm going to stop my share, and pass it back to the hosts.

END OF RECORDING PART 1

Rena

Okay, so thank you so much, Felix for the super informative and wonderful presentation. We will now move on to the roundtable discussion, round table conversation with our lovely panellists, and our amazing Nneka as our facilitator, so I'll pass it on to Nneka.

Nneka MacGregor

So I'm not going to read my bio, I find it a little bit self-promotional. Just to say that I'm the co-founder and executive director of this small but mighty organisation, by and for women and gender diverse survivors of all forms of gender based violence. I'm coming to you today, and I'm filled, if you can see my face, I'm beaming, from ear to ear at the incredible work my amazing team have done in presenting our work thus far. Really, really, really impressed by the work that WAVAW, and thank you, Felix, for that brilliant presentation, that WAVAW has done. My pleasure now is to actually get into a conversation with some amazing, amazing people. This is why I love the work that I do is because I get to hang out and chat with wonderful, wonderful people who are like-minded. I think the title of today's webinar, Leading with Abundance says a lot, oops shared my video, the title of today's work Leading with Abundance, there's a lot about our philosophy of this work. It's not a place of deficit. It's not a place where even though there's been harm that's been caused, we still show up with love in our heart, with hope in our heads, and where the determination to make life different, right, make experiences for other people different. And especially today, with what's happening in

the world. We just come out of a two year, actually, we're still in it, a global pandemic. And then there are some men who feel that this is a good time to go to war, Russia, against Ukraine. Right? For us, this is a moment in our own personal lives and our own personal histories where we can make a stand. And part of that stand is finding new ways of doing this work of bringing back joy into everybody's lives and into our hearts. I am going to introduce, actually I'm going to open up the space, let you know that there's going to be a couple of brilliant people who are going to be sharing their journeys in transformative justice. And I'm not going to read their bios either, but instead I'm going to invite them one by one to do a brief introduction of themselves, and then we're going to get into it. I'm also going encourage everybody on the audience to put your questions in the chat box. And we will spend time addressing the questions from the audience as well, but there are some sort of overarching general questions that the panellists are going to answer. So I'm going to call on first my, one of my girl crushes, who I met last year, Dr. Rachel Zellars to come into the space, Rachel, and tell us about yourself.

Dr. Rachel Zellars

You're so funny, you're lucky too, I just stepped away and I'm back. I'm Dr. Rachel Zellars. Rachel Zellars. Just Rachel is good. My day job, I'm a professor at St. Mary's University, in Halifax, here in Nova Scotia, I'm on leave this year, which is wonderful. I have three teenagers who have given me COVID twice. And, *laughs*, I'm a co-founder of an organization called the Third Eye collective that I co-founded in 2013, with two other really brilliant women who I still work with to this day. And yeah, just can't wait to get into this conversation. Thank you.

Nneka

Thank you so much Rachel. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Next, I'm going to call in my other girl crush, and you're going to see a theme today, my other girl crush, Marlihan Lopez, who again, I met Marlihan a couple of years ago at a conference in London, Ontario, and became, the bond of sisterhood was instant. But welcome, Marlihan.

Marlihan Lopez

Thank you Nneka. So hi, my name is Marlihan Lopez. I'm based in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. And so right now I'm the coordinator at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, but before that I worked within and I still do work within the anti violence movement in Quebec. I worked many years as an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion coordinator at the Quebec Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres. And that's where I was introduced to this work.

Nneka

Beautiful, beautiful. Thank you, Marlihan. And then my other girl crush on the panel is Dalya. Dalya do you want to jump on? Red lipstick. We rock.

Dalya Israel

Working it out. Thank you, Nneka. Hi my name is Dalya Israel, I use she/her pronouns. I'm joining today from Musqueam territory out on the West Coast. I am the very fortunate person that currently gets to lead WAVAW as the executive director. And I come, I often refer to myself as growing up in our victim services programme at WAVAW. So I've been supporting survivors since 2002, in various different capacities, but most of my career I've spent supporting survivors to navigate systems after sexual assault, which really informs everything that I think about and do as we kind of navigate the world in this incredible tipping point, as conversations become more and more centralized around sexual violence. And yeah, I think other passions of mine, I also am a mom, I have a seven-year-old. I try to do as much work to transform my Jewish communities around anti-racism and inclusion as well. And just really grateful to be here.

Nneka

Thank you. Thank you, Dalya. And our last panellist is my guy crush. And I think that anybody who has met Jeff and anybody who has had the pleasure of being in conversation and in community with him will vouch for the fact that this man is, chef's kiss, a beautiful, beautiful human being who we're both wearing our up-bun. Over to you Jeff. You're on mute.

Jeff Carolin

It was me! I win the mute prize but though I do you have to hide my self-view because I can see all the bumps in my, that didn't quite get into my button here. So I'm just gonna, I can't hide it I'm pinned. Oh, no! I have to figure out something else. There we go use my sticky note pad. Um Thank you. Introduce myself while my heart is beating very fast now, that's where I'll start. Thank you for inviting me here. In terms of intro that feels relevant, I use he/him pronouns, I am the father of two little girls who are six and three, I've really been trying to practice transformative justice in an everyday way, in all my roles and identities in life, including that of a father, how to slow down in those moments and feel that pull, my daughter calls it of like going away, and then coming back together. And all the micromoments too. The journey of how I met Nneka, and came here, I guess, was being able to support Marlee Liss, through a restorative justice process, who was the survivor and had a trial that was on track for a jury trial. And we got connected through an amazing group here called the FU project that does work in

jails and also restorative justice work. And we were able to design a process that really worked for Marlee and took a really terrible moment in her life and made it one brought some healing. So, but maybe I don't know if it's ironic or not, I was really loving what Felix is sharing about the paradoxes. My work, that I'm moving away from it more and more is as a criminal defence lawyer, with a kind of prison abolition lens. That's how I came into that work, thinking that we weren't going to jail ourselves to some kind of better kind of public safety or less violent society. And through that time, have wanted to move further away from the adversarial system and see how we can create healing for everyone. Just how I'm here.

Nneka

Love that, thank you. Thank you. So to the audience, this is going to be, imagine that we're all sitting in my kitchen, or in any one of these panellists' kitchen. It's going to be a really gentle, easy-flowing conversation. And I'm going to invite the panellists to jump in anytime that they want, they have something to say. And we're going to start with a little bit more, can you share a little bit more about how you got into the work of transformative justice? What was your journey that led you here? Maybe we start with Marlihan.

Marlihan

So I don't really remember a time where I thought the police or the criminal justice system was there to protect me or my community. I grew up constantly witnessing the violence of policing and criminalization. And in my early teens, I experienced a violent police intervention. So as a survivor of Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence myself, and having experienced the barriers to accessing support services and the justice system, I knew that the system was not really designed to support survivors, especially those that looked like me. So my experiences and my desire to transform those systems that reproduce violence led me to organising within the anti-violence movement. I started working at the Quebec coalition of rape crisis centres as an Equity Diversity Inclusion coordinator, in 2016. I was mandated to accompany rape crisis centres in developing internal policies that address the barriers survivors face when accessing support services, and the revictimization that stems from the lack of cultural securitization, and the strong dependence on carceral and punitive strategies to addressing sexual violence. I worked with the rape crisis centres all over Quebec, especially those that work or service Indigenous communities in the north, where we address how colonial approaches and feminist interventions to sexual violence revictimize whole communities of survivors. So at the height of the #MeToo movement and following the, I don't know if you all remember, the Globe and Mail's 20 month long investigation that

exposed the overwhelming number of cases deemed unfounded by the police, I was given the Justice dossier at the coalition. So having witnessed the revictimisation that survivors experienced when they file a complaint, and knowing that the system that this is a system that communities I work with rarely access for millions of reasons, I decided to look for solutions elsewhere, into alternatives to the justice system, including restorative and transformative justice. I also reflected more broadly on the violence against women's movement's strong dependency on punitive and carceral responses, and its rapprochement to the state and its shift to prioritise judicialization and criminalization as a primary response to addressing gender based violence. It was very difficult to engage in these reflections in the context of my work, because as we all know, the anti violence movement, feminist within the anti violence movement fought very, very hard for criminalization of rape and sexual assault. So working with feminists that are still here, within the anti violence movement that worked in the 70s in the 80s, and trying to open conversations around the way that criminalization reproduces the same violence that we aim to eradicate is not, has not been easy. But I've continued doing this work even beyond the work that I did, in the context of the rape crisis centres, and I'm continuing to learn.

Nneka

Love that. Absolutely love that. Dalya, your experiences, any commonalities with Marlihan?

Dalya

Yeah, I'm just like, oh, yeah, thank you. Thank you for saying all of that. Um, yeah, I mean, also, as a survivor, as well, I chose never to engage with the system, because I didn't feel like it was going to find the resolution that I was looking for. And I think part of what saved me was joining WAVAW at that time in my life as a volunteer and starting to understand intergenerational violence, and really getting to the root of likely what was going on for the person that harmed me, in order to do my healing, and I, I feel like that, watching that over the years has really been the thing I've always said, I wish that the, the white ribbon campaign would build a house in every province, and walk people who cause harm through an understanding of how systems have likely harmed them, because I've seen how toxic masculinity and also toxic femininity have so deeply injured people. And so in addition to like interpersonal violence that folks have also lived through, along with white supremacy, and all of these systems that, that have caused people such deep harm. So yeah, I think walking alongside of survivors for so many years, and being able to map that even for folks who got, you know, quote, unquote, got the "justice outcomes" that the system would say was a win, or was like the check that

they, somebody was found guilty and they might have been sentenced to be incarcerated, all of these things. They had the opportunity to read their victim impact statement, they would walk away from these process, and it would be like jumping off a cliff, like the lowest lows, often for survivors that I supported through our victim services program came after trial ended, and even when it was, quote, unquote, "in their favour". And so for me, that was fascinating, right? We were there, we've been, like Felix was saying earlier, through the nonprofit industrial complex, through these funding structures that have been shaped by governments to tell survivors what their outcomes should look like. We, as a rape crisis centre, were invested in victim services and in, in these systems navigation, right. And so, by and large, my job was to support people to manage their expectations for the system, but also to make them the best witnesses that they could be, and I think that there's still power in doing that if people are still invested in that system personally. But what I would continue to see is that so many survivors just were, their hearts were broken again because the system also failed them. And, and at the end of the day, when we continue to have systems where survivors don't have standing, and they are just witnesses to a crime, like their interests are not there. And so we continue to put survivors through this, this journey trying to be incredibly creative and how we can try to centre pieces of their experience. But that's, that's a lot of work that is not necessarily aligned. And so I guess what we saw, and through our systemic change study that we did in the justice project that was happening at the same time as some of the work that Felix was talking about with starting to do work with trans and queer and Two Spirit community, was asking survivors, "how do we increase your confidence in the criminal legal system after assault?" And so many folks were just saying, "you know what, like, I don't think I can do it." My grief, the changes in my life, really, what it comes down to is somebody acknowledging the harm that they've caused me. And this system, I've, I've witnessed it do it once and it was because of an incredible defence lawyer who actually spent time with the person who had caused harm to craft an hour and 15 minute guilty plea letter to the people that he had harmed. And she did that, you know, with a student. But that was like, one time in 15 years, I saw that happen. And so, you know, being in the position that I'm in now, as the executive director, it just didn't make sense for us to continue, you know, with our values that Felix was talking about earlier, to continue to not center the reality that so many Black women had taught us for a bazillion years and Indigenous folks that, you know, healing in community and not having a situation where we throw people out of community, but that we find ways to be with each other, that felt like a really important accountability piece for us to acknowledge of just how whitewashed the feminism that was being practised in the anti violence movement had caused. And so really, this is a returning to and a recentering of,

from my perspective, and how we honour communities that, whose shoulders we stand on, but also what survivors need.

1 hour marker

Nneka

I love that, recentering and rehonouring and I love that. Jeff, same question but with a little bit of a lean-in to why the criminal legal system has been so problematic. And I just want to say, when my team were doing the introduction of the beginning, around language, one of the things that we didn't have on the slide was why we stopped calling it the criminal justice system, because it's not a site where justice is meted out for the criminal legal system. What it is, but can you lean into the work? Oh, -

Jeff

No, no, I'm not running away, just my computer just dinged me that I need to plug it in. But I'm listening.

Nneka

No worries. There we go. So it's just leaning in more to the criminal legal system of response and how that influenced you moving into this particular alternative model?

Jeff

Okay, sorry. Yeah, I can answer that in a number of different ways. I think one thing that's just coming up for me that I could share in this moment, if there's more, we can, I can share more is I've, I've had a number of clients over the years. Certainly, the majority cis men, but also some cis women charged with, like, violence related things that connected to gender, intimate partner violence, mostly. And what I was just struck with over and over, I always saw my role, particularly with men it was a bit of a different role, that I would say, I can defend, like, I can defend you like, that's my job. And I can do that without saying anything like, that you did was right. Like there was a difference and what it felt like, there were there would be room for conversations I would have where people would want to take accountability in a real way and be like, why am I doing this? Why am I messing? Like, why am I why am I causing this kind of harm? And we can explore that. And I did end up getting into these kinds of conversations that were reflecting on that. And a lot of shame rooted in that and a lot of early experiences of being boys and being harmed by, by older boys, or just you know, all the toxic masculinity pieces and and just constantly feeling like, my sense and for my clients was like, there's no, there's no room for the criminal, criminal legal system has no room for

that. It has room for that potentially, as Dalya was saying, if you are, you know, wanting or willing to plead guilty, which is and that's the term that gets used sort of, at least in the Toronto courthouse is taking responsibility. But if taking responsibility means I'm going to go into jail, into a very violent institution and likely face harm myself. I mean, I would say if I was charged with something I would, I would deny, I would minimize, I would do whatever I could, because I'd be effing terrified of going into jail. And so for me, like when jail is sitting, as the like, as Dalya, put it that like, I'm ready, set it, that's the best outcome or what is supposed to be like the right outcome when when violence has happened, I think it twists the whole thing. And it twists it, the accountability and punishment get used interchangeably, but to me, it's a punishment. And it's a punishment that actually, you never have to reflect on what you did. And you never, you know, at most maybe in the pre proceedings, you'll listen to a victim impact statement, as they're called, but that's the formal term. And so just, it just, I got the feeling at some point, like doing this work, that the whole system, to me feels, and this is not, not just my observation, obviously, but like a sort of colonial patriarchal response. It's like, one person hits another person to now the bigger, the bigger man, like writ large, that bigger white man colonial, like writ large, will punish someone, and then somehow peace will come out of this. But I mean, ostensibly, what it's not what I've seen. And structurally, it's set up like that, too, in terms of its the state's case, versus the accused, and then the, the quote unquote, complainant becomes a witness to a process. That's a public process that they don't have control over. So it's structurally set up like that, also. I'll leave it there for now.

Nneka

Beautiful, very well said. Rachel, over to you, what lead you down the path. And I know, again, you're, you have a legal background, and can talk to that intersection of the law, anti-black racism, gender-based violence, how it all meshed together to get you on this journey.

Rachel

Yeah, thanks. Thanks for reminding me of that. Heartbreak, you know, I think that's what we said, you know, when we were gathering a few months ago, and I think this question was posed to me then, what brought you into transformative justice, into this work, and it was heartbreak, it was heartbreak growing up in a home that had lots of violence in it. And then in college, losing two very beloved friends to state violence. The first was a friend who was sentenced to 45 years on a single rape charge. He is still in prison to this day. Very, very close friend. And, and then the other, you know, life altering event was losing a beloved friend, a former boyfriend, at university, at Howard University to, to,

to state violence, he was driving home to his then fiancée and, and small daughter, and he was mistaken for a drug dealer, and he was shot 17 times and killed. They were just the most, so that was two thousand, I think that was 2000. They're just the the two most painful, painful things. But, you know, I think it was the cumulative heartbreak. And losing people that I loved very, very deeply, including people who did terrible things. I think my friend Ari did not only commit that rape, but commit others in the DC metropolitan area. But, those cumulative heartbreaks made me realize that I didn't have the tools for, you know, healing from the trauma that they cause. But I knew that the state didn't either, I knew that there was no healing modality built into, you know, the prison system that still houses my friend Ari, or, or a court system, you know, that, you know, had him for years before he was sentenced. The officer who killed my friend, of course, was never convicted. That was in the early 2000s when police officers were never ever convicted. So it was it was heartbreak. And what I realized is that I needed a way to understand how to express my love in the context of profound harm. That was either, you know, in my home in the case of my father, or very, very close to home, you know, in the context of my friend Ari, the loss of my friends. And so the next time, heartbreak sort of came to me in 2013, I decided that transformative justice was the place of healing. It was the place of healing, and then most importantly, study and practice, like a place to study, a place to practice. And over the last, I guess, nine, nine years, it has become, you know, the most powerful healing medium for me. But it was, it was heartbreak that initially brought me into this work. And I'll just say one other thing. You know, Dalya, as you were talking, I just jotted down the word contradictions. And it occurred to me that growing up in, I think, relationship to violence, I learned how to understand contradictions very well, as a child. My father was someone who was very successful externally, but had a private life. It was very, very dark, which I think is true for many, many people like me, who grew up in homes like that. I have this grandmother, she's passed on, she was a Baptist minister in Newark, New Jersey. And I thought about grabbing her picture upstairs. And because I have this picture of me, like standing between her legs, she was profoundly loving and she also killed my grandfather, stabbed him to death, you know, in front of my father after he beat her one day, and went to prison for it. So that's another contradiction that is, you know, in my family tree and my family story. But, you know, transformative justice as Felix showed us with that really beautiful chart is about attending to the contradiction, and refusing to see things in the way that I grew up learning, like Malcolm, Martin, Frederick, you know, you know, WB Dubois, Booker T. Washington, I grew up thinking and learning in binaries. And transformative justice is a place that really refuses that. So, you know, Dalya, as you were talking, I was like, Oh, it's my interest in contradiction, that my real interest in

contradictions that also brings me to this work. So yeah, thank you all for venting that, yeah.

Nneka

That's profound. That's profound. I just want to digress a little bit,

END OF RECORDING PART 2

but to touch on the role of the movement as being formulated out of the trauma and tragedies of Black women, trans activists. Because, as an organisation, and my staff, my team know this, we never talk about this work, without paying homage to the progenitors of the work. And I remember when we first developed the framework, and did a beautiful presentation to our board, our governance board, our board co chair, Dr. Tope Adefarekan, we've been talking about how, restorative justice, Indigenous ways of knowing we don't want to culturally appropriate Indigenous ways. And then Tope said, Yeah, but neither do we want to appropriate transformative justice which is about, by, and for Black women, Black people, embedded in their work so Marlihan, do you want to talk a little bit about that origin story, and how important it is to centre Black women, Trans activists, individuals who actually created this in the effort to not have it whitewashed, and that was a word that Dalya used, have it whitewashed, or you and I talked about this, professionalised?

Marlihan

So, any Black woman working within the anti-violence movement or the feminist movement has seen time and time again how we whitewash and depoliticize concepts that, and not just concepts, but practices that were founded by Black women. And so if you think about, for example, intersectionality, how that has been depoliticized to be like equivalent to just talking about diversity and not really analysing the power dynamics that are essential. Um, my fear would be that we do the same thing with transformative justice and that transformative justice becomes another buzzword like intersectionality, that's, you know, adapted by the anti-violence movement, but not really put into practice. And there's also the, the aspect of professionalisation, you know that unfortunately, the anti-violence movement faces depoliticization, and is every day moving closer and closer to the state into depending on state, right, responses to addressing harm. And so what happens with the appropriation of TJ or transformative justice within these spaces? My fear is that we'll be practising TJ without the, the people that birthed this practice. So without Black folks, without the people that are most harmed by the criminal legal system. And so I think Felix raised the issue of practising TJ within a

nonprofit sector. And so I guess we need to address if we know that TJ, one, like something that is necessary for there to, for one to practice TJ is community, how do we, how do we do this in the context of a nonprofit industrial complex? Is there a really a way to practice TJ in its original form being, um, respecting the values and the principles behind it? That's a question that I'm really interested in hearing others answer.

Nneka

Let's pose it to others. Dalya, what do you think?

Dalya

I, well, I'll first just say that, like, I don't have the answer. And I feel like we're just trying to clock it. As in live time, every day, I think one of the first ways that we did it, and I see one of Aja's questions, this might answer it, but we chose to have our kind of pilot programme. So the work that we're doing on the ground with folks funded through a foundation as opposed with government. And that was really intentional, who we were going to seek to fund. And so we have a local foundation that is funding this work. And part of that felt aligned because it didn't rely on the state to fund the money and of course, philanthropists that have enough money to donate to foundations, we can go I mean, money is, capitalism is dirty, it's causing all of us a whole lot of grief. But how we navigate those things, we felt was really important. And this particular foundation really just has aligned its practices around reporting and all of those pieces to be about organisations being trusted to do the work that they've invested in. And they actually just want you to spend the money in the ways that your work requires you to spend it, and then kind of circle back to them and let them know the great work that's been done. So that was one of our intentional pieces. I, I feel like it also has kind of employment practices attached to it. So the folks that we are employing into the programme we're doing really intentionally and we're really creating the space and being intentional about who we hire into the programme to be the staff working it. And then who we're triaging to have access to the programming is another big piece. So we are ensuring that the folks that get in-taked into being one of the five cases that we said that we will do, are going to be folks from racialized communities that are Black, that are Indigenous, that are from queer and trans community. And we are, you know, we're being really clear about that. I think the other two pieces that we've kind of centred is that we're not going to step away from people when funding ends, that this isn't really about the funding. This is about organizationally that we are investing in this work and that we know that that TJ can sometimes take 5-10 years, and so we're along for the long haul. And then I think the other piece is just making sure that we're thinking strategically about how we

wrap everybody in the care that they require. And that we're being courageous and brave to step into places where organisations might have thought it was too much of a liability, or "out of our scope", quote, unquote. Really seeing TJ is not just a process that's between two people or a group of people that have been harmed, but like, all of the other pieces that have created the grounds for that harm to happen. And so really thinking about community and tapping into community and ensuring that we're hearing from folks about what they, how they feel we can be useful in contributing to conversations within community. And so right now that's where we're at.

Nneka

Really glad that you brought Aja Mason, another girl crush, Hi Aja in the Yukon, Aja asked a question. "In the Yukon, one of the biggest barriers in realising restorative justice in communities relates to the financial and administrative constraints associated with the facilitation of these processes. If we recognise that the nonprofit industrial complex dilutes movements, and that the public sector i.e. governments are themselves arms of the criminal justice system, how can we support communities to find money, [money, money money] to facilitate TJ and RJ frameworks." I just want to start off a little bit of what we do is we spend, we're spending a lot of our time educating our funders, and to your point, Dalya, about funders who give you the money, and there are no strings attached. We know the government always has strings, but we are gently walking with them to help them break those strings, right, cut those strings. For them to understand the fund that we need cannot fit nicely into this box, and cannot do the types of stuff that you want to do. And I look at it that the money from government is mine. Right? We're taxpayers. So it's actually taxpayers money that is being returned to the, to us, the community to do work that is useful. But I'd like to hear from Jeff, a little bit of, away from money and stuff, but more around sort of other barriers. Right. What are the barriers do you see or have you experienced in the work and your your work of transformative justice apart from money?

Jeff

Well, one of them I don't know, that comes to mind, I don't know if it's the one you're thinking of Nneka, that was flagged in the chat already is, and I think this is relevant to the community context to that Marlihan was saying. If people aren't in a community where there's a general understanding, like, we don't go to the police, that's not a part of it. I mean, that's why, that's my understanding, I may be wrong, but in certain contexts, why these processes began to develop. And the reality is when we're outside of, if I'm outside of that community, and someone approaches me and says, you've, you know, you assaulted me, you sexually assaulted me, or whatever it is. The, the fear is that if I

go out, and I, even if I, you know, I want to take responsibility for that, the fear is that if I the str- legal language, if I confess, right, if I admit that I did something wrong, that's admissible against me in court, either in a civil court in the context of a lawsuit or in a criminal court, in the context of a criminal case. And so the fact that that system is out there, those systems are out there, I think they have a chilling effect on on people being willing to take accountability in this, in the way that we're talking about here in terms of, you know, potentially listening, or sort of responding to what the needs are of the person who survived the harm, which might be sitting and hearing right from them directly, you know, this is the harm caused and be able to answer questions. Why did you do this? Why me? What's going on in your life? What are the underlying issues that caused this all those things that can happen in these kinds of processes? So, you know, the conservative, criminal lawyer advice is always never make a statement. 100% never make a statement. Never make a statement until you are on the stand testifying in your own defence at a trial. Because if you start making other statements, and certainly if you confess things, well, then you're setting yourself up for failure. And so what one of the things from a kind of, I don't know if it's like a nerdy or like technical legal perspective is that there are these concepts out there called settlement privilege, mediation privilege, where what happens in one process with just some, you know, I don't want to, nothing is going to be 100% foolproof, but with some, some protections can be built in that says, you know, a statement made in this context can't be used in a court, it's privileged, it's given a special privilege. So that's something that I've looked into a little bit. So that's one, but just that sort of general fear, beyond the like social fear of admitting the shame and all those pieces, then there's that fear of like jail time of lawsuit damages. And then the other piece is that a lot of people enter, the people who do pick up the phone, survivors, and call the police and then enter the system. Right now, the Ministry of the Attorney General in Ontario has a policy that says sexual assault cases can't be diverted to Community Justice programs. I could say more about that in another moment. But right now, that general policy in the Ministry of the Attorney General is opposed to doing anything under whatever label that is oriented to the same underlying values that that we're talking about here, a different kind of accountability, and healing

Nneka

I just want to follow up on that, Jeff. What are the ways that we can disrupt that notion that the only way to address sexual violence is through criminal legal system? How can we get involved in advocacy with the Ministry of the Attorney General, as an example, your opinion as a lawyer?

Jeff

You know, I've talked to you, you know way more than I do. I've been I've been, you know, in this very particular role in this system. I don't, I won't pretend to have dabbled in the policy side of things.

Nneka

Well, that's that's work to be done. Work to be done. So Rachel, I'm asking Jeff about barriers that he's perceived. Can you share some of the successes that you've experienced in your work around transformative justice?

Rachel

Oh child, I was preparing to answer the barriers question

Nneka

Well, you know what, let's start with that. Go for the barriers question.

Rachel

I want to, I want to just respond to something Jeff said, though, because I was thinking, I don't know, I hadn't thought about this until now. But, you know, Robert Wright has pioneered IRCAs, the impact race and cultural assessments. And they've been used primarily in murder cases. Jeff, correct me if I'm wrong. And they've been used successfully in a number of cases here, latest being the Anderson case, which was from December or January last fall. But you know, they are created, it was created in mind with a Gladue report as um...a ... an assessment that could, in the case, of I mean, rapes most often happen in the context of familiarity. And with Black folks among Black folks. So I was thinking, you know, in the instance of, you know, community case of rape, you know, an impact race, cultural assessment could be used to sort of create mitigating circumstances, right, I guess it wouldn't take, you know, a sexual assault case out of the hands, like out of court completely. But there has to be some way that it could be used in the way that we would want it to be used, you know, in the context of transformative justice. So just thinking Robert Wright would be a really great person to, to talk to about, about that. You just got my brain going. So I have to speak to barriers, because that's what's on my heart. I can definitely speak to successfully. Barriers, we are our greatest barrier. And I'm speaking to Black people. So I'm talking about us. We are our greatest that's who I know best. That's who I give my energy and time to. My children are Black. I am Black. We are our greatest barrier. And you know, there's a case here involving a man named Brian Johnston. It's so crazy. In December, a woman filed a complaint. She named Brian Johnston. Remember that 'ston' as her abuser. He was a former RCMP

officer, now a Baptist minister in our area, who had the responsibility of, you know, serving on the juvenile task force in the 80s and 90s and was just raping young women in the Halifax region and was protected by all of his more senior officers in the RCMP, as we know, let me just say allege because the lawsuit is proceeding, as we speak, but here's the crazy thing, you know, I read the lawsuit and said, wow, you know, there's this opportunity to use this beautiful documentary that was created here, it's called "no more secrets". I've never seen another film like it. It was created by Sylvia Hamilton very hard to find, Dr. Sylvia Hamilton has not digitised it yet. And it's Black women in our community here in the Halifax area, talking about, elderly Black women talking about being beaten by their husbands, abused by their partners, and telling their stories and talking circles, naming names. We don't have that, right. And the second part of that documentary is, you know, the role of the church, a number of prominent Baptist ministers here. I realised just this weekend, that, you know, Brian Johnston is featured in 1999, in the second part of this documentary, and his role in this documentary, I don't think he'd retired from the RCMP then, was talking about, you know, how he supports men who do harm and how he wants to transform the way that, you know, men think and behave and he's had to learn about the impact of gender based violence in our communities. Now this is just one example. And it's just on my heart this morning, because I just had a conversation with Dr. Sylvia Hamilton about potentially using the film and then realise this connection like Oh, my God, our biggest problem is ourselves. We cannot I have come to believe wholeheartedly that we cannot undertake transformative justice work, unless we are bringing community along with us. And I mean, our churches, our elders, and struggling with our elders, there's got to be there's going to be struggle, inevitably, right, because the instinct in many of our people is that, well, you're just harming Black men and good Black men, by trying to engage in transformative justice work. So you know, the greater barrier, the greatest barrier is us. And so, so, okay, let me stop there. Let me tell you, when we say something good, let me say something good. I had the most incredible, transformative justice accountability process ended last year. I blogged about it on our Third Eye website. It was incredible. And it was incredible probably because the creator was like, bitch, you finally deserve a win after almost a decade, like damn, you fucked up so much, you got some basic skills down. Like all the stars align, like getting pregnant, right? Like all the stars have to align. Now I'm being facetious. But here's the things that were really right from the beginning. I was asked to do it. I was like, I don't have the capacity to do it alone. But let's find a team. Found a great team. We were really clear, boom, about our boundaries and needs up front, super clear held and honoured those boundaries, there was lots of chat in the community about how harmful this person had been because he is a well known organiser in our community. So before we even got started, I just picked up the phone

and started having calls with people. This is not your business, how can I help you fools like understand what's going on here, stop talking about this stuff. Like the person who's been harmed and the person who have harmed agree they want to work on this, this is none of your business, right? So like, it was really, really important before we started to like kill the noise in the community, right and just have conversations, but also set really clear boundaries, you know, really clear boundaries with people who, you know, wanted to say something and believed he should be kicked out of this space and kicked out of that space. It's the person who's harmed who gets to decide what they want in the circumstance. I mean, I should have started with this. There was real clarity from both people about what they wanted out of the process. And then I think it's a very rare thing. To have someone who's been harmed say, I'm super pissed off and I don't want more harm to happen. Here's exactly what I want him to do over a year with you all. We could hold on for a whole year, our little hub. All the conditions were just like, right. And what was also right is that I had messed up enough, you know, had to make amends for stuff that I messed up. I had put in my work, I had just come out of, I think my third training with generative somatics not I mean, I'm still far from perfect, but I had like, I felt, I felt like I understood what embodiment was for the first time in my life. You know, I felt like I had the tools, you know, and that beautiful handbook that Merriam Kaaba and Shira Hassan has given us, there's like this checklist in the beginning. And one of the things on the checklist is like, you know, what's happening with you? Are you here with an intention or desire to harm or like punish this person? And no one in our little hub holding this process had that, none of us did. In fact, there were organisers who were way more seasoned than I was, who were, who participated in that process. Anyway, it was beautiful. It was absolutely beautiful. And it restored my whole faith in the possibility of actually doing community accountability processes. It restored my faith in that. But yeah, there were some stars aligned, but I had also done enough work on me to be ready. You know, that's real. That's real.

Nneka

I love that. I saw the other panellists nodding in agreement about doing work on themselves. I'm mindful of the time, I have one question for you. And then I know, there are some questions in the chats that I'd rather either ask the person that's posed it to unmute themselves and ask or I can read it out. But my last formal question to each of you, and I'll start with you Marlihan is, where do you want to go from here? Where do you see us going from here as a movement?

Marlihan

So I also want to share one of a success.

Nneka

Bring it

Marlihan

I think it's important, I think it's important a lot of times, especially within the anti-violence movement, when you talk about transformative justice, restorative justice, people just like just discard everything you say, because it's, Oh, it's too idealistic. It's never gonna work. And so yeah, I've also experienced a bit of like, I'm very excited in terms of the work. That's some of the work that's being done here and in Montreal. So some of my work at the coalition, I've worked alongside other Black feminists in developing resources for Black survivors here in Montreal, especially in neighbourhoods facing state neglect and violence, like Montreal North. I continued this work after I left the coalition, and I'm currently participating in a project in Montreal North to bring prevention and support services to the community that's, you know, founded on principles of reparation and transformative justice. And I get to work alongside Black and racialized youth in exploring transformative justice and community accountability, as an alternative means to violence, intervention and prevention. And so we're currently developing transformative detention programming with youth in Montreal North that engages them in social analysis and critique of power and community education regarding the dynamics of violence and accountability and the understandings of trauma and healing. And so the youth are working collectively in developing prevention strategies that address the social conditions that perpetuate gender-based violence within their community. And that address the disinvestment in marginalised urban neighbourhoods specifically, and so this is something that I'm very hopeful and excited about. And hopefully, we can continue doing this work and hopefully we can continue growing and learning from this work. And then in terms of what was your question Nneka?

Nneka

Where to, where next? What do you want to see happen next?

Marlihan

There's a quote from Aurora Levins Morales, I don't know if y'all know this organiser, but they say "In order to build the movements capable of transforming our world, we have to do our best to live with one foot in the world we have not yet created." So I think something that's important is acknowledging that we don't have the answers, we don't have all the answers and this work is messy, and we're going to make mistakes, and

we're going to learn from our mistakes. And we need to have the empathy and the love to be able to hold space to, to grow. And so there's a lot of challenges ahead. I'm really grateful that these conversations are, that we're carving space to have these conversations. For me it's, there's hope but there's also frustration, because in Quebec, we're, there's really little, little little space, if not none, in the anti-violence movement to have these conversations. I'm, I'm hopeful that as a movement, we move away from carceral logics that reinforce violence. And, you know, the, the anti violence movement was originally a grassroots movement that resisted, you know, state responses, state violence. And so my fear is that we continue to move, um, continue to move closer to the arms of the state and not further away from it. And I see this right now, like in the context of Quebec, where, you know, in the fight against gender-based violence, the government has just decided to continue investing in policing, creating Task Force to address domestic violence, and little, little investment in terms of prevention. When I say prevention, I mean, prevention, not like police officers going into schools to talk about healthy relationships, but prevention in addressing the root causes of violence, per se. And so yeah, I'll leave it at that.

Nneka

I love that. I'm glad you, you pushed back to say I actually have a success. So I'm actually going to open it to everybody, to now you Dalya and to Jeff, what are the successes that you'd like to share? Jeff, you want to start?

Jeff

I already referenced it. And I saw Cara Sweeny in the chat who was the prosecutor involved in that case, but that experience that I was very honoured to have been able to participate in where Cara, as the prosecutor, because of the role of a public prosecution was able to basically give us permission to do this process that was run by St. Stephen's community house, a circle process with my client, Marlee, her mother, her sister, myself, Cara, the man, the aggressor, and his best friend. There's a whole bunch of lead up steps to it in terms of him having to do counselling, similar kinds of steps that Alison was talking about earlier and Nikki were talking about. Marlee had done an incredible amount of work on herself. And then we ultimately had an eight-hour circle process. And it felt like there was so much healing happening in that, it was very intense. But the kind of personal, interpersonal and systemic healing it just felt like these, uh, huge forces like moving through this room. And the next time I walked back into superior court here in Toronto, it felt like going from a full multicolor like world to black and white. Where there's right versus wrong. There's binaries, there's us versus them. Disconnect. dehumanisation. Marlee referred to this processes as re

humanization. I think in the act of both being harmed and causing harm, there's dehumanisation that happens. And so I don't know there's almost like an energy of well, we have to resolve this we have to continue this energy of dehumanising and dehumanising and dehumanising, which is what I think that the criminal legal system does to everybody who touches it. And jails do as well. And so that it felt, yeah, it was it was a transformative experience to be a part of also gave me hope. And I think that more that these kinds of processes can happen out, I don't like outside the system, you know, outside the state system. The more there might be able to be a shift. I know my very general sense of what happened in New Zealand in terms of it's at least my sense, is they're more ahead, in terms of, I mean, again, there's all kinds of problems that can come with institutionalising things as Marlihan was mentioning, and others have mentioned but, a lot of people in terms of access to people I think will continue to pick up the phone and, and engage the state in whatever way through whatever means. And the more that can be happening there the better as, well as building things outside, but that in New Zealand, my understanding was that the gender-based violence movement had a shift towards being more in favour of these kinds of processes. And once that happened, there was more political willingness to shift as well. So I really commend all the work that everybody's doing in that way.

Nneka

Thank you. Thanks Jeff. Dalya, over to you, last words around successes?

Dalya

So I feel like my, my heart and brain is really at a systemic level, as still, I feel like I've been gathering our people for a while here in BC because I, I, when I kind of entered the movement in the late 90s, and early 2000s, there was a real, at that time, there was a real desire to continue to try to get gender-based violence seen as something that was important, and that needed to be picked up and seen for its harm. And so there was a real sense that the responses that we were trying to as an anti-violence movement succeed with, were really so rooted in this hustle for worthiness. And that somehow, the unintended consequence is that we relied on the state that is formed on the doctrine of discovery, and this idea that domination is the only way to prove worthiness. And I don't know how we, well, I don't know how the white women missed that, as we built this movement that has now become professionalised. And so, for me, what I'm what I've been doing kind of along the way, really intentionally since 2017, 2018, is really asking people who are within the systems, so defence lawyers and crown, anti-violence workers just like similar to what Rachel was saying, like, how do we do the work to think about how we've also, because many of us are survivors that are called to do this work.

How have we also been harmed by reinvesting being, being pushed and influenced to reinvest in these systems that we know are not working? And I feel like that's been a really relational process here in BC. Because we've actually had a moratorium, similar to the way that Ontario says you can't divert cases we've had a moratorium on anything other than prosecution, around gender-based violence that invites the state in. And of course, we know through that attrition pyramid, like there's a whole track of folks that aren't even considering calling for all of the reasons that we know, also. So I just find like, we're in this really interesting place and this is why I'm really excited about the national work that we're gonna get to, to host and and collect people again, to like, really try to change this conversation around how do we continue to acknowledge that gender based violence and sexual violence really is serious, and really does like, we're constantly trying to hold people so that they can stay on this planet, because of the impacts of the harm. And also see that accountability processes is not letting people off the hook, or not taking it seriously, but actually, if folks can flex that muscle, and have the tools to do that work, that it's actually far more, has far more long term changes to people's behaviour than putting somebody in jail. And so that's, I feel like starting to see, I remember Nneka, when I saw your presentation for the first time on that WAGE webinar, and I was just like, we're not alone. Oh my god, there's other people doing it. Because in BC it feels it feels like, you know, the Western alienation thing. I won't go into that. But it feels like we're, we're really up against folks who have been just saying for so long that like anything other than a criminal justice response is not sufficient to proving the harm that's been caused. And so I feel like that's a success that we are all here today that we get to do the work as parents. My son is in a school and I also saw a question about how do we work with youth. They have a justice circle at school. And so if kids are harmed, if feelings are harmed, they can go and write a note. And they hold a justice circle every week. Like, I think it starts at every kind of level of our lives, right. As an employer, I'm also looking at like, Okay, we're going to do TJ externally, but how do we bring transformative justice values into the ways that we are together as staff? When conflicts and tensions and microaggressions are happening in the workplace? How do we then kind of weave those braids of TJ internally as well? So I think it's the expansive nature of all of this is really what I see as a success.

Nneka

Beautiful. Absolutely, absolutely beautiful. I am mindful of the time, this has been, I, honestly, I'm shocked at how quickly this conversation how time time is flown. I want to go to the chats. Beautiful quote, Marlihan. Yes, amazing Dalya. Rachel, this is so perfect. This is comments from the chat. And Aja asked a question. I think we've answered one or two of them. How then do we teach/model accountability-taking in a way that is less

tied to punishment? Anyone have like one sentence? How do we teach accountability? Without big brother's finger wagging? No one? Rachel? oh, you're on mute.

Rachel

Sorry, I want to see the question maybe it would tell me, it's not totally clear to me.

Nneka

Okay so she says accountability. Accountability-taking is such an important component of TJ and RJ process, yet within the criminal justice system or slash legal framework, punishments, incarceration are all tied in with accountability. Taken together, it seems like accountability-taking is not particularly safe for people who do harm, how then do we teach it and model it? And it goes a little bit to what Jeff was saying about when you have prison looming over you, what's the likelihood that you're going to fess up and say mea culpa, I did it? And if that's not the way the system lends itself, what can we be doing?

Rachel

So I'm going to, I'm going to just start from the smallest place that I know. So when I think about so first of all, I think of transformative justice and abolition as being locked together. And transformative justice is just the floor, right? That abolition, where it gets built upon, it's the floor, it has to be the floor. We haven't built the floor yet. So for me, the starting point of thinking about all this work is what are my harmful behaviours, because I think it was Dalya that mentioned, we all live in a circle, we all live inside the circle of patriarchy, of transphobia of you know, all of the isms that we claim to be fighting against, they live inside of us as well. They live and breathe inside of us. So what are my harmful behaviours? What are my trauma wounds? What are my trauma reflexes? And then what's the relationship between my trauma and how I behave in the world and my relationships? For me, that's like, you can't really talk about or think about accountability, whether it's in the abstract or in like, a real practical way until we like work through those layers. You know, I think most of us tend to want to do it backwards and it just doesn't work, it explodes every time. So, I guess when I when I think about accountability, it's, you know, how do we do the work? Take a step back? How do we encourage people, build a world, foster an environment where, you know, people that we're in relationship to our, you know, our, in our families and our workspaces, are working on their own harmful behaviours and their own trauma? Like how do we all like, model that, but also foster that in the world that we inhabit, right? Because without that, the implo- the explosion will happen, I just believe very deeply every time. So then the

question is, okay, so how do we like separate accountability from these other carceral logics and so forth? Well, I don't think it's terribly hard, because in order to engage in like any kind of accountability work, there has to be a willingness there. I don't think you can really force people-- I think you can nudge people a little bit into accountability. You can't force them. But you know, with, you know, I just want to come back to the conditions. I used to hate when Angela Davis talked about this in the 90s because it sounded so abstract to me, but it really is about what are the conditions that I'm building as I'm working on myself as I'm like, not beating my children and you know, apologising and dealing with the harm that I've done when I'm doing all those things simultaneously how am I also fostering the conditions are really inviting for people to want to partake in this work? How am I creating? How am I? How am I modelling and like, you know, inviting people into this work. It still sounds weird and hippy and abstract.

Nneka

But it's true.

Rachel

But I do believe very much that we do this work backwards. You know, we talk about transformative, transformative justice in the abstract, and then we, you know, narrow it down to this really cool acronym, but we don't talk about the embodiment of it. And what are the conditions that we're creating everywhere to make it inviting, you know, like, an Adrienne Marie Brown gave us you know, like the idea of pleasure and activism as being really compatible, how are we like making the work of transformative justice really inviting, and by making it inviting, whereby we can actually get engaged in accountability, it means that we have to be holding all these other layers, it's like holding so many moving pieces at once. And without holding one piece, like there's more tendency to tip and fail. That's why I mentioned our elders, the church, you know, those old school like white Quebecois feminists that Marlihan on God bless your heart has to deal with, God bless you. So, anyway, that's I know that's complex, but that's how I think about it.

Nneka

No, that's beautiful. That's very, very profound and very, very spot on. I'm going to end with one last question from one of the participants who says, I'm wondering also about disabled folks, and how they tend to get left behind in anti-violence movements and if there's space of disabled folks in transformative justice. Maybe who wants to take this Dalya or Marlihan? Just a quick? Either one? Anyone? Mindful of the time.

Marlihan

Well, I responded to the question I invited, yeah, I invited the person to explore maybe some of the work of Mia Mingus because TJ does embrace frameworks that address the harm that targets folks with disability. And we know that folks with, a lot of the folks that are criminalised are folks with disabilities or disabled folks. And so yeah, I invited the person to maybe explore their work. I just wanted to say just before we finish, just to answer that previous question, I think it's important that we believe that people that cause harm are capable of changing, that communities are capable of changing, because if we don't believe that people are capable of changing, I don't think we can do this work. And also, as someone who works within the anti-violence movement, I think it's important that those that do this work within this movement, um, aspire to, to transform, you know, the conditions that create violence, instead of just managing the violence, because we're, you know, we're always reacting and involved in developing projects that just manage, you know, manage this balance, but like, when are we going to start investing in really eradicating it and transforming the violence and I think that's something that's important we think about.

Nneka

That is so beautiful, and a really nice way to end because when you when I think about our WomenatthecentrE's tagline that we came up with in 2008, it's been the same tagline since then, and it's transforming our lives and eradicating violence against women, now we've moved it to transforming our lives and eradicating gender based violence, and it is about hope, right, living with hope of a world where this type of experience, this type of reaction to live in is not the norm. Right? It isn't a go-to, and when we use the word eradicate, it was purposeful, and how the Latin eradicare, to pull up from its roots, is what we're, we're working to do. And the transformation that happens is not just for the individual who has experienced the harm and the individual that's caused the harm, it permeates it trickles through everybody, everybody in society. And my hope for all of you, who have been doing this work is that you are supported by everybody around you, is that you feel the love that is coming from us, is that you are able to continue to impact and influence everybody that meets you, as you've impacted and influence everybody that's been on this call. I want to say thank you so very, so very much to you, Dr. Rachel Zellar. To you, Marlihan Lopez to you, Dalya Israel and to you, Jeff, Jeff Carolin, because the work that you people are doing is what gives me personally hope and sitting around in a community with you and having these conversations is part of the reason why I get up in the morning. Want to say a real thank

you to my team who put all this thing together. Kelsy, who's not with us today because she is sick, sending her love, to our placement students, to all the staff. This has been a beautiful minute and I see Michelle Rolfe is on the call as well. Thank you all so very much sending you love and light in sisterhood. Have a wonderful rest of the week. And stay strong. Stay safe. Bye.

Various: Thank you!