

## **Courage to Act: March Webinar**

Transcription is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.

Anoodth: Hello everyone, and welcome to the webinar. My name is Anoodth Naushan, Project Manager for Courage to Act. Courage to Act is a two year, national initiative to address and prevent gender-based violence on post-secondary campuses in Canada. It builds on the key recommendations within Possibility Seeds by the report *Courage to Act: Developing a National Framework to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions*. This project is the first national collaboration of its kind to bring together experts and advocates from across Canada to end gender-based violence on campuses. A key feature of our project is a free webinar series where we invite leading experts to discuss key concepts and share promising practices on ending gender-based violence on campuses. Our project is made possible through the generous support and funding from the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) with the Federal Government of Canada.

Anoodth: We begin today's webinar by acknowledging that this work is taking place on and across the traditional territories of many Indigenous nations. We recognize that gender-based violence is one form of violence caused by colonization to marginalize and dispossess Indigenous peoples on their lands and waters. Our project strives to honour this truth as we work towards decolonizing this work and actualizing justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across the country.

I want to pause now and invite everyone to take a deep breath. This work can be challenging and this topic is hard. Many of us have our own experience of survivorship and of supporting those we love and care about who have experienced gender-based violence. So, a gentle reminder to be attentive to our wellbeing as we engage in these hard conversations.

So before I introduce our speaker today, a brief note on the format. Carol will speak for 40 minutes and I invite you to enter questions and comments into the question and answer box. I will monitor this and together we will pose these questions to Carol at the end of the presentation. This will happen in the last 15 minutes. At the end of the webinar, you will find a link to the evaluation form. We'd be grateful if you take a few minutes to share your feedback as it helps us improve. This is anonymous. Following the webinar, I will also email you with a copy of the evaluation form and a link to the

recording so that you can review the webinar and share with your networks. And now I'd like to introduce our speaker today.

Carol Bilson is an Indigenous Latinx woman and PhD student in social dimensions of health at the University of Victoria. Conjointly, she holds the position of education coordinator at the Victoria Women's Transition House Society where she trains staff, volunteers, community members and service providers on the issues of intimate partner violence and trauma-informed practices.

Carol co-facilitates cultural safety workshops, Decolonizing Together, to support organizations to work in more collaborative and relationally accountable ways with Indigenous peoples. Carol has over ten years of experience in community facilitation and was a previous director of the anti-violence project at the University of Victoria sexual assault centre where she ushered in multiple sexualized violence awareness campaigns, developed train the trainer consent workshops, and initiated the first educational restorative process for men who assault on campus.

This work with male students who caused harm led to the development of the first male-identified support group, the UVic men's circle. Carol has developed multiple community workshops on colonization, antiracism and gender-based violence including her most recent work, an eight-week program cultivating healthy relationships in boys and male youth. It's my pleasure now to turn it over to Carol.

Carol: Good day everyone – and welcome. Yeah. OK, great. I would like to start the next slide. So I would like to start with a bit of background that led me to initiate this work. When I came into this work, I came on the heels of two major incidents that brought national attention to the issue of sexualized violence on campuses across Canada. The first was the incident at St. Mary's where 80 students and the complete student union executive were ordered to take sensitivity training after rape chants were recorded and made public.

A second incident came from the Dalhousie dental school where a secret Facebook page was discovered where male students were threatening their female colleagues with sexualized violence under a sedation commonly used by dentists. Ultimately, 13 male students were put through a psychoeducational restorative process which included letters of an apology and a serious shift in culture at the dental school.

I would like to clarify at this moment that this is a culture of rape and this was not unique to these campuses. Similar incidents

could be tracked across post-secondary institutions across Canada. But more importantly, this provided us with the initial awareness that sexualized violence could be addressed by the institution and through educational restorative processes. That further, universities were looking at shifting their culture on campuses.

So in 2016, UVic had several incidents of its own. First, we had a female student attacked in our wooded area surrounding our campuses. This brought national and local media to the university and to how the university was addressing sexualized violence on campus. However, this incident was – it was the incident at our McPherson Library that initiated the greatest change in our response. At the time, two first-year students were caught trying to film the response of two queer female students of colour by placing condoms filled with shampoos on their legs and thighs while they were studying in the library. Because this incident was so public, it triggered a response from multiple departments who addressed a non-academic student conduct on campus, including the office of student life, University of Victoria's office of student life, ourselves, the anti-violence project, AVP, and the university student society and campus security were also called at that day.

While it was a sadly disturbing incident, it provided an unprecedented moment that allowed all of these departments to meet face to face and to actually provide an opportunity to collaborate on the best response. The roles that resulted were the office of student affairs, which took up the role of holding the structured process of the investigation and the administrative outcomes. AVP or the Anti-Violence Project was tasked with the social and educational content and the emotional support, while the student society made sexualized violence their primary public campaign mandate that year.

It is important for university campuses to be seen as safe places to attend, for people to feel comfortable sending their students there or their children there and for other adults to feel safe attending. Therefore, it's important to attend to the campus community's natural responses to major social transgressions in their community. People should be understood in their desire to demonize, get angry and blame and want to kick people off campus or to throw them away in a form of campus culture. It is absolutely natural to want to condemn, to be fearful, and want to distance ourselves from the problem. However, for those of us who do attend to gender-based violence issues, it is on us to inform the public narrative that sexualized violence while yes, it is performed by individual acts, it is a far too pervasive issue to be seen as a

cultural issue that doesn't just limit within the campus border but is a pervasive issue across our society and therefore, this will not be resolved by blaming and punishing individuals. As campuses, we have to address the culture that promotes and normalizes sexualized violence.

So as students – we were students and as academics ourselves addressing gender-based violence, we started to work at looking at those who are well versed in feminist theory to inform our work. Foundational was Black feminist theorist professor and social activist bell hooks who wrote extensively on men, masculinity, and gender-based violence. In her book, “The Will to Change”, she states: “For me, forgiveness and compassion are always linked. How do we hold people accountable for wrongdoings and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?” And that is exactly the question that we posed to ourselves when we started initiating this work.

Interestingly enough, when we started to work with male students that had caused harm on campus, we saw very similar responses to that of survivors in that in these high-stress situations alike, accountability processes and investigations, people's nervous systems were often overwhelmed and hindering their ability to cope. As indicated in this diagram, there is a window of tolerance that the nervous system can handle and when that system is overwhelmed it can move into hyperarousal, hypervigilance, extreme fearfulness and anxiety or become a hypo-arousal where people shut down and disassociate.

This is commonly referred to and understood as the fight-flight-freeze response to trauma. To have a more robust look at what you may see in your restorative processes could include things like crying, clenching hands, feelings of anger and rage, knotted stomachs and argumentativeness. You may also see intense anxiety, rapid or shallow breathing, very tense and constant scanning of the room. And finally, you may see frozen or people that cannot move, numb, cold, holding their breath, a sense of dread, or not knowing any answers to questions that are asked of them. All of these are a more robust understanding of what a trauma response can look like. These are common responses to having the nervous system overwhelmed. So support workers should plan and prepare to see one or more of these or a kind of collaboration and/or overlapping of these responses in students.

When polled, the men in the men's circle, in our men's circle, about how they had felt about being called out for their abusive or

problematic sexual behaviour and having gone through restorative processes, they mapped out some of their own feelings on this slide. So we got things like: winded, gutted, vulnerable, defensive, anxious, angry, destabilized, nauseous, spinning thoughts. These were echoing the trauma-informed understanding of what it is to have our nervous system overwhelmed and we saw that also in the men who responded to our request for mapping.

It was in witnessing the trauma responses of these male students that required that we take a more empathetic and supportive approach and this is when I initiated the UVic men's circle as a support group for me to help other men navigate the vulnerability of going through an investigation, and a circle that was unique to their gender struggles of having to address this issue. This circle is active to this day and meets about twice a month and the topics of the circle can include topics like consent, nurturance culture, bystander intervention, masculinity and healthy gender expressions.

In total, by the time I left the university, we had worked with six male students and had gone through psychoeducational and restorative processes that included using videos from Jackson Katz, Tony Porter, content from the White Ribbon Campaign, and Ashanti Branch's, *The Masks We Wear*. This was supplemented with workshop-style content from myself, the education and support coordinator, around rape culture, understanding social power and privilege and bystander intervention and this was workshopped with the men that participated in restorative processes.

We also required that the male students that went through our processes also provide some sort of media that we could then further use with other male students that would find themselves in similar situations as a way of passing this work forward. Our methods ultimately informed the sexual assault policy and prevention response of the University of Victoria that became effective in June 2017.

So under the clinical supervision at the time, we sought out a therapist to supervise our work. So we were guided towards scholar, activist, therapist, Dr. Vikki Reynolds, who led us to the work of Alan Jenkins and Alan has worked and written for years extensively about his therapeutic and political work with men who have abused or used violence in their intimate partner relationships. He actually coined the term "an invitational approach" when it came to working with people who caused harm. But to a much greater extent, Dr. Jenkins reaffirmed our own

understanding of sexualized violence as something of a social and systemic issue versus individualistic, psychological deficiency issues or anger issues. So he wrote: “By considering the context of power relations, we may be provided with a greater understanding as to why individuals perpetuate violence.”

Alan Jenkins deeply informed our processes and so when it came to developing our processes in terms of our intended outcomes for students we were working with, we broke it down into two major components or two major sections. The first one being relational, developing the student’s relational skills. So meaning that we observed that people were merely trying to navigate context, intimate ways of relating including being away from home for the first time, being available to substances for the first time, and navigating intimacy for the first time without some fundamental core relational skills.

So we made it part of our programming to include the knowledge around consent that was – so what was consent? What does it look like? What are the steps that are involved? What does it sound like? So making a full, deep understanding of what that looked like and consent being as the primary. Second, if you are practising consent you will inevitably at one point or another be rejected and so learning to deal with rejection because as we know, for many, even in family violence, the most scary day for our clients are when the divorce papers come through or when the custody is battled. So when rejection is finally completed it often becomes the most dangerous day for many women in the world and so we really wanted to really pin down the ability for rejection to be included. So how did we turn to do those feelings so that they did not turn into self-hating behaviour or were then further projected onto others, but processing rejection with a healthy way through support and emotional resiliency?

Finally, accountability. We made accountability as how do you rupture – you create rupture in your relationship and then have the moral courage to create repair to account for harms committed and have the community feel safe with your presence again. So consent, rejection and accountability were part of the relational skills and then we moved onto the process. So the first thing that had to stop in the process is the abuse and violence had to stop was step one. Restitution for harms committed. This could include an apology letter, a video, posters, essay, a pamphlet created by the male student. And finally, we reclaim that person who caused harm, the integrity of the person who caused harm, as with our process the point is to restore this person to the campus community and that his behaviour moving forward would be

something that contributed to the safety of the campus and not otherwise. So ensuring that this person's dignity was held intact through this process.

So as support workers, we obviously had to respond to deep, emotional situations while holding and centring accountability and changed behaviour. But more importantly to note, if we are a trauma-informed campus and we practise these trauma-informed ways of being which is essential now for the anti-violence sector including police, lawyers, RCMP, shelter workers, sexual assault centres are all being required to undertake trauma-informed training, we cannot, therefore, work with anyone and not fundamentally keep their physical and emotional safety as a priority. We cannot create processes that power over, shame or disrespect in a process meant to create the complete opposite.

So also foundational to our work, we looked at a powerful advocate for the condemned and incarcerated in America who is a civil rights lawyer, scholar and activist, Bryan Stevenson, whose actual movie just came out called "Just Mercy". And he led us into another perspective in terms of how we were approaching this work and saying, "I believe that we are more than the worst thing we have ever done but any system that fails to recognize those things will not be able to produce justice." And we understood that as well when we were working with those men in terms of that, we were not working with just the people that were causing harm but a full, complete human and recognizing that that person needed too also emotional and physical safety in these processes.

So, therefore, when we start setting up our processes in addressing, we must – in addressing restorative processes, we must account for trauma responses in the people that cause harm and we must do our best to mitigate that harm by ensuring physical and emotional safety to the person we're supporting. So when we think of providing just physical, logistical support, having a comfortable space to provide support in, preferably with a window for fresh air, have water, food, herbal teas available. Nausea is a very common response to being overwhelmed. A vomit bag. Have something with soft lighting and with low stimulation as in that classes are not coming and going in a nearby setting or too nearby where there's a lot of like loud ruckus, disruptions, and loud noises which is also triggering trauma responses as well.

Emotionally, we want to bring a solidarity approach in that when we were working with these men, we wanted them – we were in no way claiming purity or innocence and we recognize that we all

have the potential to abuse power, to disrespect or ignore a no. We keep accountability in the room by metaphorically keeping their survivor in the room. We hold a space for that transformation and we create a personal culture of accountability within that space. We work from a place of empathy and compassion and mercy and we recognize our humanity is connected in that when people redeem themselves they provide a space for all of our redemptions in that this is a culture and when people get well from causing this harm, we all become safer.

Finally, systemically. So an institutional response that is focused on addressing sexualized violence is essential. So that this work is institutionally backed up. It is resourced and it is supported and that the structures that are accessible and are transparent with realistic outcomes. And so all of our processes that people were engaged in were made available and were a process that were trauma-informed and that we maintained a proximity to the problem by ensuring that we had allocated staff to issues specifically to working with people that cause harm and not just kind of a general support or assault worker or a sexual assault centre worker but people that were dedicated to specifically working with folks that caused harm and were trained in that vein to do that work.

So all of this work that we were doing around restorative processes was occurring on the backdrop of an active awareness campaign. We were distributing campaigns that were creating awareness across campuses. This is actually one of our most popular campaigns and we wanted to focus on positive male leadership in addressing sexualized violence. We worked with all the male athletes, student leaders, staff, to develop and promote a consensual campus culture poster campaign but clearly, we wanted to give clear messaging around positive gender expressions, positive leadership, and also that male students could see themselves depicted in these posters around a positive message. We also wanted to have a clear message that UVic men could be against rape and that consent was essential in this awareness campaign.

So along with the poster campaign came the opportunity to create a video to go along with the UVSS “Let’s Get Consensual” campaign which was developed by AVP and the office of student affairs and we’re going to play that video now. [Video played 00:26:33 – 00:29:57]

Excellent. So along with the video, we also opened up the men’s circle to the off-campus community and it was the first time that



many men from the off-campus community joined our circle and it allowed us for the first time to actually have an intergenerational opportunity to talk to men about gender expressions within that circle. So like I said, the men's support circle remains to this day and is open to on-campus and off-campus community members and all men who would like to participate in that circle and it is still an actively working circle.

From the men's circle many of the facilitators and participants that were working in that men's circle, they decided to come up with a t-shirt campaign because they wanted men to encourage discussion on campus around consent and rape culture and generated these t-shirts that they could wear. So these were men that were in the men's circle who wanted to wear these shirts on campus and they created a word map on the back which basically included all the reasons why it had brought them to do the work and had brought them to the men's circle and why they were working in sexualized violence. And so they created this word map on the back and below that kind of spoken, there's the question on the bottom of the t-shirt that says, "Please ask me about it". And so the shirt was kind of a walking invitation for a conversation with other men.

Then we also distributed posters to all of the pubs and cafes and so the messaging around sexualized violence, consent, and basically creating a culture of accountability on campus as we basically hit as many opportunities as we could to provide that messaging forward to students.

So just prior to leaving UVic to work at the Transition House Society where I now work with families experiencing domestic violence and intimate partner violence, I developed a bit of an operating model that could be used to guide a centre's opportunity to organize itself in a process when it could include restorative education and a men's support group. So as AVP or the Anti-Violence Project, we had a support coordinator and we had an education coordinator and we had a director at the time and what came to grow out of those two circles here were that we developed a restorative education process that was in partnership with the office of student life and that we developed a men's group that created an ongoing support centre for men.

When this support group also started, it started with a male therapist and then was later taken on by specifically a therapist that specialized in sexualized violence somatic work with that men's group. So that's something else that I just wanted to mention in terms of there but if folks could take a look at the

complete. So we had volunteers. We had student work positions and I hope many sexual assault centres, if they do have them, had those students.

We had up to 20 volunteers at certain periods of time and down to five. And something else that I really recognize in terms of having a response team for residents because often the folks that were responding to sexualized violence incidents on residents were campus security who may or may not have been trained in sexualized violence response and who may or may not have been in trauma-informed training. And so we heard from many students that actually that experience of having campus security as first responders wasn't necessarily a positive experience and so having a response team to be included to residents was something that I could see moving forward as an essential service.

And so just looking at each section at what they could contribute in terms of our support coordinator, providing trauma-informed practice and survivor centred counselling for our students and support the director which was kind of in operation of daily management, address the media, was often the committee chair for UVic meetings that were multiple departments and we were the council for policy development at the university's – for the university administration. So a lot of our content and wording was included in that policy that emerged in 2017. And finally, yes, just to complete it with just a bigger department around the restorative processes that's allocated specifically.

I really recommend that people do not use the same people that support survivors that would then go on to support people that cause harm. It requires such a different perspective and ability to hold people with dignity and maintain accountability for their survivors that it's far too extensive to ask one person if you have a smaller sexual assault centre to do both. So it would definitely – this is why I believe that institutional support is essential in this work because it can provide allocated staff just for that. Thank you.

So I would like to finish off just my presentation talking about the core people, the theorists, the therapists, the scholars, the activists who were critical in informing our work, our principles and our practices and I cannot thank them all enough for guiding us in ways to do this work that held people's dignity and addressed a culture and not just an individual issue that we are dealing with because we are truly dealing with a culture shift that will be played out through individuals. But fundamentally, we're looking to create the shift in culture.

So all of this work that was displayed, I am happy to speak about it. I'm happy to offer guidance around it, answer questions, and for consulting or for any other further questions please feel free to reach out to me. I'm available to answer questions about this work and how we – any other further details on the processes that we did while we were at the anti-violence project and creating those restorative processes.

So thank you very much for your time and I'm open to creating a question period.

Anoodth: Perfect. Thank you so much, Carol. And now I'd like to invite our attendees to share any questions and you can do so by typing into the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen or via the chat box.

OK. Fantastic. I can see that we have a few questions already. So the first one is: Is it possible to receive a copy of the PowerPoint following the session? Absolutely. So the recording will be made available on our website in a few days along with a transcript of the webinar.

And the second question from the – thank you, Lindsay. The question was some folks are trying to join the webinar but there seems to be a cap of 100. So yes, thank you for that question. We're really thrilled to have had the response and the participation that we've had today and to allow easier access we're live during the webinar and we're providing the recording after.

Great. And so Carol, I think we have our first question for you. So the question is did the University of Victoria already have a foundation of restorative practices to build from?

Carol: No. It was initiated through ourselves. We had – without the collaboration, there was just the office of student life who was doing the investigations and kind of the administrative, but there was not that deep, social, psychoeducational restorative process was not. It was more of an administrative process that the student's head was – were going through previous to our educational process.

Anoodth: Perfect. Thank you, Carol. And we have another question, great. And it's what input if any, Carol, is given to survivors in accountability processes?

Carol: So with our first male students that we worked with, our very first case, it was actually the survivors who informed what the male students were – the deliverables were. And at that time and in other cases, the survivors asked for an apology, a letter of

apology. And when we got a lot of resistance from the two male students around that letter is when we – the university kind of initiated a deeper understanding of clearly these students weren't understanding the impact or the magnitude of what they had done because they saw sexualized violence as something that was like we hold people down and we assault them and we attack them from the bushes and type of thing and so not understanding the nuance of what they had done in the library.

So the survivors continue to inform what they would want and it was usually – often it's because they were – we were dealing as well with often peer situations, the educational process was often welcomed and feared because students had never heard that people could be put through a restorative process but were always looking for that for their friends and which is something actually we see in almost all – even in intimate partner relationships where they want the relationship to remain but they want the abuse or the sexualized violence to stop and so yeah. But survivors informed in terms of what they wanted for the deliverables of that student to fundamentally produce at the outcome of this process.

Anoodth: Great. Thank you, Carol. Our next question is how do we find compassion for people who have assaulted or caused sexualized violence on campus?

Carol: That's a phenomenal question. For me, when I started this work, I started working strictly to support survivors. Being a survivor myself, I really felt that my calling was in terms of empathy and support would go to survivors but in – it's always, I guess, within the journey that we find – when I would continuously look at numbers and reports and studies that continue to show me conservatively 80 percent of men had initiated assaults to 99 percent of assaults being initiated by men even when other men and boys were being attacked.

So when we had those numbers and then we have no materials, no conversation, no public narrative towards that, it led me to start realizing that we have to – we cannot have such a huge cultural issue and then have nothing to give as an alternative to that message. And so what people are being informed with before they come to campus is a deeply – it's a very culture where sexualized violence is normalized and glorified and so a lot of folks come with that narrative with them and so it's understanding that this isn't – the students we were working with weren't evil people, were actually people who are pretty horrified that they had done this and that they were in this process but also had no other alternative on how to navigate that intimacy or how to create this relation

because there was just such a lack of basic relational skills like consent and ability to be rejected, an accountability. And so it was in those processes that you develop empathy and care and I think fundamentally as a person who works from a humanitarian perspective, we could not hold these men accountable when we also hadn't provided any supports, any other place.

There's no crisis line to call if you have problematic sexual behaviour or if you're concerned that your behaviour isn't necessarily OK. Like we have nothing for men in terms of providing that support or that alternative information on how to navigate intimacy. And in that absence, we also can't blame them punitively that way. I think we have to create some kind of cultural information first and create a shift in terms of what we expect around behaviour and masculinity and what expression could look like before we just completely kind of throw them away or have no mercy or have no sympathy for them. But absolutely, when we were supervised we were asked that at the first and on the on – basically on the onslaught of this work our clinical supervisor asked us like if you do not like men you cannot do this work. So you fundamentally deeply have to have a care for men and have to have that belief in that people can do this work.

Anoodth: Great. Thank you, Carol. So our next question is, is the restorative process – does that begin because survivors are asking for that approach as opposed to a formal response or does the university decide?

Carol: The university was the one who extended the invitation initially in terms of having the students contextually understand what had happened because the university could request that they provide a letter but the understanding of what those students were going to write in that letter was where we were invited in to contribute to that content. And so yeah, I think.

Anoodth: Great. Thank you. And is there also community-based education or community-based work related to repairing harm because as our attendees have seen especially, residents, how it becomes unsafe for the respondents in their environments after the action of harm?

Carol: So sorry. So could you reframe that question for me?

Anoodth: Sure. So the question was does community-based education exist or community-based work –

Carol: OK.

Anoodth: – related to repairing harm?

Carol: Yes. So it's actually deeply work that is actually coming out of – well, Vikki Reynolds is deeply work in terms of creating restorative and repair within therapists and who support marginalized communities. And so the community education that we – that I worked from was her model that in terms of creating accountable cultures within a therapy group or within people that support marginalized folks. But I also know that there are some men's groups that have actually emerged quite a bit in Vancouver and even in Victoria who are looking to formulate a much deeper and accessible community culture around accountability. However, I know there's one out of the men's trauma centre in Victoria with one of their therapists that are working out.

So I know it's emergent. I know that there – I know of some groups that are starting work specifically with – even specifically in specific communities like the King community in Vancouver where developing just little pods to hold people accountable within their communities. And so I'm seeing more of that but it's not – I wouldn't say it's at an institutional level. It would be something people would have to really seek out at this point.

Anoodth: Great. Thank you, Carol. So the other question is how much time is typically given for the restorative process and how involved is it and how do you ensure that people participate?

Carol: Yes. So this is where the collaboration was incredibly beneficial in terms of the institution, the academic institution or the university holding the kind of the final disciplinary or the final like outcome to this. Part of their work with us is that they had to – the requirement from the university was that they had to continue to work in good faith. And so that meant that we would often communicate between the university and ourselves in terms of how these male students were working with us and where their participation was active or was it apathetic or was it just kind of tick boxy.

So it really mattered in terms of just ensuring that for us – at least for us it was the educational component that kept them very much engaged within the process and that I would say our sessions lasted probably – we started with three sessions with our first and then as we saw that we needed more, we extend it to like four, up to six sessions we did with some students. And so some students were very apt and were really interested and keen to restore and repair this relationship and repair their relationship with the university while other students required more effort. And so I have to say we had the opportunity and I'm thankful for that. That we

were given kind of that flexibility and not – we were not expected to all have like within six sessions have a complete – the process was completed.

Each of those sessions actually was about two hours of workshopping and they were also required to participate in the men's circle while they were going through the investigation. So it was yeah, workshopping with ourselves and support from the men's circle until we felt that what we were engaging with them was getting integrated. And it's a very imperfect process but I definitely believe in the opportunity to take its own kind of organic pace with each case. So I would encourage that it not be a structured process but something that is organic to the case itself, kind of case sensitive dependent.

Anoodth: Thank you, Carol. And our next question is how did you work to address the community and campus reactions that insist on having students removed or expelled from campus after incidents of rape culture?

Carol: Yeah. And I have to say it was a phenomenal opportunity for the collaboration in terms of the student society also made it that year part of – it had been the first time they had made it a huge priority that sexualized violence awareness campaigns be simultaneously run with processes of restorative processes. So I think fundamentally this is – like is said, this is a cultural issue. This is far from being an individual one. We're not going to address this issue individual by individual is what I – this is a systemic and deeply undervaluing of other genders and especially that are not masculine genders that shows up over and over and over again and different from the pay gap to the pervasiveness of sexualized violence.

So it really just made clear that we are not dealing with one perpetrator or one. It is expressing itself as that but just to really inform the community like we are trying to shift this whole culture and every time I spoke about it publicly or with individual folks, I always was very clear to make that like we aren't – we could address this individual, like this one individual we could address it, but fundamentally we have a belief system that's happening that's being brought to this campus over and it does not end at the borders of our campus. As soon as you leave the campus you can see the level of intimate partner family, in families, in our society, in the percentages and I – if folks can show me a different study, but I've been looking at reports for 40 years where these numbers

haven't changed. Not just on campuses but just even in our society as a whole.

And so always reframing it and when we talk about gender-based violence as a culture issue and so that our responses should be systemic and cultural in base and that in the nuance and in the minutiae of what we're doing it looks like restorative processes and we actually create that space where we can restore people to a campus community, but we should also be having that huge backdrop of this is something that isn't acceptable in engineering, in business, in law, at the student union building. It's not acceptable anywhere.

And so we really have to make that aware that this is an accountable campus and this is a campus that takes sexualized violence seriously. It has supports available. It will address even graffiti that is deemed sexually threatening or violent and that this is a responsive community and it is responsive to sexualized violence. And I think that is a much more important message than just like OK, well we're dealing with this one person and we're going to make sure that they go through all the administrative processes that we can put them through and then hopefully we have some sort of a punitive or disciplinary outcome at the outside of this.

Anoodth: Thank you, Carol. And so our next question is how is this process kept separate from the criminal justice system? For example, if they were writing an apology letter was there a risk perhaps that that letter could be used as evidence in a criminal case?

Carol: Yeah. I think that would be something that each university – I know that some universities lean much more on the judicial model and are much more connected to relating their incidences to judicial models and so I would say each university would really have to think about what their restorative process is would create in terms of relationships through – like how they're paralleling those processes because they do exist in parallel. But I would like to say like we can also – I really push from a very critical analysis of modelling or using the judicial system as examples of how to do these processes because we have a long, long recorded history of systemic failure a) to create safety, to create justice, or to shift the culture around sexualized violence from the judicial system or from the legal system.

So I'm a big advocate that we should try education first, but understandable that survivors will at points want to navigate through both systems and that if we create restorative processes we have to be very transparent with the person that is creating this letter that this can be then therefore used within a judicial model,



right? And so that's like always – I always believe in transparency and I always believe in accessibility because we have cases that I would say like when you participate in they're incredibly overwhelming. There's 20 pages of complaint documents that you have to go through and it's very arduous. And so just to really think about which is once again how we do trauma-informed practices when we do this work, is this accessible, is this safe, is this considered – is this going to re-harm or retraumatize, is this going to shame, is this going to create a power over situation and so – because those are actually all the things we're trying to prevent from the student recreating.

So we really have to think about how we really do those things and so inviting that invitational approach. Inviting people into processes but being very transparent about how this can impact them judicially or how it can impact their academic career at this university needs to be really made clear so that each step that that student takes and how that university navigates that process is very clear and well informed and consensual, right? So that students can decide at least to their capacity to make a decision that is beneficial to everybody.

Anoodth: Absolutely. Thank you, Carol. I am just mindful of time. I know we've got about 15 or 20 more questions that folks want to ask you. So they –

Carol: OK.

Anoodth: – can email you at [cbilson20@uvic.ca](mailto:cbilson20@uvic.ca). But maybe –

Carol: Yes, please.

Anoodth: – we have time for one more question.

Carol: Sure.

Anoodth: So the last question I'll pose is do you think this program can be replicated on another university campus and what work would need to be done before we start this work as a university or sexual assault centre?

Carol: Absolutely. Absolutely. I think this is – while this is my PhD research, it is actually to document all of this work that we did during our time creating these restorative processes because when I was doing it, I just felt very under-resourced and very much like a satellite in a sea of trying to navigate this and just really hoping that other universities absolutely can take up this process and that's why I said like if a university focuses strictly – not strictly

but focuses intentionally on addressing this issue through a trauma-informed way, then it could absolutely create positions that will – are ...

Basically, these positions are purposefully meant to work with people that cause harm and so that has to be within a bit of a framework and a policy and in a – and I think an ethos of how we're going to go do this work at the beginning. So we really thought about how – what perspectives were we using when we are doing this work. Was it feminist, was it antiracist, was it classist? We thought about the intersections which create systems of oppression and we really tried to mitigate what that would look like.

So we really had to – we even did readings. We did a lot of group work. We even did support and asked for support when we were starting this work. We really thought out the specific workers that were most keen to do this work, that were most interested in seeing these transformations happen and not all of our staff were and that is absolutely normal and OK. And so to really just think about who is already at hand available, who already has a perspective. If anybody is doing work around gender or especially masculinity and gender and violence. These people are ideal to start thinking about how we could create processes to best move male students through a process that is considered of a gender and of trauma-informed practices.

So I would say laying the foundation. Where are we at? How do we philosophically approach this work and then just setting up in terms of who's our allies, who would be willing to do this work, and then who can we look on campus for support? When we first started it we looked for therapists that were on campus. We looked for people – all of the staff and the resources we were looking for, we wanted them to be kind of an in-house that – and as an effort to show the university that they did have the resources within their campus borders to address this violence.

So that would be the next step in terms of and then really taking this up to an administrative level where it is supported. Educational restorative processes are policy supported, are institutionally supported. So yeah, I would think those are – those were some critical pieces that we took on when we first started and we needed to do the work.

Anoodth: Great. Thank you, Carol. So we've had a wonderfully engaging, informative and thought-provoking discussion today and I'm just mindful of time as I want to honour our one-hour commitment.



[www.couragetoact.ca](http://www.couragetoact.ca)

Carol, thank you so much for sharing your time and your expertise with us today. We've learned a lot, and the recording will be available on our website later.

I also want to thank our participants for joining us and for sharing with us today. We appreciate and take inspiration from your commitment to addressing and preventing gender-based violence on campus. We feel very lucky to be able to work alongside each and every one of you. So thank you again, everyone. And a kind reminder to please complete the evaluation forms and we'll see you at the next webinar in April.