

Solidarity, Collective Care & Sustainability: Responding to Gender-Based Violence

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POSSIBILITY
SEEDS

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VIKKI REYNOLDS



Vikki Reynolds (PhD RCC) is an activist/ therapist who works to bridge the worlds of social justice activism with community work and therapy. Vikki is a white settler on the territories of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam nations. Vikki's people are Irish, Newfoundland and English folks, and she is a heterosexual woman with cisgender privilege. Her experience includes supervision and therapy with peers and other workers responding to the opioid catastrophe, refugees and survivors of torture - including Indigenous people who have survived residential schools and other state violence, sexualized violence counsellors, mental health and substance misuse counsellors, housing and shelter workers, activists and working alongside gender and sexually diverse communities. Vikki is an Adjunct Professor and has written and presented internationally. Articles & speaks free at: www.vikkireynolds.ca.

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A workbook to accompany Courage to Act's National Skillshare Series on August 18th 2021.

YOUR PATH TO THE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE MOVEMENT - HOW DID YOU GET HERE?



Our work resisting gender-based violence is hard, heart-breaking and requires us to swim upstream against systemic oppression. It is no accident that you are in this struggle. Reflect on your path into the gender-based violence movement:

Who were your teachers? Your lateral mentors? Your inspirations?

What key histories and life experiences have accompanied you in this struggle?

What were the crossroads and intersections where your life turned toward this work?

What theories, voices, and teachings do you hold dear that orient and accompany you on this path?

WHAT QUALIFIES YOU FOR YOUR WORK RESISTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

The qualifications required for your work are often dictated by funders and policy, and your resume likely lists a thin description of what truly qualifies you in this work. Imagine if your job description actually described what you do, and your resume brought forward what really qualifies you?

What qualities and ways of being make you useful in work resisting gender-based violence? Consider things not usually presented in your ‘professional profile’. For example, consider your relationship with patience, tenacity, and moral courage. What qualities would you name?

What expertise, wisdom, and hard-won knowledge(s) do you carry that fosters your competence and usefulness in this work? For example, specific complex understandings of intersectional feminism and political analysis that attends to the context and specificity of your work?

What might the people you aim to be useful to (i.e. individuals, communities, populations you serve), and co-workers, name as your qualifications that might surprise you?

A DECOLONIZING STANCE - FOR NON-INDIGENOUS WORKERS**“Settler moves to innocence”**

- Eve Tuck

Our work resisting gender-based violence all happens on the territories of Indigenous homelands and ancestral territories. These provocations are for non-Indigenous workers, and are from *Disrupting Current Colonial Practices and Structures in the Immigration and Non-Profit Sector* (Dupuis-Rossi, Hellson & Reynolds 2020).

How am I positioning myself, individually and collectively, on unceded and occupied Indigenous homelands and ancestral territories?

What do I know about the specific and unique impacts of colonization on the particular Indigenous communities and nations with whom I have (or hope to have) relationships?

How am I participating (overtly, covertly, unintentionally, or with ethical blindness) in the ongoing colonization of Indigenous Peoples?

What does being in solidarity with Indigenous nations mean to me? What does it look like in practice?

Despite my efforts and intentions to not replicate colonial oppression, and my acts as an ally in specific moments, how will I stay implicated as a settler yet resist adopting a sense of righteousness, or thinking I am a “good settler”?

COLLECTIVE ETHICS: WHAT IS AT THE HEART OF YOUR WORK RESISTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

The heart of our work is enacting our ethics for justice-doing and resisting gender-based Violence. For example, collaboration and solidarity, a decolonizing stance, and not replicating oppression. Reflect on your ethical stance for resisting gender-based violence:

What are the ethics and values, and ways of being that you hold close that drew you into this work?

What ways of being in this work do you value, maybe even hold sacred?

What ethics are required for your work, without which you would be unable to work?

What are the collective ethics we hold in solidarity for responding to gender-based violence?

COLLECTIVE CARE AND SOLIDARITY: HOW ARE WE SHOULDERING EACH OTHER UP?

Our best resource for this work is each other. Our solidarity drew us to this work and it can foster our collective sustainability. A useful strategy is to build a Solidarity Team of folx who shoulder you up in this work and have the moral courage to offer you critique and keep you connected to our collective ethics in resisting gender-based violence:

What people, experiences, and places make up your solidarity team?

What is your history of solidarity with these folx in the gender-based violence movement?

How have you invited folx into being useful to you in solidarity? What are you needing? Critique? Witness? Revolutionary Love?

How can you experience being accompanied by your Solidarity Team in the hardest moments? How will you connect? How will you bring their spirited presence when you need solidarity?

What might it mean to folx to know they are part of sustaining you in the struggle against gender-based violence?

Who can you “Howl at the Moon” with, who won’t call a “mental wellness check,” pathologize you, or try to rescue you from the work?

See article: Reynolds, V. (2011). [Supervision of solidarity practices: Solidarity teams and people-ing-the-room](#). Context. August 2011. Association for Family and Systemic Therapy, UK, 4-7.

IMMEASURABLE OUTCOMES & BELIEVED-IN-HOPE

It is our ethical requirement to be the bringers of hope to the people we serve, and not steal what hope they have. Believed-in-Hope is not optimism or positivity, but a discipline and hard work to look for small acts of resistance against gender-based violence. Measurable outcomes often obscure more than they reveal about the real usefulness of our work, and so we need to witness and attend to the immeasurable outcomes of our work against gender-based violence, such as treating people with dignity and structuring safety. Consider all you do that is immeasurable and amplifies a Believed-in-Hope:

Tell yourself, or a witness, a small story of Believed-in-Hope in your particular work against gender-based violence. Why did you pick this story? What difference did your actions make in the life of the person or people you are working alongside?

What have you witnessed in our movement and in the collective struggle that has inspired some Believed-in-Hope?

How are you doing the hard and necessary work of holding onto, fostering and sustaining a Believed-in-Hope for yourself, your solidarity team, and the gender-based violence movement? What practices do you need to resist (like doom scrolling and corporate media coverage), and what do you need to create and embrace?

See article: Reynolds, Dupuis-Rossi & Heath [2021]. Inspiring Believed-in-hope as an ethical position: Vicarious Resistance & Justice-Doing

RESOURCES:**Articles**

Reynolds, V. Riel Dupuis-Rossi, R & Heath, T. (2021). Inspiring Believed-in-Hope as an Ethical Position: Vicarious Resistance & Justice-Doing. *Journal of Contemporary Narrative Therapy*, 2021, Release 1, p. 2-18. https://www.journalcnt.com/uploads/9/4/4/5/94454805/may_release.pdf

Dupuis-Rossi, R., Charlene Hellson and Vikki Reynolds (2020). Disrupting Current Colonial Practices and Structures In the Immigration and Non-Profit Sector. *Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)*. <https://vikkireynoldsdotca.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/2020-disrupting-colonial-practices-dupuis-rossi-hellson-reynolds.pdf>

Reynolds, V. (2019). The Zone of Fabulousness: Resisting vicarious trauma with connection, collective care and justice-doing in ways that centre the people we work alongside. *Context*. August 2019, Association for Family and Systemic Therapy, UK, 36-39. <https://vikkireynoldsdotca.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/2019-context-uk-zone-of-fabulousness-reynolds.pdf>

Reynolds, V. (2014). Resisting and transforming rape culture: An activist stance for therapeutic work with men who have used violence. *The No To Violence Journal*. Spring, 29-49 <https://vikkireynoldsdotca.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/2014reynoldsresistingrapecultureanactiviststance.pdf>

Richardson, C., & Reynolds, V. (2012). “Here we are amazingly alive”: Holding ourselves together with an ethic of social justice in community work. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies* 1:1-19. <https://vikkireynoldsdotca.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/richardsonreynolds2012hereweareamazinglyaliveuicjournals.pdf>

Reynolds, V. (2011). Resisting burnout with justice-doing. *The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*. (4) 27-45. <https://vikkireynoldsdotca.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/reynolds2011resistingburnoutwithjustice-doingdulwich.pdf>

Workbook

This workbook was created with an orientation to be of use to folx responding to the opioid catastrophe, but the frame supports the sustainability and collective care for workers responding to particular contexts of systemic oppression and targeted communities. Of particular interest in the Gender Violence Justice movement are the exercises on Debriefing with Connection and Responding to Death and Hardship in our work.

The Zone of Fabulousness: Resisting Burnout & Shouldering Each Other Up

Digital: https://vikkireynoldsdotca.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/zof_digital.pdf

Printing as Booklet: https://vikkireynoldsdotca.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/zof_booklet-printable.pdf

Video Series:

These videos are centered on responses to the opioid catastrophe, and people with living experience working in Overdose Prevention Sites and Shelters. These strategies for Resisting Burnout are useful in the bender-based violence movement, but require contextualizing and politicizing to respond to the specificity of these struggles.

Resisting Burnout & Vicarious trauma with Connection: The Zone of

Fabulousness: <https://vimeo.com/277787561>

The Zone of Fabulousness Part II: Alternative ways to look at worker Burnout:

<https://vimeo.com/277787618>

ZONE of

FABULOUSNESS

RESISTING BURNOUT & SHOULDERING EACH OTHER UP



Responding to Death & Darkness: <https://vimeo.com/277748164>

Debriefing with Connection: <https://vimeo.com/277741088>

Solidarity Teams: <https://vimeo.com/277787636>