

LIGHTLY EDITED FILE

ACE-DV Speakers Initiative Webinar Series: Valuing
your Story

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

Remote

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>> Fore those of you who are hearing me now, welcome.
We're ready to get started in just a couple minutes.
My name is Casey Keene, I'm the director of programs
and prevention at the National Resource Center on
Domestic Violence and I'm so happy that you've chosen
to spend your time with us today.

First I want to take a moment to tell you a few things
about our webinar system.

So you should be able to see the full PowerPoint
screen, and not have to scroll to see all the
information.

You should see a slide right now with the title of
today's webinar, valuing your story.

If you can't see the full PowerPoint slide image, click
on the box on the bottom right corner of the PowerPoint
screen to change the size of the window.

You can feel free to send a message in the public chat
on the bottom left-hand side of your webinar screen and

I see many of you have been doing so.

The speed with which you can send and receive messages will really depend on the strength of your internet connection.

Keep in mind the public chat is open and visible to everyone participating in the webinar.

So, be careful not to share any confidential or sensitive information in the public chat because it will be visible to all participants.

You do have the option to send a private message to presenters and to me and those who are leading us behind the scenes or to each other.

You can click on the tab marked "private," and select a person's name and type and send your message.

Please submit any questions or comments that you may have throughout today's webinar in the public chat and we'll be share to pose them as we're able.

So, thanks so much for being part of today's session.

We're going to wait just a couple more minutes to be sure everybody's had a chance to join.

And then we'll jump in and we will be recording this session.

So, hang tight.

We'll give people a couple minutes and then we'll be ready to begin.

In the meantime, yeah, please introduce yourself in the public chat and tell us where you're joining from.

I see Rebecca sharing in the chat remember wellness moment.

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Where there is trauma, healing is the answer.

Thank you for that.

William, one of our presenters today also welcoming everybody.

Thank you.

So, let's go ahead and get started.

Justine, if you would begin the recording.

So, good afternoon, everybody.

My name is Casey Keene.

I'm the director of programs and prevention for the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

I also lead the adult children exposed to domestic violence or ACE-DV leadership forum.

I really appreciate all of you for joining us today and welcome to the first part of our speakers initiative webinar series on valuing your story.

Before I introduce today's panelists who are also

members of the ACE–DV steering committee, I'd like to share just a bit about the work we're engaged in together.

So, these are the faces of our 12 current steering committee members, some of them pictured in this photo. All advocates and change makers in the movement to end gender-based violence who identify as having experienced domestic violence in childhood.

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We represent diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

And each of our stories is unique and multi-faceted. You can see here on the slide that we were established to help amplify the voices and experiences of those who identify as adult children exposed to domestic violence to enhance our work in this movement together.

The ACE–DV speakers initiative was developed to help build the capacity of adult survivors of children's exposure to share their stories publicly.

The initiative includes the creation of a speakers' bureau and the development of capacity building tools, including this guide that you see here.

You can download this guide at VAWnet.org and we'll be sharing that link a little bit later in the session.

In fact, this webinar series that we were starting today was created in response to feedback and questions that were raised when the guide was released.

Participants in our launch webinar back in December, which undoubtedly includes many of you, noted that they'd like to engage more about certain aspects of storytelling for social change.

That's why today we're talking about valuing our story and over the course of the next three webinars we'll be exploring challenges in storytelling, our relationships

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with those who use violence, and what it means to bring your whole self to this work.

So thank you for contributing your thoughts and your questions at the release of the guide, and we hope that you'll find this really helpful.

So for today's discussion, we'll engage with four ACE-DV members who each bring a unique perspective based on their personal experience as story-tellers. I'd like to welcome our panelists.

First let me introduce Rebecca Balog.

She has a deep-rooted self-identity as an advocate. Rebecca brings 15 years of healthy relationships in antiviolenace work through national and grassroots

activism.

As a member of the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center team, Rebecca serves as grants compliance manager, tracking and overseeing grants receive and deliverables and NRWC projects.

Rebecca -- sovereignty for native women, safety for all families, and networking with allies who challenge both visible and invisible privilege.

Rebecca is also a technical assistance specialist for Women of Color Inc.

Rebecca, welcome.

>> Hi, hi, everyone.

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Thank you, Casey.

>> Yes.

Next we have Annika Leonard.

Annika is committed to creating a world where the inherent worth and dignity of black women and girls and LGBTQ survivors is given honor and value.

First in her personal life as a survivor and also in all capacities of her professional work.

Annika founded and leads Priceless Incite, whose mission is to uplift the experiences of black women and girls and youth who are impacted by gender based

violence through community based prevention,
intervention and development.

Annika has developed a unique culturally specific curriculum for black teen girls that cultivate their leadership, survivorship and wellness to bring about deep radical and cultural solutions to ending violence. At her core, she believes that answers must come from survivors and she is committed to empower, the empowerment of black teens to lead the solution.

Annika, welcome

>> Hi, thank you.

>> Yes.

Next, William Kellibrew, he's an international advocate and trauma survivor who travels the globe sharing his

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message of courage and hope throughout multiple human service systems and settings, with key audiences including mental health, substance abuse, adult and juvenile justice, corrections, domestic violence shelters and programs, sexual assault programs, youth leadership, hospitals, and many others.

As the principal of a small business and consulting firm, WCK consulting LLC, Kellibrew provides training and technical assistance services on issues ranging

from trauma, violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and bullying, homelessness, and how values play a major role in rebuilding and recovery from victimization and trauma.

Through hundreds of keynotes, motivational speeches, television and media appearances, workshops, and sessions, Kellibrew has inspired millions with his story of survival.

William, welcome.

>> Thank you very much for having me.

>> Yes, of course.

And last but definitely not least is Lenny Hayes who's an enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton, I'm so sorry, I practiced this before, Oyate.

Is that right, Lenny?

>> Yes, it is.

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>> Oh, great.

Of the northeast corner of South Dakota.

Lenny is owner and Prater of Tate Topa Consulting LLC.

Lenny has always worked with the Native American community and is currently in private practice specializing in two spirit native LGBTQ issues with adults and youth.

Lenny was recently selected to be a technical assistance consultant with the office for violence for victims of crime.

His experience and training have made him a sought after workshop presenter on Native American's historical and intergenerational trauma and how it impacts the Native American community as well as the Two Spirit Native LGBTQ individual and community. Lenny has traveled nationally, training on two spirit native LGBTQ issues.

Lenny, welcome.

>> Thank you.

Hello, everyone.

>> Wonderful.

So, now before we move forward we'd like to learn a little bit about you.

So if you would take a moment to respond to this polling question and I think Justine is making it

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appear on your screen.

So the question is, where are you when it comes to sharing your story?

So if you could click your response, and we tried to kind of capture the journey here, so from thinking

about it to you can be facilitating this webinar, where do you fall on the spectrum?

Have you started writing it down and piecing it together?

Are you sharing only entrusted or intimate relationships?

Have you told it in certain settings?

Or do you have a great deal of experience with a variety of audiences?

I see that people are responding.

Looks like participants are across the spectrum.

But that about 50% have told their story in public settings before.

And so we do have some on both ends of the spectrum, but we -- most people tend to fall in that middle area there.

Thank you.

And, yeah, Justine, if you would share the results so everyone can see.

>> They should be shared.

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>> Okay.

Great.

Thank you.

All right.

So let's go back to the slides.

So wherever you are in your journey, we would like to emphasize that your decision to share your story is personal and it's a true gift to those who receive it. So, very briefly, your story matters.

It's a very important piece of a larger narrative that can inspire action, hope, strength and unity in others. But our stories are just as valuable to ourselves, to ourselves as story tellers as they are to our audiences.

They can help us in naming and reclaiming our experiences, in helping to fit the pieces together and put a timeline to those things that we have experienced in our lives.

And they can help us realize the power that we have inherently to impact other people's lives.

The story of ACE-DV has unique value.

The themes and lessons learned from your stories can offer valuable insight to inform individual, organizational, societal, and systemic approaches to address and prevent gender based violence.

To bring in the message for this year's campaign for

domestic violence awareness month, sharing your story may be your #onething when it comes to taking action for social change.

So I'd like to begin by exploring making the case to yourself.

So, even if we know that our stories have value, even if we inherently know that, advocating for the value of our stories can be really challenging.

It's really a journey for many of us, which can be complicated by our experiences of trauma and oppression, and truly impacted by our cultural values. For example, questioning one's worth is a very natural response to having experienced trauma.

And for those who live at the intersections of trauma and oppression that personal journey can be very complex.

So my first question to our panelists is a basic one. How did you come to realize that your story had value? So I think, I don't know if anybody is eager to chime in.

If not, I can call on somebody.

But I think I'd like to call on Annika.

>> This is Annika.

>> Yes, wonderful.

>> There we go!

Well, thank you.

Hi, everyone.

I think that I first learned that my story had value when I started to share it and people would come to me and would say things like they had been through similar things and didn't feel comfortable sharing it.

People were just really moved by what I said and to me it was like, well, I didn't say anything that, like I didn't think it was, anything was important or special about my experiences.

And the feedback from individuals who were also impacted by the same thing is what told me that there was something important and special and the fact that I did share it, that did take courage and to me it was just necessary.

So they, like audience members, actually young people actually helped me see the value in sharing my experiences and my story.

That helped make the case for myself

>> Awesome.

So it's almost like this cycle for you, right?

The more you put yourself out there, the more feedback you get reinforcing how important it is to keep doing

that.

Thank you so much, Annika.

>> Absolutely.

>> Thank you.

So, let's see.

Who else would like to chime in on this question?

>> I don't mind chiming in either.

Can you hear me?

>> Okay, William.

Yes, we can hear you, go ahead.

>> Like Annika, I think that actually in tenth grade I was part of a mentorship, mentor program for an elementary school, and unfortunately this is something that the staff thought that would be my story would be impactful for students to hear.

But fortunately, you know, I did tell my story and it really made an impact but I think that it also, it sort of had a maybe a traumatizing effect on the kids because I saw that a lot of people were crying and I was only 15 years old but I saw that people were crying in the audience, they were really moved.

One of the things I realized was when I went to the playground, the recess playground, every kid surrounded

me and I mean, there was probably 100 kids out there. They all surrounded me hanging on my every word that I said after that.

And I thought that was very powerful and I was in a very difficult space as a teenager, but that told me that my story actually had value, that actually people cared beyond my, you know, my nuclear friends and family.

So I have since realized that telling my story or sharing my story may create a safe space for others to actually share theirs.

So I think that was a valuable lesson I learned.

>> Thanks, William.

I don't know, Rebecca or Lenny, if you have additional thoughts to offer?

>> Yeah.

This is Rebecca.

Thank you, Annika and William, for sharing that.

That is so helpful.

For myself I -- I was a bartender and I wanted to get out of that environment so I answered a customer service ad in a newspaper just for a regular day job. And it happened to be a domestic violence shelter.

It was many things, comprehensive, huge YWCA.
And I went into this interview not really knowing what
it was other than customer service.
And that interview led to me disclosing for the first
time formally my experience.

And that led to we'd like to hire you in this
department instead, just so you know, we have a shelter
full of survivors.

And that was the first time I formally told my story
and I saw how widespread this issue has been.
I'm 18 years now doing the work and it all started with
me telling my story for the first time.

So, thank you.

That's my story.

>> Awesome.

Thanks, Rebecca.

Lenny, I wonder if we can, you know, ask you to reflect
on this next topic, which is around considerations when
valuing your worth.

So when it comes to valuing your worth it feels like
there's a lot to consider.

We I think need to remember that our movement strives
to be survivor-centered, which means that all of our

experiences as survivors are really critical to informing all aspects of this work.

If our movement is truly built around survivor experiences.

I think it's also important to know that our personal experiences give us unique expertise, in other words, we are the experts on our own experience.

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This said, I think it's always really important to weigh the risks and consequences of sharing your story, especially for people of color and other marginalized and oppressed individuals.

So, I don't know, Lenny, if you would be willing to reflect on some of the considerations that feel central to your experience when valuing your worth as a speaker.

>> Well, that's a really huge question.

Well, for me I identify as a two spirit male.

In my culture, I am, and in my language I would be considered a wĩnkte.

When we talk about two spirit LGBTQ people, we hear their stories because coming from an oppressed community we have a very difficult time telling our stories.

I didn't tell my story until I went through 10 years of

extensive therapy and healing, and then just got a lot of courage to tell my story and having people ask me to come and tell my story because I think people even within my own community didn't realize that a lot of our people who identify as myself never had the opportunity to tell their stories.

So one of the things that I always tell people is that we need to tell our stories so that we can help others. So when I tell my stories it's not about me, it's about

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giving voice to others so that they can tell their stories because, like I said, we come, or I come from a very oppressed community.

I grew up on a reservation.

There was a lot of things that I was taught and there was a lot of things that I had to, what is the word, break barriers.

And one of the barriers I had to learn how to break was about keeping silence.

One of the things that I was taught growing up was to keep silent.

Don't talk about things that are happening, so that was a huge barrier for me.

So there's a lot of considerations to really think

about.

And I do this work because I know that my community, the Two Spirit Native LGBTQ community is often not recognized or it's an underserved population.

>> Thank you so much, Lenny.

That is hugely important I think to remember that how complex these decisions around sharing our stories can be, given how we're brought up and what our culture tells us and is really important to keep all of that in mind.

I don't know if others have reflections from that kind

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of a place.

Annika, I don't know if you had anything in particular in mind here.

>> Well, I'm not exactly sure where it goes but I'll throw it out here and see where it lands.

I think that also when we are sharing our story and those who are from traditionally oppressed communities are sharing in the mixed company of those who are used to being empowered, you know, or people who have a lot of power and privilege in society, I think that sometimes our stories can, you know, basically get used against us and sometimes when this happens when you are

working in a domestic violence service provider agency and things of that nature.

I think the thing is I'm really excited about sharing my story and was really excited about sharing my story, but I think sometimes it was used as a weapon, it was weaponized.

You know, so I think there's some conversation around being prepared for how our story can be used against us or pointed to the reason why we shouldn't engage because it's deemed unprofessional or something along that nature.

Absolutely our stories have value and they have worth and we should share them.

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And also like the context in the audience I think those are considerations that, you know, could reduce the harm for those of you us who are just stepping out there to share our stories.

>> Okay.

Wonderful.

Thank you so much, Annika.

Are there any other reflections on this?

I know that, yeah, many of your personal experiences, you know, you have these kinds of considerations.

Especially when speaking to mainstream, mainly white audiences.

So, are there additional thoughts that any of you would like to offer?

>> This is Rebecca.

We might touch on this a little bit later if there's time, but if there isn't, there's that rule of our current modern world that it does take a lot of bravery, that rule is everything that's on the internet stays on the internet.

So, it can be weaponized.

There are trolls, there's backlash, there's [indiscernible] and oppression.

All of these things do have to be sought out because re-victimization can happen, but that's the bravery in

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doing this work, that we're in our healing and we're ready to share to help others.

>> And this is William, I would also add that this happened to me recently preparing for a speech to a really big audience.

I think the speaker after me made a comment about, to the staff about in preparation for this conference there was concerns around exploitation of stories.

And, you know, I am experienced technically in sharing my story, but I don't want to minimize the fact that my story is real.

It is a genuine, authentic story of survival and ongoing healing.

And this may take a lifetime.

And sometimes the healing happens on stage.

Sometimes the healing happens in the middle of telling our stories.

And you know what?

Sometimes the healing happens while I'm driving on the freeway by myself.

And I'm going over notes.

And sometimes I take a moment to say, you know what?

This is real.

This is difficult sometimes.

It's challenging because in my story, you know, my mom

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was killed when I was 10 years old.

My mom will always hold a special place in my heart whether I'm telling myself that or I'm telling an audience that.

And I say be encouraged because we'll have some people and some institutions and some folks who will look at

us in a way, in a different kind of light.

I think that what holds me together is the fact that I know that this is my journey and there's no one to be compared to with my journey is, because that's how unique we are.

And that's how I began my healing was when I finally understood how unique I was and that trauma was an individual experience from the core, I knew that I should stop comparing myself to people.

So I'm so unique, I'm an individual and my story is mine.

>> Mm-hmm.

Thank you, William.

So, let's move onto the next topic.

This discussion has been so rich and I appreciate all of your perspectives.

Even if we can make the case to ourselves and we can see the value that we bring, many survivors have indicated to us that they feel they lack the support of

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the agencies or systems in which they work when it comes to sharing their stories, even in agencies who profess to center survivors' experiences, right?

So there are risks to being out as a survivor in

professional settings.

Even though our movement was founded by survivors, which reflects on some agencies' tendencies I think to think about victimization from a deficit model.

It seems much more likely to have the support of an agency who embraces an asset or growth framework which values the strength and resilience of survivors and can really see the value in our stories.

So I'm asking you to reflect on, you know, ways that you have approached gaining buy-in or support from the agencies in which you're positioned or from systems in which you work.

I know William and Lenny, you have unique experiences because you have your own, you're your own boss in many ways and you've created your own thing.

And Annika too, you created your own thing and you're telling your story within the context of your own agency.

Let me start with Rebecca and see, Rebecca, if you have anything to offer in terms of reflections on making the case to the systems and agencies in which we work.

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>> Thank you.

I think that goes back to some really powerful work

Annika said earlier that survivors are the core of our work.

We know our movement has so many survivors -- part of our healing journey.

And that has to be one of the most valuable opportunities and disclosing is very difficult, it's not a requirement.

We can't say you have to tell your story, obviously.

But we are working with survivors that are having new experiences today.

and are hard memories and our memories of what we went through, where that empathy comes from, it's just so valuable.

So, survivors being at the core and always at the core.

Going back to, I'm not going to take long, I could go on forever about this, but I don't know if anyone ever did the who's driving the bus training to evaluate funding guidelines, driving the bus, is it policies driving the bus.

If we could always keep survivors at the core of driving the bus in our work, I think we'll always be good to go and we will end violence.

>> Thank you, Rebecca.

Annika, do you have reflections on this?

Can you speak to experiences of trying to get buy-in from agencies and systems?

>> Well, Casey and audience, I think that it was really hard for me to get buy-in.

That it actually traumatized me trying to get buy-in from the organizations that I work the for, which was a sexual assault service provider in a sense.

So it was really hard for me to get buy-in and that's what actually led me to give birth to the organization that I run now and the avenue that I share my experiences in because it was so hard, you know.

And I think that all things are divine, what happens was supposed to happen for me to give birth and to have the courage to step out on my own because once I found the power of my voice and the power of my experiences and the ability that it had and the possibilities that it created for other people, it really, it pushed me to step out even further, beyond my own comfort zone.

And so I would love to say like to make the case and sometimes the case like really means you're pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone and taking a leap that you never thought you would make.

>> Yeah.

Yeah.

No, and, yeah, that's absolutely right.

Thanks, Annika.

How about you, Lenny, any reflections on making this case?

>> Well, for me in the beginning it was really difficult because like I said earlier, you know, coming from the Native community and then coming from a place of who I am as a two spirit male, like I said early right here, we are an underserved population.

We don't even talk about our identity within our own tribal communities, so for me it was just going out in obviously and attending events and I would get up and say, well, you know, what you're talking about also happens within my community, why are you not talking about my community?

And I did that over and over in different situations and different settings until people came up to me and said, well, what can you teach us?

What can you teach us about your identity?

So, and another thing too is even just publicly speaking about the trauma that I experienced and getting people to listen, so it took a lot of hard work, it's not easy, but I would definitely tell people

not to give up.

And keep coming forward and telling your stories

because I do agree with what everything that's being said, that's going on in the chat boxes in regards to, you know, all this work really begins with the survivors.

>> Yeah.

Yeah.

Thank you, Lenny.

And I think it's so important the points that you're making around the self-advocacy that's necessary here. We're trained in advocacy, right?

Like this is something that's in our blood and so advocating for the importance of our stories and our narratives as they kind of contribute to the knowledge base about how we do our work is really important, and so believing in ourselves and the value in ourselves and bringing that forward I think is, yeah, it is hard work and it's necessary work.

Thank you so much.

Go ahead, William.

>> Yeah, very important, and so earlier Casey, you described sort of my private work, I do have a

consulting firm where I am the guy who makes the decisions and so the person who makes decision, and so I get a chance to feel the pressure but also the joy in being able to.

So, you know, my story matters and I want to get it out there.

I want to talk about trauma informed approach.

But I also have a work in the government, and so while this presentation's not about my government job, but I also have to say that when we're talking about systems and agencies, because I have, because I have some courage to be able to bring a story or some reflection of how I read -- sorry, how policies resonate even with what I have gone through, I have been able to impact policy changes.

I have been able to impact the way that systems think about, you know, how we approach individuals who may have a story or people that, individuals that we serve. But one of the most important things I think in terms of the system change, systems change in agencies and making the case is that we are the stories.

I guess that's the thread through this.

It's not just about those people that we're serving.

This is about us, this is about us and when we presume that there's a history of trauma in the room and presume there's a history of resilience in the room, I think we're honoring the stories, we're honoring the individuals who may come to the table who may not even feel comfortable talking about this.

But there are some of us at the forefront of the movement to impact policies and impact the way that systems treat us.

And I think we've made great strides in that

>> That's an excellent point, William, thank you.

It's like a reclamation, right?

Reclaiming that we are the ones, as Rebecca said, that drive the bus.

>> Exactly.

>> Thank you.

So, William, I'd like you to hang in there for this next slide because I know in your work that you do that you are just really heavily involved in -- often and you have a whole system for negotiating terms and you seem to have it really figured out.

So I think when it comes to negotiating terms and fees, I think it's important for people to remember the value

that their story brings to a space and to audiences because negotiation can really be one of the most uncomfortable aspects of sharing your story.

But I think it's important for people to know that it's very reasonable to expect fair compensation for the value that you're bringing to an audience to ask for a contract, to protect yourself, to have specific asks related to travel costs and arrangements.

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And any accommodations that come with this.

So accommodations for accessibility and accommodations for your safety and your well being, both during and also before and after the event.

And so I guess I'm wondering if you can start us off by reflecting on how do you determine what's reasonable when you're negotiating terms and fees for telling your story.

>> So that's a great question, probably one of my favorite topics to discuss because that is our perceptive value about our work, how is that valued externally?

You know, how is that valued through government and so I have had the experience and really lucky and I consider myself in a sense, you know, blessed to have

an opportunity and privilege really to have an opportunity to even share my story in different settings.

And so I'm very honored and very grateful for that opportunity.

So I have had the opportunity to receive compensation from the private industries, from corporations, from state, federal, and local government, as well as international organizations.

I mean, all kinds of organizations, embassies, you name

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it, I have been in that setting.

Federal grants, I have been on.

So the one thing I will say, though, the number one thing, and it speaks to what you said, Casey, a little earlier, it is so difficult and challenging.

I do not like talking about money at all.

Especially as it relates to my story.

I just, I think our stories are priceless, number one, they're priceless.

We cannot really put a fee on it.

But if we had to, the number one thing I would say is try to avoid negotiating your own fee.

Okay?

I would say that some representation or some consultation with either having somebody represent you to go through that conversation or consult about what the fees are so that if you do have to talk about it, that you do have some kind of standard, and so I would say with governments, oftentimes governments have a really -- so federal grants have a cap, you know, and that cap may start at \$450 and oftentimes our stories and the survivors, we're kind of like on the bottom scale of payment.

When we tell our stories, it's probably in the government at this point they'll probably value that as

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\$450 or \$500.

Whereas other experts in their field, say a Ph.D. who's going over some technical talks would be probably paid 650 or even more.

But there's a cap on that too.

It just depends on how the grant was written that you, that you're in there.

So sometimes, I mean, this is good work that we're doing and so we do it on behalf of governments, oftentimes we do that.

Now, there's other government contracts that actually

go well beyond and allow for speakers to make or consider a much more elevated pricing.

The other thing I will say is that when you're preparing for speeches, to have a rider, to have expectations about what is important for you.

One of the things that I request all the time because I don't like standing because it hurts my back, I request a stool.

I request some water, and I try to be as easy as possible.

I request a lavalier mic and handheld mic.

I sing at the end.

my presentations, I sing with the handheld and talk with the lavalier.

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The other thing is I work with a agency that's a -- 50-year-old agency in the world.

My agent is also the agent for Goldie Hawn for example, I know that Goldie Hawn can command more than I can command, for example.

But -- speakers can command a lot more money.

So you have an opportunity to talk about that.

Last thing I will say, when I met my agent, my agent saw me speak for ten minutes before he was my agent.

And that ten minutes was so powerful for him that he said I have got to represent you and so he asked three things.

He said three things to me.

We represent individuals who have these three things.

Number one, are you nationally recognized?

Because that's, you know, that's the level of speaking.

Are you nationally recognized?

Number two, do you have an hour or more worth of content?

That's number two.

And number three, are you so busy you cannot manage your own schedule to the point where you have all these speaking engagements?

So that's kind of where I am at this point.

But it wasn't always where I was.

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I started out volunteering to share my story and it was just, I just volunteered and I still do that work today.

When somebody asks me who may not be able to afford a 2,000 or 5,000 or \$10,000 speech they're like can you just come to Mississippi because I just got to have you in Mississippi.

And we have a limited budget and we can't do much more than that.

And I said you get me there and I'm with you.

You get me there.

Sometimes you just have to do what you have to do.

There's a whole big range.

>> Yeah.

Well, thank you, William.

And not all of us, you know, speak on that scale, but it certainly is great points of learning, I know you have learned a lot along the way and especially on knowing your worth.

And, you know, protecting it.

So, I wonder, and I'm sorry I want to point out, we can't get a chance to say goodbye to Annika, she had to head out for another engagement.

So happy to have her with us during the first portion of this webinar.

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And I know she'll be happy to answer any questions that anybody may have for her.

I will pass those along and we can follow up with her after the webinar.

William, thank you for giving us so much to think

about, so much great advice.

I wonder, Lenny, you I think bring a different perspective.

You also speak nationally, internationally.

Do you have any reflections on, you know, negotiating terms and fees?

>> Well, most of my situations have been federal grants and like William was saying earlier, there's a cap. But one of the things that I always try to remember too when I go outside of the federal rate, I always keep in mind what a mentor said to me at one time, know your value.

One thing that I, you know, keeps going on in my mind is that I was always told to negotiate high.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> With the individual or with the organization, and then negotiate, you know, come to a place where you both agree on.

But one of the things that I know that is important also too is to make sure that they get you to where you

need to be, where you don't have to take care of that. But most of my work has been within Native communities and within Native organizations, so I'm already at a

federal rate when I do work with Native organizations. I haven't really gone outside of that, which makes it much more difficult in the fact that I'm still trying to get into that space, does that make sense?

In regards to going outside of my own community and doing work within a non-Native community setting. But it took several years for me to really get into that space because it is uncomfortable to talk about money.

>> Yes.

>> One of the things I always, like I said earlier, what I keep in mind is what a mentor said, know your value.

Your story is valuable.

But I also agree too that it's also priceless.

>> Yeah.

Yeah.

Thank you.

Thanks, Lenny.

So I do want to move onto Rebecca.

I know you have some comments to offer as well.

But first a question came in from William Tipper Thomas

who is on our speakers bureau.

Hi, William.

He had a question for you, William.

If you would define nationally or internationally recognized?

What does that look like?

What does that mean?

>> Wow, I was just typing it into the chat to answer it, but I will answer it verbally.

Nationally we're talking about the states, to the U.S. territories.

That's the geographical area and it really is a reflection of your relationship with either the national or federal government, state government, but essentially outside of your own jurisdiction or where you live would somebody be able to recognize your work in California, for instance?

Would somebody be able to recognize your work or who you are in different agencies, right?

And so that, the only people who are not aware of who you are and what you do is just in your local settings. So what are you doing across the nation and how is that work perceived across the nation.

Number one that's the nationally.

I think when we're talking international we're talking

about either entities that are operating here in the U.S., for instance like the British Embassy, I do a lot of work with the British Embassy but have international impact.

For instance, they have me judge these, who would be, you know, judging these particular competitions that send people to Cambridge for experience.

But there's the physical experience of actually being overseas.

I have spoken in England, I have spoken in Japan, I have spoken in China.

I've spoken in these different countries where they have a demand for the subject matter.

And then lastly I will say that you could, if you were in media, if you were on television or on the radio or anything like that, you don't have to go anywhere.

You could transcend the boundaries and the borders of a national relationship -- of national presence by having an international presence.

So that just reminds me of, you know, I was featured on Oprah, the Oprah Winfrey Show, so on Oprah, her show is actually aired in over 21 -- 120 countries.

And 45 million people viewed it at the time that it was played, and they played it like four times.

So, yeah, I didn't go to Sri Lanka, but there are

people from Sri Lanka who got in touch with me.

When they're talking about internationally recognized, it doesn't mean that you're physically there, it means that your message, who you are, how you're featured could be captured beyond the national borders.

Does that sort of answer that question, William?

And actually I know William Tipper Thomas, he's here in Baltimore, so I'm glad to see him on the call.

Wow, what a pleasant surprise.

>> Thanks, William.

And so another question came in from Rebecca Zimmerman who asked of Lenny that you mentioned receiving advice from a mentor and wondering if anybody has thoughts on finding a mentor.

And Lenny has answered here in the private chat to say that what has usually happened is that several mentors of his have found him.

And that the more conversation that he's had with them, he went to them afterwards and asked them to teach them.

Lenny, I don't know if you have anything additional to offer there on identifying mentors in our lives around

this.

>> Well, I think the most important thing to remember, especially for me coming from a place of trauma, I have

to remember to really watch for safety.

Safety, is really important and because you know when you grow up in a world of violence, you're always on the lookout.

Safety is one of the most important things that I remember because often sometimes we can have mentors who, they value our story, but yet sometimes they also can dictate how we tell our story, does that make sense?

And the fact that there's still that power and control. So, my mentors, I look at them as a person of safety. Whereas they -- I can talk on them about anything, but they can also give me advice in a loving way.

Does that make sense?

So it's all for me it's always about safety.

I'm always -- safety is the number one priority for me.

>> Thank you so much, Lenny.

So, Rebecca, so back to this question about negotiating terms and fees.

What reflections can you offer to us?

>> So just as, something to remember, this webinar is going to become hopefully a library of resources to check back in on while people are stepping forward to share their stories.

And (indiscernible) -- putting on my grant compliance

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hat, that, -- that's valuable to know going in so it doesn't feel negative, there are going to be opportunities to share your story in a formal setting, which is a part of grant funded work from either non-federal or federal funds in a program that you're working for.

One of the things to pay attention to in your negotiations, which may or may not be possible, is that when something is funded by a federal office, they have to approve the content and then they have, because they -- the content in your consultancy, they may have ownership over that content.

My advice, if you do have a PowerPoint or handout, a good way to kind of get through that without someone owning your story in black and white would be to have a creative PowerPoint that maybe doesn't spell it all out in black and white unless you choose to.

This is just safety planning to keep your story that

you own it and you've never sold it, per se.

I know that's a bad way to put it.

A way to protect yourself from those guidelines that can make things feel different

>> Rebecca, that is so critical and I really appreciate you raising it.

It's a perfect segue because really we want to explore

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this notion of owning your story and those considerations are when it comes to owning your story which clause both protections for you as a storyteller, but then also considerations for family members and others who you may name who may be part of your narrative.

And so let me open this up, I don't know -- William, let me start with you.

Do you have reflections on like things that you've learned when it comes to owning your story?

>> I think one of the first things that many people may not be aware of is that you could trademark your name.

And you can truly own your name, technically, with a government entity because, you know, one of the individual individuals had lots of problems with this what was Vanessa Williams who was Ms. America, right?

She had a problem because there was another Vanessa Williams on earth in the United States and they had some problems around that.

So trademarking your name may give you an opportunity to sort of own it, technically own it.

But on the other end of that, you know, if you're so inclined to even write a book or write some poems or tell your story some kind of way and have that copyrighted, that's also a way to go.

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But also being public about your story also puts it out in the atmosphere, and so your name's coming across, welcome, the Washington Post or you begin to own it, you are the one who can tell it.

But I will say this, organically or sort of from the grassroots level like right on the ground, this is your story, no one else can tell your story the way that you tell it.

I have heard people tell my story and I'm like, mmm, they probably missed that little bit.

That's not accurate.

And so, that's not accurate.

But I think that to put as much, if you feel that you're going in that direction, you're going to become

the speaker, and by the way, I don't write my story because I want to make money, by the way.

That's -- if that's the goal, I think that could be a skewed goal.

For myself I think that the power of my story means that I can own my story.

I know who I am and I'm writing it because it's a healing, it's healing for me to express myself because I have been shut down for so long and traumatized for so long and over the course of years that being able to share my story is powerful in and of itself.

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But it's much technical pieces around your story, legality around your story is very important.

Because if somebody picks up your story and wants to make a movie about it, you can be someone that no one knows about, but your story could be very powerful.

And I say just kind of look at some, you know, having a friend who might be an attorney or someone might, you know, and do some consultation and don't necessarily represent yourself all the time.

Really grab that -- somebody mentioned it on the chat, kitchen cabinet, like, have people around you in every sphere.

Consulting, marketing, legal, I mean, I have friends who are in all those things like that in those different disciplines who offer me some thoughts and some options about where I'm going.

>> Good.

Okay.

Lenny, any other thoughts on owning your story?

>> Well, I guess, I think one of the most important pieces to remember too is like coming from where I come from, you know, the reservation, coming as a Native American, as a two spirit male, we don't have a lot of people like me to -- we don't have that capacity to go out and tell our stories publicly in that way, does

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that make sense?

So, often we have to do things within our own community to be recognized outside of our community.

But one of the things that I try to remember in doing this work is to be really humble and for me as a Native person to remember the things that I was taught in regards to -- values, so one of the things that I always tell people is that I don't want to get rich telling my story.

I want to be comfortable.

And that's more important for me than having a lot of money in my pocket.

A lot of money would solve a lot of issues, but that's not who I am.

I try to be humble in my part, so.

I guess that's all I can really say

>> Thank you.

>> And I'd love to add to that, and Lenny, may I add to that, Casey?

>> Sure.

>> Time limit or anything.

Lenny makes a great point that follows up what I said before, which is, and I have read a lot of books, I have read a lot of books on how to tell your story. There's a great book on, you know, writing about being

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famous, you know, and really tells you, really shares that when people are writing their books, real key to writing is trying to focus on something other than just getting rich and the money.

It really is about -- because I would tell my story for free any day.

I do it every day.

You know, we talk with our family members, we share it

with ourselves again.

You know, sometimes you have to get in the mirror and tell ourselves, you know, what's going on.

Hear it out loud sometimes.

And practice our story and really talk with ourselves, but I think that we should be doing that.

But we should be reading also and learning more about writing -- they were autobiographies were very popular in the past.

Biographies are very popular.

Today stories are told in a memoir-ish fashion.

Memoirs are so important.

And memoirs should be, should be according to a lot of experts, should focus on your story without being famous.

And if that happens, if you're famous when it happens, let that be a part of the trajectory.

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But the key is really being genuine and writing your story and owning it as if it never would be published.

>> Thanks, William.

>> Can I add one thing too?

I know we're really -- -- thank you so much, Casey. going back to protecting yourself and understanding

that when things are out there, they're out there, it's okay -- it's not okay in this world that there are negative Nancys that for entertainment purposes or -- whatever, they're called trolls, we all know that they're out there.

The thing that helps me if I have a non-critical helpful feedback, but mean-spirited stuff, my mentor, going back to that, taught me this, is how I get through those hard times.

Healed people heal people and hurt people, hurt people. So it's that lateral oppression and negative Nancys come and get after you because you shared your story, please don't internalize, and remember your own healing journey so you're healing people.

They are hurt people hurting other people.

Thank you.

>> Thank you.

And I think that's, it's important to remember and actually, Rebecca, you've been providing the best

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segues today.

The next topic that we wanted to explore and the final topic is around caring for yourself.

I think we can't be talking about this without talking

about caring for ourselves.

Self-care is really a critical component of the storytelling process, knowing that because your story has value, you have value and your wellness is a priority.

So it's important to think about what boundaries you may set in the interest of maintaining your well being through the process.

So it may mean building in protected time for yourself to allow for recovery after you tell your story.

We have been talking about cost in one way, but really there's another cost to story storytelling, and that's the personal toll that it takes on us.

And so it's paying attention to that and, you know, learning to mend ourselves and take care of ourselves.

And so any other reflections?

Thank you, Rebecca, for your comments on this.

Lenny, do you have any words to share on caring for yourself in this process?

>> Oh, my goodness, yes.

Self-care is very important to me, but my self-care

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entails a lot of different things.

I love to read books.

You'll always see or hear about me being in coffee shops.

But one of the things I also do too is that even though I don't go to therapy often anymore, like I used to, but I still go and do check-ins.

Especially when it comes to grief or something that's just really hard for me to handle.

But also too what I do is I usually go and sit with elders within my community.

You know, elders who I feel safe with, elders who are going to share knowledge with me, elders who are going to remind me to be in a place that's negative so my self-care entails a lot of different things.

But most of all just really taking care of myself.

Making sure that I make time for myself daily.

I don't know, self-care is really important to me.

It's like one of my -- most important things in my life is taking care of myself because I can't help others if I'm not helping myself.

>> Yeah.

Thank you, Lenny.

How about you, William?

>> So I liken self-care to what flight attendants say

on the airline.

When a flight attendant says the oxygen mask will fall from the compartment above and whose mask are you going to put on first?

That is my mask.

We have to put our own mask on first.

Even if we have children on board, are we going to expect our children to figure out how to put our masks on when the instructions may not allow for that access?

So I think that this is all about me.

This is all about me because if I cannot support myself and focus on my own healing and focus on that, then I'm probably not going to be able to focus on anybody else.

I have three points that I think are important here.

One of them is we don't have to see a therapist, I'm glad, Lenny, you mentioned it, that there's other things other than therapy, but we do our check-ins, we don't have to be with a therapist for it to be therapeutic.

That healing can happen outside of that, but healing happens in relationships, so it's about building relationships with trusted visits that we can talk with and hear feedback from.

So number two, I think that before I go on, you know, I use thing that if an agency is willing to keep me there

for two days one day past the speaking day and I'm able to juggle that, I always try to put in an extra day for myself so that I can actually relax and go around.

And one of the things I always do is I think about the time before I speak and post-speaking because I know that after I speak, I'm going to talk to about 20 people and they're going to be telling me their stories.

And so I've got to be prepared for that.

I've got to be prepared for that and because that's a lot of weight to take to the hotel room and then sit there with all of these stories.

So who do you have?

And so I always actually have a team, this one person, I take my grandmother sometimes to ground me after everything, and I go out to eat or something like that or go to the pool or do something, but have something available that you do that you like to actually decompress because it can be very difficult when we're getting off the stage and telling our story.

And so I think those are the three key things I think that are important for me is just own your time, this is time management, and when we speak, you know, try to

figure out how we can get the best out of the speaking engagement that supports our well being at the end of

the day.

>> Thank you.

And as you said, this is all part of valuing ourselves, right?

That's what we're exploring today.

So remembering that that's a really critical component of it.

So unfortunately we are at time.

I know we could probably talk for more hours on this topic, and I'm so grateful for today's panelists and all of your really valuable contributions to this discussion.

So thank you, William, thank you, Lenny, thank you, Rebecca, and thank you, Annika.

I'd also like to thank our captioner for today's webinar, Megan.

And I want to close out with some reminders.

First, while your voice is unique and your message is critical, what gives your story the most value is you. And by bringing your whole self-to this work, you will encourage others to do the same.

And inspire people to value each other's life stories.
Remember you are a catalyst for change.

We really appreciate you spending time with us today,
discussing this topic, being part of this growing

initiative, this growing speakers' initiative.

If you're interested in joining our Speakers Bureau,
please reach out to us.

You can access our speakers guide and pocket resource
on VAWnet, and stay tuned to everything we're talking
about on our project, Facebook.

Again, thanks for spending time with us.

If you'd like to chat any unanswered questions in the
chat box, I will share them with our panelists and ask
them to provide responses so that you can receive all
of that in a follow-up e-mail.

So, again, thank you, William, Rebecca, Lenny, Annika.

Thank you so much, you've been wonderful.

Your feedback is really important to us, so as you
close out of today's webinar, please be sure to respond
to the survey.

And thanks again, everybody.

Goodbye!

>> Thank you, everybody.

>> Thanks, William.

Thanks, Rebecca, thanks, Lenny.