

Live captioning by Ai-Media

(Music plays)

SPEAKER:

Greetings, everyone. And welcome today to of NRCDV is National Prevention Town Hall. Prevention is radical, shifting power, taking risks and showing up. I am Leletha Marshall and I serve as five President of advancement and organizational sustainability for the national resource center on domestic violence.

I will be your MC for today. At this time, please turn your attention to our training Institute director Ivonne Ortiz.

IVONNE ORTIZ:

(Speaks alternative language) Welcome, happy Latina heritage month, NRCDV is committed to create accessible and multilingual spaces. That is why we are offering live interpretation services. If you need to access interpretation in Spanish, click on the interpretation globe and select "manage". For everyone else that wishes to listen to the English version, please select "English". Thank you.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Now for some brief housekeeping notes. We are recording the event and are sharing through a website. We are offering a live caption feature for all of our events. You can access this feature by clicking on caption at the bottom of your screen. The Q&A feature provides an opportunity for attendees to answer questions for the presenters to respond. Remember, the public chat is open and visible to everyone participating in this webinar session.

Please reach out to our staff if you are experiencing ongoing technical issues but please note our limited capacity to address issues while the meeting is running. Before we turn the floor over to our presenters, we would like to remind you that the wellness room is available to you throughout the event.

Because presenters will be discussing their experiences of racial trauma, this is meant to be a place of respite for those who may need to step away. NRCDV staff will be present in this space sharing videos meant to soothe and heal. They are available to talk if that is requested.

You can access the space at any time by clicking on the breakout room icon at the bottom of your screen. When the wellness room box pops up, hover over the number in the right-hand corner and the word "join" should appear. Click on that to join the wellness room.

Be aware that other participants can see who has visited the room. If you would like to anonymously step away, you can physically leave or closeout of zoom and rejoin at any point. Please remember to take care of yourself. All of this will also be in the chat so you can reference it at any time.

Now I ask you to join me in welcoming NRCDV's director of program prevention Casey Keene.

CASEY KEENE:

Hello. On behalf of all of us at NRCDV, welcome to day two of our National Prevention Town Hall. I am coming to you today with a very full heart. With deep gratitude for this space and for the collective power that is in it.

I want to take a moment to appreciate our presenters from yesterday. Renee Kim, Darren J Dorsey, (unknown name), Elyse Moore (unknown name), Tami Truett Jerue, Jennifer (unknown name) and Claire Ferrera.

They gave us so much of themselves. Their passion, their pain mother wisdom and their truths. Their stories resonated with her own experiences and what we know to be true. And they enforced what we know we must do to bring our actions and our values into alignment.

We must shift power, we must take risks, we must show up. I want to allow a moment for us to take in the graphic recordings from yesterday's session. That Andre Medina captured for us. While we share these, I also want to remind you how important it is that we translate this learning into action.

The pallets from yesterday are still available to you. We encourage you to revisit them and share the concrete actions that you will take to move this work forward. I see a lot of bold and courageous actions in there already. Let's support each other in following through.

Let's hold each other accountable. After today's town hall is over, let's stay connected through our learning community, advancing collective liberation. Thank you Breckan Winters for putting those links in the chat.

Today sessions will uplift the value of community driven, culturally rooted prevention strategies. And explore our readiness to shift power and leadership to and anti-Blackness in our movement. Andre Medina from on the right mind will be capturing today's session through life graphic illustration.

To view their progress, you can look for Andre in the participants list and view or pin their art. We will also share their illustrations at the close of each session. And you will have the opportunity to reflect on them as you consider your action steps related to the content.

As you take these in, I would like to recognize the amazing team that has helped to put this event together. My NRCDV teammates have been working hard behind the scenes to support this event, created in service to the vision and leadership of our planning team.

That includes Tami Truett Jerue, from the Alaska native women's resource Center, Elyse Moore -- and Jennifer (unknown name). From the California partnership to end domestic violence. Ashley (unknown name) Gimenez from prevent connect and valor US. Megan Sure from the Oregon coalition against domestic and sexual violence, Darren J Dorsey from routing movements, and (unknown name) from

necessary interruptions and the social Justice fund Northwest.

Friends, let's think boldly together today. And let's lean in to our collective power. Thank you so much.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you, Casey. Now we ask that you please turn your attention to Tami Truett Jerue executive director of the elastic -- Alaska native women's resource Center.

TAMI TRUETT JERUE:

I want to say that because land acknowledgments are so important, because traditional people cannot be erased and other times traditionally a lot of people are not on their traditional lands. Unfortunately in Alaska many of the people up here have been forcibly removed from their original lands.

So, this is another way of recognizing, but also finding out if you're interested in this story. The story of the history of the land that you reside on. So I will go ahead and do the acknowledgment, much like yesterday.

For thousands of years the Denae people of the lower Tanana River have cared for this place that I sit on, known as Fairbank. So I would encourage all of you to put your feet on the ground, take a deep breath and just think about that. Who lived on that land previous two buildings being built? Infrastructure that surrounds you? Think about that.

There are sustainable and symbiotic relationships with animals water and land which is made Fairbanks where I reside currently what it is today. These relationships are embedded with the Denae language. Please place both feet on the ground like I said, it's really important to potentially connect with our ancestors and where we lived.

Excuse me. As a step towards reconciliation we acknowledge the Indigenous stewardship and histories, this is to open relations to the indigenous people is about personal work and self-examination. As I've said many of the people in most of our indigenous people identify as the people in some way in their language, may have been removed from their traditional lands but then have claimed lands that they were forced into for the most part.

The work that-- this is work that we need to do ourselves, it isn't forced work, I think it's exploring work. I love history, and I just feel there's a connection with ancestors and I think that it's important to understand where the land that we live on came from, or who had it, I think like they say, stewardship in the beginning.

You know, the work - because everywhere in this country and others there is and always will be indigenous land - land acknowledgment is about recognizing and thanking indigenous people for your sustainable care and way of life in a place.

Wherever we live there were indigenous peoples who cared for the land, and that is the acknowledgment of their stewardship. And I can't repeat this enough, if you are interested I think it's

really an important little bit to go ahead and explore whose lands you may reside or work on, (Speaks Indigenous language).

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you Tammy, now we are pleased to pass the floor to life coast activists and mentor Renee Kim.

RENEE KIM:

Hello everyone it is great to be back with you for the second day of this town hall, my neighbors are having tree work done so in the honor of mindfulness we are going to block those chainsaw noises out. Anyway, alright, I hope you had a good evening last night. That you were able to take care of yourself and do whatever it is that you needed to do to feel refreshed today.

I wanted to start today with talking about the spiritual journey. As I shared with you yesterday, I was raised in church, and I was taught that thou shall not lie. But you know what? We lie to ourselves every day.

We tell ourselves that we can do it all, that we can make people happy, we can help everyone, we can do less at work-- we do more, excuse me, with less at work and in our home life. Or we tell ourselves "I can't do that" or "I shouldn't do that, not now" "I'm not sure" or "I'm not good enough". "Maybe I'm not ready?".

Each of these sentence starters are like flattening your fingers with a mallet, because you're counting down all the reasons why you can't do or say or be something. You keep thinking about this until hopefully one day you will have an awakening, and you will realize, wait a minute, I can do this, I can say that, and I can be whatever I want to be.

Because no one is holding me back except for myself. The lie I told myself was that I was not very smart, or wasn't pretty like the white girls, and no one really loved me, not even my birth parents.

I believed this for many years. Then one day I learned more about the art of self reflection and found out that I am not only smart, but a truly deep thinker. Beautiful because of my humor and loved by people who see me.

We all have a narrative that we have held onto and been told to by the people around us, and it's time that you re-create that story and make it even more powerful than you ever imagined. Because you can do this.

Well, friends, my spiritual journey has not been what was taught to me as a young child. It has been more of our walking through life, changing the lens of my glasses to see things in a new way rather than in a set of dogmatic rules to live by.

When I first started my business, I shared an office with a wise woman, and we were having coffee one day and she said "you know, when I listen to you talk about all the jobs you've had, the process you went through to get them and how you felt once you got there and when you left, I truly believe

that you have been on the spiritual journey."

I was taken aback and pondered this statement. How does one define and identify their spiritual journey? Well, I believe it can be found in your career path. Your relationships. Your spending habits. The food that you eat. They are all kinds of ways.

It can make you feel comfortable or uncomfortable, and that's OK because they are all part of your life's personal roadmap. A spiritual journey is somewhat of an -- abstract concept, and yet most of us know what feels right to us and what feels wrong.

When things feel right you usually have been able to listen to your gut and your heart and your head, and you are able to make a decision that feels clear and centered. When a wrong decision has been made you feel that pit in your stomach, like when you're coming down from a roller coaster.

Maybe you can't sleep well. Maybe you ruminate too much over nothing. I believe that the spiritual journey is when you can learn to listen to your gut, tune into how your body is feeling. Calm your mind and be at peace with the decision that you made.

I will never be done with my spiritual journey, and I suspect you won't be either. When you think about all the emotional labor that goes into this work, think about how tenfold that is for people of color.

We are not just add on services, like when I worked at the GAP and you add on a T-shirt. And that's how I feel sometimes when working in this movement.

White lead programs with the most money often come up with ideas of how to add on culturally specific services and staff, but they forget about all the support, mentoring and leadership development that needs to come with it.

As someone who led statewide workgroups for communities of color, I met a ton of brilliant and passionate people who want to bring their full selves to this work, they had amazing experiences in human resources, finance, customer service, and they could have risen up to be the next Executive Director or finance Director.

But these people usually left their jobs within two years. They would call me for support on how to transition away from the field and it broke my heart. Because this work is so needed. A trend I have seen in domestic violence agencies since the 1990s is that the baton of leadership is passed from one white Executive Director to another, and oftentimes board members become executive Directors.

In the 2000's it seemed that people were coming into this work with masters degrees and were and still are surpassing staff who have worked at the agency since its inception, but kept at the front-line level and never promoted into leadership.

Oh, they might've gotten some leadership opportunities like, can you organize our annual volunteer recognition and highlight one of our volunteers of color? Or, it would be so great if you could come to

the board meeting and talk about your bilingual program, and maybe you can even bring a participant and have them share their story with the board.

You know what's even worse? Is when we put people of color in leadership and Director roles and expect even more from them than their white counterparts.

We expect them to champion all issues around diversity and inclusion and mostly inside, we want to know if they think we are racist.

There's one more thread to this story that is even more painful, and I have watched it come to life more often than I would like. A person of color is finally elevated to the leadership role they deserve, however many of their mentors were white so they begin ruling like their mentors. And internalize their own oppression, and never support people of color in their own agency.

It is so disappointing to watch, and even more so I feel a ton of compassion for their hearts and their souls. I think what could have been done differently to help this person thrive?

This really sets people up for failure. This is such an unfair way to promote people, and then we wonder, don't things change in this movement? You know, where I found salvation? I found it working in the DV movement, because it was in this work Rob began to build the foundation of who I am today.

I left my abusive marriage, I worked as a volunteer coordinator, listening to women tell me their stories of abuse. The same stuff that was going on in my home, but I kept denying. Remember the person who was so mad at me for uninstalling the internet? Well, she and I have been friends for over 30 years.

Healing takes time, when one of those gifts of healing is resiliency there's a beautiful concept called the wounded healer. I never really thought about it until I started writing for this event. I have a hunch that many of you have these characteristics. You have helped people since you are a child. You look at all of the experiences is an opportunity for growth.

And you are able to find common chaos. True liberation is attainable if we continue to work to dismantle racism, anti-Blackness and oppression. And call out when we see others and ourselves exhibiting white supremacy culture in our words and our actions.

I truly believe that we can create a world free from violence and bring up the next generation of leaders in this work to feel seen, heard and valued. Thank you.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you, Renée. It is now time to transition to our first session today Rooted in Community Reflections on a 20 Year Journey. Please turn your attention to our town hall moderator NRCDV's director of racial equity and social change Jaqueline Miller who will introduce our speakers.

JACQUELINE MILLER:

Greetings, everyone, thank you Alisa. It is great to be with everyone on day two. Tara Peterson is a recognized expert in the field of violence against women. And is responsible for the executive and administrative leadership of the YWCA Glendale and Pasadena which strives to eliminate racism and empower women.

Tara has played a pivotal role in revitalizing the agency's 95 year legacy of supporting local women and girls by expanding programs and reach and igniting a change in the culture and conversation around gender and racial equity in Glendale and surrounding communities.

Tara cofounded and leaves the coalition for an antiracist Glendale which helped draft the city of Glendale's historic son downtown resolution. Apologizing for his racial exclusionary history as a son downtown. Tara brings more than 20 years of experience addressing domestic violence, youth violence, sexual assault and reproductive rights.

And also, Zoe Flowers is an author, content creator, healing practitioner whose work can be found in several anthologies, journals, and interviews. In 2004, Zoe interviewed survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

From ashes to angels dust, a journey through womanhood is the book that emerged from those interviews. Since then, Zoe's conducted listening sessions with survivors of violence across Florida about shelter services, tribal elders, in Canada about missing and murdered indigenous women, Black students at the University of Florida and Florida A&M, University about the University's response to them during COVID-19.

And black lives movement community members and advocates in the US, London and Canada about sexual assault and goober rideshare service and advocates and executive directors across the US and territories about racial inequity in the gender-based violence movement.

Will you join me in welcoming Tara and Zoe? Thank you.

ZOE FLOWERS:

Thank you so much. Tara and I wanted to start with a grounding. So, I want to just invite you all to take everything out of your hands if you have anything in your hands, unless you are driving, if you are driving don't do this. Just go ahead and let your shoulders drop.

Your hands can be up or down on your thighs if you feel like you need a little bit more routing right now you can place your hands face down on your thighs.

And we invite you to just take a deep breath and--in, exhaling out. Taking another deep breath in and just giving yourself a thank you and acknowledgment for showing up anyway. In the midst of all the other things we have going on we continue to show up. Just wanted to give this acknowledgment for that and I'm going to turn it over to Tara. Go ahead and open your eyes. I can't hear you.

TARA PETERSON:

Can you guys hear me now? OK, sorry about that. Thank you Zoe so much for that grounding and my name is Tara Peterson. I am the CEO of the YWCA Glendale and Pasadena. It is an honor to be here in community with you all.

I feel extremely honored to be joining Zoe Flowers as part of this presentation and conversation that we are going to have. Both Sally and I worked in the movement for over 20 years in a variety of capacities at the national state and local level. Today we both continue to do the work.

In different ways. But we are still here in this movement and have been on this journey, parallel journey together for a very long time. So we are going to reflect back on our journey, share some of the work that we did together in California around prevention and also begin to share some of the work we are now doing through the lens of racial justice and antiracism.

With that, we will get the conversation started and we will start talking with you Zoe about what inspired you, what inspired your journey into this movement? You are on mute.

ZOE FLOWERS:

Thank you. I did just launch into the grounding so I just want to give my pronouns, they are she/her. I am calling in from Connecticut so this is the original land of the (unknown name) and many named and other unnamed tribal communities and you may see an errant cat, I just want to warn you if you see a tail I'm trying to keep them out of the place but (Laughs) He wants my attention today.

Probably just because I am doing this. So I came into the work as a survivor who did not know I was a survivor. I just thought that I had dated a person who had anger issues. Somebody that I could help. With their anger. Somebody that I could make, if I showed them love I thought that they would be living back and that did not happen.

I basically just answered an ad in the newspaper so that tells you how long ago that was for an office manager position, at a coalition. And came to the coalition and started reading everything there was and realized that there is a name for what I went through and so many other people went through it and there are all these people working on it.

And that is when I was able to put a name to what I had been through. That kind of changed everything. What about you?

TARA PETERSON:

I came into this work when I was listening to Renée talk and when she get into the to thousands it all sounded very familiar because that was the time I was introduced to the word. I was starting in a space working with pregnant and parenting teens and as I was working with these young girls, mostly girls of color, mostly girls that lived in poor communities, with limited access to health and education, and as I started having conversations with them, there was one common theme with many of these girls in that they had either, were experiencing some form of violence in their life from their boyfriends or family members, or they grew up witnessing their own mom as children of domestic violence.

So as I was doing this work and we were thinking about preventing teen dating violence I remember feeling a disconnect of how can we talk about preventing teen pregnancy if we are not talking about preventing the violence against women and children?

And I found an ad in the paper, similar, to an organization that was hiring a shelter hotline worker. That is the I answered. I was brought in for an interview and was immediately asked if I would rather take the position of African-American outreach counselor. That was kind of the thing in the late 2000's, there were titles that were very tokenized and I was so naïve I did not realize that.

As a young African-American woman who just graduated who had her Masters degree, I also recognize that I was coming from a place of privilege. And so I really felt honored to have that title (Laughs) I was like "yes! I want to be, I identify as a black woman, I want that in my title. How cool is that?" But then I quickly realized as I accepted the job, because I could not find anyone else, that I was faced with barriers of how my going to do this work if I am expected to bring women of color together which was my role to support them, provide support group but I was given this curriculum that I was like... If I bring this curriculum into the support group with these women of color, these Black women, they are not going for it.

It was like, you want me to take the curriculum used for all of your other mainstream groups but present it in these group of women of color because I'm a woman of color? Therefore you think it translates. So I felt that immediately and had to really think of different strategies and ways to really create a safe space for the African-American women that I was working with at that time.

And luckily enough, when you talk about taking risk, because it was an African-American woman support group and I was the only Black woman of the organization, it was closed to only black women's was able to do whatever I wanted to do in that group. There was no supervisor that was gonna come in and observe me (Laughs). I said "forget this curriculum." In the book that we focused on is change, change, change.

Everybody who came into this woman as a -- movement as a black woman in the early 2000's is aware of the book. That was our curriculum. That was our Bible and that is how I was introduced into this work.

ZOE FLOWERS:

--Wow. I love that.

TARA PETERSON:

I want to talk about how we came together because we kind of book came into this movement and one thing I have always felt like in this work as I have always felt supported in this work. I had Black women who were mentors for me, I also know that as a woman of color, as a biracial woman of color, there is privilege that comes with that.

In the way that I look I also know there is privilege that comes with that. But I have been really

privileged and fortunate to be able to do this work and when I began my prevention work, I was at the state coalition. Which is also a privilege. You get access to a lot of information and resources.

So when I reflect back on the early prevention work I am curious around your journey as coming into California as a darker skinned sister coming to work for me which I was so grateful for, what was your journey like in doing prevention work early on in California, how did that work look like to you?

ZOE FLOWERS:

Yeah, it was really... I think we did really good work. I talk about a lot of the early work that we did quite a bit. Moving from Atlanta to Sacramento, yes it was a little bit of a culture shock.

But, I really, the idea of prevention really resonated with me. I did not know about prevention, I was firmly entrenched in intervention work at that time. But that position as a Delta coordinator came about at the partnership, what really resonated with me was the opportunity to talk about the world that we wanted to see.

That was the thing that really jumped out at me about prevention at that time. It was very clear, and there was even language about sort of we are creating the world that we want to see and that is how I lived my whole life.

So there were many other positions at the coalition at that time and when I saw that when I was like "this is me. This is the one I want." There was a lot of freedom because it was kind of the beginning. I don't think there was a Delta coordinator, I think... I was the first one, right?

TARA PETERSON:

Yes.

ZOE FLOWERS:

It was 20 years ago, I can't remember (Laughs). There was a lot of freedom and what we were able to do within the partnership but at the same time, with it being a CDC project, there were a lot of restrictions and things like that coming down from the top so a lot of the work that I did at that time was working with six local programs that were doing the prevention strategies in their towns and cities, and I also did a lot of translating. Like taking the ideas that they had as local programs and really helping them translate it into something that the CDC would not send back or have a lot of questions on.

And I did a lot of helping them to put language to what they were doing. Because I don't think that we got a lot of that. Coming into the work, a lot of times just coming into the work even at the coalition level, my first coalition, it was kind of just like "welcome to the work, here is the file, all the six people who came before you. Good luck figuring it out."

I think at the same time we had the benefit of a lot of conferences, a lot of meetings, that was kind of how you and I met, was at a conference. So there was opportunities for learning at the coalition level if you wanted it, not so much at the local programs.

And so I tried to do a lot of, again, translating their ideas into the sort of higher level language. I also did a lot of traveling around the state talking about prevention. There was a lot of resistance from programs about, is this prevention money going to interrupt the intervention strategies and the intervention works in the shelter work? There was a lot of that, so we had a lot of calls with people, really training them on how intervention and prevention actually work together.

Because one of the things we knew was once we started talking about prevention, hotline calls went up, right? Shelter stays went up. So it was really important for folks to understand how the two things could work together.

There was also a lot of focus on collaboration. Again, to get these very high level, you know, language. I didn't come from prevention, I loved the Public Health model, I love the social ecological model. The prevention principles, getting to outcomes, all the devaluation stuff that Tara was like great at. I definitely struggled with that.

So I was learning along with the local programs how to put our own flavor on, again, these high-level conversations that the CDC was having. And one of the other things we did, we got charged with starting a statewide consortium, so I got to work with what was then (unknown term) which is now valor, we worked with them to create a consortium across the state, we did a lot of meetings, regional meetings with the local Delta programs, myself and our empowerment evaluator at the time.

Just, again, bringing people from the local programs together so they could talk about what was working with their programs, what wasn't working. We also did with the national deltas, we did some good stuff - oh hi David! - And there's a lot of stuff happening at the national level, the CDC would fly us to Atlanta and all the national coordinators, and we would get together and talk about the struggles we were having and how to get through all the reporting and all of those things.

So at every level there was opportunities for built-in support. And so yeah, that's what we were doing. And then of course introducing primary, secondary, tertiary prevention. We were doing a lot of that to.

TARA PETERSON:

So when you think about that model in the framework of the Delta project, again it's operating from really this place of privilege and having access, right? And we were part of the mainstream movement as woman of, so we really were able to benefit from that privilege, but at the same time because we were women of we were also able to navigate and implement the program through our lands as woman of, so that's one of the things I've always taken away.

I got introduced to prevention work is one of the original 14 states funded by the CDC for the Delta project, and I remember at that time really struggling with the language in the framing, specifically around primary prevention.

And at that time we were really discussing racial justice or Anti-Racism work, and I remember thinking, how can we take this work into communities of color if they've already experienced so much trauma? So much racial trauma, trauma from just being underserved, poverty. How can we actually translate

this work into communities of color and actually really truly do primary prevention work when the trauma is already there, so I remember really struggling with that language.

But, I was in love with the idea of, how can we prevent it before it starts, right? So for me it was like, wouldn't it be a beautiful world if no one had to be exposed to domestic violence, right? If children do not have to witness domestic violence.

So those are the things that really resonated for me, and how can we take that messaging and really shifted to communities in the work that they are already doing? And how can we say that this work you are doing at this black church every Sunday with these women is prevention work, right?

It may not have an ecological model, it may not have a program evaluation and outcomes, but the work that they were doing, that grassroots work is really prevention work. So that was what resonated for me.

Working at the coalition level, again, I've always felt a deep sense of privilege to be able to be in those rooms and have those difficult conversations. But as I look back I realize that there was a missed opportunity, because even though we were talking about intersectionality and we were comfortable talking about intersectionality through the lens of how it intersects with violence against women, but if we take that concept out in terms of domestic violence or the domestic violence, it really felt like we weren't having the tough conversations around race and racism and the impact that oppression has on communities of color. Specifically black communities.

As far as the intervention of community violence, sexual violence, state violence. And so, I felt like we weren't able to go into that deep place but I still feel like that work was very groundbreaking and really was-- really helped transform my career as well. So--

ZOE FLOWERS:

No, go ahead.

TARA PETERSON:

I think I wrapped up.

ZOE FLOWERS:

I think you are right. I mean, there definitely was not explicit conversations happening at that time in the way that we are talking about them now. I think that I was always shocked, because I was still early in the work, really, at the level of whiteness in these spaces.

And remember leaving meetings because I just felt like, ain't nobody here, y'all ain't serious, what are we even doing here? And staying at other tables because I felt like I had to stay there, right? Just this very old place. Yeah.

On the one hand being like, if I'm not here the nobodies going to raise these issues, but at the same time I'm here and if I raise these issues and nobody does anything about it, I'm going to be mad, so

there was always that piece too.

TARA PETERSON:

Absolutely, I think I felt the same way, always feeling torn. I really appreciated the opportunity, and I even think about this framing, the opportunity I was given, the opportunity to be in the space with all these other leaders across the nation, mostly white leaders, really feeling like I'm from a place like "Wow I get to be in this space, rather than I deserve to be in this space because my voice is equally important in this space that I had to really find a way to make sure that I owned that, and I really just embraced that instead of feeling like I wasn't deserving to be in the space.

So when I think about just the work that we were doing and doing it from a lens of being a woman of color and being a black woman, and through our own lived experiences, I think that was the only way we knew how to do the work, and we understood how important race and racism wasn't how it was operationalized and how White privilege was really embedded into our work, recognizing there were opportunities for us to benefit from that privilege.

But then how do we take that privilege and create opportunities and space for other people? And I think that's one of the things I did as a leader because I have the ability to hire folks, right? And I look-- I specifically looked for Zoe and recruited Zoe, and it was because I felt a deep sense of responsibility for making sure that I am also lifting while I climb, right? And that was a huge part of kind of how I approached the work.

So, that I think is really important to share is that how can we as women of, especially someone who's working in a mainstream organization, not take on the values of dominant culture? And it can be really difficult to not do that, right?

Given your funding sources, the access that you have, the relationships you have with community members, and you have to really be intentional about that. So I was really proud of the work we were able to do together in California.

ZOE FLOWERS:

Yeah, and I think that-- so, you are definitely very intentional about your hiring, and I don't think I probably ever said this to you out loud, but one of the things I so admired about how you led and how you lead is you always have this team aspect, and I wonder if that's because of all the sports., Because it's always a team thing right?

It was always very intentional. And a lot of things we did in the black community we did outside the collision, so now we have this privilege, so it was like, OK let's bring together black organizations in LA, let's do that. Let's find out what happening locally in Sacramento. So I would go when force my way into events to talk about domestic violence and things like that in the black community, or in churches.

So we did a lot of things outside because we realize that there really was only so much you can do within the coalition structure.

TARA PETERSON:

Absolutely, and Lavonne, I'm so glad you are here, sister so good to see her name. And that's another example, I mean as an Executive Director of the coalition, which I didn't start in that place, right? I was meant toward and groomed to become the Executive Director and I had the support of women of color in the movement so it made it so much-- while he pretty much told me I had no choice but to apply for the job, that's how I became the Executive Director of the partnership when a group of black women who were my mentors in California had a meeting and basically said Tara, you are going to apply for this job. And if you don't get it you are going to develop your exit strategy.

And that was the messaging I got from women of color leaders that gave me the courage to actually believe that I can actually not only apply for this job but I should be the one to get this job based on the work that I've done within that organization.

So, I always really felt really blessed to be able to have that type of mentoring and support that I know a lot of other women of colored don't get when they come into mainstream organizations. And then being able to be in a position of power and make decisions about who gets to be the keynote of your statewide conference.

I remember when we brought in Lavon, it was amazing to our statewide conference in Sacramento, I remember when we brought in early, early, the struggling!

ZOE FLOWERS:

I'm just saying!

TARA PETERSON:

So I remember us being in these spaces and really making those moves and taking them and it was just a really great thing and as I think about my journey, given that I still work in mainstream, I'm the CEO of a YWCA which comes with a lot of legacy, history and the women's movement, funding and resources and when I came into this organization, like most of us domestic violence organizations we were discussing the intersection between domestic violence and racism.

But I really felt like we need to take a deeper look at the work that we were doing. So when he came into the organizations and started to look at our policies and procedures at his the organization they were very dominant culture behavior. Because I was a woman of color in a position of power I was able to shift those things. I was able to change our curfew from 6 PM at the shelter to 11 PM.

Make key decisions on like, no we are not going to lock up every single product that we have. We are going to put these products out for the women and they can take what they need. Changing that type of... That approach to our work and so it was really an amazing opportunity to do really good work, work that I've learned about the coalition and then bring it to the local level.

The other thing I feel like once I started working in a mainstream organization as a woman of color, I also work in a very, in a community that is a very close knit community that is 2% African-American. I

was wondering like how can I do this work from a space of a woman of color in a community where Black people make up 2% of the population? How can I address issues that does not address it from her perspective of racial justice?

One of the things that was really inviting to me about working for YWCA is the mission statement of eliminating racism and empowering women. Even though this organization was not doing racism -- racial justice work at that time, being an African-American woman and coming into the space I had to also be very couple. -- careful

I cannot just enter the space talking about Black Lives Matter. For me one of the strategies was kind of figuring out where people are at. Where is the line? If I can walk to that line and slowly begin to push it, so that we can begin to have these conversations about race and racism, and how they impact not only our services, but also how it is existing within the system that we are working in.

And so, I have been really fortunate to be able to move the needle in a very close knit organization and really separate the work, recognizing that racial justice work is prevention. It is prevention. Racial justice work is prevention of intimate partner violence.

So we have to do the work, we can do it through intersections, but there are times when we actually need to specifically focus on racial justice work. And, do it from a place that centers Black and brown communities. I hear you, Zoe.

SPEAKER:

Zoe is having trouble hearing or audio so were going to get her connected back in.

TARA PETERSON:

OK.

(Multiple speakers)

TARA PETERSON:

I am trying to find the script here. I want to be aware of the time. Oh, you are back so.

ZOE FLOWERS:

Can you hear me?

TARA PETERSON:

Yes, I was just sharing some of the strategies that I have been able to implement as a woman of color leading a mainstream organization that is in a community that is very close net -- net and we are less than 2% of the population is African-American so being able to really begin to have these conversations in the community but do it in a place of meeting people where they are at but also continuing to push.

And part of the reason why we have to do the work that way is sustainability. So after the murder of

George Floyd, the community turned to the YWCA. We don't have an ACLU, we don't have an NAACP in our community and so the community turned to the YWCA because of our mission. Even though we had no racial justice were, we were not at these tables, it became really clear that we needed to get out in front and we need to make sure we had a statement and I did not ask for permission.

I just did it and I was willing to take whatever risk and that means my board was uncomfortable, if we were going to lose funding, I was willing to take that risk. And thankfully, the risk really, we benefited from that risk. We did lose people, we lost a lot of people, I was personally attacked by people in this community as my own personal agenda because again, here I am back -- a Black woman talking about racial justice work so it has to be my personal agenda. So I was faced with that type of backlash in this community.

But I was also impressed by the tremendous amount of allies and the faith community and we were able to form our coalition for antiracist Glendale which led to the sundown town resolution that was adopted, was the first state in California -- first city in California and now three other cities in California have also passed those resolutions.

So because of that work, we had to also begin to look at our practices internally. As an organization. On the outside I'm talking to folks about centering Black and brown people, looking at centering Black women's voices and peoples lived experiences, how are we doing that as an organization?

So really trying to make sure that we are doing everything in our power to shift dominant culture behavior. So this idea of if you don't have a Masters degree you cannot climb the ladder, does not exist within the YWCA Glendale Pasadena.

We know there are some funders that will say that this is a requirement of funding, and we have been able to navigate those experiences with our funders. To make sure that we are given opportunities to women of color and people of color who have lived experiences and have been working in this movement so I had a lot of, I am really grateful that I have taken those risks instead of just looking at the ground and saying "the grand says no so therefore you cannot have this position."

No, I'm going to reach out to the funder and have a conversation. If that means I have to be the domestic violence director that I will be the domestic violence director but we are going to figure out a way to still uplift people in this organization and not allow those barriers to hold them back.

So that is something that I have been really fortunate enough to do within our organization and really lift people up who were front-line workers, shelter advocates, who are now leading organization, who are now leading our domestic violence education and training, who are now leading our case management or, these are all women of color who started as shelter advocates and they are still here to this day.

So I'm really proud that I was able to create that space and really leverage my power and my privilege to create space. So that again, that is another benefit of working in a mainstream organization, having access to resources.

At the same time, wanting to truly be my authentic self as a Black woman and within this community. So I have been lucky enough to be able to do that, but I also again, it also goes back to this place of privilege. I still present as the biracial woman, nonthreatening woman, until they start talking to me than their public "old man, who'd be invited to this meeting!" (Laughs)

Once they realize my deep commitment to racial justice work I'm sure they get a little fearful but nonetheless, I think that those are some of the strategies of how I have been able to navigate the work around racial justice within a mainstream organization.

I think the challenge and what continues to be a challenge is of course having to navigate this work as a woman of color in a mainstream community. But the other challenge is really sustainability. How do we sustain this work? That is what we are dealing with right now. We started, we had this momentum, we started this coalition, we have volunteers, but women of color in my organization are the ones having to lead to the work.

It is exhausting. And it comes to a place of "how can we sustain this as an organization? How can we sustain this as women of color leading racial justice work in a community that is less than 2% Black?" What is going to be the real significant impact and change? Unless others are leading the work besides women of color.

So that is kind of one of the challenges I think in doing this work in a mainstream organization. How about you, Zoe? Talk with us a little bit about your racial justice work and how you have been able to really create a lien for yourself. I mean you really created the space to do this work.

I think one of the things I think is most is -- interesting for your journey for me as I watched you work in mainstream organizations and on mainstream organizations and through that work, you really have created a space to really, truly be who you are and show up in your ethnic self and I just think that has been a beautiful transformation to watch. So I would love to hear about how you are navigating the space around racial justice and anti-Blackness.

ZOE FLOWERS:

Yeah, it has been hard. It has been really challenging to stay in this work. You know I have been like trying to leave it for 20 years. (Laughs) Just because of all of these things.

I carved away because I just had to. I felt like I was at odds with so many of the organizations that I worked with. I think just because of how I present and my expectations. I expect that we can do this work with joy and fun and laughter and not from a place of crisis.

And all of those things. And in the body that I am in, I feel like I also, like you have gotten a lot of support. I really have to, you know, I was thinking about that today, the ways that have been supported, a lot of the relationships that I made with the early deltas come away-- we are still in communication. I have been assisted in this movement and have been harmed a lot.

And so I had to create that lane for me. Mainly consulting because it is just... It is just better for me (Laughs) To just be a consultant. In this work. But as far as the racial equity framework now, a lot of the work I am doing is with organizations combing through their policies and procedures with a racialized lens.

Going through people's policies and they talk so much about respect so then I'm having conversations with them about people can be respectful and be racist. It happens every day.

So I love that work. I love going in and really seeing what is happening. And doing my best through a healing and wellness process of trying to come to some kind of repair around these issues. It is not always possible.

Because of the ways that things are set up, but that is a lot of the work that I've been doing in the past really two years, really since the racial uprising like you, Tara, someone came to me and was like "you need to start doing this work with shelters. You need to start doing racial equity work with shoulders--shelters" I was like "no, I work with healing and I am an artist." But they said I needed to turn my listening sessions into these DV and sexual assault programs. That is a lot of what I'm doing. I'm branching out of DV NSI so working with organizations around, organizations that work on food and Black farmers and education and weaving a racial equity lens into my work with them as well.

One of the other things that I did most recently is I expanded our social ecological -- economical model to the cultural spiritual ecological model because there are things that are important to me now that I'm paying attention to like the land and so strategies around mentoring people, around their relationship to the land, and reconnection to the land, is in that new model.

We don't talk explicitly about anti-Blackness, at least in the version of the SEM that I was introduced to (Laughs) We were talking about that. But the model I created I really feel like it expands it to talk about white supremacy culture explicitly, anti-Blackness explicitly. Trans phobia exquisitely. So I took each one of the levels and I flipped them a little bit so I have a cultural, spiritual, concentric circle so it is a little different.

Casey, they have the model so hopefully when the materials go out you all can see it. I'm also looking for feedback on it because it is a new model. But I feel like these are just things, these connections are connections that we don't make enough. Particularly when it comes to the land and the way that we sort of call mother Earth "mother Earth" and we treat mother Earth like we treat women identified people. So it's like how can we be doing this antiviolence work and not be connected to the land as well?

So that's how I'm weaving those racial equity.

TARA PETERSON:

Now one of the things before we go on because I want to ask you about your Listening Sessions, one thing you said I had to take a moment to reflect on his feeling both supported by this movement and also feeling harmed by this movement.

And I know I talk a lot about my support, but I also was harmed. And I was quickly reminded that, wait a minute, Tara, you are a woman of color. Once I was in a situation where I was arrested for protecting myself against an abusive partner it became real apparent that people began to distance themselves from me and this movement, and it was the most heartbreaking experience that I experienced, and actually walked away from the collision at that time because of that domestic violence arrest that I had.

And it was heartbreaking because I was like, wait, everything we talk about in our work of supporting women of color understanding the women of our most likely to be-- arrested in domestic violence situations and here I am as a woman of color and a leader that was embraced in love by this movement, but as soon as that experience happened I immediately was like, you are black, Tara. You are a black woman at the end of the day.

It was really heartbreaking to have to walk away from the work. But I know it was also something that I needed to do for my own healing as well. And the beautiful thing about it is, when I was approached about the YWCA position five years later and I was hesitant to throw my hat in the ring because if anyone would Google me they would find out about my history, and with that prevent me from being able to do work in this space again?

And I walked into a board room for my interview with nothing but older white women, and I'm thinking there's no way they're going to pick a black woman to run the YWCA, let alone a black woman who has a history of domestic violence. And they supported me 100%, and that's how I was able to come back into this working to do this work from that space.

And so I just wanted to share that story because I do talk a lot about how I feel supported, but I also was harmed. And you know, it is still difficult to talk about and share, but we have to remind ourselves, if we are truly going to be with supporting women and women of their history and background, whether they've been formally arrested, formally incarcerated, we can't allow that to stop us from creating a space for those people to be in this movement.

And so, I just wanted to share that because I just felt moved to share that with folks, so just thank you for bringing that up in creating that space for me to share that, Zoe, and that's one of the things I really love about you and your soul, is that you create safe spaces for people to share their stories and to feel - and I see all the love coming in so thank you thank you thank you! - But that's your Listening Session Zoe - I know, right? - You are with me to that journey, so you were a big part of watching my transition, the fact that I'm here now, sitting in front of all of you really feels good because I feel so many familiar names and it just feels good to be back in this space in community with you all.

So with that, Zoe, I think we only have 10 more minutes. I know there may be questions, but again I think the Listening Sessions that you are doing, I want to create space for you to share that these are very important. It's very important that we are listening to folks, right?

So can you talk a little bit about what your listening strategies of your Listening Sessions and what you

are hearing from people now that we are in this space of talking about racial justice and Anti-Blackness and violence against women?

ZOE FLOWERS:

Yeah, absolutely. So, you know, one of the things that I'm hearing across the country and in the territories, you know, sadly, is that not much has changed since the 20 years that we came into the work. A lot of the same harms that you shared that have happened to me are still happening, you know?

And I guess on the flipside - what's the flipside? (laugh) - I don't know the flipside is! So yeah, I don't know what the flipside is, but I think what is exciting, I guess, is that I'm being prompted to do that, I guess that's the flipside.

So I'm doing a lot of listening sessions with programs.

TARA PETERSON:

The way we can to you much your voice went away a little bit.

ZOE FLOWERS:

Sorry, let me make sure that is up. When I was with the women of network they tasked me with leading a project and we decided that we wanted to do a series of town halls.

So I was able to do them around the country with folks about the ways that they were being victimized in Uber rideshare service. And so, that was really outside of the DVC, I was asking them why they think historically and currently marginalized people are more susceptible to having these crimes enacted upon them, and after the first iteration of Listening Sessions we decided we want to start to make global connections.

So I was able to go to Uber in London and talk to the women of, their of their experiences at uber, what they thought about the victimization that was happening in the rideshare community.

I was able to meet with the Muslim organization that works on female genital mutilation, I was able to go to Canada and meet with tribal elders on reserve about their experiences with the missing and murdered indigenous women and trying to organize how transportation could be helpful to them.

And then last year I had a year-long research project with the students at FAMU, and the University of Florida, really try to gauge what the University's response to them was during COVID and during the Black Lives Matter movement.

So I think that while so much has stayed the same, I think that social media has helped a lot to get these messages out. I think that the younger people coming along and constantly pushing and pushing and pushing is really great, and so I think that if there is, again, just sort of the flipside, there were some people coming behind us that are going to take this work even farther, right?

These reports, these things that I'm parsing aren't going to just sit on a shelf, and there are actually people that are willing to take them on.

TARA PETERSON:

Absolutely, and I think one thing that's really important to take on before we end this, is what is our call to action for the folks out there today? What would be your call to action for anyone who's out here listening to our conversation today, and doing this work in this space?

ZOE FLOWERS:

Focusing on your own healing first, or in tandem of doing this work. We talk a lot about liberation now but we are still showing up, you know, traumatized to work, or we are being traumatized at work, or we are the traumatizer at work. And so, we really have to get serious about our healing because I feel we can't take people were we having gone ourselves.

We can give them referrals, we can do all those things but we really have to do our work. A lot of us, we just need to do our work (laugh). So there's that piece, our healing work. And invest in that, right? Racial equity is a part of the work but our healing is also a part of this work.

And trusting black women, you know? You've already heard what Tara has done for so many people. I was able to stay at the women of network for nine or 10 years, the longest I've stayed in any organization which I wasn't afraid of being fired for showing up as myself, I wasn't being survey old, they supported all of my woo-woo ideas and found ways to weave it into the organization, so yes, trusting black women.

And if you do your healing work you will be able to trust yourself and then you will be able to trust black women and other folks, so that's my cold action.

TARA PETERSON:

I love it. No, I think it's a similar thing, I think it's that creating the space for healing for yourself but also for your staff. And I just think that anybody who is in a position of power and has the ability to change things around equity, you just have to do it.

You just do it because it's right. Like, if I need to pay my shelter advocates \$19 an hour because it's right, right? And when California we are a \$15 minimum wage I've made a commitment that no one makes less than \$19 an hour at my organization we will figure out a way to make it happen, right?

And those the risk you have to take because it's the right thing to do, so continuing to take risks, to continue to examine the people who are at the front lines and what are their needs? And if you can't make the risk that I took of moving people within our pay scale, but what are other things that you can begin to offer folks?

What space can we provide folks so they feel supported in this work and supported as they continue to do this work on the front lines? And so, my work is always with front-line advocates, I do this work always thinking about are front-line workers.

And I think we have to center that as well. We have to center the people who are on the front lines and making sure that as organizational leaders we are constantly thinking about them in every policy, every decision-making. They were at the heart of that work, so that would be my call to action.

And so we, how can people find you and support your work? Because I work for mainstream organization but you are a consultant, and I want people to support you in your work and I want people to know how they can contact you and access you.

ZOE FLOWERS:

Yeah, I'm pretty accessible. I put information in the chat, you can definitely-- well, you can definitely buy my books, I have two so I will put the links in the chat. One is From Ashes to Angel's Dust, the journey to womanhood and that's interviews I did with women of color about their experiences with domestic and sexual violence, you can definitely get information on those.

And the second is a book of poetry, but a much I am Zoë Flowers everywhere. Facebook, Instagram, and I will put my information in the chat. How about you?

TARA PETERSON:

Awesome. I just put my emailed in the chat, and so people can definitely feel free to reach out to me and emailed me. But I have to remember, Zoe, when I first got this job five years-- six years ago, Zoe was one of the first people I brought in to do a book reading.

And I remember bringing you to the little small Glendale with no black folks that live here, and you just brought in yourself and you did a whole book reading and book signing. And our community showed up for you and it was so beautiful to see. And I just remember that, so please support Zoe support her books, purchaser books, hire her as a consultant and compensate her (laugh).

ZOE FLOWERS:

Yes, definitely (laugh). It is 10:29, so are we taking questions or are they questions, Casey?

CASEY KEENE:

Thank you Tara, thank you Zoe. We are going to move in to some processing. You have just been amazing. It is not my voice people want to hear right now so if you are all set, we will pass the floor back to our voice, Leletha Marshall. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you Casey, thank you Tara and Zoe. For that powerful, powerful session. At this time, we want to pause, breathe, and reflect as needed on what we just heard so everybody just take the time to take care of yourself.

As we process what we heard in this session. If you need a moment to breathe, remember that the wellness room is available to you. I will pause here to open space to process what you heard in this session. Please use the next 10 minutes to identify what you feel if the call to action and document at

least one concrete action you will take in response to that call.

CASEY KEENE:

This is Casey chiming in with a note from my fellow white identified participants. If you are feeling the need to step away right now, I encourage you to resist that urge. Your discomfort or reluctance to engage is a sign that it is time to lean in and do the work.

We heard some calls to action from Zoe and Tara. Now is the time to reflect on your commitment to change. We are sharing a link in the chat to a Padlet to facilitate your sharing. Inside, you can view the illustration that Andre Medina lovingly captured. Please feel free to use that illustration as a reminder about what was shared today.

We invite you to add your concrete action steps to this Padlet so others can see what you are committed to doing moving forward. You will see the Padlet on your screen now. To use it, go to the link that Breckan Winters Sharon -- shared in the chat and you can click on the + in the bottom right corner.

At this time as you consider your action steps, we welcome you to unmute yourself in this space and share your thoughts about today's session. And while you are getting ready to do that, I will ask Breckan Winters, our chat monitor, to lift up some of the comments that were shared in the chat. Bracken?

BRECKAN WINTERS:

Absolutely, there was a lot of love in the chat throughout the whole session. Especially tomorrow while you are sharing your story. -- Tara

I want to share that Kim brought Beth Ritchie into the space and shared that they did not feel like we could have this conversation without bringing Beth into the space. Lots and lots of love all throughout, echoing that yes racial justice work is prevention work.

We cannot do this work without centering racial justice. Let's see... I am still scrolling through just so much love. (Laughs) To both presenters. And I did want to uplift, there was a moment where Zoe was talking about what is the positive side to the fact that we are still seeing the same problems we always have and Michelle offered, I think the flipside could be more open public discussions of what is really going on. Around harm, racial injustice, and inequities in the movement and not just hidden cubicle conversations.

So thank you, Michelle for that strengths-based perspective. And then yeah, lots of love, echoing that we need to trust Black women, and if anybody else wants to vocalize any reflections in addition to sharing in the Padlet or the chat, please feel free.

CASEY KEENE:

thank you, who would like to share? I see that Cecile has commented in the chat: this has been a

healing experience for me also. So much courage expressed here today. An affirmation that we must have courage and be willing to take risks in our work, especially when in mainstream organizations.

Please, keep your commitments coming in the Padlet.

We will allow a few more minutes for you to think about your action items and add them. Either in the Padlet or feel free to vocalize them in this space or share in the chat. Zoe and Tara, if there are any additional reflections or parting words he wanted to offer we do have the space for that now.

Thank you, everyone for your offerings. Go ahead, Zoe.

ZOE FLOWERS:

I was just going to say I did not have anything to I was just going to ask Terry if she does. -- Tara

CASEY KEENE:

OK, in that case I think we will pass the floor back to our voice.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you Casey and thank you everyone. We will now move to a break. A 30 minute break. Please return promptly at 10 after the hour. For a minute of mindfulness before we move into our next session. As a reminder, you can access the wellness room at any time by clicking on the breakout room button and selecting "wellness room". Please enjoy your break. Take the time to get up and stretch, and get refreshed so you can come back for more powerful and engaging dialogue. Thank you.

(Break)

(Music plays)

SPEAKER:

Recording stopped.

(Music plays)

SPEAKER:

Recording in progress.

(Music plays)

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Welcome back, everyone. We hope you have joined -- enjoyed your brick. Before we begin our last session, engage in a minute of mindfulness with our event Weaver, Renee Kim.

RENEE KIM:

Hello everyone, welcome back. I thought we would take just a minute of mindfulness, to ground ourselves, reset ourselves for the last session. And what I would like to do is invite my friends with the bell, and once I bring it I will walk you through.

(Bell rings)

RENEE KIM:

Just get as comfortable as you can, where you are. You can either close your eyes, or you can move your gaze downward.

And just begin by taking a nice, deep inhale and exhale. At your own natural pace.

And just let go of any anxiety... Any stress... Tension that you may feel. Unlock your jaw. Let your forehead and neck soften. Your shoulders melt away from your ears.

Take another inhale and exhale, again, at your own pace. As you are able, and as you are comfortable, just let your tummy stick out and relax.

Your knees and your ankles, soften. And take one more deeper inhale and exhale...

And truly honor yourself, for being here on this last day. And give yourself lots of love. And comfort.

When you are ready, you can very slowly and gently open your eyes. Or, move your gaze upward. And come back to this space.

And you can stretch... Thank you.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you, Renée, for that wonderful refreshing exercise. I particularly liked when you said, let your tummy stick out... I am thinking to myself, with these pandemic pounds that I have, my tummy sticks out on its own. But I love the exercise. (Laughs)

At this time it is time for our last session, 'Is Our Movement Ready To End Anti-Blackness?'. Despite everything, the overrepresentation of white women and underrepresentation of Black leaders in prevention continues. Please turn your attention to our Town Hall moderator, and our CVD director of equity and social change, Jacqueline Miller, will introduce our speaker.

JACQUELINE MILLER:

Thank you Leletha. Michelle M Osborne, J D is an antiracist facilitator and consultant with expertise in leadership development for both profit and not-for-profit organizations. Racial equity and social justice practice, and the prevention of gender-based violence. A former prosecutor and trial lawyer, she focuses her expertise and years of experience on historic legacies of racism.

The evolution of process. Systems, policies, and cultures in institutions and organizations, and

leadership development for women, girls, and femmes of color. And exploring the roles for women in power and leadership. Michelle also conducts original research related to organization's readiness to become more racially equitable.

Michelle lives in Seattle, with her husband, and a very curious cat. And loves hearing her daughters anecdotes about life, at college. Will you join me in welcoming, Michelle. Thank you.

CASEY KEENE:

Michelle, you are needed.

MICHELLE OSBORNE:

Hello and thank you Jacquelyn for that really kind introduction. Hello everyone, I am so honored and excited to be invited by NRCDV for this opportunity and be and that's really powerful space. I am joining you from Seattle, Washington and the ancestral lands of the co-sailors peoples -- Indigenous peoples. (Land acknowledgment)

It also includes the land of these Indigenous peoples, for whom the city of Seattle is named. I want to thank Tammy earlier today for the beautiful land acknowledgment that has helped me continue to understand why we must do recognitions of who walked and were stewards of the land then and now that we all live and work on.

I also want to thank the ASL interpreters. I will do my best to speak at a measured pace instead of my very usual fast speak and I want to thank the Spanish live translators and wonderful translation that was done in Spanish on my slides, I am really appreciate about that.

Despite the leadership that Black people have offered to freedom and antiviolence movements since the 17th century in this land, our question today must be why is the leadership of Black people so underrepresented in our movement? Thank you for forwarding my slides in advance, we will look at the next slide.

I want to give you a little look at who I am. I am a Brooklyn, New York girl originally who was raised in Michigan. And in Detroit. I was also raised for a couple of years as a child in Nigeria when it was on the lead of the Civil War, finally I was raised in Seattle, Washington.

I was always, as a kid, about equality and equity for girls and women. Especially because I was a child of the tail end of what is now known as the civil rights movement. Even in high school, college, and law school – this was my concern. Where is the equity and equality, particularly for Black women and girls.

I found my way into this work in the 1980s. I hate to say that! My first job out of Lascaux was a prosecutor in a very white County. So whites that there were almost black lawyers in that county. There was one woman of Judge who was not a woman of color. There were eight women in the district attorney's office that I landed then.

I was one of those eight women but I was the only Black attorney in the office for two years. You can imagine that a woman in a situation like that may ask a lot of questions. And I did, I asked questions about the white male normative view of criminal justice.

I was against the death penalty and talked about including Black and Brown people on juries which at the time, was rarely done. I talked about income and race and yes, I was punished for that. My punishment was to be sent to the sex crimes unit, which is what it is still cold in a lot of offices.

I did not see that as punishment at all but if you wanted to get into robbery, punishment, homicide, death penalty cases – I did not want to do those cases. What I found in the sex crimes unit was it was not a punishment for me. It was an opportunity to help women, children, survivors who had largely been ignored by our office.

They felt they were not important crimes and would not advance them in the office. I knew some about the dynamics of sexual assault but I learned so much more about the needs of survivors, who we called, of course, victims.

I learned at that time that what I needed to do was be part of other social justice movements that were supporting the thriving and survival of the types of folks that I was seeing on the other side of the ledger in the court.

Even after I left the DAs office, I continued to volunteer with different social service organizations that work with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. When I finally stopped practicing law and stopped being a civil practice attorney, I continued to work in these organizations.

I eventually worked for a multi-community outreach project for a large domestic violence agency in the San Francisco, East Bay agency. They were wondering why women of color were not using their services. I was given the opportunity with a small staff to explore that and come up with answers and recommendations.

It meant doing focus groups and talking to people and communities that were not being appropriately served. That was a great lesson in hearing, listening, and knowing that the wisdom for how to be served better resided within the communities themselves – not with us at our agency saying, "we think we know what they need."

I want to give a shout out to (Unknown Name) who is my colleague at that agency at the time. It is always nice to see people who you have worked with over the years. I also ran a rape crisis center in Silicon Valley and continued to work with other women of color who were doing this work to ask the really tough questions about why there was so much racism in our work?

Why are we not been recognized not only for work but the ideas and vision we are bringing to this work? All of that stuff was happening to me before the year of 2000. That is not only how long I have been doing this work but how long these questions have been going on. I think what is really important about today is that we continue to look at how long we have been asking these questions of inequity

and equity and leadership by Black and Brown women and people in this movement.

Why has it not shifted? The leadership, the visions in our movement? So I want to, as we look at the next slide, has a -- have us really think about some thoughts for today. I want to put the language and thought that you have been hearing over the last two days but haven't really resonate in your reflection on these questions.

These ideas and concepts include the challenging things that you will be hearing, some of which may be upsetting. I recognize that, particularly for Black folks and folks of color today. It is also the parts that if we cannot talk about it and see it, we continue to ignore it and render it invisible to us.

I want these terms and concepts to be in your mind today. Pro Black, pro blackness, Black people and Black women have always been leaders in this work. For centuries. Remember who they are, their legacy is what we continue to build on today and will in the future.

Trust Black women and trust Black people. We have been showing you the way for centuries in anti-violence and on the issues of social justice and practice, we have not been wrong. Alignment of the values of movement with the so-called values within your agencies and organizations.

As Tara Peterson spoke about just a few minutes ago, many of those values have been created by Black women and Black people and people of color in our movement. Center Black and Brown people's lived experience. D center white people's narratives.

Do not center the major white narrative of how we got here and how we do our work. Shift and change that narrative to include white Black and Brown people has been giving this narrative and movement for centuries. Intersectionality, seeing and understanding it will take you to the door of solutions.

Open communication, transparency, accountability. Being allies and being accomplices. Take the risk. Meet the challenges that antiracism gives us. Did I say listen to and believe Black people and people of color in our movement? We believe women, in our movement we do not yet believe Black women, Black people and people of color.

Elevate Black leadership. Did I say antiracism? I cannot say it enough. Use your power to shift. I want to take a moment here, a lot of white organizations always say, "we do not have power. We are at the mercy of our findings and the rules and regulations we have to meet and what our community will and will not tolerate with respect to diversity and racial equity."

Yeah, you have power. You are running an organization. Step into it. Do not allow your funders to tell you how powerful you can be. You have power, use it for good. Be fearless and never ignore the power of self-care and healing. Racism is trauma. It is trauma to Black people, brown people, nonwhite people.

But it is also trauma to white people. Everyone must heal and take self-care. Do not ignore it. So those are some thoughts and concepts I want you to reflect on as we go through today. Let us look at the

next slide where I want to offer an additional definition to racism that you may already be using.

I want you to think about this expanded way of looking at power when we talk about racism and the power embedded within white supremacy that continues to control racist institutions, systems, and structures in our society. This is Professor Ibram X. Kendi.

You may know him from his books. Stemming from the beginning and history of racism in the United States. His most famous works relate to how to be antiracist. Here is what he tells us on really deepening our view in word on racism and racist institutions, systems and structures in our society. He says, "racism is the marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produce and normalize racial inequity."

"What is a racist policy? It is any measure that produces or sustains inequity between racial groups." What is a racist idea? "It is an idea that suggests one racial group is inferior or superior to another group in any way."

What I love about this quote is he really names what power looks like. He also gives us a direction on how to eliminate racist policies and ideas. He says institutes and policies and antiracist institutions and policies. I am not saying it is simple but that is the map forward we are not always given.

Change out the racism and ideas, put in antiracism. The other thing he is saying is to stop the staff about not being racist. Stop the subject of being neutral on race. Stop the staff about, "I am a good person, I would never be racist. I never owned a slave, I never used the word, I have Black friends..."

He says that is not really what is going on here. Good white people have stood by, not understood, and thereby harm continues. This is not about being a good white person. This is about have you done in the moment a racist thing, said a racist thing, advocated for or been complicit in a racist policy or idea?

What this suggests is that we cannot be in that moment. We cannot therefore perpetuate it. We can actually interrupted. We can stop it, eliminated by being antiracist. He also suggests that because of inferiority, that is another legacy of white supremacy and racism. People of color are also swept up in perpetuating white supremacy.

We can stop it as well in those moments where we begin to feel ourselves being drawn into complicity. He says to be antiracist in your actions, words, advocacy. I find what he is offering us is very powerful, constructive, productive.

Let us look at the next flight now that we have some help in thinking about, "okay, what can I do?" Let us talk about how racism is deeply embedded in our movement to end gender-based violence. If we are still at the... I am kind of aware, we need to get quickly out of that awareness and into accountability. So we can be advocates, and take action. What is the first thing we need to know?

There is a historic legacy in our country, patriarchy, misogyny, racism, including anti-Blackness.

Remember, even within our own movement, there is misogyny, there is patriarchy. How can I help you understand that?

Every time a funder says, "take money under this condition." In that condition does not sit right with you but you take the money, there is some patriarchy and misogyny going on. We are being told as women, primarily women who run these types of anti-gender movements with agencies and organizations that support it, we are being told what can and cannot be tolerated.

And thank you for that, it is not just misogyny it is misogynoir - which is of course, misogyny directed particularly against black women and Black people.

Let's look at the second thing, virtually every institution, system, or structure in our country was first and foremost designed only to benefit and advantage white people, including white women. I ask you to think about law divorcement is an easy way to examine this, and law enforcement of course.

Law enforcement was not designed to protect or benefit Native or Indigenous people, right? What came out of the early iterations of law enforcement, like the night watch, or the slave patrollers, then began to become law enforcement. But at no time was that designed to protect Black people.

If you are running a centuries old enslavement scheme, why would you ever protect law enforcement, for the Black people, the Black bodies you are enslaving? Remember, every institution in this country, education, medicine, healthcare, transportation, incarceration and imprisonment... We could go on and on, were not designed for Black and brown people. We just happened to kind of sort of maybe benefit... Let's not forget that.

The third thing is that for centuries, white people have been socialized consciously and unconsciously, to view Black people as a problematic group of people, including black women and girls. I will not say any more about this, because we all know it is true. Let's not deny it, Black people are seen as some sort of problem that has never been quite fully resolved.

Even in our movement. Can I mention shelters never seem to keep Black women and children very long. Right? The studies have shown over and over again, I will not even quote them here, that on average, black women and children stay in emergency shelters less time and white women and children. And we know why.

Number four, in general, white people do not consider that they have any accountability for the racial discrimination, oppression, and violence that Black people are faced with every day. And if you do not believe that, think about how remorseful white people felt after George Floyd's murder. It was for a few months, but really now we are back at... I do not have responsibility for that as a white person. Why can't that community have more response ability and accountability for itself?

That dialogue happens in our heads because of socialization, even if we are not aware that it is happening. Let's look at the next slide, because I want to give you a couple more things that we have to know and understand to accept what is going on in our movement. White people, including white

women, are socialized to minimize, ignore, discredit, undermine, forget, rendering visible, or view as insignificant the contributions and achievements of Black people, particularly black women. That is a social thing. Even in our movement, we have known better for decades, and we still forget.

When I talk about some of the Black women, and women of color I remember as leaders of this movement, including going back centuries... Sometimes white people do not know what I am talking about. They have never heard... Excited to learn, but they do not know what I am talking about. Because Black women, Black people, and other people of color, we remember and we know.

Why is that? Let's look at number six. White people, including white women, are socialized, consciously and unconsciously, to believe that Black people, particularly black women are never quite ready for leadership roles.

It was so powerful to hear Tara and Zoe's stories in particular this morning, (Unknown Name) and Darren's stories about how they moved forward in this movement yesterday morning. Also, we had another panel that included women of yesterday, I remember Tami, Claire, Jennifer and Elise were part of that panel, who also talked about their experiences.

It was heartening to hear that Tara say that at one point she was told that she needed to apply for this position of leadership. You know, I and a group will support you, and if you do not get it, you need to plan a strategy for walking away and going on to where you will be appreciated your leadership and vision. That is so powerful, and does not often happen for us in this movement. Look at number seven.

Despite the never -- many reports, surveys, troubling events and Black voices lifted against the status quo, the predominately white leadership of our movement has failed to see or include Black leadership.

Just want to make that clear. We are here, and yet we are invisible. We have been erased, we are not remembered, or worse... Our stuff is taken because it is so good, and not acknowledged or credited.

So, that's look at the next slide, and thank you for the reminder to slow my voice a little.

This slide represents a powerful article not yet six months old, that was published in March of this year online. By Mother Jones magazine. This article represents a major shift in our knowledge and awareness of racism in our movement. And also misogynoir.

This is required reading about this is book club material. Everyone's staff should read it. But it is painful reading, it is dense and complex, and nuanced. There is much to be thinking about. Reflecting on, there are many revelations here. You should have many epiphanies as you read it.

This article tells traumatic truths that each of us will recognize, no matter who we are. It is not linear. In this article, we can see the wrongs done, and also some of the answers that are needed.

But is this article being read by people in our movement? There are only three comments the last time I looked. Three comments accompanying this article.

So, what I want to say is, that even after this article came out – I admit I am quoted in the article – so are a lot of other people who are Black and people of color in this movement. But I worked with a sexual assault services agency client after the article came out this year, and the director kept telling me, "I know about the article. I need to find the time to have my leadership team and staff, not only read it but then schedule a time for us to discuss it as an organization."

I encouraged her numerous times to say, yes, you need to do that. To date, that organization has not found the time.

So, that is what is at stake. The article is telling truths, that are harmful, they are about continuing harm without perpetuating harm, about what it looks like up close and personal. It is almost a manual for, how can we have racism in our organization and pretend that we are not? And yet, this is not getting the attention it deserves.

So I commend all of you, this is your homework I am giving you. No I will not check up on you. But particularly, white leadership, including your boards, you must read this and learn from it. And if you need some guides on it, there are people who are willing to help you, and you will of course compensate them for the time and labor that they will put into this. This is key. There is much here that is about the problem in our movement.

Let's look at the next slide. I am quoted in the article as saying this, which I have been saying for years. "Everybody loves to quote Audre Lorde, but somehow nobody wants and Audre Lorde to be their executive director."

When I say that I think you guys know what I mean. Audre Lorde gave us so many directions of brilliance, and vision to follow. In our movement.

Audre Lorde is one of the mothers of our movement, the founding mothers. With her wisdom, gone too soon. And you know, other people that are always being quoted by our movement, Black people, black women in particular, Angela Davis, bell hooks, June Jordan, Kimberle Crenshaw, Maya Angelou, Beth Ritchie, there are more, and I am embarrassed that I am not going to name all of them. What I am also endorsed about is that our movement takes the wisdom of these incredible Black women, and let me not leave out that there are other women of color who are also saying brilliant things, visions, and directions for us to move in.

We quote them, but we do not actually want anyone who is living up to what they are saying and implementing it. Black women, Black people, as leaders in our organizations. So Audre Lorde becomes a poster on the wall, but a woman or black person like Audre Lorde is not leading our organizations, except in the rarest of situations. Shout out again to all the Black sisters who are leading organizations and coalitions in this country.

So, I want to say, that you cannot have posters of Black people on your wall, you cannot quote them and then ignore the Black people in your midst. Who are implementing these ideas and visions, and have others of their own. You cannot do that. And think that you are doing the work.

Let's look at an example of when there was this belief that the work was being done. OK... Let's go to... The next slide.

This is very powerful, it is called 'Moment of Truth Letter', literally. When I saw this letter I was like... OK! There are some amazing things being said in this letter. This letter was signed by 47 sexual assault and domestic violence estate coalitions, not long after George Floyd was murdered.

State, government sanctioned murder by a Minneapolis police officer at the end of May 2020.

This letter said something amazing, right there in that paragraph that I have put in bold. We, the undersigned sexual assault and mystic violence estate coalitions call ourselves to account for the ways in which this movement, and particularly the white leadership within this movement, has repeatedly failed Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) survivors, leaders, organizations, and movements."

This is powerful stuff, folks! I know some of you have never seen this letter, you can tell you it is part of the resources that Town Hall, NRCDV is offering. I believe it is also on VAW.net - if anyone could correctly on that put it in check, and I will appreciate it.

But this letter says something that we have not heard the movement at this level say before. Anyway, that is what was said in June, 2020. OK, I did a little research, I did a random search of some of the coalitions that signed on to this letter. Their websites, to see if they have this letter posted, to see if they have any accountability statements that they have made, shows how they are implementing the issues that they confronted for themselves in this letter.

And you know what, you guys? I know it was random... I did not look at all 47, but what I found in the ones that I did look at... No. The letter is not there. There is not a mention of it. There is no accountability statement that says, in the years since 2020, and the murder of George Floyd, when we said we would... Understand, and do better.

There is nothing like that. Just on the websites that I went to. So, let's talk about this performative letter, and it's problematic issue. If you leave -- if you read the letter in full, I just copied the first couple of paragraphs, you will see there is not a statement of what each coalition that signed the letter is planning to do.

There is a lot of recognition and statement of awareness, I will not put that down. This is still a milestone in our movement, we will never be able to ignore this letter again. It will always be present. Just like the murder of George Floyd, January 6, there is a before and after.

We have to find out what is going on here. What I say is you cannot do performative letters and raise

awareness but also obscure what you will do to account for the harm that you have done and talk about how you will never let that happen again.

Because the letter is the way in which eye-movement talks about harm, we have acknowledged it. When I say we, I mean everybody but I am really talking about weight leadership. We acknowledge at times that do nothing. I am suggesting to you that this letter is both important, significant, but problematic and performative.

So let us move on to the next slide and talk a little bit about what it offers. The next slide is again from Professor Ibram X. Kendi's research. He says we need some help thinking about how people get talked about in the world of racism.

Racism asks: what is wrong with that person of color? What is wrong with those loud, Black women in our emergency centers and their out-of-control kids? Whatever has been said in our centers for decades when we started admitting Black women and their children. Why do we go there with racial stereotyping?

When we say what is wrong with the person of color? We are also saying what is wrong with the racial group? As if we are a problem. Antiracism asks the correct questions. What is wrong with policies that allow racist ideas, procedures and processes to be instated against people of color? What is wrong with conditions?

What is wrong with systems? What is wrong with structures that allow us to produce and normalize racial inequity, violence, harm. If your agency is still asking about, you know, let us do our client review this morning. "Guy's, I have a client in shelter who is a problem..."

Those of us sitting around the table know instantly that person is a person of color just by the way they are being talked about, that is racism. Instead of saying, "we have a client in shelter and I do not think our policies and process are working to maximize that person's ability to not only survive what is going on right now but to thrive when they leave our shelter."

That is the way we should be talking. And Professor Ibram X. Kendi says we need more help, so let's go to the next slide. I want to give us a brief reminder about today's inequity in the context of today's history and how that let us here.

I have given you some thoughts about how we have treated each of the major racial communities in our country, how we treated native and Indigenous women, girls and people. How we treated African-American girls, women.

What we have done two women from Latinx communities. What we do to LGBTQAI communities. Folks from those communities in our movement. And finally, we have ignored much of the leadership and vision that has been offered. So I want to talk about that a little bit more.

I also want to have the Spanish translation of the slide, in just a moment, thank you. So what is

important about this is if we do not understand the history of what is going on in our movement, how the people we want to serve fast but serve poorly got asked – we have to understand the history of our country.

It is really that simple. If we are going to have awareness and understanding 101, this is the second day. The first day is Professor Kendi helping us understand racism. The second day is, "let's talk about history." And let us talk about that history still being in the movement. It has not gone anywhere.

How have we gotten the movements from our Native American and Indigenous sister is not just in the United States but in Canada and we are seeing other countries really continue to adopt the wisdom, brilliance and leadership of that movement and countries like Australia, countries like Mexico, etc.

Adopting what we are learning from those movements. Why are we having those movements at all? Why are we not already working with Indigenous women and communities to be protective of women and girls in those communities? We have known for centuries what we have done in those communities.

With enslavement, did we really think that it ended at the end of the Civil War? Because we have already always known that it hasn't. If we look at (Unknown Name) leadership on anti-lynching during the Jim Crow and segregation areas, if we look at the work that Rosa Parks was originally doing as a field secretary for the NWA CPP, she was working with rape survivors.

Black women working with white men as they had been since enslavement. If we listen to (Unknown Name) and the abuse on Black women's bodies when they were simply trying to get simple healthcare, walked in for an appendectomy and left with a hysterectomy.

We know that is still happening to women of color. We know it as recently as 2021 when we heard tales from women who are incarcerated for immigration issues. We know that this existence. And yet, we have closed and I to it. We know what our sisters and brothers in LGBTQ+ communities are experiencing.

And yet within our movement, we are still having issues about how we address that. So I just want to make clear that we know our history and we do not know our history. We cannot not know anymore. We cannot not know. It does not work like that to say that we will solve racism without knowing how we got here. Without understanding our socialization of erasure and invisibility for communities furthest away from justice.

Communities who are the most oppressed. And communities that we do not always know how to serve. Remember that as early as the 1980s, we were having organizations develop, in our movement, that were to serve women and children of depressed communities because they could not be served collectively in white led organizations. I want to talk about the Asian women's center and showed it to (Unknown Name) there.

I want to think about the coalition and groups of Black women who worked around this in the 1980s

and 90s because we knew that folks in our communities were not being properly served by white led organizations. Those organizations existed today.

But you know, I live in a state, where many of us do – the Black population is small. The ability to start a Black women's shelter and sexual violence organization for instance is very difficult. For the most part, we are going to be relying for services which are paid by our tax money in many instances and have white leadership.

Right? That is just a reality of life. But why does it have to be white leadership? As we are saying, we know that we have leadership of color, we have always had it. Why are we not allowing that leadership to flourish and grow? Let's look at the next slide. This is a question, why is a white dominant leadership structure still the rule in our movement?

As I said, these questions have been asked for hundreds of years and I will prove it to you in just a moment. But I have been involved in these conversations for decades as well with others in the movement. I have seen and worked in organizations where the Executive Director or senior leadership position, which was white, was about to be vacated.

Rather than the position be posted, the next thing I know is it has just turned over to a white person. The latest example of me seeing that was in 2021. That was mentioned earlier in Tara and Zoe's talk about just shifting to who we know and trust, not open it up to others and not see the possibility of others.

That is still in our movement. It is and how white dominance gets passed along to another white person. In that mother Jones article that was required reading for all of us, a group of sexual assault organizations led by executive directors and their CEOs signed a letter in Washington state challenging Black EDF the statewide sexual assault coalition just months into her tenure.

Some of the people who signed that letter were people of color. Why was that letter even written? The Black ED was supremely qualified, hired by her board and was a co-ED with a white woman. Why did they write this letter? There is no honeymoon for women of color, Black women who take leadership.

I have seen this in my job and other organizations. There is no grace period at all. If you are trying to understand how that works, let me remind you that President Obama was challenged by (unknown term). He was one of the most qualified candidates for the president of the United States ever.

At the very least, he had the same qualifications as others who had run for president. And yet, he was challenged in every single way. Think about Kamala Harris who was challenged not even being an American citizen even though she was born in Oakland, California.

Despite our qualifications and past proven leadership, President Obama was a senator and Kamala Harris was an attorney in California. Our leadership is called into question. We are uncomfortable with what we know when we pass on leadership. Think about that for a moment.

And by the way, go back to the moment of truth letter. As I was saying in my research, two years after the letter was confirmed by so many coalitions, some of those coalitions are still virtually all white and their staff and they are all white on their boards.

How could that be? Let us look at the next slide. We have Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. She was a freeborn African-American woman before the Civil War. Who was an advocate for civil rights, particularly for Black women dishes on the subject of voting as well. She was a Black suffragette.

She had a speech, we are all bound together. She called out white women as not supporting Black women's need to also receive the vote. If you have studied the suffragette movement in this country, you know some famous white people that we venerate as leading suffragettes actually did not want Black men to get the vote.

And they did not want Black women to get the vote at the time when Black people did not have the vote. As early as 1866, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper says, "I tell you that if there is any class of people who need to be lifted out of their area and things and selfishness, it is the white women of America."

She was saying, look, you guys are our natural allies. But you are betraying Black people, in particular, Black women in terms of civil justice. Why are you all doing that? And she was very clear that she had received promises of support, and then they were taken away.

That there was invisibility to black women wanting the vote, the invisibility created by white women saying, "they are not ready for it."

So I just want to say that this issue, within our movement of white women not sharing power, not advocating for, not standing beside is centuries old. And you know that even before it was happening to Black women, and Black people, it was happening to Native American, and Indigenous people as well.

When I talk about history, and the legacy, let's not forget how far back it goes. So let's look at the next slide.

What does accountability to Black people look like in your organization? Only you can answer that, because you know your organization. But let me throw some ideas and questions at you. What does accountability look like?

Because so many organizations have not figured it out, this is... Endemic to all of our organizations in our movement. Why hasn't accountability been built into the work that the organization does? Because we have been telling you about this for... Again, I say centuries.

Why the resistance? Black clients and people of color, how are you really serving them? And do you know how to serve them? I told you about a multi-community outreach project I did, it was very instructive as communities of color told us why they did not use our agency services, or were hesitant

to use them. Or only used them sporadically, in certain ways, because they could not otherwise feel that they would be held to getting the services that white people thought.

So there was an accountability issue to communities of color. What about the accountability issues to Black staff and people of color? Are you overburdening them with the diversity thing like... Here, you take care of that for us. What about black board members and POC members? I have heard horrible stories -- stories of Black people who join boards and how they get marginalized. Or how they get sent off to do the diversity and equity stuff.

How do you listen to the communities? Is it one of those things where, I work for an organization and they say... We know what the community will say. They are always saying the same thing. We already know... Really? If you already know then why are you not doing what they talked about meeting? And if you already know, are you updating it by continuing to listen, or have you shut them off silenced them? What does accountability look like?

Let's look at the next slide. What is your organization doing to shift power from white to Black ship? Wow! Is this a painful issue!

We heard some things about mentoring and coaching, and supporting them and letting there be a "honeymoon" like white people get when they move into new roles. Letting there be a grace period. But what happens a lot of time and said, is that again, what leadership is saying... Well, we hired this person, but we are expecting everything from them. A lot of it is unarticulated expectations, which as we know, is dangerous.

The other thing that happens is that, we know the disproportionality and disparities that are happening within our organizations, for staff or the people that we serve. And yet, we want the new person of color, Black leadership to come in and fix everything. And if they do not, we hold the existence of these long-standing, disproportionality's and disparities, harm, against them.

So even as we talk about, what are you doing to shift power? I am not going to answer that question for you so much again, try to lead you to answers by saying... Tokenism is not the answer. You cannot install a Black leader or a leader of color and give them complete whiteness surrounding them. You cannot do that and think that they are going to be successful.

Which leads us to: sink or swim is not the answer. You get into place, you either sink or swim in leading this organization. That is not a best practice in any environment, and it is not a socially or racially equitable test practice or method.

Support, resources, mentoring, coaching, actually going on the search to find capable and fantastic leadership. And then supporting and resourcing them. And standing up for them. Again, in the Mother Jones article, we saw that when that letter signed by members of the coalition went out against the new Black co-Executive Director, the board did not stand up and defend her.

The board was radio silent. The board was missing in action. You cannot do that. And we know that.

Let me ask you another question... What are actionable strategies for shifting power? I will ask you some more questions, and see if this will help.

Have you identified policies which created the inequities in your organization? In the communities that you serve? Have you identified ideas in your organization that normalize or make it OK with these inequities, disproportionate service disparities, in-service, to exist?

Have you identified the historical context of the ideas? Do you know the racist history in the community? Region? State in which organization is located? Do you know it? Because the Black people and people of color sure do! You better catch up? Right?

Suddenly, white people learned about Tulsa, the horrific history of black Wall Street in Tulsa. What people are like... I did not know that, oh my God! Black people are like, particularly Black people from Oklahoma are like... We knew that, we know that, we have been living that.

So the idea that some people know the history and others do not, that needs to end. In Seattle, a recent example, Seattle Children's Hospital, terrible racial inequities were going on. When it was finally brought to the forefront by a beloved Black doctor, white people go, what?! That is happening at Children's Hospital connect it is a premier hospital, how could that be? And Children's is still doing the work to understand its own history. Is that happening as your organization?

Have you admitted to, and named past harms? member the Moment of Truth letter, started...

Have you created a statement of goals, tactics, and accountability and transparency for how you will repair the harm, increase racial equity, and be antiracist? Those are just a couple of things that I am going to ask you to think about.

I actually have a 20 point program for beginning this type of work. And Zoe remembers that I shared some of that with her recently. (Laughs)

But everyone needs to ask this question, how do we shift power from white to Black leadership? Do not get me wrong, I am also including people of color in leadership, specifically anti-Blackness is so profound in our movement, that I focus on that.

Let's get to the end of this so I can answer a couple of questions, if possible. Let's look at the next slide.

Just a reminder, sorry... The actual strategies for shifting power. We will move to slide B on that. In the next slide, I am reminding us that Doctor Kendi says that we must be antiracist. That is the way this is going to end. It is a transformative concept, it re-energizes our conversation, it gives us a place to move to. We are not just stuck in awareness about racism, we are now in accountability, advocacy, action, and antiracism.

Let's look at the next slide. This is, when will racism disappear? A question once asked of Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, and she was just upfront. "When it is no longer possible, and no longer psychologically useful. When that happens, it will be gone."

In our movement to end gender violence, we need to get here yesterday. We do not have any more time. Yes, people are dying, and we know that. So what are we waiting for?

Last thing I am going to do, and then I hope we will have questions, and Renée thank you so much for giving me a little bit of your time. I do not want to take it all, if we can avoid it.

What that is is an activity. Because I want you guys to have a little bit of hope in thinking about it. This is the waterfall activity, we will look at the next slide to see how it works.

Oh! I love her! Because we know what this means, even for those of us who really do not speak Spanish very well. So let's continue to think about that, without women, without Black women, without Afro-Latino women, without women of the, without people who stand with women of the, this is not going to be the revolution we need in our movement.

So, we will go to this exercise, that reminds us of power that we have. I keep saying we are going to the exercise... I forgot I gave us some inspirational quotes. This one is from Adrienne Marie Brown.

She made this quote even before COVID started, and that is what I love about it. Because it is evergreen, it is always with us, this idea that we have energy. And can give our power to our whole selves, to shape our future.

So, thank you for that wisdom, Adrienne Marie Brown, another person who is always getting quoted in our movement. Wouldn't we like her to lead some of our organizations? I know I would!

I will try it one more time and see... This is the question and comments. Let's do that before we do any exercise. Are there any questions I can try to answer? In just a few moments that I have left?

I do not know if there are questions in the chat, or if someone would like to unmute and ask a question, but I know we have time for one or two.

BRECKAN WINTERS:

Michelle, we have not got any questions in the chat yet. If folks would like to share questions, please feel free! Or as Michelle said, you can come off of mute and ask.

MICHELLE OSBORNE:

Thank you. While we wait for questions, we will do the exercise. Even if you guys may never see this slide... (Laughs) do we really have that much time? Oh my gosh, thank you!

CASEY KEENE:

Michelle, I am actually not seeing the Waterfall slide here, let me see if I can pull it up on my screen.

Give me just a moment.

MICHELLE OSBORNE:

Thank you. Even if we do not have it, that is OK. I can say the instructions and we can do it together. It looks like I have a bit of extra time, so I am always happy to see what I can do to answer questions. Or even take comments.

So, while we wait to see if there are any, and maybe there are not, and that is fine. Because everybody I know, is really reflective about what we have been hearing and learning these last two days. So that is really... What I hope I have added two, with this work.

But here is what I think... We can do. As a hopeful exercise, and this is honoring leadership by women of.

So here is the thing. Think about a woman of color who inspires you. Place your answer in the chat box, but do not yet press 'send'. Because what we will do is waterfall.

After people have placed answers in the chat box, I am going to say one, two, three, waterfall. Then you're going to press 'send' and we are going to have a cascade of brilliant, Black, and people of color leadership in chat. That we can work with, that we can think about, that we can reflect on. And that we can see as iconic for the brilliance in vision and direction in which we need to go in our community.

Yes, they can be people we know personally! Because some of this work is being done in our communities, and we need to shout out to that leadership in our communities!

I have a friend who passed away nearly 20 years ago, a brilliant leader, Puerto Rican woman, who was leading both in San Francisco and back in her hometown of Brooklyn. Another Brooklyn girl. And I want to put her name into chat. I am talking about women of, people of color, Black women, Black folks of color who has inspired you.

Everyone put a name into the chat box. I will give you a couple more seconds. Then I will say the magic waterfall word. And then all at once, you will click 'send', and you guys will be able to look at each other's responses. I will give you another 15 seconds before I say the magic word. Thanks, everyone.

Okay, and getting ready to say the magic phrase. Is everybody ready? I will pull up the chat box I can see some event. 123, waterfall. Hit send. My goodness! Oh, these names! Oh my goodness, you guys. I am so happy! With these names that I am seeing. Oh my goodness.

BRECKAN WINTERS:

Should I read the names out loud so are interpreters can translate and share?

MICHELLE OSBORNE:

That would be wonderful, do you want me to do that?

BRECKAN WINTERS:

You take the lead, whatever is easiest for you.

MICHELLE OSBORNE:

I will start. (Unknown Name) Pearson, Leletha Marshall, Tara Burke, Reverend Doctor Selena Carter. Alicia, (Unknown Name), Roseann, Felicia, (Unknown Name). Becky (Unknown Name), Gloria (Unknown Name). Jacqueline Miller, this is so great! Shirley (Unknown Name).

Karen Cooper, (Unknown Name) gets another shout out. Lisa (Unknown Name) in Denver. Belinda Jackson, Janet K. My Angelo. Beth Ritchie, Diana (Unknown Name). (Unknown Name), (Unknown Name), Toni Morrison, Anita, Natasha GeeHee, Marianne Cobb.

This is so fabulous. She escaped Mississippi and came to New York, met my dad and gave birth to me. Earned her MSW degrees while raising me and my sisters, worked on behalf of survivors in a correctional facility – Teresa McNair. Thank you Kim, that was beautiful.

Michelle Osborne, thank you for that! (Unknown Name) Jones, Doctor Butler, Angelica, new coworker: Joyce (Unknown Name) who is changing the vibration of our organization, the latest of many who inspire me. Santana (Unknown Name), Dorothy Roberts, Michelle Alexander, Doctor (Unknown Name).

Doctor (Unknown Name) Richmond, my best friend! That is a great shout out. My coworkers, that is wonderful. My Abuela. Shelter manager of 20+ years, Meredith. Arlene Vassell L, that is from KC. Alice Walker, Shirley (Unknown Name), Toni Morrison, Doctor Margaret King, Doctor Gail Frazier.

Renita Walker, Mary MacLeod, Arlene Vassell, Patty Branco, Jacqueline Miller, Adrienne Mary Brown. Yes Arlene! (Unknown Name), and I think... you can help me if there are any more names! Wow! Thank you all for putting those names into our space.

Those and so many others are so brilliant with their leadership. Whether local, national, international, historic, learning. We learn about them in the present day. This is the hope that I offer you after everything else that I have been saying that may seem like oh my God. Because the hope is what continues to compel our passion and move us forward.

We cannot not keep moving forward in our movement. But we also cannot keep perpetuating the harm of what we are doing. I will end here with the idea that if you all have questions, there is a way to get in touch with me through my email, through texting me or through LinkedIn.

What is important for you to know is that I want to be a support for folks. If you need to talk to me, it is never about the money. That is never, ever where I start. It is about how can I support you and how can I help you? Because I know you are already supporting others and that is part of what is taking a toll on you.

But the other part, I really want to affirm this for folks of color, for my Black brothers and sisters, the other thing that is taking a toll is the daily grind of racism and disappointment in our movement. We need to and that. And I again say that we have the power to do it.

When I say we, I am saying white folks in conjunction with us. We have the power to do it. Thank you! I really appreciate this opportunity, everyone.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you Michelle for that powerful, powerful presentation. At this time, I want us to pause, breathe, and reflect on Michelle's presentation. I remind you to take care of yourself as we process what we hear in the session.

Again, if you need a moment to breathe, remember that the wellness room is available to you. We will now transition to open space, to process what you heard. Please use the next 10 minutes to identify what you feel is the call to action and document at least one concrete action that you will take in response to that call.

CASEY KEENE:

Thank you Leletha and thank you Michelle. This is Casey chiming in with a note for my weight colleagues, if you are feeling the urge to step away, I encourage you to resist. Discomfort is always a sign that it is time to lean in and do the work.

We are sharing a link in the chat to a Padlet so that you can facilitate your work. Inside, you can view the amazing illustration that Andre (Unknown Name) created for us. It is a reminder about what Michelle shared with us today. We invite you to add your concrete action steps to this Padlet so others can see what you are committed to doing, moving forward.

How will you help shift power? We welcome you to unmute yourself in this space to share your thoughts. And (Unknown Name), if there's anything you'd like to lift up in the chat to help advance this processing conversation, I invite you to do so.

BRECKAN WINTERS:

Sure, thank you Casey. There was just so much gratitude for Michelle's presentation. I do want to lift up Cecile's comment after the waterfall activity saying, "thank you for reminding us how many women we admire out there. Because we must celebrate them more."

Thank you so much for the West and thank you for celebrating the amazing leaders that we know both personally and those who we do not know personally but admired from afar.

CASEY KEENE:

As a reminder to add to the Padlet, go to the link that Breckan shared in the chat. Go to the screen that will allow you to post. I can lift up, somebody says, "we need to hire Audre Lorde's, not just quote them." Somebody says they need to look at the lies they have internalized about themselves and help coworkers, co-organizers, family and friends to do the same.

Somebody says, "I commit to ongoing growth for myself to be an inspiring ally to BIPOC. I will read, reflect and lean into difficult conversations." Another says, "I plan to bring this information and conversation back to my agency's equity committee to determine our future steps." I challenge you to share an action step of your own personally that you are committing to today.

Somebody says, "every week I would like to set aside some time to reflect on the ways that I uphold racism and anti-Blackness." If anyone would like to unmute, we have a couple more minutes of processing time and I would invite you to do so.

SPEAKER:

This is Cecile.

CASEY KEENE:

Please go ahead, Cecile.

SPEAKER:

I can just say that I am so moved by all that she had to offer. And share. So many things that I need to think about as I synthesize it into my own way of being and the work that I do. This whole conference that you have had is so empowering, so reflective.

It has given me so much opportunity to go deeper within myself. And so relevant, you know, at this time. We live in a country where we... George Floyd was murdered and for a few moments, as she said, people became a little bit more conscious.

But then they have amnesia and they go back to their same, old ways. So it is like yes, now we must be much clearer in helping others to break their patterns of returning to the easy way. You know? So I am still in reflection mode, I will be in reflection mode for a few days! It has been overwhelming but in a positive way. So I think you.

CASEY KEENE:

Think you Cecile, you are not alone in reflection mode, I assure you. I would like to pass the floor back to Leletha Marshall.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you, Casey. I would now like to turn it over to the Director of Racial Equity & Social Change enter vice president of programs and prevention for what was formally named the Women of Color in Coalition Leadership Project, but first I would like everyone to join me in wishing Arlene a happy birthday!

If everyone could join me in the chat, in wishing Arlene a happy birthday! Happy birthday, Arlene!

(Multiple speakers)

ARLENE VASSELL:

Thank you, everybody! Oh! That was not in the script that we shared with all staff members, that was off script, but OK! (Laughs) Thank you all, so much so, so much!

I am so full, so so full from yesterday, from Zoe, Tara, and Michelle. Thank you so much for your truth telling. It is like my life, right? It is like, the last 25 years of me working in the movement just flashed in front of me. And Zoe, like you said, like healing, it is so important.

Because the main, humor, joy in healing has kept me here, and will keep me here. I will bring Allisa's words back into this space as we continue to speak.

We, Black women, people of color we are the greatest gift to this work. And I am going to start with that. We are the greatest, greatest gift to this work, we need to hold that, embrace that, and love up on ourselves.

Before I jump into, just briefly talking about the work that NRCDV is doing , I just wanted to shout out my colleagues in this space. Especially the people of color Caucus, on words together!

We have so many amazing people of color, women of, Black women on staff. I just want to use shout out the people of color caucus, because without their support, I do not know if I would be here, and continuing this movement.

I have had my moments... Of wanting to leave, and my consulting business actually came from those moments. And I still continue with my consulting business, because it is the plan B, right? For right now, all is well (Laughs) all is well at the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, but I need to come feel the need and urge to acknowledge the people of color Caucus, my sisters that I work alongside every day.

With that being said, Michelle, I had asked Casey if I could read your words of wisdom that you shared. Because I feel like that is where we are at right now.

And that is the call to action. Everyone put out calls to action throughout the last two days. Before I jump out into what NRCDV is doing, I want to bring your words into the space, Michelle. Because I think it is a concrete call to action for everyone here.

Our movement cannot continue to perpetuate historic legacies of erasure, invisibility, and violence against Black women and women of. We must promote and illuminate past and present day achievements, contributions, Black excellence, and leadership.

We have no other choice in our present. If our present is to become liberated, become a liberated and antiracist future. Let me read that last sentence again.

We have not -- no other choice if our present is to become a liberated and antiracist future.

I want to also lift up what Zoe talked about, regarding hurting, being harmed, and being supported. For me, again, I experienced both. Being supported, and being harmed, simultaneously.

Oftentimes, by non-Black individuals. But sadly, sometimes – oh! By my Black colleagues. My Black colleagues who are trying to navigate a system that is not designed by the thought for them to thrive. And as many speakers talked about before, are in this cycle of also perpetuating white supremacy.

So again, healing is so, so, so very important. I am working on my healing in order to support others. And all coping -- and echoing much of what Zoe talked about, where we need to heal. We need to do our work in order to show up for others.

So at NRCDV that is one thing we are focusing on, is wellness for staff members. And you know, after all of their presentations, my point today is just having a conversation about, what is our role at NRCDV? As a national organization, Tara talked about, women of color being in mainstream organizations.

So, what is our role as a national organization to dismantle anti-Blackness, and white supremacy that we know exists in our movement? It has existed for decades, at least for the last 20+ years that I have been in this movement, it has existed.

At NRCDV, we are still trying to figure it out. But we are definitely committed to shifting power, and taking risk. We create spaces like this for action oriented, bold, courageous and unapologetic conversations for strategic planning. Holding individuals accountable.

I want you to know that in these cases we are listening, adjusting, pivoting, and we are doing the internal work while simultaneously showing up externally.

Our internal work currently consists of examining current policies and practices that are not equitable. Examining our hiring practices, intentionally focusing on wellness and spaciousness.

We currently have a leadership team comprised of four women of, including two Black women, myself and Leletha Marshall, RMC who threw me off with the birthday wishes.

We currently have 16 staff members who self identify as people of color. With variant experience in gender-based violence. We recently hired our director of racial equity and social change, Jacqueline Miller, the pronoun queen. You all heard that. Whose main role was to oversee the implementation of our racial equity action plan.

Jaclyn continues to stretch and challenge us, support us, and encourage us to be better and do better.

We also hired our director of community engagement, (Unknown Name), who apart of their responsibility is to deepen our response ability with survivors in diverse communities, and expand our engagement with thought leaders in communities.

Keyword: in communities. As a national organization, in communities, yes! And primarily, communities and individuals that have been traditionally marginalized.

As you all may know, the struggle is real. (Laughs) Especially for a leadership team of four women of, internal and external. My colleagues know I do not sugarcoat. Internal, and external, the struggle is real. But we all stay committed. To showing up, and to dismantle the systems that have a process for many years, a.k.a. this movement.

And again, like Tara mentioned, when I talk about what is our role? It is important for us to think about, as Black women, as a mainstream movement, we must be intentional about how we show up. We have to be unapologetic, and show up without permission.

I remember spaces, someone mentioned earlier, you don't get invited to the table... Or people are like... Yeah, let's invite Arlene. I think Tara you said him a they are like... Oh my God! Oh, truth telling! Yes I am.

So again, we are engaging with survivors, being relational instead of transactional. We are showing up in communities. In the one initiative I want to highlight here, the Transforming the Gender-Based Violence Movement: Increasing BIPOC Representation and actualizing accountability Project launch, you all know I did not come up with that name! The group did. (Laughs)

Experiencing firsthand about what Tara, Zoe, Michelle, Darren, (Unknown Name), what everyone talked about over the past two days, this initiative brings me so much joy. And it brings me so much hope.

We have been for many years, at least four years, in deep collaboration and meaningful relationship with a diverse group of multigenerational thought leaders, all people of color. Including NRCDV's people of color Caucus, who are passionate about everything that you heard over the last two days.

It is a sacred space for people of color. It is definitely a healing place for many of us, in that space. The project is led by myself, and Doctor (Unknown Name), and what we talk about impact...

One immediate impact from that group that I want to share, is that group members continue to say that they feel a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging to the degree of, or they just feel valued, they feel heard, they feel seen.

And they do not feel this anywhere else in the movement. There is an ongoing expression of gratitude in that space, for us being able to purposefully develop and implement strategies that will begin to dismantle these oppressive systems.

That we all engage with, and work with. Because it is a multigenerational space, there is a lot of mentoring and support happening in the space. One member recently shared, but she shared information about the work happening in this space with another woman of color at a training, and that

woman just felt so liberated. Just by hearing about the space, and hearing that there is a space.

So really quickly, the initiative is intended to preserve the history and legacy of the movement. Dismantle racism, and white supremacy within the movement. In creating opportunities for women of and family-based initiative.

Several times you've heard about the issue, that has continued for decades. When I think about it, I have spent half of my life... I will not tell you how old I am... But let's say I have spent half of my life in this movement that everyone has talked about for the last couple of years.

So you see why this brings me so much joy. I am hopeful, because I am ready to pass the baton. But I do not want to pass the baton on two younger sisters by age, not by wisdom, at all. And then they have to grow a thick skin in order to survive, and cannot thrive, right?

So for me, I feel like in addition to lots of initiatives that has happened over many decades, and Zoe dropped some resources in the chat, I feel that I am doing my part, and I feel I am in an organization supporting the able to do a part, alongside the people of color Caucus, and the thought leaders – I would say about 20 thought leaders.

Who have been consistent, very consistent following through with this project. So the official launch will happen October 18. The information is here. We will talk about our journey, over the last few years, how did we get there?

Much of the information that was shared over the past two days is information that we heard again, when interviews were conducted. But again, the overrepresentation of white women in leadership positions persists. And the number of women of color remains stubbornly low.

This is a structural issue, you all. If you have not heard it over the past two days, let me repeat: this is a structural issue. That is inherently set up to fail women of, especially Black women, and hinder our thriving.

The overt lack of diversity in leadership reflects an enduring racialized systematic erasure of women of.

And like Michelle said, we just have to change that. The Collaborative was born and sustained, and continues to thrive because of sisterhood, love, passion, real joy, opportunity, meaning NRCDV's leadership, including the board saying yes. Go forth and be great. And supporting the initiative with money, so we can compensate individuals for their time and expertise – even though it is priceless. But just a token of appreciation.

One thing that I want to highlight, that continues to allow the group to thrive is trust. Deep trust within that space, and trust in the process. A process that started with small beginnings, zero dollars. And the collaboration that happens in that space, and the big vision – it is not about the individuals in the space. It is about the impact in our movement.

For many of us, it is part of our legacy. Several presenters talked about that. And what is your part? For me, this project is a piece of what I want to leave behind. And a piece of, what I want to contribute so others do not have to go through what we all talked about... What we continue to go through.

Like the presenter said, it has to stop. And all the presenters have all, are all doing their part. I want you to take the resources, reach out. Support, support, believe. Drop your coins there. To support, and alongside the presenters – this is not in replacement of – alongside the presenters, this is what NRCDV is committed to doing.

So, join us for the official launch on this day. You will learn more, you will be able to ask questions. We will be launching a website that is designated to the project. And we are also going to be able to provide support to the field, two women of.

The people of color copies, it will be triaged through the people of color Caucus at NRCDV. Again, we have 16 staff member who are committed to dismantling these oppressive systems that we are all a part of.

I want to throw away the Plan B, but I am holding onto it. (Laughs) I am holding on to Plan B, I am fully transparent and what you see is what you get. The trust with Black women in the movement – we have always needed a Plan B.

Hopefully as a result of this project and everything else you have heard from the presenters, we can ditch the Plan B, our sisters and brothers have taken the baton. The people and individuals have taken the baton from the ones who have been doing this for a very long time, they will not need a Plan B. That is the goal.

The goal is for the future and what does our movement look like? So again, join us! I am super excited to share more and I wanted to say thank you to all of the presenters who spoke true. You represented my story, I did not have to say my story.

That is the sad part about it, Tara, Zoe, and Michelle spoke my story. Inc. you all and I look forward to you joining the official launch.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you Arlene. As a reminder, we are going to share the registration link in the chat. Before you leave today's session, be sure to complete the evaluation. Your feedback is extremely important to us. Now, we will turn the floor to our town hall Weaver, Renee Kim, for closing.

RENEE KIM:

Thank you so much. This has been an incredible two days. My heart is full, my soul feels replenished, and my spirit is uplifted. Thank you for having me as your town Weaver. I also want to acknowledge that I understand what kind of work it is to ingest traumatic stories every day and still show up as you are.

-- As you are full self at work. It is not easy. Even if you are not in direct services, you are still around the work. You cannot help but be affected. As I said when I opened, this work is emotional and it is joyful. Be sure to take care of yourselves.

I also want to leave you with a couple of things to think about. One is, does my life pass reflect what I truly value? And second, how do I want to show up in the world? I want to thank you again for having me here as your town Weaver.

Thank you to all of the speakers for your powerful messages of love and liberation. I also want to thank the NRCDV staff for this fantastic, amazing, wonderful people for their hearts. I would like to close with a reading by Starhawk called Dreaming the Dark.

Community,

Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion. Without having the words catch in her throat. Somewhere, a circle of hands will open to receive us. Eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our power.

Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing, a circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free.

Thank you so much.

LELETHA MARSHALL:

Thank you René and thank you all for joining us today. We hope that you leave this powerful, powerful town hall with more rich information to take back to your communities to implement in their everyday lives. Thank you for joining us and have a great rest of your week and weekend.

(Music plays)

Live captioning by Ai-Media

CASEY KEENE:

We invite participants to please log out. Presenters and staff can stay on for a debrief.

(Music plays)