

Launch: A Comprehensive Guide to Campus Gender-Based Violence Complaints

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

[Start of recorded material 00:00:00]

Anoodth: Hi everyone and a very warm welcome to the National Skillshare Series and addressing and preventing gender-based violence at Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada. My name is Anoodth Naushan and I'm Project Manager of Courage to Act. We are so thrilled to welcome you today to this toolkit launch, featuring the really ground-breaking Comprehensive Guide to Campus Gender-Based Violence Complaints.

And before we begin, a quick note on language and accessibility. Attendees can view live captions for this session, by clicking on the link in the Chat box. You can also listen to the session in French by selecting the French language channel using the interpretation menu. Today's session is being recorded and will be available on our website, along with the transcript. The Comprehensive Guide to Campus Gender-Based Violence Complaints as well, is available for download via the Courage to Act Knowledge Centre.

Possibility Seeds, leads the Courage to Act project. And we are a Canadian social purpose enterprise, specializing in project management and policy development. And we work alongside our clients to create, connect, and cultivate gender justice. Our team has over 20 years of broad experience working with communities, governments, labour organizations, public and private institutions.

And a bit about Courage to Act. Courage to Act is a multi-year national initiative to address and prevent gender-based violence on post-secondary Campuses in Canada. It builds on the key recommendations within Possibility Seeds' vital report, "Courage to Act: Developing a National Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions." Our project is the first national collaborative of its kind to bring together over 170 experts, advocates and thought leaders from across Canada to address gender-based violence on campus.

And yes, the National Skillshare Series is back with a new set of exciting learning and professional development opportunities. And this series will feature subject matter experts and conversation about urgent issues, emerging trends and promising practices and strategies to better address gender-based violence on campus.

And we begin this series with today's toolkit launch, presented by Courage to Act's Reporting, Investigations and Adjudications Working Group. And supported by CACUSS, Skillshare sessions are also a

recognized learning opportunity. Attendants at ten or more live sessions will count towards an online certificate and our project is made possible through generous support and funding from the Department of Women and Gender Equality, or WAGE, Federal Government of Canada.

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

This work can be challenging. Many of us may have our own experience of survivorship, and of supporting those we love and care about who have experienced gender-based violence. A gentle reminder here to be attentive to our wellbeing as we engage in these difficult conversations. You can visit the self-care section of our skillshare webpage or visit our "self-care" room by visiting the link in the chat. You can also follow along on Twitter with the hashtag #GBVNationalSkillshare and #IHaveTheCourageToAct.

All right, before I introduce our speakers today, a very brief note on the format. You're invited to enter questions into the Q&A box throughout the session and we will post these to our presenters at the very end. The Q&A will happen in the last 30 minutes of the Webinar. We will try to engage with as many questions and ideas as we can in the time that we have together. And at the end of the session, you'll find a link to an evaluation form and we would be really grateful if you took a few moments to fill it out. It's anonymous. It helps us improve.

And following the session, we'll also email you the link to the evaluation form and a link to the recording, so that you can share it with your networks. And I'm really excited to introduce you to our speakers today.

So Deb Eerkes is Director of Student Conduct and Accountability at the University of Alberta and Co-Lead of the Courage to Act Reporting, Investigations and Adjudication Working Group.

And Britney De Costa, is a Research and Policy Analyst for the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, OUSA, and Co-Lead of the Courage to Act Reporting, Investigations and Adjudication Working Group.

And we have Zanab Jafry, a gender-based violence and DEI specialist, and co-author of the Guide. A consultant for Courage to Act, she builds interventions for mitigating, addressing and preventing sexual violence.

Today we have our three co-authors in conversation with Farrah Khan, who is Executive Director of Possibility Seeds, Director of the Courage to Act project and Lead of the Response and Support Working Group of

Courage to Act. So we have a really brilliant lineup today and I'm really excited now to turn it over to our brilliant speakers.

Farah: Thank you so much. Zanab, I am so excited to be here to be launching the RIA tool, which felt like a dream when we first talked about it. And now being able to talk to Zanab, Deb, and Britney about the amazing work that they've done to create this ground-breaking tool. So I want to welcome the three of you here. And I'm so excited to nerd-out with you about this conversation, because I feel like this will be great.

And I would hope that people are looking at this in gallery mode, so you're seeing all these wonderful faces here. It's great to see folks from across the country in these conversations. I'm going to just – oh, ask if you are not muted, just make sure that you are on mute.

So I'm going to just start us off – so for introductions, there's three different – you're all coming from different perspectives. Zanab, you worked as a frontline worker at Ryerson University with Consent Comes First, during work with survivors and also have done a lot of work on Human Rights cases. Britney, you come from OUSA, which is doing some amazing work on advocacy for students in Ontario, in university. And Deb, you've been working as a Conduct Officer for a very long period of time, in conduct and that's really been your work. So could you each tell me, starting with Zanab, a bit about what brought you to do this role and work in the GBV field?

Zanab: Sure. So hi everyone. My name is Zanab Jafry. My pronouns are she/her. As Farrah just said, I'm a former Sexual Violence Specialist, from Ryerson University. I've provided direct support to students, faculty, and staff, affected by gender-based violence. In that role, I was responsible for guiding complainants – both within the university structure and in the greater criminal and civil justice system – through various resolution processes, all the way from conducting initial intakes, which would sometimes trigger the complaints process to adjudication and appeals of those complaints.

Outside of the complaints process – which was the brunt of my work – my job included advocating for the needs of survivors in their work, learning and living environment. And championing the needs of vulnerable student populations, with a special focus on international students, refugees and newcomers who are not familiar with Canadian processes. In my most recent tenure with the University Health Network, as their Manager of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility, I occupied an investigative role where I facilitated workplace investigations pertaining to gender-based violence.

So, to answer Farrah's question, what brought me to Courage to Act, was perhaps pretty predictable. And it was the fact that I was working with hundreds of students on an annual basis, who all had extremely different needs that I did not feel were being fulfilled by the very

adversarial complaints processes that currently exist across Canada, at most PSIs. And I wanted to be a part of something bigger. I wanted to build a solution that could meet those needs and remain flexible to accommodating newer needs as they popped up. Because as we grow to become more diverse, also as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion field evolves to include more marginalized communities, we're going to need more flexibility in these processes to honour the lived experiences of the people who are actually engaging in them. So that's really what brought me here.

Britney:

And I can introduce a little bit about myself. So hello everyone. My name is Britney. My pronouns are she/her and I am a settler living on territory – Treaty 3 territory, in Guelph, Ontario. And like Farrah said, I work at OUSA, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, as a Research and Policy Analyst. So in this role, I support our students who are a student-led organization and I support them in their policy and advocacy work to advocate at the provincial level for affordable, accessible, accountable and high-quality post-secondary education in the province. And in this role, I have a number of portfolios, including our Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Prevention and Response portfolio, which is the piece that really linked me to Courage to Act initially at the beginning.

But prior to working at OUSA and prior to my work with Courage to Act, I was studying Law and Social Work at the University of Windsor. And I was really fortunate to be part of a group of student advocates and faculty, who were speaking out against some of the violence that had been happening in the Law School at the time. So, I come to this work with a bit of experience as a student advocate, but since then and over the last few years, I've been really thankful to work with student advocates who are in their institutions right now, who are really brilliant and leading this work on their own campuses at the institutional level, provincially and even nationally. And one of the things that I really appreciate about working with Courage to Act in this project, is the centering of student voices. So it's been wonderful to be able to bring both my work at OUSA and my work at Courage to Act, to really elevate those voices.

And with the guide, I also – so we all came at this with different lenses, in terms of some of the principles that we were applying throughout the guide – and for me, I had experience working as a Research Assistant on a project to pilot Trauma-Informed Training for Lawyers at Legal Aid Clinics in Windsor. And this was part of a broader push to bring Trauma-Informed Lawyering into these spaces. So that's where I got introduced to the concept of trauma-informed practice and what that means. And when we were working on the guide, I really used that and used this lens throughout the work that we did.

Deb:

Hi everybody. I am Deb Eerkes. I use she/her pronouns. And I'm coming at you from Treaty 6 territory, in Edmonton, Alberta. I am the Director of

Student Conduct and Accountability at the University of Alberta and I've been in that role, an Investigator and a Decision-Maker for the past 17 years. So in that role I deal with all types of misconduct, including gender-based violence. I also developed the Sexual Violence Policy for the institution. And before I did all of that, in Student Conduct, I spent five years advising students through the campus complaints process, my focus in the guide was on the procedural fairness sections and strategies.

What brought me to Courage to Act? I think the idea that we are dealing with cases individually and that that is what my job is, did not sit well with me. And I needed to make a positive contribution. I needed to think about the systemic change – like gender-based violence needs to think about systemic change. So I think that's what brought me here.

Farrah: I love that all three of you are coming from this so differently and I really can see it in the guide. You can see it from the fact that you're talking about procedural fairness, but also talking about harm reduction. I know Zanab, that was really an area that you were talking about. And Britney really brings in, how do we all have this conversation, not only with people who are doing it, but also that students can understand the process and it be transparent.

So can you talk a little bit about just a high-level overview of the project? Britney, maybe you can walk us through that. And what are the three standards that I've kind of just talked about – harm reduction, procedural fairness and trauma-informed practice – how do they fit together? Because sometimes when you say those three things out loud, people get so uncomfortable, because there's this idea that they're almost antithetical to each other, that they're not going to get along. So tell me a little bit about this process.

Britney: Yes, definitely. So I guess for a bit of context to start us off – for anyone who's on the call and isn't really familiar with who we are in the scope of what we're doing – we're looking at these institutional complaints processes for gender-based violence, which is a very complicated and I've learned over the last few years, very, very, very complex world. And it's even more complicated because there isn't a standard practice and every campus does it differently, every province does it differently. But essentially what we were really looking at was when a person brings forward a formal complaint of gender-based violence to the institution – so not to the police or not through the criminal justice channels – but to their post-secondary institution. And when a complaint is brought forward to an institution, it's treated as a policy violation.

So again, it's not a criminal matter in the context that we were working in, in our guide, or this project. But when a complaint is brought forward, it may lead to the application of interim measures and investigation into whether there was a breach of policy, adjudication and possibly an appeal. And outcomes from this process can range from a finding that

there was no policy violation to sanctions on a respondent and a whole host of other things.

So a little bit more context, because it's so different across the country and at each institution, who is responsible for each stage of the complaint and how these stages are realized, really boils down to that institution in their approach to the process. In some cases like Ontario, where I am, there is some legislative direction, but often there isn't. And when that legislative direction exists, it's not comprehensive enough and it's not trauma-informed enough.

So that was sort of, I guess the focus or scope of what we were looking at, really just improving these processes overall, because we agree – and I think, [coughs] across the Courage to Act project, we agreed the complaints processes are not a solution at all to gender-based violence. And they're just a tool that we have and something that exists in this space, but we know that they're inherently harmful to everyone. We know they're harmful to complainants and survivors. They're harmful to witnesses and the staff working in these spaces and even the respondents, who are going through these processes.

So we're really focused on how to mitigate that harm and we based that off of what we learned from folks who contributed to the Courage to Act report and what they were sharing about the gaps in their work and the challenges that they were facing. So we took everything that we knew – from all of our different perspectives, which was really wonderful. I've learned so much from Deb and Zanab, just from their expertise and their experiences. And we met with people from Courage to Act's communities of practice. So if anyone's on the call, we really thank you. You've been incredibly insightful and generous with your perspectives. And we brought all this together to create this guide of strategies that could be used by anyone to address these inherent harms.

So we really wanted this guide to be for anyone – so whether you're a senior administrator creating these processes, or you're working in these spaces, your in the government and you're looking to come up with policy solutions, you're involved in the complaint as a complainant or a respondent or a witness and need to know what's going on and what your rights are, or you're just advocating for a better process – we really wrote this for everyone. And that was really the focus of the project.

And the standards that you asked about – so I'm going to share my screen, because we have – our graphic designers made this beautiful visual of what these standards look like. And [sneezed] excuse me, our guide is made up of strategies that are based on three main standards. So you mentioned – procedural fairness, trauma-informed practice and harm reduction. So those were the standards that we applied throughout the guide.

And what we argue is that these – with the foundation of Human Rights and Equity – can't be separated from one another. So even though there is that tension that you mentioned and this idea that they oppose one another, we really argue that you can't have procedural fairness, unless you have trauma-informed practice and harm reduction. And you can't meet any of these standards, if you aren't meeting the Equity and Human Rights standards.

So throughout the guide, we offer strategies and recommendations. And all of the context we provide and the questions we ask, are meant to show how the three standards are dependent on one another, how they can't really be in tension with one another because if you want a process to be procedurally fair, you need to approach everyone involved, through a trauma-informed lens. And these pieces apply to everyone throughout the process. So sometimes you get this idea – that procedural fairness only applies to a respondent, or a trauma-informed practice only applies to a complainant, harm reduction doesn't even factor in – but really all of these things apply to everyone. Everyone should have procedural fairness. Everyone deserves trauma-informed practice and needs that to meet their procedural fairness rights. And harm reduction is just necessary because of how harmful these processes are and how much we can't eliminate all of those harms.

So yes, I guess, this is getting a little more than that level, but we used these standards and then we broke down our guide into four sections to really show how this all plays out. So we have another beautiful slide here that illustrates the four sections. In our first section is where we give all this background and context on the strategy. So there's individual chapters on procedural fairness, trauma-informed practice, and harm reduction. And it's a really great place to start, I think, if you want to understand what we mean when we say these things. I know trauma-informed practice has so many applications and so many understandings, so what does it mean in the context of the complaints process? Harm reduction, what does that mean in the context of the complaints process and procedural fairness?

And then the next section – oh – excuse me – oops. The next section is where we get into our strategy. So this is where we start to look at, what can you do to apply these principles to your work? So it begins with chapters on how to design and amend your policies and procedures and then how – who to hire and how to train your staff to be able to do this work. We have – our next section is really our strategies for practice. So we really acknowledge that our – we don't have a good landscape for – or a framework for post-secondary complaints processes right now. And even if we were to have one and every institution were to have really robust policies that were trauma-informed, much of this work really happens at the human level and policy is only going to get us so far. So each chapter focuses on a different stage of the complaints process and looks at sort of how you can bring these pieces into your work.

And then we also include a chapter on non-adjudicative options, because we want to make it clear that this isn't always the best way to look for accountability, or to respond to these complaints, because of how harmful these processes are. And I'll plug in the Courage to Act Knowledge Centre, there's some really incredible tools by some of our communities of practice, like the Can Justice Heal group, that really speak to these alternatives. So if you haven't checked it out already on the call, definitely do that. But those are our strategy sections.

And I think one thing that was really cool when we were writing these strategies, was how naturally these three things fit together. We were all focusing on a different standard and we would write a strategy for an intake worker when – and Deb's strategy and Zanab's strategy and my strategy would overlap so heavily. So our strategies for being procedurally fair, really were strategies for being trauma-informed and to reduce harms. So that was really cool to see it all naturally come together.

And then our final section just explores some of the questions that we don't have an answer for. For some of them we worked with an expert panel to develop recommendations. And other ones, we just need to explore more as a community, to know what the best response is. So we've identified these questions and hope that we can continue those conversations. But basically, that's what the project looks like at a high level and what the standards are. [Laughs]

Farah: I love how just casually you're like we did two years of intense work and made this amazing guide and just we can see it in this chart, but it's so much more than that. I know, the three of you came together – it's been two years – so last – two falls ago – two falls ago. And so you've been working together so much. Zanab, can you tell us a little bit about how you came up with this concept for the RIA guide? Because it seems so expansive from just this idea of, "OK. Let's make this Complaints Guide." It sounds like you really went in deeply on how to have this conversation.

Zanab: Yes. So let me begin by offering a little bit of context as to how Britney, Deb and I actually met. It might be interesting to note that Deb, Britney and I have actually only met one time in person, which was two years ago at the very first Courage to Act Working Group meeting. And since then, we've been meeting virtually to actually compile this. So perhaps that indicates how important the first meeting actually was, and how important it was for all of us to be on the same page.

It sounds like a difficult task, but it actually wasn't for us. And the reason for that is because all three of us, in our own way, had encountered a very specific myth. Before I talk about the myth, I think I'll go back to our work backgrounds. At the time, I was a frontline worker in the GBV field, supporting people who had directly been affected by gender-based violence, either historically or sometimes early that morning, or the night before. So that's the kind of work that I was providing. It was very

frontline. It was very acute in some cases, where Urgent Care was being provided for survivors.

For Britney, Britney is involved with constructing and lobbying for policies which actually shape our PSI processes. And Deb was actually a decision-maker in the complaints processes. So these are almost three tiered levels of our involvement in very different ways in the gender-based violence field. But we had all encountered this one specific myth, which was the idea that procedural fairness in due process, only exists for the respondent. And trauma-informed care only exists for the complainant. This was compounded by the idea that trauma-informed care somehow undermines procedural fairness, or rather more simply, that both couldn't exist in the same process. Essentially that to be procedurally fair, you have to forego caring for parties in a complaints process.

And our thinking from our experience within PSIs, is that this is born of a misconception, but really because of issues pertaining to reputational risk, risk mitigation, the fear of having lawsuits from the respondents and against the institution that, "Look you were not procedurally fair, during this extremely lengthy complaints process, because you provided trauma-informed care to the survivor."

And so almost intuitively, institutions backtrack on providing the care to the survivor, to the point where they're actually advantaging the respondent, over the complainant. And so our response to this myth was to create a system – or a set of standards that Britney just described – that showed that, "No. Actually trauma-informed care facilitates procedural fairness and a process is more procedurally fair, when trauma-informed care is in the mix."

We also introduced a third concept that ties the two together, which is harm reduction. And so harm reduction in its origins, is related to substance abuse – and providing support to people who are users of specific substances, to reduce as much harm as possible by making traditionally unsafe environments and unsafe situations, as safe as possible – so recognizing that we're not actually going to be able to eliminate the lack of safety completely, but we can add layers of safety to it, by altering those environments or encouraging specific behaviours that encourage safety.

So we wanted to bring this principle to the complaints process. And by bringing it to the complaints process, we're not necessarily saying that we're going to reduce all of the harm in a gender-based violence investigation. We're simply recognizing that the process itself is a harmful one. For the – by virtue of the fact that talking about an incident of GBV is harmful and it's a difficult thing to do and different kinds of harm will arise throughout the process. And for the institution, the responsibility doesn't stop with hiring an investigator, commencing the process, going through the steps of the process, checking off the specific

requirements of an investigation and then adjudicating it and then putting the matter to rest. But in fact, we should have the responsibility to take care of both parties, with the various harms that they experience and try to reduce that harm wherever possible.

So those are three principles that we brought to this guide. And our aim was to resolve this myth that you cannot be procedurally fair if you are incorporating trauma-informed care into the process. And our argument for that, is to say that trauma-informed care is not only to be applied to the complainants' experience in a complaints process, but actually to the experience of the respondent as well. We talk about this in depth in the guide, but one of the main purposes of bringing this principle forward to the respondent experience – is to create room for accountability, is to create room for reflection – so that while we're having those complaints process, that we're actually creating a space where healing can occur, where accountability can happen.

Because the main feature of a complaints process, should be to result in accountability at the end of the day, which current processes don't really do. There's sanctions that are applied. Sometimes the outcomes of investigations aren't even shared with all parties. So in a way, institutions benefit from saying, "Hey, we've done a complaints process. We've done our due diligence." But there is a big question mark, did this actually change the behaviour of the person who caused harm? And that, up until now, has remained unanswered. And we hope that tying these three principles together, can provide a better experience for a complainant in this process and also a better experience for the respondent in this process too.

Farrah: People are hyping you up in the comments. It's really exciting to hear conversations about the understanding that trauma-informed is not just for the survivor or the complainant in a case, but also the respondent. And I also think that that quote that a lot of people say, "That hurt people, hurt people." That idea that people that are respondents, have their own histories, their own experiences of trauma and harm. And so this is an opportunity to actually create some healing and accountability. So thank you so much for the work on this.

What – for Deb – for you and when you see this project, as someone that's worked so much in conduct, what was something for you that made it important for you to create this work?

Deb: Yes, it's a great question. You know when they tell you, you should write a letter to your 15-year-old self, to tell yourself what you wish you knew then – that's what this guide is for me. It's me talking to my former self, explaining everything I wish I knew when I started out. And some of my very first cases as a decision-maker, involved sexual violence or intimate partner violence, and I was totally ill-equipped to handle them – totally. I

had no training. And the going wisdom was pretty much limited to, “We have to give the respondent procedural fairness,” and that’s it.

And so, of course at the time – this was 17 years ago – I had never heard about trauma being considered in the context of a gender-based violence complaint. And when we finally did start to talk about trauma and trauma-informed practice, we were sort of told, “This is going to interfere with procedural fairness, so it is not to be used by decision-makers or investigators.”

Also, I had so little understanding of the regulatory environment. I knew that we had Human Rights Law, I knew we had Privacy Law, other things like Occupational Health and Safety, obligations to our employees and our students, I knew all of those existed, but no-one talked about their application to a complaint process or in any kind of comprehensive way.

So you feel like you’re operating in this tiny little bubble and it felt wrong. So on top of that, when Zanab introduced us to harm reduction in the context of complaints, I knew immediately how important that was going to be, because even as our processes were causing obvious harm to participants, the message was that the procedure was the only important thing. And that did not sit right with me. We are dealing with humans who are in pain. And so I needed to do something different. And I could see in their faces and their body language that I was causing serious harm to complainants, especially when I was telling them, “They’re not going to have a voice or a role in the process, except to provide a witness statement.” Or, when I asked a totally inappropriate question and I did, I did ask inappropriate questions.

But reflecting back, I can also see now the harm I was causing to respondents. And our process created a situation, in which their only option was to defend themselves. There was no real accountability. And two specific cases come to my mind. One started with what I would call a restorative impulse. The person wanted to apologize, wanted to make amends, and felt terrible for what he had done. But when his family learned that he had been charged under the code of student behaviour, they hired him as a criminal lawyer. He was then told, “Say nothing.” And that was the very beginning of a long pattern of what Jennifer Freyd has aptly termed DARVO, Defend, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender pattern, that shows up again, again, and again.

But another case, around the same time, I had a respondent try to negotiate immunity for himself, in exchange for turning in his friends, like he’d seen on the cop shows on TV. And I’m thinking, how did we get here? This is as far from accountability as we could possibly get. Our processes didn’t make any space for them to listen or reflect or learn or take responsibility, make amends, acknowledge the harm they caused, nothing. We had no space for any of that.

So, so many of our complainants and respondents have been scarred by our processes and left honestly with terrible memories of their university experience. And I consider that kind of a direct result of the way we modeled our approach on the criminal legal system. So I think, what I wish I knew then, what I would tell my baby Discipline Officer self is that, “Procedural fairness, trauma-informed practice and harm reduction are not in opposition, they work together.” And I wish I knew then that campus gender-based violence, is a Human Rights and Equity issue and not something to be treated like a crime in a post-secondary institution.

I wish I had a better understanding of the big picture and where I fit into it. And I wish I had understood that even when policies and procedures are not great, there’s so much you can do, just in everyday small actions, to reduce the harm to the folks involved.

And I think finally – and probably especially – thinking about trying to find training for myself. I had to cobble together information from all over the place – so Workplace Investigation training, Human Rights, Student Conduct, Labour Law, Risk Management, Student Development Theory – I was all over the place. And fortunately, I’m a voracious reader, but much of it also was from the U.S. And that meant I had to cut through a lot of irrelevant material and regulatory stuff that didn’t fit here in Canada. And I had to take things from places outside of post-secondary. So I had to try and figure out, where does that fit in what I’m doing here? I had to look for the elements that applied to my context.

So, I wish I had known better, how specifically to apply what I learned to a campus complaint process. And that is what this guide does.

Farrah: I would never not guess you for someone who would be a voracious reader of so many things, knowing that any time of the day, Deb will send us an article being, “Did you all read this? Do you know about what’s happening?”

So this project was initially – so for people that don’t know – Courage to Act, when we first did the report, it came out there were so many things about the complaints process. And Deb and Britney were part of the Advisory Committee for that. And then Zanab, was someone that I have a lot of admiration for and has done tremendous work and also I had the pleasure of working with. And so when we put the three together, they had never worked together before. And so when you first came together, I can imagine that the project we initially thought of has evolved to be something much different, because you were learning who each other were and building this project together. So Britney, can you tell us about how the project has evolved over the past two years?

Britney: Absolutely. Yes, you’re right, it has evolved so much. It definitely doesn’t look like it did at our first meeting, but I will say that one of the things that’s been consistent throughout, is this idea – at our first meeting we

had that discussion about these foundational standards and how they fit together – and that hasn't wavered from the beginning.

So at the core of what we were doing, what we wanted to convey hasn't really changed. But what that looks like and how we were going to do it did. I think one of the biggest ways for me is really narrowing down the scope of what we were doing. So we're all very passionate about what we do. And we have all of this experience and knowledge and we were working with – we had access to experts from across the country – so we had these big, glorious plans that we were going to address, every concern that came up in the Courage to Act report and any concern that had to do with complaints processes. And then on top of that, we wanted to create a national registry of investigators, to make finding a trauma-informed investigator more accessible for campuses, because that's one of the challenges that comes up so often.

We still touched on that in our guide a bit, but we realized it was a bit beyond our capacity. So when we started to look at the different gaps and challenges, we really had to narrow down our scope, which helped us set pretty clear boundaries. I mean we did change those boundaries often, [laughs] but we tried to set firm boundaries about what the scope of our project was going to be. And also recognized what questions we really couldn't answer, because what we didn't want to do was present strategies that have these unintended consequences because we don't know whether they are actually going to reduce harm or not, or whether they actually are trauma-informed. So questions that we don't have an answer for, we really had to identify those as well.

And I think it narrowed for me personally too, in terms of my expectations at least. So as someone who's a little bit more removed from the day-to-day of complaints processes – unlike Deb and Zanab – I knew that they were harmful, but I didn't know, I think the extent of how rooted that harm was, in just the process itself. So the more deeply we got into it, I started to recognize a little bit more that what we were doing wasn't really providing strategies for some kind of transformative experience that would create the perfect opportunity for accountability and providing support to survivors, which I knew going in. But I was also very excited about what we could do, so I was like, "Maybe this is an opportunity to change that."

So not only did we narrow our scope, but I narrowed my expectations and what we were doing, which I'm really thankful that I did, because I think it might have been bad or harmful to suggest that if you just adhere to the strategies in the guide, then no-one who's going to go through these processes is going to be harmed – because we've all talked about this – it's just not true. They are – complaints processes – are rooted in harm. They're not transformative justice by any means. And it's a colonial process that we are really just trying to make safer for everyone who goes through it. And another way I think it really evolved – which

might contradict my point about us narrowing what we were doing – but we also kept going deeper and deeper into what we were doing.

So we'd narrow our scope, but the issues we really dove into. So as we were working, we would send chapters to the different communities of practice to get their feedback. And they would give us some really thoughtful and important comments and from all the different perspectives that they came from. And that really helped us dig deep into what we were saying, what we were trying to convey, to folks.

And one of the things that we really had to do was articulate things that we assumed that everybody understood. Because – while we all came from different perspectives – as Zanab said, we all had this core belief and idea of what we wanted to do and what this myth was that we were trying to address and we just assumed that everybody else felt the same way as we did. But having all this feedback, we realized that [laughs] that isn't necessarily the case.

So one of the biggest things I think right from the start, was we didn't name Human Rights and Equity in what we were writing at all. We just assumed this is kind of where we're coming from. And it was pointed out to us I think – I'm very grateful to the folks who pointed this out – but this is – that's something that we needed to be very clear about. And I think that just helps to distinguish between that criminal side of things and the administrative piece of post-secondary complaints.

So everything we did really had so many layers that we were diving into. And we had so many questions as well. So we met virtually, pretty much every Friday, for the last two years. And I think the vast majority of the time – maybe 99 percent of the time were – we'd been talking through questions that had come up, or going over new cases, or articles that Deb has shared with us. And someone would have an idea or need clarification. Usually it was me needing clarification on what happens on the ground? And those would bring up new questions that we needed to answer. Or new questions that we couldn't answer but we needed to maybe even identify.

So we ended up adding a whole new section to the guide that looks at unsettled questions, which wasn't part of our initial plan. We were thinking we were going to have answers to everything. We didn't expect to leave these things unanswered. So we have topics like privacy and disclosure, tensions when there's concurrent institutional and criminal complaints and the responsibility of institutions to address historical complaints. And we convened a panel of experts, which – who were really great to provide their thought process on these questions and we were able to come up with some recommendations that could be explored. And then we added even another chapter closer to the end, where we realized there were these broader conversations that needed

to happen and resources and responses that needed to be talked through.

So yes. We definitely didn't intend to have these unanswered questions throughout, but I think it really speaks to the complexity of complaints processes and the need for all of us to really engage with this work, not just sort of come at it from your own perspective, but really engage more meaningfully. So yes, I guess the last few years was really narrowing our scope, but also diving into these new questions and just getting more immersed into this really complex and detailed world that – at least I very naively thought was a little more straightforward [laughs] at the beginning – but it's not that way.

Farah: One of my favourite things about your project was how many people are so invested in it. You had – there was an amazing community of practice that really wanted to see the materials as it came out, and wanted to give feedback. And there's some really interesting conversations that come from that. I remember the harm reduction conversation was very interesting to see it come through. And I just – I know you gave a shout out – but I love seeing that some of the folks from the community practice are here today – from the complaints practice. So thank you so much for being here. And this is so much of a launch that is also your work as well.

So Zanab, now you've launched – I feel it's your baby, because you've been labouring this for three years – or two years – and it's a long process that comes out. What's your vision now? How do you want to see people use this guide? How do you envision people interacting with it? How do you see it – do you see it just looking at how it's going to change the way we do campus investigations? Or do you want to see it in other ways too?

Zanab: So the list of people for whom we would love to use this guide is quite long. So of course, we want – administrators and leadership and senior admin, the people who are charged with actually producing complaints and accountability processes for incidents of GBV on campus – we of course want those people to get this guide and use it. Specifically, because this guide is built in a way that each step of the process – from disclosure to intake, to adjudication and appeals – are discussed in depth, with strategies to ensure the process is trauma-informed, procedurally fair and rooted in harm reduction. So absolutely, we want those people to pick up this guide.

But we also hope that student advocates and activists will use this guide. In particular, because more and more students are taking active roles in their policy review processes across the country and many of the policies that we have now, are because of student mobilization – students mobilizing and student activism.

So we hope that this might be a tool that they could use at their own campuses – especially during periods of policy review – to bring up strategies and amendments to their home policies. So institutions that we may not have had a chance to talk to, [clears throat] excuse me, if they could use this as a list of strategies to bring to their home institutions, to amend their own policies, that would be amazing as well. Also for people in Deb’s position, so decision-makers who want more guidance and strategies for delivering their decisions in a way that is trauma-informed. We even have a section that’s all about bad news and delivering bad news in a way that’s trauma-informed and reduces harm.

Of course, it’s important to remember that no matter how good the process, it is very likely that someone is going to be receiving bad news, whether that’s the complainant, the respondent, or members of the institution. And I think there is a social responsibility to even deliver the bad news in a way that is rooted in harm reduction. Investigators who want to enhance the way they gather information from complainants and respondents, and to better understand trauma responses, will benefit from this guide.

So one of the key pieces of writing that I was involved in when making this guide, was describing the role of complainants and respondents in an investigation. When we look at the very public criminal justice cases that are brought forth, we sometimes forget that complainants are doing a service really, to the rest of their communities, by talking about their experience in a public forum. While it’s not the exact same, we have to recognize that complainants are providers of integral information to the institution. They are describing their experience in a way that allows institutions to notice where there’s gaps in safety, to identify active causes of harm, and to take action against that harm.

So it’s really important to honour, that complainants and respondents, are providers of information. And the way that we gather that information from them, is going to determine whether or not the complaints process is successful or unsuccessful. And so we have a number of strategies on how to best gather information from people, by employing trauma-informed strategies to that process. So investigators will also benefit from this guide.

And then last, but not least, survivors, students and employees going through this process who want to know their rights, self-advocate for better care, more resources, and especially those survivors who are not familiar with the laws of this country, with the processes in this country, with the language of this country, or generally how complaints processes are dealt with in Canada. We would want those people to use this guide as well.

So that’s a very long list of the folks that we want to use this guide. But as Britney was saying, we weren’t able to dive deep into every single component that we were interested in, but in the Knowledge Centre at

Courage to Act, the communities of practice and working groups have created many, many tools that I think are very complimentary to our guide. In fact we have – we had the opportunity to work with the working group that created a Guide for Workplace Investigators. So I would highly encourage that people check out those tools, in addition to this guide, because it compliments our work and it also covers areas that we weren't able to get to in this guide.

Farrah: I love the idea that students who may be nervous about a process or how to advocate for themselves, could look at something like this and go, "OK. Maybe there's a different way forward. Maybe I can understand this better." Or I can even see a parent looking at this and trying to understand what's happening for my kid, and they can understand it better. It's really exciting to see this laid out. It's also just really beautiful. So I want to give a shoutout also to the illustrator Michelle Campos Castillo who created the images for this – the original design brand for this project. And then all the amazing designers who are a part of this. There were so many and we're so lucky to have them.

One thing I would love to hear from you – as we move into the end of this section – we're going to start asking – so folks get ready for your questions, because we want to hear them. What are two top things that each of you think PSIs could do right now to get started to address the harm reduction, procedural fairness, trauma-informed? How can they bring this to the next – what do they need to do next? So maybe we can start with Deb, and then we'll go to Zanab, and then Britney.

Deb: Sure. I think my top two things are kind of related to each other. And the first would be, commit to moving away from that singular laser focus on procedural fairness just for the respondent. And adapt those foundational standards – all three of them – procedural fairness interacts with trauma-informed practice, which reduces harm. And in order to do that, you don't even have to change your policies. You can get started today, [laughs] on something like that just by looking at the practice, focusing on your own practice within your work. So I'd start with that – my Number 1 wish-list.

And then related, I would say attend, or have your staff attend and/or have your staff [laughs] attend our training. And we have a whole bunch of training coming up in the next two years that I will be talking about a bit. Our hope, I think, is that practitioners from across the country will use the guide to themselves become the experts in these processes. And that no-one finds themselves in the same position that I was in 20 years ago.

Zanab: I think there's a number of things that institutions could do immediately. I'll start with just providing people with the support that they need right away, having resources available right away, without having to disclose anything at all. That's the model that was followed at Ryerson University, when I was working with Farrah, at Consent Comes First, which was

refreshing for me, as I hadn't worked out of PSI, where that was the process. People could just walk into my office, request support, and receive it, without having to trigger a complaints process, or even tell their story. So I think that's something that people could do right now at their home institutions, just like Deb was saying, change your practice, provide support from the jump, versus waiting for people to elaborate on the events that led them to coming to your office. I think that's one major change.

The other thing that I think people could do, is create a Multidisciplinary Response Team, which is just a tiny little ask on my end, but people in the United States have been doing it. There are Multidisciplinary Response Teams that we can use as templates at our home institutions, but the importance of having a Multidisciplinary Response Team, lies in the fact that everyone's needs are going to be extremely different. So it's important to have offices that are culturally safe, involved in the process. So Spiritual Care offices, Academic Accommodation offices, Medical offices. It's not a linear path to resolution for any survivor, so making sure that various different offices and people of expertise – of different expertise – and authority in various different offices are all connected to your gender-based violence office, is really key.

There's actually a guide that I had the pleasure of working on, that will be released in the coming stages of Courage to Act, that speaks directly about how to form a CRT, a Coordinated Response Team, at your campus. So that's one thing that you can do.

And then the final thing – and this is a larger conversation that extends way beyond post-secondary institutions – but if possible, demedicalize the accommodations process. Accommodations right now are entrenched only in what medically you're able and unable to do. I think we need to broaden the definition of an accommodation to include all of the code grounds in the Human Rights code. So including things like caregiver status as well. Including things like class in the conversation. It doesn't make sense that our accommodations processes only limit to one code ground in the Human Rights code. We should be looking at the multidimensional experiences of people, based on their class, based on their race, based on their social location. So really de-medicalizing the accommodations process, so that it's more accessible to people who need it. But those were three things, but those are some of the things that people could do.

Britney: Those are all very important things – I think it's worth giving the three. For me, one thing that I think is really important, is making sure that the staff you have in place doing this work are trained in trauma-informed practice and know how to integrate care into their work. So for institutions, a commitment to training your staff in trauma-informed practice, specific to their roles and specific to the complaints process generally. So not just the people who are providing support, but investigators and adjudicators. And again, with Deb's experience, we

don't want people to have to put this together themselves and cobble this together themselves. But really having something in place by the institution that shows a commitment to changing these processes.

And also, evaluating your hiring practices. So if you're working with external investigators, who are you hiring to do this work? And looking at what their experiences are, in terms of trauma-informed investigations and investigations into gender-based violence complaints. And I think also part of that umbrella of training – and ensuring staff are able to do this work in a way that's trauma-informed – is providing them with the support and resources they need to protect against things like trauma exposure response and other things that are really harmful. People who do this work need the support the way that our complainants and our respondents do, because they're not doing easy work. They are doing work that brings up so much. And if you don't have the proper support in place, this affects your ability to really do your job and to be able to care for people and use a trauma-informed lens in your work. And it's also just not something we want for them – regardless of whether they can still do their job still – it shouldn't be that way.

So yes. I guess the second thing I'll say is institutions should be looking at their policies and their procedures. And they can use the guide to do that. We have strategies for you. In Ontario Sexual Violence Policies need to be reviewed every three years, but even if you don't have this legislated requirement in your province, you should be doing regular reviews of your sexual violence policies. And we've done a lot of this work for you, in terms of what do you need to look at when you're doing this review? What standards should you be meeting? And this is all based on the expertise from folks across the country.

So it's there for you to use. So really just taking that and looking at what you're doing on your campus. And when you're doing that, really making sure that you're involving the students and the people who do this work on your campus, because it's only going to make your policy stronger. And work with your unions to strengthen your collective agreements and make sure that they align with the policy, so that everyone is safer in these processes. Yes, so I would say, making sure that everyone knows how to be trauma-informed in their work and making sure your policies are trauma-informed is really important.

Farrah:

I love that it's really – all three of you are really looking at this as a holistic matter – that's it's not just a one thing that you do and then we're good. But it's something that's ongoing. It's a commitment, not only from the policy, but the procedures. Because we all know policies are as good as the paper they're on, if they're not done in a way that's actually supportive of next steps and processes.

So Deb, what's next? Because I know you, Britney and Zanab, you mentioned that there's going to be training and workshops available. But

there's some really exciting stuff that you three are doing together, so tell us a little bit about it.

Deb: Sure. Yes, Britney's going to pull up a slide actually, that has some of the information on it. So over the next two years, we have a whole bunch of stuff planned. Starting with the introductory training on how to apply the three foundational standards across the entire spectrum of reporting, investigation, and adjudication. So we're going to offer that, four times over the next two years and we hope as many people as possible can attend that one.

And we'll follow that with a training series called Go Deep, in which each session walks through one step of the complaints process and talks through the strategies that will ensure procedural fairness, trauma-informed practice and harm reduction in each step. So this is really our strategy for the practice session of the guide. So one session each for receiving a complaint, interim measures, investigation and then a session for adjudication and appeals.

We're also introducing a speaker and panel discussion series titled, We Can Do Better, because we can always improve what we're doing. And we'll be looking at topics like, moving from decriminalizing our processes to decolonizing them. And supporting complainants and respondents through the process. And of course, alternatives to complaints processes, again recognizing that these will never be desirable processes for everyone.

We're also going to tackle more of those unsettled questions. So it's similar to what we did in our unsettled questions section of the guide. We're planning more roundtable discussions on personal relationships between students and faculty and information sharing both within and outside of a post-secondary. And we hope to generate white papers from the discussions from a lot of these things to go into the Knowledge Centre, so you'll have access to the proceedings of these things.

And finally, keep an eye out for our new Blog series, called Simple Questions with Complicated Answers. Each Blog will explore a common question related to the complaints process and we'll attempt to explain the issues, debunk whatever myths people are clinging to, challenge the misconceptions and provide some context and background for those new to the complaints processes. So just as a little teaser, our first simple question is, gender-based violence is a crime, why don't we just leave it to the police? And I'll stop there.

Farrah: Just dropping intense questions right at the end. Because that's something that I hear all the time. I think when everything was happening with Western University – when the stories were exploding there – so many people were like, “Well this is a police matter. They need to call the police.” But as Zanab raised, that part of support really needs to be

actually the first thing we think about. How do we support survivors?
How do we ensure that people get their needs met?

And so that will be a really interesting conversation. I'm looking forward to that. And if people don't know, Deb and Britney wrote an article for Policy Options. I'm just going to pop it into the Chat, so if people haven't read it yet, it's great. Hopefully there's more opportunities like that to hear from Zanab, Britney and Deb.

And now, we have about 20 minutes for some questions. So I'm happy to post some – because I have so many questions for these three wonderful humans – but I would love to hear from people in the group. Do you have questions for Zanab, Britney and Deb about this amazing three-part guide – because you have to download in three parts which is important to know – but do people have questions? Oh four parts, oh my goodness, oh my goodness, I think I only saw the first three for a minute. Yes.

So I want to ask a question and then hopefully I'm going to ask one question and then I'm going to ask the crowd – this amazing group – because I see amazing people that I have huge intellectual crushes on in this group. Hopefully you're going to ask some really great questions. But first I'm going to say to the three of you, what's something that you think – what makes it really different between the criminal process and the process within universities, that actually is an opportunity? So something you're like, "Oh, this is something we get to do differently that actually poses this amazing opportunity to do X?" Who wants to take that on?

Deb: One of the things that I would say is that the criminal process and the campus processes have completely different goals. And so if we are trying to emulate what they do in the criminal process, we're completely not being able to meet our educational mission.

So the goal of the campus complaint process is to make sure that people who are within our communities, can live out their purpose in our communities – so we can meet our educational goals, we can offer knowledge sharing and teaching and learning and research and all of those things – but we have to make sure our environment is conducive to them.

So if we're not paying attention to that – keeping our eyes on that – as our Number 1 goal, we're not doing it. And so as soon as we start emulating the criminal system and bringing in elements that really don't meet that goal, we're moving away from it and we're missing the boat.

Zanab: If I could also add that when it comes to the criminal justice system, the goal is to determine whether or not a criminal offense has occurred against the State, not the life of a person who has been seriously harmed by a specific event or series of events, et cetera. In PSIs, we

have the opportunity to take a community-based approach to the situation and to view students as members of a community, because that is really what a college and university is – it's a microcosm – it's a small community of people who are coming together for the same goal that Deb was just talking about.

And so, we have the opportunity to make the goal, not be the determination of fact if someone has violated a policy, but rather is there an opportunity to change someone's behaviour? The act that they did, or the way that they acted? If there's a way to improve on it, so that it doesn't happen again in the future. I think recidivism is a really big question mark, when it comes to sexual violence. We know that it's a handful of the same offenders perpetrating most of the sexual violence and we already know that criminal justice sentences, they're not stopping that. They're not reducing rates of recidivism. We already know this. We know that people who go to jail for these crimes, either become victims of sexual violence themselves, or perpetuate this harm to other people in those facilities.

So really, there's no reason to replicate that system at all in PSIs. In fact, we should be looking for ways to foster reflection and healing and accountability. And so, we have a really big opportunity to do that in a community-based model, moving away from the criminal justice model.

Britney: Yes, 100 percent to all of that. And I think part of that also brings in what we can do for survivors in these spaces, because it gives a little bit more autonomy and control over the process of what it is that they want out of it? What are they looking for? And they get to be parties to the process, rather than in the criminal system where you are a witness only. So in terms of these – this community-based approach – if a survivor is looking for that piece, that's something that they can find in an institutional process, that they can't find in a criminal process.

Farrah: I think those are the things that really excite me about being in a university community to do this, is that you could actually see people take accountability, do the work they need to, being held by their community to do that, if we – if we do this right – if we do this in a way that actually works, yes.

OK. Are there any questions from the crowd? Or do you just want to hear me ask lots of questions of these wonderful humans, which is fine? I'm just going to give it one second. Because sometimes they'll need to collect themselves. But that's OK too. So maybe I'll ask two more questions and we'll end early, which is always OK. Because I know things – people are just blown away by all the answers that you're giving.

I think one of the things that I love to learn a little bit more about, is when the three of you were working on this, can you talk about the collaborative nature of it a little bit more? Not just with you, but with all the people that are involved. Because when I look at the

acknowledgment page for this guide and tool, it's a mile, mile long. It's just so immense how many people are involved in this.

And so what did that look like? How – was it superficial, or was it like people giving you deep feedback? What did that look like? Because I think something that I think is really unique about your guide and about a lot of the guides and tools that come from Courage to Act, it was collaborative, in a way that I haven't seen a lot of this work being done. So can you tell us a little bit more about the collaborative aspect of it?

Deb:

It was amazing actually, working in this group of literally hundreds of strangers. Some of them are strangers, some of them we knew, some of them were friends. But it was in a way, it was a little scary, putting ourselves out there writing this guide, because we would write a chapter and then send it out to the universe. And we had amazing – an amazing number of people come back to us with live, line-by-line reviews of what we had done. And you know Britney talked about just the concept of, “Why didn't you frame this,” in terms of Human Rights?

In our head it was, but to have that put out there, to say, “This – you have to be explicit,” was amazing. So that was very cool. And these are folks from across the spectrum. People who worked in survivor support, investigators, administrators, student organizers, lawyers, scholars, unions, everybody. And so many people who knew so much about gender-based violence.

And so we felt – I'll speak for myself – I felt a little exposed [laughs] sending things out to all of these people and they're going to realize I don't know as much as I wish I knew. But – and it wasn't the same even as sending out a finished manuscript for a reader's report like when you publish and you get these nice little anonymous reader's reports back. We did that too. So we have that as well. But sort of what – as uncomfortable as that was – the level of feedback we got and the depth of engagement was so amazing, that the scary thing became actually the guide's greatest strength. Because we – it's so much stronger and more credible, because it's been so carefully reviewed by so many people with all of these perspectives.

Zanab:

If I could also add that it was – in the collaboration – there was a number of other tools that I feel I had mentioned before, are now complimentary to this guide. So because of that – because of how many people we were working with – I think it led to the development of a really comprehensive toolkit of resources for people to use in workplace investigations. I believe there's also a guide on alternative resolution processes. So the things that we weren't really able to cover, we knew that the people – the amazing people that we were going to be working with – were going to take a deep dive and produce tools that spoke to those needs.

Farah: You really see it in the work that you all have produced. And again, I want to give a real – I really ask people to look at the pages of acknowledgements because it's just – it warms my heart and makes me really excited about the future of this work, if we're all saying, "OK. We're all committed to this. What can we do together to make change on our campuses?"

So the last question I want to end on is, what can – oh, we actually have a question in the crowd and then I'll go to my question. Are there ever incidents where procedural fairness and trauma-informed practice are in opposition of one another? And if you come across that, which do you prioritize?

Britney: I can, I can take this one. Yes, I think that question, I think will come up a lot when we think about the way that procedural fairness and trauma-informed practice have really been framed as these oppositional forces. But I think depending on how you understand what the concepts are, that will help sort of shape that. So in our framing and how we understand them to play out in a complaints process, is really that they can't be in opposition to each other, because they rely on one another.

So the principles of trauma-informed practice in this context, which are – that the knowledge of trauma and its impacts be incorporated into all policies, procedures, and practices. And that this lens be used to avoid re-traumatization and mitigate harm, can always be applied in a way that's procedurally fair, because it's about understanding trauma. And we can be equally attentive to both, without needing to prioritize either.

And also, what really helped me understand this, is this point that because they apply to both parties, when we've said this, we often think procedural fairness is only something for the respondent and trauma-informed practice is only for the complainant. When we think about the fact that both parties should be afforded both of these standards, this kind of helps break down this idea that they are in opposition to each other, or that there's some sort of tension that we need to reconcile, when really it's the opposite.

So, I would say that this – it may feel like this comes up a lot in your work, but if you really get down to what it means to be trauma-informed, you can see that it will never be sort of in opposition to procedural fairness and you won't need to make that prioritization, which I think is really something that we try and lay out in all of the strategies. We try and show where this tension may arise for you and then how it's really sort of – I don't know what the word is – but a false – is it like a straw man argument or something like that – I think that might be the wrong term, but yes.

Farah: So the last question I want to leave you on – and I really appreciate that actually that question came up – because it feels like it's the elephant in the room sometimes, or it is the first thing that people always say. My

favourite was Robyn Bidgood, who did the initial research for Courage to Act on the report about adjudication. She made this meme of two Avengers people in opposition to each other. And I just loved how she was able to [memeify? 01:17:51] it, because there's so much idea that they're supposed to be fighting, but really you're together.

So the last thing I want to ask you, is we know that it's not just up to institutions or student advocates around this. We know this is a project that is connected to the federal government. So what could the federal government and provincial governments do better to support trauma-informed, harm reduction, violence-informed conversations around this? How can they change this procedural fairness? How can they bring this together? Sorry, [I forgot? 01:18:20] last element. But yes, bring those together to kind of bring about change in complaints processes on campuses.

Deb: That is a great question. We actually identified a couple of areas where we would like to have policy change – law change – but I think just making sure that the government conversations involve the people who are working in the frontline, who are going through the processes, who are survivors, who experienced what it's like to do this – need to be heard. And I think too often, we're too busy thinking at the high policy level, institutional level, without remembering the human element. And I think that's what really has to happen.

Farrah: Zanab, I know you have a burning question or response.

Zanab: [Laughs] Yes. I was just going to say that I'm sure there's many GBV and sexual violence specialists in the audience right now. I think one of the main things that the federal government, the provincial government, all bodies that determine funding for our institutions can do, is make sure that the funding structures are permanent, that they give autonomy to the offices that actually carry out the work. It is an extremely heavy weight to carry all by yourself, as an office on campus. That's one of the reasons why I was suggesting a Multidisciplinary Team, because a single office cannot carry the burden of multiple different expertise, but we do in GBV offices. Not only are we supporting people who have been affected by sexual violence, but we also become medical experts and legal experts and accommodation experts and it's impossible for us to know all of those policies, at its fullest extent, but that is a responsibility that is on our shoulders for the most part.

And so while I did say we should have Multidisciplinary Coordinated Response Teams, I think one thing that could better help us do our work, is knowing that – our jobs are protected, our jobs are respected, our expertise is respected – and that can only happen when there is clear distribution of resources from top down, indicating as such. So I think that's one big change that needs to happen.

Farrah:

Yes, it sounds like it's not just something that just the individual staff can do. It needs a lot of push forward. But I also love Zanab, that you raise this idea of respecting the knowledge of the people who do the frontline work. And I love that this tool really reflected that, where you really talk to people who were doing the work, that were seeing the cases, that were struggling on their own and those small offices going, "I don't know what to do here," or, "No-ones listening to me." So I really felt that was reflected in this.

And so I really thank you both – sorry – the three of you, for the work that you've done on this. I want to also, as we wind down this conversation, I want to thank Zanab Jafry, for your exceptional work on this, Britney De Costa, and Deborah Eerkes, the three of you came together – never working together before – and have created this exceptional guide that I know that will be ground-breaking for the movement to end gender-based violence on campus. So I want to thank you for that work.

I also want to thank the Courage to Act Project Team. So CJ Rowe, Anoodth Naushan, Carina Gabrielle, Andreanne, Emily Allan, and Kelly Prevett. As well as the designers that created the guide – because it's a four-part guide, it's huge. Jackie Dias, Kitty Rode, Jay Bird and Vy Do, which is on elements for Michelle Campos Castillo. And there's a whole host of other folks like the expert panel, including Karen Busby, Lara Hof, Amy Kroes and Lyndsay Anderson, Lise Gottell, Pamela Cross, also is part of this. Angela Bradley too – there are so many people that are part of this project. And so I really want to say thank you again.

And we have an evaluation. Please fill it out to tell us what we can do better and what we can do differently. And don't forget to download the four-part of this amazing guide to share with people you know and make sure to stay tuned, because we're going to be having lots more conversations like this to get really in depth into this conversation.

So thank you for joining us and thank you for being part of the Courage to Act process. And we're going to end now. Bye everyone. Take good care. Don't forget to fill out the evaluation.

[End of recorded material 01:22:54]