

**Alternative Methods of Negotiation
in the Social Services Sector**

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Major Project Report

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Foreword

My Major Project consists of a workshop plan and curriculum materials for teaching an alternative method of negotiation to people working in the social services (SS) sector in Toronto, Ontario. This Major Project Report includes reflections on lessons learnt in the process of developing these materials in relation to my Learning Objectives as set out in my Plan of Study, which includes these components: Social Capital; Negotiating Inequality in the SS sector; and Colonialism and excluded voices in SS leadership. Many of my Learning Objectives have been addressed through this Major Project.

In over 20 years in the sector as a worker, woman/ student/ director/ negotiator, I have observed the persistent ongoing shift from an independent non-profit model to a hierarchical corporate one, often with boards whose responsibilities include running the organization like a business, and hiring leadership drawing on the business sector model. This has resulted in an ethos which “services” clients rather than supporting citizens’ seeking jobs, support, and social justice. SS organizations have become managers of government programs with decreasing resources and stringent accountability systems. At the same time, the needs of impoverished and disenfranchised communities continue to grow, demanding more and better-quality services from front line workers and management. Within this context conflict is ever-present and inevitable.

Conflicts arise from insufficient or uneven distribution of resources, discrimination, harassment, racism, sexism (intentional or unintentional) and other forms of oppression. Misuse of power often results in costly and long negotiation processes involving unions or employee associations and management, and interpersonal conflict among employees and management staff. The current model for negotiations creates an “uneven table”, with winners and losers. It does not consider or correct for power imbalances, and consequently often perpetuates conflicts and injustices. The formal training for SS leadership draws largely on this private corporate sector negotiations model, even though SS organizations are not in the private sector, are not supposed to make a profit, and have marginalized clients / service users -- not customers. The sphere of conflict resolution is characterized by poor resolutions; participants often feel threatened, angry, frustrated, or misunderstood.

My overall objective in carrying out this project has been to help develop a different kind of discourse along with alternative visions for SS leadership, starting with negotiation models. This represents a paradigm shift that is not a panacea - instead it is an attempt to identify pathways toward more effective conflict resolution and stronger democracy in Toronto.

MAJOR PROJECT FINAL REPORT

Project Brief and Background

My Major Project, the final learning activity of my MES degree, involved developing a workshop to share resources for new (non-traditional) approaches to conflict resolution and negotiations for Toronto's non-profit social services (SS)¹. The workshop plan and supplementary teaching materials are included as Appendix 1. The SS in Toronto includes organizations of diverse size and scope, ranging from small (5 to 25 employees) to ones with hundreds of employees². These organizations are taking on an increasing share of society's most important and difficult work. They are tasked with delivering programs and services to those who "fall through" the social safety net. These people include refugees, some new immigrants, people with different abilities, people in racialized and indigenous communities, women and children, homeless people, disenfranchised youth, the working poor and the elderly.

This report explains my process and reflects on what I learned in carrying out this project.

Organization of this Major Project Report

The first section of this report covers my personal motivation for this project, theoretical framework, literature review, research questions and methodology. I interviewed a number of experienced SS professionals, 'key informants', to help guide my workshop development process. In the second section, I draw out some of the main points from my interviews, with illustrative quotes from interviewees. These are presented under themes on which I drew in developing my workshop plan. In the third section, 'My Learnings (POS)', I reflect on what I learned while carrying out this project, in relation to My Plan of Study Learning Objectives: 1. Social Capital, 2. Negotiating Inequality in the SS sector and 3. Colonialism and excluded voices in the SS leadership. The concluding section includes a few recommendations and suggestions for future action.

I. Motivation and Personal Practice

The idea to carry out this project, and my initial personal motivation, stemmed from over 20 years of being at “uneven tables” in progressive human resources positions in the not-for-profit sector in Toronto, including more than ten years at the senior manager and director level in the unionized social service (SS) or public sector. I have worked closely with workers, mostly women, in the areas of health care, community development and service delivery, as well as with union representatives and management. In my area of work, human resources, one of the most pressing issues is to address and mediate around conflict resolution, because this often results in prohibitive costs both at the human and economic level. As an immigrant woman, student / social activist, and as a worker/director/negotiator, I believe that a different approach to negotiations in the social services (SS) sector is overdue. To consider a different way of negotiating, it is necessary to develop a clearer picture of the relationships among those who work in the SS sector, their aspirations and perspectives on the exercise of power.

In my experience, SS workers do remarkable and challenging work in very challenging working environments. Within this sector, social and political conflict arises constantly and the need to look for alternative methods to resolve conflict using alternative skills, methods and approaches to negotiation. The frustrations that are frequently expressed require careful analysis to develop effective alternatives to overcome the prevailing inertia and move toward greater empowerment on behalf of those who use these services, typically those who have experienced the greatest disadvantage in our society. This study focuses on Toronto, a very diverse society with an extensive social services sector.

In my research on alternatives, Phyllis Beck Kritek’s book Negotiating at an Uneven Table; Developing Moral Courage in Resolving our Conflicts (2002), caught my attention with her analysis of power imbalances, her honesty in both naming the issues and taking personal responsibility, and her alternative approaches and open challenge to look for “new ways of being” – in my case, as a negotiator and as a human being. Phyllis Beck Kritek uses recognizing and addressing power imbalances as a starting point for conflict resolution and negotiations.

Over the course of my life and career in the SS sector I have managed to challenge, whenever possible, the misuse of power. This is always a very lonely experience, even when other courageous but isolated voices speak up, and often comes at a high price. Recognizing your own power and owning it and questioning your own biases while making sure to keep your ego in check is yet the hardest challenge. In the social, political and working environments and spaces I know, addressing conflict from the many identities and different sides of the table is a constant challenge. For example, workers in this sector usually include casual, unionized, non-unionized, administration, and people in leadership positions.

The Role of Unions

The literature on public sector unionism is usually situated in a discussion of collective bargaining, compensation levels, interest arbitration and the right to strike, dominated by a labour relations lens as opposed to a political or social movement one (S. Ross “Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity.2013. p.10).

Donna Baines in “Unions in the Nonprofit Social Services Sector” (Ross. 2013) states that “Social unionism is the official discourse of most of the union representing workers in the non-profit sector”. p.84). Social unionism, according to Stephanie Ross, is generally understood to involve both engagement with social justice struggles beyond the workplace and methods of union activity beyond the collective bargaining process, is claimed to increase the labour movement’s organizing capacity, bargaining power, and social and political weight³. Most workers in the SS sector are member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, the United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Health, Office & Professional Employees (HOPE),the Canadian Auto Workers, or the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Healthcare.

The Ministry of Labour is responsible to develop and enforce labour legislation. There are several labour relations laws that govern labour negotiations. The Ministry’s labour relations activities focus on settling workplace disputes under various employment-related statutes, assisting in the settlement of collective agreements and producing collective bargaining information⁴. The Ministry of Labour administers labour relations-

related laws such as the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (LRA). The LRA regulates various aspects of labour relations for most Ontario workplaces including the certification and decertification of unions, the collective bargaining process, mandatory grievance arbitration, strikes and lock-outs, unfair labour practices, and the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). While the OLRB's mandate is to provide, as an independent tribunal, excellence in administrative justice through the effective resolution of labour and employment disputes, there are no laws that protect the workers from precarious work, governments funding cuts to public services, and wage freezes. (<https://cleoconnect.ca/organization/the-ontario-labour-relations-board-olrb/>),

Baines writes that prior to neoliberalism the Nonprofit sector was not merely an extension of the public sector, existing instead to provide alternative services for specific and new populations and to act as an advocate for those less heard. Under neoliberalism, the Nonprofit social services sector has grown significantly, Baines argues, because of the cost savings to governments in terms of wages and overheads. Currently the Nonprofit SS acts as a low-wage drag on the public sector that will likely continue to grow as governments attempt to undercut and downsize public services. (Ross.2013. p.82)

In my limited experience working closely with representatives of SEIU, OPSEU, CUPE and UFCW (2008-2017), while I represented the management side of the table, I had the opportunity to use different approaches at the negotiating tables with greater success. This happened when both sides managed to adopt more open-minded attitudes, more dialogue and more willingness to listen to each other, and more respect. These attitudes led us to more understanding of each other's goals and helped us connect at a human level, thereby starting to imagine outcomes based on cooperation and trust.

The process wasn't great from everyone's perspectives, but it represented an important advance, and it made me realize how much we could achieve with so little effort. It was through those relationships that a possibility for a different approach to conflict resolution and negotiations in the social services sector first began to come together in my mind.

I am the first to acknowledge union activists' dismissive approach to what they see as "mainstream consultants" lecturing on the merits of cooperation and win/win negotiations. Unions have made their greatest gains through conflict and struggle. (Martin.1995. p.133.) Ironically, management holds to the same view, and in their eyes, they have won the most battles.

D'Arcy Martin, a union educator, in *Thinking Union: Activism and Education in Canada's Labour Movement*, wrote: "I am convinced that union education has the potential to change power relations in the workplace and in the society more broadly"⁵. (D'Arcy Martin. 1995. p.3). He also stated that a union's operating style shouldn't be a matter of personality traits or a moral imperative, but reflect a calm, collective choice based on objectives combined with a clear sense of momentum and timing. At times, he claimed, unionists should choose to be combative. At other times we should choose to be collaborative. In his words, 25 years ago,

"...Among unionists this approach is a lot more common than it was when I started doing worker education in the late1970s. Yet the pattern of subordinate and adversarial behaviour remains a defining feature of the union culture. Adopting the new information, attitudes, and skills required for a strategic approach to open-field bargaining is a challenge for the labour movement. Certainly, the union educator has a role to play in equipping people for this new mode of representing fellow employees..." (D. Martin.1995. p.134)

While the focus of my study is on a small sample of SS organizations, workers (unionized and not unionized) and their leaders in the social services / non-profit sector need to find an alternative framework to counter, on the one hand the pressures to silence civil society voices dealing with the changing and increasingly precarious nature of employment; changes (or lack thereof) in sector legislation and regulation; the rapid pace of technology development, and new ways of working. And on the other hand, the pressures imposed by a legacy of colonialism that combined with endemic realities such as racism, classism, and other forms of oppression perpetuate power and privilege for a few.

The current model for negotiations creates an “uneven table”, with winners and losers. It does not consider or correct for power imbalances, and consequently often perpetuates conflicts and injustices. The formal training for SS leadership draws largely on this private corporate sector negotiations model, even though SS organizations are not in the private sector, are not supposed to make a profit, and have marginalized clients / service users -- not customers. The sphere of conflict resolution is characterized by poor resolutions; participants often feel threatened, angry, frustrated, or misunderstood.

The Power of Naiveté ⁶

Jory C. Faibish, a BC-based mediator and negotiator, claimed that people exercise power in many ways, unconsciously and consciously. There are many types, manifestations, and attributes of power, he wrote, and these can be used separately, in combination, by ourselves or with others. He came up with a list of 36 types of power; number 26 is the power of naiveté. He defines it as the power of “Not knowing and engaging as a ‘blank slate’”. Many of my friends, and some colleagues and especially some of my Latin-Americans compatriots have pointed out the level of naiveté of my project. How in the world can I think that through nice and inclusive language and attitudes (relationships) and an open-minded approach to different ways of being in the world we can change the power dynamic of our workplaces and of our society? Have I learned anything about the history of struggles of our people?

My response is to echo Kritek’s insights as she writes: “...a paradigm shift emerges when cultures, groups or even an individual find themselves unable to explain something with the old answers. The old answers may not apply to something new that has recently been “seen,” or to something “seen” for a long time where the old explanation no longer seems adequate. The search for new answers leads to an array of alternatives. Over time, some new explanatory stories begin to enjoy a degree of popularity because they meet the needs of the searchers in one way or another. Sometimes the process occurs in only one or two dimensions of a culture. Other times it may be quite pervasive and touch many dimensions or disrupt old answers to some of the most

compelling and important questions of that culture. At some level, this seems to be another way of describing the evolution we inexorably pursue”. p.179

There are ample sources, authors, and daily stories that document how national and international states, institutions, and citizens have adopted a neoliberal political and economic system imposed by the larger global corporations and the owners of capital. I have “lived experience” working in the social service sector; I know what is like being a user, a worker, a manager, a director. I have lived the realities firsthand, along with thousands of co-workers, unionized, non-unionized, and people in leadership positions. I can attest to how people in the SS organizations have become the managers of stringent government programs. While poverty and disenfranchised communities keep voicing their expectations of more and better-quality services of front-line workers and management alike, their demands are met with decreasing resources and stringent accountability systems for taxpayers’ dollars.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The theoretical framework of this project focuses on personal consciousness and the location of self and others with respect to systems of power/powerlessness in our society and the SS sector context. This is the essential starting point in any process of negotiation and in my view, workers and leaders in the social services / nonprofit sector need to find an alternative framework to counter the pressures to silence civil society voices dealing with the increasingly precarious nature of employment; changes (or lack thereof) in sector legislation and regulation; the rapid pace of technology development, and new ways of working; as well as the pressures imposed by a legacy of colonialism that, combined with endemic realities such as racism, classism, and other forms of oppression, perpetuates power and privilege for a few.

Authors use different lenses and approaches to offer explanations to the current global state. Some of them explain the current conflicts / world crises through political and ideological lenses, (Tuhiwai Smith 2012; Kaufman, 2012; Pyles & Cross, 2008; Carniol *et al*, 2017). These authors name capitalism, patriarchy, colonization, imperialism and neo-colonization and neoliberalism as the root causes of the global problems; themes that are far removed from the current mainstream training materials for negotiations.

For example, *Challenges for Urban Social Justice Movements: Neoliberal Urbanism, the Canadian City and Toronto*, by Greg Albo documents neoliberal urbanism in Canada since the 1970s, when the federal government abandoned its direct role in urban development. Albo shows how the housing policy was reoriented to increase profits of private sector mortgage markets and developers. The provinces also began to push for urban amalgamation and rationalization of municipal services at this time, hoping to bolster the attractiveness of cities for business investment by reducing the employment costs and the number of well-paying jobs in the municipal sector. Through the 1980s, industrial restructuring drastically increased the population dependent on welfare. Manufacturing deindustrialization both downsized workplaces and shifted many industrial plants to lower-tax, lower-unionized 'greenfield' sites and ex-urban regions. At the same time, financialization led to a huge expansion of the speculative activities and bureaucracies associated with the banking and insurance sectors. North American free trade agreements and the increasing inter-penetration of Canadian and U.S. capital intensified these economic developments. Neoliberalism itself was consolidated as the unquestioned policy framework through the 1990s⁷.

Downloading the burden of social services

The downloading of service provision and responsibilities from federal to provincial governments and from provinces to municipalities has been an important policy and administrative tactic of and for advancing neoliberal objectives. (Albo 2006) Downloading or "offloading" is broadly defined as "the range of ways that provincial and federal governments pass administrative costs, capital costs, service provision and other expenses and responsibilities to local levels of government without adequate funding or revenue streams"⁸.

Downloading has served as an administrative mechanism to move from universal public provision of social services, with democratic pressure to advance to higher standards, toward market provided services that are both priced and delivered at lower standards for the average user. The objectives of service downloading have been: lowering of taxes; withdrawal of government from providing services directly as much as possible; reduction of public sector employment and wage growth; the addition of

pressure on private sector wages by norming public sector wages to lag private sector settlements; and the creation of new profit opportunities for business. (Albo p.9)

There are ample sources, authors, and daily stories that document how national and international states, institutions, and citizens have adopted a neoliberal political and economic system imposed by the larger global corporations and the owners of capital.

The Toronto social services sector has accommodated the neoliberal call for austerity and efficiency by shifting from an independent non-profit model to a hierarchical corporate one; where social services organizations are often run by boards whose responsibilities include to run the organization like a business, and to hire business-like leaders who draw on the business sector model to service clients' needs, rather than on citizens' claims for jobs, support, and social justice.

In Case Critical: Social Services and Social Justice in Canada by Ben Carniol, Banakonda Kennedy-Kish, Raven Sinclair and Donna Baines, (2017), the authors review the roots of Canada's social services going back to the 18th century in London, England, as well as the causes of inequalities in Canada today: classism, sexism, colonization, neo-colonization, racism, discrimination and neoliberalism. These endemic realities affect, to various degrees, both the communities the non-profit organizations are supposed to serve and the organizations and their workers in charge of serving those communities. The authors' approach to disrupt past and present ways of presenting and understanding the history of social welfare in Canada, and the broad effect of colonialism is especially interesting as it comes from Indigenous and non-indigenous scholars, collaborating and demonstrating the need to work with, and learn from, broader and diverse perspectives today.

Grace-Edward Galabuzi (2006, 2011)⁹ documents the major transformation of the country's demographic composition. If the labour market continues to relegate workers from racialized groups to the back of the pack, the number of Canadians left behind will only accelerate — calling into question the promise that Canada is a fair and caring society committed to equal opportunities, no matter who you are and where you come from.

These themes are far removed from the current mainstream training materials for negotiations. The approaches presented by these authors are useful as they juxtapose the obvious effects on people with the deeper, underlying issues affecting our world. Some work by emphasizing the political-social consciousness level; others at a more personal-consciousness level. These approaches represent the two sides of my own approach – the link between cognition and politics - which when unified, are part and parcel of what is needed to create change. Over all, these sources offer the realization that in light of the immense task ahead of us no action is too small. This realization has led me to suggest a paradigm shift in relation to the search for answers to the question of how alternative dispute resolution and negotiation approaches can be taught and used in the social services sector in Toronto. This is not a panacea, instead an attempt to identify pathways to new approaches to conflict resolution and negotiations.

Existing approaches to Negotiations: What is Negotiation?

The English dictionary¹⁰ defines negotiation as a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement. The authors of *Getting to Yes*, one of the most used books that teaches Negotiating skills without giving in, (Harvard, U of T and FES, York University) define negotiation as “a basic means of getting what you want from others” by “a back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.” (p.xvii) Other experts define negotiation using similar terms. Bartos and Wehr (2002) claim that negotiation takes place “when conflict parties agree to meet face to face to resolve their conflict.”

One of the most widely accepted negotiation approaches is the “integrative bargaining” approach offered by Fisher and Ury in *Getting to Yes* (1981). In integrative bargaining it is assumed that in every negotiation there are common interests. It becomes a “joint problem solving” process, which allows all negotiators to actively engage to discover common interests. Failing this, the most common practice while trying to find common interest is simultaneous pursuit of litigation or the use of legal power. Conflict resolution sometimes involves both, the authors claim, and to know when to use these require several skills and the ability to apply powerful strategies¹¹.

Conflict resolution is defined by the Harvard Law School¹² as the process of resolving a dispute or a conflict by meeting at least some of each side's needs and addressing their interests.

Theories covering human conflict range from the Karl Marx's historic Conflict Theory – the most fundamental conflict of humankind based on detailed historic analyses of the rise and expansion of (Western) capitalism- to the innumerable social conflicts affecting our society. The Western model operates within a system that accepts that negotiations will never happen on “a level playing field”, and that there always will be disparities. This is given as a reality that needs to be acknowledged and accepted. Furthermore, the setting for negotiation is analogous to a battlefield, where the better equipped, more powerful, and those with the best tactics and strategy will have the greater chances to succeed.

Included among well intentioned strategies we find: maintaining open lines of communication; asking other parties to mediate; and keeping sight of one's underlying interests. In addition, negotiators can try to resolve conflict by creating value out of conflict; capitalizing on shared interests; exploring differences of approach; and addressing potential implementation problems up front.

Experts are careful to warn us that every negotiation has a set of interests and a set of assumptions, and that it is key to be aware that implicit assumptions get in the way of being creative and getting to the common interests. Assumptions are informed by the personal history, experiences and worldview of the negotiators. Bazerman, et al (1985), claim that negotiators commonly fail to find mutually beneficial trades because of the assumption that the one-party interest directly opposes the other party's interests. This is particularly true when the other side is viewed as the enemy, which is common in environmental conflicts. "What is good for the other side is bad for us" is a common maladaptive assumption in environmental disputes". Bazerman (1983) labeled this assumption the "mythical fixed-pie" because, although the parties believe that the size of the pie of disputed resources is finite, in reality disputants face a flexible pie that can be expanded if the parties find ways to integrate their interests. The

fixed pie assumption is the most formidable barrier our mind erects to wiser environmental agreements (Bazerman, 1983).

Experts offer numerous examples of dispute resolution and explore various aspects of it, from how it can be useful in your personal life, workplace situation or in international disputes. However, most authors stop short of examining the underlying causes and/or addressing issues of power dominance and inequality and limit themselves to offering solutions such as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) for organizations (Stitt, 1998) focusing on the interpersonal, “discursive dynamics” or emotions levels - cognition and rationality Bazerman (1991). In the end the skills, personal traits and the training that hones those skills will guarantee a successful outcome. These skills are meant to be useful in crisis negotiation situations and in managing cultural differences in negotiations. They can be useful when dealing with difficult people, helping you to “build a golden bridge” and listen to learn, in which you acknowledge the other person’s points before asking him or her to acknowledge yours¹³.

William Ury, author of one of the best known and widely used books on negotiation, *Getting Past No: Negotiating with Difficult People*, describes a five-step strategy for dealing with hard bargainers and difficult people. Ury calls his method “breakthrough negotiation,” a way to “change the game from face-to-face confrontation into side-by-side problem-solving.” <http://www.atlas101.ca/pm/subjects/>. These steps are:

1. Don’t react: Go to the balcony – or anywhere you can go to step back from the brink.
2. Disarm them by stepping to their side. One of the most powerful steps to take—and one of the most difficult—is to try to understand the other person’s point of view. Ask questions and show genuine curiosity.
3. Change the game: Don’t reject—reframe. Instead of locking into a battle of will or fixed positions, consider putting a new frame on the negotiation.
4. Make it easy to say yes. Look for ways to help your opponent save face and feel that they are getting their way, at least in some matters.

5. Make it hard to say no. Use your power and influence to help educate your opponent about the situation. (<http://www.atlas101.ca/pm/concepts/dealing-with-difficult-people/>)

Other strategies for handling hard bargainers or unpleasant people include: Sandwiching the “no” between two “yeses” to express your difference of opinion in a more positive light; building a “golden bridge” to help your opponent view the outcome as a partial victory and listening actively to disarm your opponent by asking open-ended questions.

Other experts explore strategies such as saying “no” firmly, clearly stating disagreement in a way that respects the opponent’s position; using active listening skills and asking open-ended questions. Most importantly they advise allowing the opponent “at least a partial victory to save face”. Concepts covered also include how power affects negotiators, building trust, preparing for interactions with difficult people, and dealing with threats.

Knowledge is power, but only if you know how to apply it to “the real world”. Experts claim you can gain knowledge, practice what you learn, and emerge a better negotiator. The negotiations experts empower the student with all the tools and tricks to win and at same time that they caution negotiators to keep away from blurring into the unethical and manipulative tactics¹⁴. In fact, the emphasis is often placed on well intentional methods to be obtained which are seen as a source of double edge power. The good negotiator will need to master the know-how of and when to apply it in the real world. Thus, in all these approaches, models and strategies of dominance power is accepted as the central premise; the continued sustaining of existing power structures and inequalities is implicitly assumed. The goal is resolving the conflict at hand, not dramatically reconstructing social systems. So, negotiators are expected to enter the negotiation arena habituated to traditional ways of negotiating and responding to dominance power but often not examining power imbalance and accepting it as a given: those with less power are forced to find ways to leverage, and to adopt the recommended skills and personal traits. When they are unable to perform by the standards and the rules imposed on them, they may be prepared to recur to other options, which

in many cases is the status quo- BATNA, or your best alternative to a negotiating agreement (assuming that the status quo is for the powerless a real alternative) may be seen as better than not engaging.

Conflict resolution methods, the traditional way

Conflict is defined as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles¹⁵. Most of the traditional methods and strategies to deal with conflict are based on general principles, which at least in theory, are supposed to work toward reaching the greatest good; based on common interests, rather than a positional approach; working collaboratively, not against each other; and toward reaching mutually acceptable agreements in every sort of conflict.

Certain skills and traits are favoured. Amongst the most commonly recognized and valued skills in a negotiator are leadership, crisis management, team-building, cooperation, communication, and innovation. While some of the most desired personal traits are trustworthiness, powerfulness, self-awareness and self-control, the unsaid premise is that this set of skills and traits need to align with the existing system structures of dominant power. Success is generally measured by the ability of the individual negotiator or teams to win or walk away having obtained something from the other party. But the ultimate success rests with the ability of the negotiator to play the system, to conform with the norms by acquiring the right skills and honing the right personal traits. Books, workshops, seminars, university courses are available to prepare negotiators to become better at “winning” by adopting these tools.

Successful negotiation is associated with many positive consequences, including satisfaction with outcomes, stable relations between individuals and groups, and social and economic growth. Even though most negotiations allow for integrative ("win-win") agreements that satisfy all parties' needs, negotiators often reach suboptimal outcomes that fail to satisfy parties' goals and thereby undermine stability, satisfaction, and peaceful relations. In *Emotion and Fixed-Pie Perception*, p.3

Psychologists, sociologists, lawyers, political scientists, negotiators and mediators have researched, written, lectured, practiced within the Western approach and many teach about it: all seeking to offer the right theory, the right explanation and the right

approach along with the right tools to succeed within a very diverse list of conflicting areas. They range from personal issues (unresolved self-conflicts), to inter-family, organizational, community, national and global issues. Historically we have found conflict among social classes; the poor versus the rich, among religious tendencies, cultural and ethnic groups. And historically we seemed to have used the same approaches generally with the same results. Today, worldwide we continue to witness conflict over the same old issues: power and resources, world poverty, famine, injustices, and planet destruction. Despite all the world's discoveries, technological advances and innovations that were supposed to make us better at conflict resolution, we still find ourselves deeply involved in conflict.

Phyllis Beck Kritek: Alternative Approaches

Negotiating at an Uneven Table; Developing Moral Courage in Resolving our Conflicts by Phyllis Beck Kritek has two major premises; 1) that the resolution of human conflicts is a moral enterprise that is the responsibility of every human and, 2) that we humans have conflicts over many things, and we do not always engage in conflict because of dominance power concerns. By dominance power, we understand it to mean the existing social order that reigns in the western world. That social order that it is maintained by functioning structures controlled by persons with disproportionately dominance power and the desire to maintain it. (Beck Kritek. 2015)

Conflict resolution, according to Phyllis Beck Kritek, is a field of endeavour and negotiations is the “actual work”. So “labouring” or negotiating the traditional way is in her words a distortion, which if applied in the traditional way, harbours a threat to its own real promise – resolution. In addition, labouring in the traditional way also runs the risk of allowing room only for conflicts that fit its bias. This systemic bias is “virtually fixated on dominant persons in dominant groups negotiating about “dominance power” (p. 51) and dismissing those who question this bias. The implicit risk is one of vacuousness, superficiality, and stasis, and this benefits no one. (p.18)

Beck Kritek uses the “uneven table” as the metaphor for explaining inequality, which in her opinion works better than the common image of “uneven playing field” to describe some of the unaddressed inequalities in the processes of conflict resolution. The au-

thor defines an uneven table as a table in which inequality, dominance power, control, and manipulation are almost constantly at play. Thus, the table represents the site of a negotiation, “set” by one or more negotiators, who attempt to ensure that the table is even. However, if one of its legs is too long or too short, broken, or missing, the table tilts, perhaps even collapses, and its “tableness” becomes doubtful, as does its utility.

A significant point of Beck Kritek’s approach is her claim that no negotiations can be successful when inequalities are not acknowledged and addressed. It is the task of one negotiating in a conflict to increase her or his potential for success by actively structuring to create an even table. This preliminary process is designed to increase the potential for success of the actual work of conflict resolution that is negotiation. (p.40) Unevenness at a table introduces an indicator of failure in meeting that goal; unevenness indicates that something is “unequal, irregular, or varying in quality”. To have started the negotiations with inequality built in is to alter the entire process that follows (p.41). However, historically and throughout the world, less powerful negotiators have and continue to struggle at tables that are limited by the traditional thinking, and that are occupied by dominance power.

Another key aspect of the alternative methods proposed by the work of Beck Kritek, or the examples put forward by historic charismatic leaders such as Nelson Mandela or Ghandi, are the personal ability to think and act beyond self-interest. This involves exploring alternatives, which refrain from the reproduction of dominance power, that keep perpetuate oppression in the first place. This implies profound and difficult/challenging personal work. Beck Kritek writes that once you get a taste of dominance power, it is hard to give it away. Dominance power has such a disproportionate impact on individuals, permeating our culture like polluted air, that thinking of alternatives to replace it is a lifelong job for some and still hardly attainable for others. Thus, in the absence of readily available alternatives we become habituated to what we already know, have, and understand. (p.52). Thus, on the one side we have the cultural / societal reinforcement of and about dominance power, and on the other side we have the self-perpetuating energy of dominance power. Beck Kritek argues this energy is not merely cultural, economic, or political, but deeply personal.

Here both traditional experts and Beck Kritek agree that one of the most challenging dimensions of negotiating is the negotiators themselves. While the traditionalists' focus is on the individual's psychological elements (Kramer 1995), (Pietroni et al, 2008), Rosier, 2008), (Gino, 2013.) along with their skills and personal traits, Beck Kritek focuses on what she describes as the individual dominance power fixation.

Kritek argues that the need to know and acknowledge your own resistances and unconscious desires and goals, to unveil your own vested interest in warding off change, is paramount to effect change. Change will be difficult to achieve if we don't become skilful at experiencing "new ways of being." That is, change will be unattainable unless we become comfortable at mastering new ways of "knowing how to be."

When we choose to imagine new approaches and let go of traditional ones at an uneven table, negotiators first need to make several decisions as well as some reframing of reality processes. This may cause inner personal conflict.

To arrive to the decision-making process there are questions the negotiator needs to ask: what is the goal of this negotiation? Why am I going to this table? What am I hoping to achieve? What am I willing to do to achieve this? If the answers to these questions reveal motives that go against the goals that the negotiator feels a need to achieve, then she is already ill-equipped to deal with this table's unevenness. (Kritek. p.156)

Applying some concepts: new ways of "knowing how to be"

The historical context of systemic colonization and neo-colonization for many communities prevents their individual members from trusting each other and "the other" as in other social groups. We have been at uneven tables for so long that it is extremely difficult to sustain other ways of being. Most literature and authors represent conflict resolution and negotiations as a battlefield. At the same time, many proponents of conflict resolution see it as a tool of social justice. However, as Beck Kritek argues, social justice is conceived and described within the boundaries, assumptions, imperatives, and biases of one's culture.

The historical context of systemic colonization in Canada, as it has worldwide, has prevented Indigenous communities from regaining control of their sense of identity, culture, and autonomy. The effects of so many years of oppression, assimilation, the Indian Act, and the Residential School system have robbed Indigenous communities of their cultural identity and traditions. So many years of sitting at uneven tables, so many years of continuous turmoil and pain has brought disastrous consequences: Inuit communities have the highest suicide rate in all North America and the Western world (Watt-Cloutier.2015.) Tanya Talaga (CBC Massey Lectures, 2018) cites abuse of alcohol and drugs, family disintegration and the loss parenting skills, as well as loss of life and high socioeconomic costs, in addition to the loss of personal powers, the loss of wisdom and the loss of freedom.

In The Right to be Cold, Sheila Watt-Cloutier takes the reader through a journey of personal search and perseverance. Her struggle to find her voice and in the process mastering both a renewed way of being as well as an attempt to regain the voice of her Inuit communities is an example of what Beck Kritek describes as mastering new ways of “knowing how to be”. Watt-Cloutier acknowledges that she and those whom she represents, the Inuit people, often find themselves up against government, corporate interests, lawyers, and scientists who haven’t hesitated to use their dominance power to imperil Inuit communities. Watt-Cloutier recounts how over the years representing her people at negotiating tables, she experienced history repeating itself: “Missionaries, fur traders and governments had fought over the Arctic for decades to further their own self-interest: converting us to their religion, pressuring us to build their trade or using us to establish their sovereignty. In the process, our well-being and our way of life were sacrificed”. Yet, her Inuit values and conception of justice, which are intrinsically connected to sustaining the Earth and all its inhabitants, as well as to ensure the health and well-being of the people (p.292) has kept her and other leaders like her going. As she writes: “We need to remember that we Inuit have been fighting for our right to be cold. We have been trying to draw the world’s attention to the devastation caused by human-produced or accelerated climate change. And we have been trying to educate the world that the vast majority of greenhouse gasses that affect the Arctic are produced well outside of it... we Inuit are victim of by-products.”

However, Watt-Cloutier acknowledges the difficulties of her position as a negotiator constantly sitting at uneven tables. She relates how she and her colleagues found themselves caught in a vicious circle that despite the growth of programs, agencies and institutions in their communities, has provided little real evidence of positive change. The very outcomes they have pursued have led many in their communities to embrace dependencies and addictions instead of searching out concrete solutions to empower their people. This makes a lot of sense if viewed within the context of Beck Kritek's argument. The outcomes pursued in general by Indigenous people have not altered the systemic oppression that put Indigenous communities in those circumstances in the first place. The outcomes pursued perpetuate the power structures and in turn maintain the oppressing conditions while leaving dominance power unperurbed.

“The challenges facing us Inuit are complicated and interconnected. They are born out of generations of trauma and injustices that have disabled us from thinking for ourselves the way we have traditionally... we must resist the urge to compromise our values by adopting the quick fixes to our economic and social problems that the extraction industries and development seem to offer”. (p.315)

Given that dominance power or the pursuit of it is a significant human trait, if one focuses on it to the exclusion of others, one does not capture other dimensions of interest and importance. Beck Kritek proposes an approach that rather focuses on the humanity of the individuals and recognizes them as capable of self-awareness and more importantly of change. This way of thinking departs from the western traditional approaches that emphasize aggressive personal traits and skill sets.

Phyllis Beck Kritek offers ten ways of being at an uneven table. These are:

1. Find and inhabit the deepest and surest human space that your capabilities permit.
2. Be a truth teller.
3. Honor your integrity, even at great cost.
4. Find a place for compassion at the table.
5. Draw a line in the sand without cruelty.
6. Expand and explicate the context.

7. Innovate.
8. Know what you do and do not know
9. Stay in the dialogue,
10. Know when and how to leave the table.

In the same way traditional handling of conflict is passed from generation to generation, from parents to children, from experts to apprentices, we need to find a way to promote a paradigm shift and start the practice. We need to pursue attempts at different ways of being.

Research Question and Methodology

Thus, the motivating question for this Major Project is: How can alternative dispute resolution and negotiation approaches be taught and used in the social services sector in Toronto? Taking Phyllis Beck Kritek's approach as a starting point (from Negotiating at an Uneven Table; Developing Moral Courage in Resolving our Conflicts, 2002), I developed a schedule and materials for a training module / workshop on alternative dispute resolution and negotiation skills for diverse participants on all sides of the SS sector negotiating table. The workshop aims to recognize power imbalances explicitly as a first step, and address participants' experiences of misuse of power at negotiation tables and in other places where discrimination and other forms of oppression and power imbalances are present.

When I decided to embark on a project focused on social services, I knew it could not just point out the problems of the sector. I wanted to develop a curriculum for teaching different alternative approaches to conflict resolution and negotiations in our sector. My first impulse was to look for sources that documented social services workers' experiences from the front lines. Over the last three to four decades there has been a considerable change taking place in the sector, which affects people and their families. I felt I needed their input, their stories, and their voices. But when I found no documentary sources, I decided to invite some of them as key informants to my study.

My methodology for developing this workshop, besides the literature review summarized above (and additional readings I did in various courses during my MES program), involved interviewing 23 "key informants" who work in SS and related areas in Toronto,

to ask their advice and glean stories and themes to emphasize in the workshop plan and materials. These interviews helped me fill gaps in the published literature and make the workshop particularly relevant for the SS sector in Toronto.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of the work done in the SS sector, there is still a dearth of specific research relating to this sector. It is noteworthy however that in the process of undertaking this exercise, I have become aware of a considerable number of substantial initiatives and interventions at the personal and very local levels that are currently underway. The results of connecting and learning from other peoples' direct experiences is invaluable. Their voices are reflected in this project.

People in the following job positions participated in the study¹⁶.

2 Educators	2 High School Teachers
3 Human Resources Consultants	2 Counsellors
2 IT Coordinators	2 Health Promoters
1 Union President	1 University Professor
1 Union Steward	1 Settlement Worker
6 Union members	2 Case Workers
1 Administrative assistant	1 Youth Worker
2 Directors, Community programs	1 CEO
2 Community Development workers	2 Executive Directors
2 Social Services Consultant	4 Negotiators - both side of the table
1 Executive Assistant,	1 Teacher assistant volunteer
1 Communication Coordinator	2 Social Workers
1 Research, Evaluation Coordinator	1 Nurse
4 Managers, Adult, Early Years, Seniors, Housing and Youth Services	2 Yoga Instructors

Key Informants

The interviewees included leaders (management and front staff) and human resources personnel in the social services sector. The purpose of the key informant interviews was to tap into the collective knowledge and lived experiences of a broad swath of ex-

perts. Their combined experience amounts to more than 200 years¹⁷. The interviews were crucial in helping fill gaps in the published literature. They have helped me diversify my approach and have provided a wealth of stories and feedback. Of the 30 invitees, 23 resource people responded positively to my invitation to participate in a study about the social services sector in Toronto.

The interviewees had between 5-20+ years of experience as a leader, educator, negotiator, union member, staff and/ or advocator for advancing social policy related to social, health, political/economic issues affecting our communities in the social services sector in Toronto.

Interview Questions

The key informants responded to a set of questions about their role in dealing with power, conflict, negotiations and social issues, their strategies and how they deal with the contradictions of a service delivery approach that does not satisfy the needs of servers nor the users. I asked my 23 'key informants' the following questions:

1. What has your experience been like in general, and what has been your specific experience dealing with conflict and addressing conflict at negotiating tables?
2. What has been your experience dealing with power imbalances and inequity?
3. What has contributed to the success of your role, and your sector? In other words what specific tools/approaches help or have helped you to succeed?
4. How do you define a successful negotiation?
5. Are you able to name specific negotiating approaches that did not contribute to success? If so, what are they?
6. What has been the biggest challenge that hindered your ability to succeed at negotiating tables?
7. How do you reconcile negotiator's training and leadership / management approaches based on corporate values (efficiencies, market economy, winners and losers,) with SS sectors discourses centered on empowerment of communities and social justice?
 - a) What has been your approach?

- b) What are your concerns about others' approaches to the negotiation table?
 - c) Has anything changed in the way you approach the issues over the years?
 - d) What does it mean to be an effective negotiator in today's social, political and economic environment?
8. What are you most proud of in relation to your achievements at negotiating tables?
 9. What are the opportunities and challenges you see facing future generations in your sector in Toronto?
 10. Based on your experience, what type of training will be necessary for leaders and negotiators in your sector to sustain what has been achieved?
 11. Would you be interested in exploring alternative approaches to negotiations for the social services sector in Toronto?

The ideas discussed in this report thus represent a complex amalgamation of critical perspectives on social services realities as experienced by people working within the sector as well as from the perspective of a few who have recently retired from the sector.

I sent about 30 invitations to people on both side of the table (management and workers), making sure I had representation regarding jobs, positions, gender, gender identities, social location, and race and ethnicity. I conducted 23 interviews that resulted in insightful and provoking conversations.

Among the 23 voices there are different experiences and perspectives. While some of their experiences and perspectives are similar, others are different and appear occasionally as contradictory, representing as they do different social locations and identities of a group of people who work in Toronto, one of the most diverse cities of the world.

These perspectives helped me revise the workshop plan and curriculum to incorporate approaches that resonate with people in the sector, including ethical leadership for the social services, systemic issues of capitalism, colonization, patriarchy, and racism;

communication, discourses, and language; power and power imbalances; conflict resolution, cultural competency, mindfulness and hope.

II. Key Informants Report Summary

The ideas discussed in this report represent an amalgamation of complex issues and critical perspectives on social services realities as experienced by a group of people working in the sector. These key informants responded to a set of questions about their experiences in general in the SS, their experiences in dealing with power, conflict, negotiations and social political issues, and their perspectives in future challenges and opportunities.

The findings regarding the key informants' experiences need to be considered exploratory, due to the limitations of the research base from which they are drawn. The consultation involved such a small sample size that it is difficult to generalize from the findings and most of the people that agreed to be interviewed had been past colleagues, or professional acquaintances in the sector (union, and non-union, management and front-line). Therefore, in no way am I suggesting that the list of factors presented below represent the reality of the whole sector.

Key findings:

An analysis across the reviews found some congruency of findings. This allows grouping those findings and having some confidence that the factors identified are the recurrent themes observed and / or experienced among the participants. Some of these have confirmed my own experiences and observations and some are completely new to me.

Coping with crises:

I've learnt that there is a common pattern of coping with crises: look for allies, become your own agency, work on local cooperation, push the boundaries. This indicates that some people understand that help from a centralized authority (management, fiduciary boards, level of governments) especially those considered "removed from the problems" cannot be counted on and that workers, frontline and middle managers rely on themselves.

There is an acknowledgement that in some organizations, the salary gaps between frontline staff and top leader are enormous. It is interesting that, people do not complain about this, even though salaries in some areas have been frozen for years.

The most vulnerable workers are new immigrants (mostly women).

Leadership crises

Front line staff and middle management's complaints focus primarily on issues of white privilege, a self-serving orientation, and lack of awareness, along with unfair, disrespectful, inconsistent, unethical and oppressive treatment from some of their leaders. The workshop includes a power point presentation developed from what interviews expect in a leader.

Some just see the crisis as the obvious development of capitalism. They recognize that their work is not to challenge or address the poverty or extreme marginalization they encounter daily, but rather to deal with and mitigate its most ugly consequences, and to keep working to prevent themselves from sliding into poverty.

In the next two sections, I draw out some of the main points from my interviews, with illustrative quotes from interviewees. I drew on all these points in developing my workshop plan. The illustrative quotes from the interviewees are organized under the following headings: 1) about the social services work in general: positive feedback about relationships with coworkers and their work experiences; critical awareness of SS versus the community; advocacy; diversity both in service delivery and in leadership; conflict/power imbalance; fear; leaders' perspective. 2) About leadership: leadership culture; and union

1. About the social services sector in general:

1.1.- Positive feedback:

The most gratifying experience for both middle management and front-line workers, except for issues of cultural competency, are the relationships among staff and their

impact on service delivery or the relationship with community members and service users. Some of the collected comments of my interviewees are listed below.

To the question about their general experience working in the sector, participants highlighted the positive experiences of working when there is collaboration and alignment with values:

- *Collaboration works; with clients to problem solve; with other workers across the sector, and among staff.*
- *People working together work; a team approach works; coming up with ideas on how to support people especially when working with high needs/ marginalized population. And when we support each other, and work to reach consensus.*
- *When you meet other staff who share an understanding, are non-judgmental, have respect for and understand that people need dignity not charity, those are good moments.*
- *Social services' work - for people with a conscious level- is both extenuating and empowering. This is how you get the inspiration... this is how we get up and go back every day.*
- *... because when you come from where I come from... or you understand what it means to have been treated roughly by members of this society because of your place of origin, your class, your skin colour, your accent your otherness... and you look at them, "the clients" and you see that they are still here... sometimes challenging and pushing boundaries mainly to maintain their dignity – boundaries which responsibility [as staff] is yours to keep up and you see them with more courage than you could ever imagine – then you become inspired and it helps to get up in the morning and go back and do more work in spite of policies and protocols, and power play, and pretend...and your own cynicism."*
- *Generally, I have felt it to be a mostly positive and progressive experience, maybe because I have had the luxury of sitting at the table as a board member, teacher or union representative with others who are willing to be open minded, to stay calm, to*

consider different points of view and to think beyond ourselves, although at times it's best to hold back...

- *I have had an extensive and rewarding experience in the SS. I have learnt a lot from the people we are here to support and from co-workers. I have worked the frontline, as manager and I have worked as executive director. All of it very rewarding. I love most my current position as a manager, I like the little power I have, to support the programs that I think are going to work, but being an ED was tough, way too much.*
- *We brought some consciousness to the surface and the next generations are going to take it further. I have faith in the leaders coming behind us. Youth optimism is empowering even within levels of marginalization they scare people that need to be scared. They take less bullshit [and] they are less afraid to speak their minds.*
- *I get the efficiency point of view, I believe in efficiency too! But there needs to be a balance. There needs to reconcile what we do for our clients... and you can't compare oranges to apples.*

1.2.- Critical awareness of SS versus the community:

- *The social service sector is a sector that is drenched in historical and current inequities.*
- *It is very messed up, so I think trying to work in this sector is a very delicate balance in terms of the good or the harm you could do. I feel there is probably a lot more potential to harm someone while working in social services than there is to help them. If you have a social location like mine, I was born here, I'm white, I've had good education and I had class privilege growing up. Your potential for harm multiplies exponentially to harm other people so I think that in terms of trying to understand, manage, and mitigate the power that I hold just by virtue of being in the sector, is a huge challenge.*
- *If you look at most social work students right now that are graduating, they tend to be people who can afford education and who have a social safety net where they know they get out of debt if they are to obtain it. There is a certain class level that comes with being able to get the required Master's or degree to work in social ser-*

vices sector especially now. There is a huge amount of privilege associated with it, and in social services there is such a big history of social services being used as a tool to oppress, to tear families apart and to commit cultural genocide, and to make moral judgments like who is worthy of keeping their children or who is worthy of receiving income supplements. That is not necessarily where social services are at today - although some of my colleagues will argue differently- but there is that historical legacy that current social services are rooted in that I think is hard to shake.

- *There needs to be recognition that the social services sector deals with community – both with community members as staff and with community members as users. And that these can also have double roles at the same time.*
- *As an immigrant woman, I feel I must take some abuse of power, “suck it up” as they say, and I have taken on a lot, and a lot of work too; IT, HR, communication, admin assistant, etc. and as you know all in one job. I have learnt a lot and I am grateful. I feel that the social service sector is great that way, it provides immigrant women like me with good jobs and I am proving that I can do it. I must show resilience; the work makes me resilient. I come from a hard-working culture, I have work ethics and I eliminate inefficiencies in the ED’s life and that is my contribution.*
- *There should be consistency; whatever philosophy we apply to clients we should apply the same internally to the staff. It is about reconciling values, being mindful that the processes or the approaches are consistent within the organization’s values.*
- *My general experience is that there is a real dissonance between the values put forward by the leaders of the social services sector which is all about caring and being on the side of people who are marginalized... and it is very difficult for people who have chosen to be in the social sector because they believe that they will be treated differently; that the way we negotiate, that the way we treat each other, is different. I think that the disappointment and the sense of betrayal is much deeper than what the eye sees and often has led and leads to cynicism which is very difficult to shift.*

- *They showed no respect for my contribution over the years, they pretended to do their best, they invoked their policies and best practices but as a person, as a worker, as a community member, I felt completely broken when I left. So, I fought them legally. And I walked away with a higher compensation, a great sense of cynicism, and a determination to never work for a non-profit again.*
- *As a special needs teaching assistant, I realized there is a lot of discrimination based on class, colour of your skin, [and] accent, and colleagues treat my supervisor not as an equal. Some professionals will see her as less knowledgeable or capable all while she is having a tremendous impact in her classroom.*

1.3.- Advocacy:

Advocacy is a constant in people's analyses of the discrepancies between what the discourses or mandate of the organizations are in terms of advocating for the most vulnerable members of our communities and what they can accomplish. This is expressed both at the personal as well as at the organizational level.

- *I've spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to advocate effectively and a lot less time actually advocating effectively. I've been involved in a lot of learning processes and trying on different kinds of approaches and working with different kinds of organizations or social movements, work, in a volunteer capacity, as well as in an involved citizen capacity. I'm trying to see what feels comfortable and right while still challenging myself and not getting too complacent.*
- *It has been difficult and an on-going struggle, in trying to figure out how exactly to advocate. Part of that struggle has been how to manoeuvre through negotiations with people. On the other hand, in my experience working in some organizations it has been on the other end of the spectrum where you are not working collectively with anyone. You are trying to individually negotiate power with people, your co-workers, and your supervisors.*
- *The liberal model of funding has impacted the leadership capacity to go beyond program output, to go beyond the general information that has been repeated in funding applications over the years. There is a deficiency there that reflects the in-*

capacity of being innovative or imaginative, of being creative with the information that provides details of the changes that have taken place in some of our communities. And when some of us question that model, we are minimized. And we have been asked not to raise certain questions because [in their views] some of us do not understand the complexities associated with our own work.

- *15 years ago, I was hired by a different leader with a different approach to community development. So, with the change of leadership it also changed the dynamics of the organization, we became more complacent and the focus of my position and my work became less of a priority within the organization. The focus changed from community capacity building and supporting community organization approach to an individual approach making the individual responsible for their own health and well-being.*
- *Sector-wide, contracts are being cut. We need to negotiate as a sector. We don't do that enough. My clients' voices are not enough. On one side leaders are afraid to lose their own jobs and on the other, people's workload is insane, but we need to do more. We have leadership issues, workload, funding, advocacy issues...*
- *I would have absolutely benefited from concrete hands-on skills in movement building and collective advocacy, creative political advocacy. How to build a collective understanding, I find that I am pretty weak in this area. To get involved in a way where you don't immediately feel awkward. We need more people who are comfortable in this area.*
- *Technically health promotion with the focus on social determinants of health it is supposed to be working to change systems. We are also to work with clients and that work is to support them to having better control of their health. The objective is to broaden that agency, broaden the self-determination, and to deepen their knowledge and skills so that they can advocate for themselves better. If we, the health care providers already know what the end goal is, then it becomes very difficult. How are we going to help people advocate better for themselves if once they advocate better for themselves, they are not advocating for something that we think is best for their health? It is very tricky. I find that I struggle with my education and*

the approaches I've been taught when trying to work in a partnership with clients because there is such a power imbalance set up by virtue of them coming and seeking medical attention from me.

- *The social services sector is losing the creativity in how they could approach things; leaders push the hard work to the side; "it is too hard, too messy; we don't have the resources, it is not part of our mandate; we may lose the funding". I also find they are often afraid of frontline workers...and their opinions, because it doesn't fit within their funding models. Leaders don't know and don't necessarily want to know about the experiences, what it is like to work with people at the street level. If they were to hear us it may mean they would need to do something different. So, they make up very stiff hierarchies. 'This decision is for me to make and as a front-line worker you don't get to have an opinion; never mind participating in the decision making.' So, they hire consultants or send out questionnaires which are totally useless. They are not looking for feedback, they don't want your opinion-- they are totally disingenuous. They are just checking that box.*

1.4.- Diversity:

The historical context of systemic colonization and neo-colonization in the sector prevents some individual members from trusting each other and other ethnic and or social groups. We have been at uneven tables for so long that it is extremely difficult to sustain other ways of being. Despite changes in the discourses about diversity and inclusion there is a lack of diversity and inclusion both at the service as well as the leadership level.

Diversity Services delivery:

- *I was part of a consultation with a diverse group. One of the consistent themes regarding participants' experiences were finding themselves in spaces where they receive services by people who did not look like them, did not think like them, did not have an understanding of their cultural context. And they give examples of situations that weren't healthy or were injurious.*

- *The other piece I hear about is the “emotional labour” (because these are intersectional folks not only Black or indigenous but they are queer and trans) So when racialized folks find themselves in these situations they describe them as emotional labour to withstand some of the micro and not so micro aggression they suffer every day from frontline who do not understand the culture and who may be unaware of the ways they were being inappropriate or discriminatory in terms of their practice and interactions with their clients or peers.*

(lack of) Diversity in Leadership:

- *For me the diversity of the clientele we serve in the sector has yet to be reflected by the leadership and decision-making bodies. The lack of representation has an impact on clients and in our communities. I will say that direct service is where we find the most diversity; however, as we move up on the ladder we find the same white middle classes holding on to a culture of leadership that reflects their values, their culture their way of doing things and this way of doing things is imposed on the clients and staff. In addition, they tend to replicate themselves, and pass on their culture; and that is a problem.*

1.5.- Conflict / Power Imbalance:

Over the years as I worked as member of leadership teams, I often heard that workers avoid persons in leadership positions because of the perceived and real power they assigned to them. This, along with mutual mistrust makes conflict and negotiations an area that most prefer to ignore.

- *I have always avoided conflict. This is because I lack confidence, knowledge. Now I frame this in terms of strategy. I step back and make sure that there are commonalities. However, you need to pick your battles, for example we know there is no flexibility regarding salary so why even bother to go there. I am a steward, I am part of the negotiations committee and I have never received any training to deal with very difficult issues.*

- *My belief and my practice have been in whatever role or position I may be when conflict arises, I deal with it even if the conflict is with someone within the organization structure where they have more power than me.*
- *My supervisor and I were in a constant state of negotiation. It was constant. There was never a thing we just saw eye to eye on. I was able to just escape with my integrity but that's a bare minimum.*
- *Addressing conflict is one of the hardest parts of the work we do as it relates to conflict with colleagues, among team members, supervisors / co-workers. Where we are stronger is when we need to address conflict between participants but when it comes to conflict with staff we struggle, we avoid it, we go around it or sometimes we may deal with it in ineffective ways.*
- *Conflict needs to be dealt with in a timely, appropriate and direct manner, however, we don't have much of staff training /development to deal with conflict unless we are in the middle of it or unless our role requires conflict resolution as part of the job – however, there is an expectation that we deal with conflict. Part of the work that we do in our sector is about dealing with conflict but people in general don't acknowledge this and by not acknowledging, they don't address the lack of training that leaders and people in general have.*
- *I don't think that power in and of itself is a bad thing at all. Power simply exists, it's a form of energy. What makes it dangerous is when people, aware of it or not, use it in ways that are problematic.*
- *I have a perspective on negotiations that each party has more power than they perceive and as much as they need if they are prepared to look differently at the situations that they are in.*

1.6.- Fear – real or perceived:

- *Fear doesn't work. Adopting fear to resist. Top-down fear: fear of losing what they have, funding, grounding, reputation, fear of having to do more- a big one!*
- *Top down, hierarchy doesn't work. Pulling rank doesn't work.*

- *To maintain boundaries for the sake of boundaries doesn't work. We need to have them, but we need to keep looking at them. Test them, push them, and examine them. The SS get set in their ways and get very protective and defensive.*
- *So, we deal with the consequences of capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy but we don't challenge them. And to make sure we don't challenge them we are put into boxes... and label it as "this is what we do", so we don't do that other work that some organizations say we do. And ironically, we are the ones that sustain the status quo... because if we weren't there what would happen? But that is not going to happen...because we are missing a channel, to collaborate, to connect, to organize, to create spaces to support each other. We are too busy, too overwhelmed, too stressed out, too cynical, too mistrusting, too isolated! And if you think about it this is the product of bright minds...we are kept in this way going in circles so others, the few, can benefit from what this system has to offer at the expense of the majority. We maintain the status quo for fear of losing what we think we have.*

1.7. - Leaders' perspective:

Most of the senior leaders invited did not respond to the invitation and the ones that did could not find the time to meet with me. Only one CEO accepted to meet with me. She has only been in that position for a year and did not have previous experience in the sector.

- *My negotiations experience with the sector has been limited but my priority when I started was first to meet with the union to reset the relationship between union and management. I felt that relationships were far too adversarial for the type of work we do in the sector.*
- *For us it is not just about the financial accountability both to our board members, founders and donors but is also the strong accountability for our clients. We tell the story of the numbers through the story of our clients.*
- *Lack of training is a challenge, everyone should know how to negotiate, and everyone should understand respectful communication, and empathy vs. sympathy. Everyone should understand that communicating effectively can minimize conflict*

whether it be written or orally. In our society we have a huge problem with listening, and it is to our detriment.

- *People sometimes negotiate and forget that the people at the table are not the people they are serving. We are serving the wider group not the people at the table. People get embedded in their ego and their own interests.*
- *Always focused. If there is anything that has changed with me, it is at the level with my staff and people within the organization so that I am much more open. I've been much more transparent about my personal process even though that is not my ideal. I know it is helpful for other people and it has made a bigger difference.*
- *I have been to tables where there are power imbalances, those are unavoidable for bargaining. I also believe that people underestimate the amount of power they can have even when they are in that perceived position of less power than the opposition.*
- *I have never been one to accept the fact that I only have a certain amount of power whether that is at the negotiation table or in my personal life. But I do think it is that perspective that allows me to have successful negotiations even when the table is imbalanced.*

Other Executive Directors voices:

- *My life is extraordinarily busy these days as the province changes. My time is not my own.*
- *I did not enjoy my position as ED, it was too much.*

2. About Leadership:

2.1.- Leadership Culture

At the heart of the generalized complaint about social services sector leadership's culture is the idea that those with power are self-serving and disingenuous in their discourses about caring and being on the side of people who are marginalized. While this was a common thread among persons working at community level organizations, there were many voices that praised leaders who in the past and on an ongoing basis have

mentored, role modelled, inspired and supported services providers and users, despite conflicting directives from higher up.

- *I felt like the constant negotiation and struggle for power was such that the most I could do was maintain my integrity. I was not able to affect any kind of change; I wasn't able to have any kind of impact. I became more protective and more reactive in terms of being able to negotiate those relationships and to work that job and remain whole trying not to compromise my integrity. That should be a baseline for your job, not your accomplishment in your job. That was my accomplishment and that's unfortunate.*
- *The SS evoke as part of their mission and mandate statements that they support and care for those communities; but they do not live up to any of those principles-- not in their treatment of staff and not in the support for their users.*
- *My experience with leaders in the social services sector is that they want to be able to have the best of both worlds. They want to have the reward of knowing themselves, of being seen, as people who "are doing good work" and who are part of the non-for profit sector; they are working for the public good, for the social well-being and they also want the best of the world that is for profit in terms of status, title and power to affect what they think it's important. Many leaders in the social services sector have not cultivated a practice of self-awareness, of examining their own leadership and motivation at certain times.*
- *I have expectations that leaders need to find ways to use their power for the betterment of the sector, not themselves. People with power in our sector should be leading the way... But I find that most of them work for themselves, to advance their own situation, not the sector's. They should be about understanding the issues, framing them so others understand, be curious about people's perspectives, ask, and listen to them, and see their leaders working with them to achieve them.*
- *My challenges have been how not to be angry at them. Because they don't use the power they have the way I think they should use it – for the benefit of the sector, the community. Some of them in my experience just think of themselves. So, anger comes in, and you have to shut up.*

- *There's been this false culture in which they operate when they go out and consult staff and consult clients, and in their minds, they are somehow sharing their power and these are real damaging notions that that is a form of sharing power and sometimes I want to say particularly problematic because often these are people with socially conferred power- they're often middle-aged, they're often white. They're often heterosexual, they are often able-bodied. So, it's not just that power given to them from their positions in the organization it's all the other types of socially conferred power and all together it gives them tremendous power over people, and they use it deliberately.*
- *When thinking about my role in relation to the other staff, it was always a little bit removed and there was a certain amount of power that I think I had by virtue of evaluating their programs. Power in that my lens would determine whether their program was portrayed as successful or not. Everything was meant to be done with the teams, but I worked in a very isolated, bit of an ivory tower department, that had very strong leadership that wanted a very particular direction so the amount of team input into evaluations was limited, not limited in that it was nonexistent, it was constrained by pre-existing values and priorities that came from higher up.*
- *There is such a resistance to accountability that [it] makes them more dangerous.*
- *They would have to put aside their egos, and their investments in its own positions, their roles and the power that comes with it*

2.2.- Education and training:

"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house"

- *If the leadership is the challenge here, there need to be opportunities to change the complexion of the leadership. Look at the culture that is operating in some of these organizations. Sometimes you replace leadership, but those leaders have learned in a culture that is oppressive. "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house". Sometimes we change the complexion of the folks, but they come in with the same old training. And they get rewards and encouragement. They continue operating in the same way they were being instructed.*

- *After 27 years working as a counsellor, today I see a disconnect between where leaders want to take us and where we [workers, community] want to go. Then you get these new professionals coming to SS with their professional degrees from today's educational system and you look at them and you know they come from middle class background and I have to wonder how these people are ever going to be social change agents. Sometimes they don't even understand how their own issues intercede and so [I] have to wonder what they can offer and get done without an alignment with the people we are serving.*
- *One of the big challenges and ideology clashes that I've experienced over some years is looking at collective social movements that are not afraid to use conflict as a tool. Where they are pushing and challenging and not even trying to negotiate or to have a conversation. From the viewpoint that there is never going to be a productive conversation between a marginalized group and those in power because those in power are going to maintain power and hold their grip on to it for as long as they can and so the only meaningful method of resistance is through strong opposition.*
- *As a worker in the sector, I am part of the system we need to change! As instructor in a higher education institution – when working with some social work students who go to extremes to finance their education, I make sure they are aware of the change they can actually make. Make them aware so they don't blame themselves...*
- *We need to have / make space for larger conversations about capitalism; systemic issues, who are the winners, who are the losers and at the same time to question what can I realistically contribute? To society? For change? For social justice?*
- *I feel the most successful when I can support people to get language to articulate their own realities. I give them tools; the language to critically engage in political discussions: they may live it, but they need to articulate their, which is our own experiences: capitalism, anti-capitalist, feminism - feminist, racism- black power. Sometimes we don't have the language capacity to participate, to challenge, and we get intimidated by the neoliberal approaches of the non-profits, setting us against each other when we compete for same resources –jobs, funding, services, favours from people who don't look like us, don't sound like us and who can care less about us.*

2.3.- Unions

- *We need to shake up the leaders of the unions representing or not the interest of the workers in the SS. The union sometimes – in my experience in our sector- also adjusts their ways to the discourses that this is the way it is these days - the union has not succeeded at leading the way... some of them don't use their power and they don't empower their members either... they could do more training, more capacity building and they don't.*
- *Diversity, lack of representation is a big one among the union. They send leaders to work with members who do not know how to connect with the diversity of Toronto's social services and that needs to change.*
- *I am the first female union rep at the school I teach at. I feel it is slightly a problem because I do not feel knowledgeable enough yet to be in that leadership position. So, it concerns me that people will come to me with questions that I do not have the answers to. At times I felt like I was given this position for equity reasons. Which bothers me in a way because at times I don't feel I am the best suitable for the job.*
- *In my agency there was an attempt to organize a union and all three staff were fired.*

III. My Plan of Study (POS)

3. My Learnings

In this section, I reflect on what I learned while carrying out this project, in relation to my POS Learning Objectives: Social Capital, Negotiating Inequality in the SS sector and Colonialism and excluded voices in the SS leadership.

3.1.- Social Capital

3.1.1.- The Potential Social Capital within Toronto Social Services

It is my view that the potential for what Putman describes as social capital (Pyles p. 42) exists among the rank and file of the Toronto SS sector. The connections that exist among individuals, that arise from these connections, is real, as it is the trust and reciprocity they experience; where they can see themselves as belonging to a group of

people experiencing similar negative, systematic oppression both towards themselves as workers as well as towards the community members they support.

However, what I also confirmed through these processes is that these connections and networking take place only in small pockets, through and within reduced workplaces, which may not be enough for some individuals to take these connections to another level; to organize, or advance democratic values, to challenge Power. There are exceptions, but for the majority, once they live their demanding frontline work, workers and engaged middle managers retreat to their individual social networks – with family, social media, ethnic / cultural groups. They look for ways to escape from the realities they encounter at work daily: key informants describe this as living their lives, protecting their family spaces, looking for a life outside work, and recharging themselves, regardless of their high level of political awareness of their social and class location. The connections across sector or with other social groups does not seem to be strong enough.

As older generations of workers are approaching retirement age or have retired and younger generations, with different values and education, are replacing them on the frontlines, the departing activists differ in their views. Some of the interviewees are optimistic and believe that new blood is our only hope. They name *Black Lives Matter* organizing as an example. Others on both the union and management side do not have much hope; the emerging leadership taking over the sector seems to accept the current culture unchecked and unchallenged. Given the realities of the working conditions most are coming to, with heavy workloads, underpay, and having to compete among each other for jobs, the prospects for the new generations to become social change agents are even more uncertain.

Several of the interviewees and I, prefer to adopt a more optimistic approach: workers have the potential to envision themselves as part and parcel of the transformation of their social environments as well as of the larger communities they serve. For this to happen there is a need to create spaces to connect, to share different approaches, to rally across their communities.

Some believe that the harsher the working / social/ economic conditions, the better the chances for the workers to organize and resist. And that this will lead to the emergence of new leadership.

My overall objective is to promote the further development of a different political discourse along with alternative visions for SS leadership and forms of organizations for conflict resolution and democracy in Toronto. It is important to connect older generations in the sector with the more progressive one coming on board. There are several elements that will need to be overcome, including isolation, the ability to balance front-line work, social organization, and the development of cultural competence. As well, those in the sector need to develop the ability to see and recognize humanity in themselves and in otherness and connect with it. Leaders need to create the opportunities and see themselves as part of a sector that has more power than it believes, or it is made to believe. There are examples right within Toronto.

3.1.2.- Our Dance of Revolution; “You don’t need a mass to speak back against injustice”:

Our Dance of Revolution is a documentary shown in Toronto (Spring 2019) which portrays the struggles of a handful group of black gay men and women who were able to challenge the status quo and interrupt the heterosexual and whiteness of the LGBTQ movement in Toronto. While the director follows the activists in what are intimate, caring relationships, the message is strong, powerful and hopeful. It puts the audiences in proximity with the humanity of these activities. Through their love, connections and perseverance, a new paradigm emerges. As they go about making community, they inspire others, such as myself, with their work and their courage.

Among the activists, many of whom have worked and work in / or for the social services sector, we find artists, educators, writers, community activists and social services leaders. In them I recognize my first connections to discourses that went beyond the mere political language I brought from my experience growing up under a dictatorship in Chile; I met mentors, organizers, and advisors, who over the years have offered support, encouragement and motivation. What has been most revealing is that my own motivation to speak up has come from the example offered by these activists who have worked to resist and address social justice issues in Toronto from and within the social

services sector. I recognize how over the years these activists have played a key role in transforming the realities of the LGBTQ communities in Toronto and beyond.

In the words of one of the activists in the documentary who is also a SS study key informant:

- *“I find that power imbalance sometimes becomes an excuse for people to bury their heads. Power imbalances can make it more difficult and more challenging, but it shouldn’t be an excuse to avoid it or shift it. It’s important that we find our voices, that we find strategies to attempt to deal with conflict and that we find necessary support even when we are dealing with people with more power than us. It may be more difficult, but it is possible.”*
- *“I think the focus of the work needs specifically to address those who are in power. I understand that sometimes we may get punished, we may feel vulnerable afraid of losing one’s job, but we need to find a way to get it done. We need to build and or find support and allies.”*

3.2.- Negotiating Inequality in the SS sector

In Toronto, Canada, workers in the social services (SS) sector or the non-profit sector as it is also known have experienced first-hand the effects of neoliberal policies of the last 40 years on both the communities they are supposed to serve and, on the workforce¹⁸.

Workers in this sector are made to take on an increasing share of society’s most important and difficult work: to support the social safety net that keeps the Canadian liberal capitalist system functioning by taking on the role of delivering programs and services for some of the most disadvantaged members of society, including refugees, some new immigrants, people with different abilities, and people in racialized and indigenous communities, women and children, homeless people, disenfranchised youth, the working poor and the elderly. Some organizations operate in multiple areas and have become the managers of stringent government programs with decreasing resources and stringent accountability systems for taxpayers’ dollars.

As we face mass systemic challenges beyond the reach of existing organizations and their hierarchical authority structures, problems from youth unemployment, embedded poverty and inequity, to climate change, and destruction of ecosystems require unprecedented collaboration among different organizations, sectors, and even countries. Sensing this need, countless collaborative initiatives have arisen in the past decade—locally, regionally, and even globally. Yet often they have floundered—in part because they failed to foster collective leadership within and across the collaborating organizations¹⁹.

While by no means a panacea, revisiting the rationale of traditional leadership and traditional methods and discourse for conflict resolution and negotiations, SS leaders, supported by a knowledgeable workforce and their communities, should be able to identify alternative way out and possible solutions to our communities' shared challenges, including shifting from working from silos to fostering collective leadership within and across organizations.

3.3.- Colonialism and excluded voices in the SS leadership sector

To understand the past and current political economic systems that direct and control communities' day-to-day existence, we need to look at the structure of society: the effect of both colonization and neoliberal policies on the social fabric of Toronto: issues of democracy, power, and historical and new forms of colonization that keep people controlled, divided, and relegated.

My overall goal is to help the SS sector come up with alternatives to what we hear so commonly among the social services corridors: “suck it up, buttercup”. We need to see the SS as potential grounds for the development of leadership, through which to resist and respond to the continuous assault on Toronto's local communities and reclaim socio-economic and political space. Who is at the table? Whose voices are missing? What lessons can be drawn from the legacies of colonization?

One clear example of the historical context of systemic colonization are the policies that have prevented Indigenous communities from regaining control of their sense of identity, culture, and autonomy. The residential boarding school program was an official program that robbed indigenous communities of their cultural identity and tradi-

tions. The last residential school closed in 1996. The residential boarding school system was established with the goal to “kill the Indian in the child”. It represents one of the longest-lasting attempts at complete erasure and cultural genocide of Indigenous language, values, beliefs, and way of life through forced assimilation. We must learn from this historic lesson and recognize that we settlers live and work in the land that was taken from First Nations. We need to unlearn some of the official history and re-learn how to overcome our biases so together we can work toward overcoming the systemic discrimination and oppression our communities face.

3.3.1 Cultural Competence and ARAO Framework:

What is cultural competence?

Cultural Competence refers to a specific set of values, attitudes, knowledge and skills that sensitize and improve sharing of information and assistance between people of different cultural orientations. Cultural Competence is also defined a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, practices, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable that system or agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations²⁰.

Over the years I have worked and adapted the definition for the SS sector. Cultural Competency is an important component in the realization of personal, departmental, and organizational goals in the same way that competencies such as communication skills and client focus are. Cultural competency means that the individual demonstrates the skills required to work in a diverse work environment, and to provide effective, appropriate and respectful clinical care or service to clients from marginalized and/ or diverse groups (e.g. gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, abilities, language, religion, sexual and gender orientation, etc.) This includes a critical understanding of the dynamics of power and social location in our society and demands personal reflection, accountability, transparency, and respectful inclusion and collaboration with diverse communities.

What is an ARAO framework?

An anti-racism anti-oppression framework (ARAO) is a perspective or way of being in the world that confronts all aspects of injustice and inequality within society's institutions, structures, systems and practices, and is intended to understand and eradicate racism and oppression in all its forms. ARAO is active not passive. It is personal, professional and political²¹.

What is racism?

Racism: is typically distinguished from mere prejudice in terms of power. Prejudice – negative or hostile attitudes toward members of a group based on some shared trait, perceived or real – becomes racism when one group has the power to systematically deprive the members of another group of rights and privileges that should come with citizenship and/or being a human being.

Racism: a historically created system of power in which one racial/ethnic group dominates another racial/ethnic group for the benefit of the dominating group; economic and cultural domination as well as political power are included in the systemic dominance of the exploiting group; a monopoly of the means of violence is also held by those in the dominating group.

Racism: An act that combines power and discrimination against a group of people based on their common origin, colour of skin and physical appearance²².

Racism can exist at the individual as well as institutional levels. Individual racism is defined as beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be unconscious or conscious, active or passive.

Institutional Racism: Discrimination that exists within public and private organizations, the government and legal systems, and other institutions which gives out rewards or penalties based on race. Closely related to civil and human rights. The network of institutional structures, policies, and practices that create advantages for White people and discrimination, oppression and disadvantage for racialized people²³.

What is unintentional racism?

Unintentional Racism: Unintentional racism is perhaps the most insidious form of racial victimization. Unintentional racists are unaware of the harmful consequences of their behaviour. They may be well-intentioned, and, on the surface, their behaviour may appear to be responsible. Because individuals, groups and institutions engaging in unintentional racism do not wish to do harm, it is often difficult to get them to see themselves as racist. They are likely to deny their racism. Unintentional racists need to realize, however, that it is not necessarily the person wearing the white sheet and carrying a torch who poses the greatest threat to minority group members. Rather, cloaked in their sincerity and desire to do good, unintentional racists often do some of the greatest harm. (Ridley p. 39) and ...perpetuate racism not because they are prejudiced but because they deny that they are racists. Denial – refusal to recognize the reality of external threats – is the essence of the unintentional racist’s mind-set (p.161)²⁴.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is an act or instance of discriminating; treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit: racial and religious intolerance and discrimination²⁵.

Cultural Competency acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of the following principles²⁶.

- Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity.
- Fostering a staff that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities.
- Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated.
- Valuing cultural differences.
- Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers.
- Practicing self-awareness and self-reflection.
- Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability.

Using these insights in the workshop's development

The Key informants' perspectives along these perspectives have helped me revise the workshop agenda to incorporate approaches that resonate with people in the sector, including ethical leadership for the social services, systemic issues of capitalism; colonization, patriarchy, and racism; communication, discourses, and language; power and power imbalances; conflict resolution, cultural competency, mindfulness and hope. I combined what I learnt from my years of experience, from my research, and from the experiences shared by interviewees into a curriculum and workshop plan for an Alternative Methods of Negotiation in the Social Services Sector for SS leadership and staff (See Appendix 1).

Workshop summary and outline

This Alternative Methods of Negotiation in the Social Services Sector workshop for the Toronto Social Services sector leaders and front-line workers is designed to help participants achieve the following learning objectives:

- Understand how alternative dispute resolution and negotiation approaches may be used in the social services sector in Toronto.
- Learn and practice alternative approaches to conflict resolution and negotiations, to use with others.
- Learn to challenge oneself and the status quo regarding power imbalance and learn how to have different conversations on familiar topics.
- Build a Negotiator's Manual to help develop more positive, personal and social interactions.
- Recognize Uneven Tables and how to respond to them

Part One:

1. A Paradigm Shift - an attempt to identify pathways to new approaches to conflict resolution and negotiations.
 - 1.1. Building the Foundations of Leadership Skills
 - 1.2. Defining Basic Concepts of Conflict and Negotiation
 - 1.3. Defining Cultural Competency and Cognitive Dissonance

1.4. Defining Communication

Part Two:

2. Negotiation in the Social Services Sector - explore various individual and group techniques that will spark new ideas and fuel results.
 - 2.1. Defining and discussing power dynamics
 - 2.2. Defining and discussing the Uneven Table
 - 2.3. Understanding Traditional Approaches and the Uneven Table

Part Three:

3. Alternative Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Negotiations -identifying how to make better decisions and use more creative problem-solving skills
 - 3.1. Understanding Constructive Ways of Being at an Uneven Table

IV. Conclusion

In the same way traditional handling of conflict is passed from generation to generation, from parents to children, from experts to apprentices, social activists, educators, social change agents need to find a way to promote a paradigm shift and start a new practice. Those of us who care about social justice need to pursue attempts at different ways of being. The response to my invitation to key informants on the sector was the first indication that there is a need and a desire to engage in conversations where we can share, learn, question, challenge and test with each other alternative negotiation and mediation approaches. We first need to see ourselves as capable of having difficult conversations about old themes with new language.

In the experience of one of my SS key informants, when asked about a successful negotiation, taking responsibility and being accountable at the personal level is key. For the individual to take responsibility there needs to be clarity about personal agency that lead to the conflict, personal engagement to resolve the conflict, and accountability for the outcomes;

“...a successful negotiation for me it’s not only about how people feels; is not about feeling happy, good or disappointed about an outcome. Success for me is when through the process of negotiation there is clarity regarding expectations and positions, and about outcomes, resolutions and accountability. People should leave a situation

knowing what their role has been in leading to, participating in and engaging in the process to resolve the conflict. Sometimes people leave without knowing that and that impedes them taking responsibility”. (Courtney McFarlane, interviewed by A. Galvez. April 2019)

I have lived my adult life as an activist with a foot in the struggles of Latin America and the other in the local social and political struggles here in Toronto. I am one of those immigrants who was lucky to insert myself in the local social political spaces that exist within our communities. My first SS sector job came nearly 20 years ago via my family doctor in a community health centre. My doctor was also a social activist. When she heard of a job opening at her community health centre, she recommended me. I started at a job supporting the communities I knew best: newcomers, refugees, non-status people. I received an honours degree in political science after studying and trying psychology and social work. I rejected both fields for their blind emphasis on the individual without examining the socio-political and economic environment. At that time, I applied to a master’s program. I was accepted into the FES. My dream was to get my master’s and go back to Chile to work on protecting Chile’s decaying environment and take part in the rebuilding of the social movement there. Instead I stayed in Canada, dropped out of the graduate program and had two children. I got a job in the social services sector “on the wrong side of the table”, as the people who knew me then used to say. After 20 years, I went back to graduate school to complete my master’s and focus in my life learnings.

When I decided to embark on a project focused on the social services sector, I knew I could not just point out the problems of the sector: the contradictions, lack of political and social class awareness, isolation, lack of organizing, cynicism, apathy, trauma, fear and hopelessness. Some people, including my advisor, might say, who cares? Why is this relevant? How should we address this? This motivated my attempt to document what to care about, why we should care, and the relevance of making connections among those who do care. My overall objective for my Masters program has been to help develop a different political discourse along with alternative visions for SS leadership and forms of organization to further support conflict resolution and democracy in Toronto, one of the most diverse cities in the world.

Through my research I realize that I am not alone; that there are activists that come from all sorts of background, health care, education, labour, spiritual, social work, radicals, academics, artists, who make up community that speaks truth to power daily. The training workshop that I developed belongs to all of them. The next step will be to come together and get it tested!

Notes

- 1 Statistics Canada. The International Classification of Non-profit Organizations. 2015. As per the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO) the non-for-profit sector or social services are classified according to their primary area of activity; some organizations operate in multiple areas.
- 2 Ibid. Core non-profit organizations across Canada (not including hospitals, universities, municipalities and colleges) contributed 3.3% of Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The core nonprofit sector is one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy with an annual growth rate of 7.1% from 1997-2007. 2. Contrary to common perception, 45.1% of the core nonprofit sector's revenue comes from earned income (sales of goods and services) and an additional 17.1% comes from membership fees. Government transfers from the three levels of government comprise only 20.9% of revenue, with charitable donations at 13.3% and 3.6% other.
- 3 Stephanie Ross. "Varieties of Social Unionism: Towards a Framework for comparison, Just Labour: A Canadian Journal of Work and Society – Volume 11 – Autumn 2007.
http://www.justlabour.yorku.ca/volume11/pdfs/02_Ross_Press.pdf
- 4 A collective agreement is a written contract of employment covering a group of employees who are represented by a trade union. This agreement contains provisions governing the terms and conditions of employment. It also contains the rights, privileges and duties of the employer, the trade union and the employees. Collective bargaining is a process in which a trade union and an employer negotiate a first collective agreement or the renewal of a previous collective agreement. The parties usually focus on such issues as wages, working conditions, grievance procedures and fringe benefits.
https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/lr/faqs/lr_faq1.php#what1
- 5 Martin, D'Arcy. (p.3)
- 6 Faibish, Jory C. 2005. Types of Power.
- 7 Greg Albo. Neoliberal Urbanism and the New Canadian City.
<https://socialistproject.ca/2018/05/local-roads-to-austerity-neoliberal-urbanism-canada/>
- 8 Robert Duffy, Gaetan Royer Charley Beresford. 2014. "Who's Picking up the Tab?" Federal and Provincial Downloading onto Local Governments, Columbia Institute).
- 9 Grace-Edward Galabuzi 2006. Canada's Economic Apartheid: The social Exclusion of Racialized Groups in the New Century and Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market study by Sheila Block and Grace-Edward Galabuzi (2011)
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/negotiation>
- 10 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/negotiation>
- 11 <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/category/daily/conflict-resolution/>
- 12 Ibid.

¹³ <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/category/daily/conflict-resolution/page/2/>

¹⁴ Lax, D.A. and J.K. Sebenius. 2003. "3-D Negotiations: Playing the Whole Game" Harvard Business Review.

¹⁵ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/conflict>

¹⁶ One person may perform different roles currently or in the past.

¹⁷ 23 people ranging from 5 to 30 years of experience in the social service participated in this initiative. One CEO with only one year of experience participated in the study.

¹⁸ See Donna Baines "Unions in the Nonprofit Social Services Sector" for an overview of the non-profit social services in S. Ross and L. Savage 2013. Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity.

¹⁹ Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, & John Kania .Winter 2015 "The Dawn of System Leadership" https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_dawn_of_system_leadership

²⁰ Competence Consultant's & Associates and Adobe Consulting Services. Training on Cultural Competency and ARAO. 2012

²¹ Sources: Mussel, B., Cardiff, K., & White, J. (2004). "Glossary." In The mental health and well-being of Aboriginal children and youth: Guidance for new approaches and services. Chilliwack, BC: Sal'l'shan Institute. (p. 6).

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²² Source: Dictionary.com. (2019). Discrimination. Retrieved July 2019 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/discrimination>.

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APPENDIX A
ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF NEGOTIATION IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR
Alejandra Galvez
1 Day Workshop 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
AGENDA

TOPIC	FOCUS	DOCS/ HANDOUTS	Time
Welcome, Learning Objectives and Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Learning Objectives - Training Day Rules and Approach - Encouraging respectful participation, problem solving, confidentiality, open mindedness - Introduction of topics - Collect / acknowledge negotiation challenges (from participants) 	Handout #1- Learning Objectives and Introduction of topics	15
Building the Foundation of Leadership Skills	Part 1 – Building the Foundation of Leadership Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-Assessment Leadership exercise 	Handout # 2 – Leadership Skills	45
Conflict and Negotiations	Part 1 - Key Definitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is Conflict? - What is Negotiation? 	Handout #3 – Conflict and Negotiations	20
BREAK 10 Minutes (9:00-10:30 a.m.)			
Cultural Competency and Diversity Wheel	Part 1 – Key Definitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is Cultural Competency? - Diversity Wheel discussion - Small group exercise 	Handout #4 – Diversity Wheel Handout #5 -Defining Cultural Competency Exercise	30
Cognitive Dissonance	Part 1 – Key Definitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is a Cognitive Frame? - What is Cognitive Dissonance? - Cognitive dissonance group discussion exercise 	Handout. #6 - Cognitive Dissonance Cognitive Frames By Sarah Kaplan	40
Lunch 60 minutes (10:30-12:40 p.m.)			
Communication	Part 1 - Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active Listening - Critical Listening - Reflective Listening - Exercise – <i>Listen Linda</i> 	Handout #7 - Communication https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkLmyxA0LBk	30

APPENDIX A
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Alejandra Galvez
1 Day Workshop 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

AGENDA

TOPIC	FOCUS	DOCS/ HANDOUTS	Time
Negotiation in the Social Services Sector	Part 2 - Negotiation in the Social Services Sector Defining and discussing power dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Power relationships within the social service sector - “Power over versus power with” at negotiating tables 	Handout #8 - Types of Power	30
Traditional Approaches	Part 2 - Traditional Approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecturette of A. Galvez’s paper 	Handout # 9 -Traditional Approaches	20
BREAK 10 Minutes (12:40-2:00pm)			
Alternative Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Negotiations	Part 3 - Understanding Constructive Ways of Being at an Uneven Table	Handout #10 – Alternative Approaches	30
Constructive Ways of Being at an Uneven Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part 3 - Alternative Approaches To Conflict Resolution And Negotiations - Lessons drawn: Phyllis Beck-Kritek, Nelson Mandela, Gandhi - Indigenous ways of Being and conflict resolution approaches http://fourdirectionsteachings.com/index.html 	Handout # 11 – Ghandhi Quotes Reference article: Nelson Mandela as Negotiator: What Can We Learn from Him? Harold I. Abramson	30
Group Work:	From Knowledge to Action (exercise) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise based on real participants’ conflict scenarios - Distribute/ review negotiation challenges. - Group work. Let’s create learning experiences to tackle them together - Key Takeaways 		50
Summary of the Learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary review of the day - Questions and Answers 		15
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribute Evaluation Handout 		

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Learning Objectives and Introduction of Topics

This workshop for the Toronto Social Services sector leaders and front-line workers is designed to help participants achieve the following learning objectives:

- Understand how alternative dispute resolution and negotiation approaches may be used in the social services sector in Toronto.
- Learn and practice alternative approaches to conflict resolution and negotiations, to use with others.
- Learn to challenge oneself and the status quo regarding power imbalance and learn how to have different conversations on familiar topics.
- Build a Negotiator's Manual to help develop more positive, personal and social interactions.
- Recognize Uneven Tables and how to respond to them

Part One:

1. **A Paradigm Shift** - an attempt to identify pathways to new approaches to conflict resolution and negotiations.
 - 1.1. Building the Foundations of Leadership Skills
 - 1.2. Defining Basic Concepts of Conflict and Negotiation
 - 1.3. Defining Cultural Competency and Cognitive Dissonance
 - 1.4. Defining Communication

Part Two:

2. **Negotiation in the Social Services Sector** - explore various individual and group techniques that will spark new ideas and fuel results.
 - 2.1. Defining and discussing power dynamics
 - 2.2. Defining and discussing the Uneven Table
 - 2.3. Understanding Traditional Approaches and the Uneven Table

Part Three:

3. **Alternative Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Negotiations** -identifying how to make better decisions and use more creative problem-solving skills
 - 3.1. Understanding Constructive Ways of Being at an Uneven Table

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Leadership Skills

<p>The Social Services Leader is A PERSONAL LEADER</p>	<p>The Social Services Leader is A COMMUNICATION LEADER</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Leads by example <input type="checkbox"/> Is aware and engaged; physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned <input type="checkbox"/> Is not afraid to advocate <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates integrity in their actions and decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Inspires others by acting as a role model <input type="checkbox"/> Projects personal energy and dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates effectively - listening, fostering dialogue and coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages open exchange of information and ideas; using appropriate communication tools /media <input type="checkbox"/> Deepens the ability to have trusted, difficult conversations <input type="checkbox"/> Requests and listens to feedback
<p>The Social Services Leader is CULTURALLY COMPETENT</p>	<p>The Social Services Leader has LEADERSHIP INTEGRITY</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes and supports an anti-oppressive and harassment free service and work environment <input type="checkbox"/> Initiates / reviews existing projects, programs and or services to ensure that they are delivered in a culturally competent manner <input type="checkbox"/> Able to advocate for programs, policies and procedures that challenge systemic oppression <input type="checkbox"/> Provides constructive feedback to colleagues/clients to acknowledge and rectify behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fosters a work environment of trust and mutual respect <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes and maintains productive relationships with others <input type="checkbox"/> Maintains availability (in person) and accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages other to provide input on better ways to work together as a team; able to build a strong sense of commitment <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates commitment to resolving issues or conflicts. <input type="checkbox"/> Embraces/ responds to change as a way of working

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Leadership Skills

<p>The Social Services Leader is A STRONG MANAGER</p>	<p>The Social Services Leader is A STRONG MANAGER</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engages others; fosters development, supports and challenges others to achieve professional and personal goals <input type="checkbox"/> Builds teams: facilitate an environment of collaboration and cooperation to achieve results <input type="checkbox"/> Creates an environment that supports employee achievement <input type="checkbox"/> Takes the time to acknowledge and celebrate successes Encourages initiative, setting clear limits without discouraging creativity <input type="checkbox"/> Allocates resources, makes space and time from management and staff for building capacity and expanding knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Is not afraid of taking risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages transparency; gets others involved sharing their vision and objectives for the team and the organization <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes and respects diversity of perspectives and personal styles <input type="checkbox"/> Is a good listener <input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to the creation of a healthy organization where others have meaningful opportunities to contribute and the resources to fulfill their responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Assigns funds for training and staff development <input type="checkbox"/> Focuses on fundamental relationship strategies – suspends judgment and places trust in connected relations with others
<p>The Social Services Leader holds SELF ACCOUNTABLE</p>	<p>The Social Services Leader leads ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Practices self-reflection and self-awareness: acknowledges power, privilege and oppression; acknowledges personal principles, values, and social location and implications for practice <input type="checkbox"/> Able to engage in recovery process and receive constructive feedback from colleagues/clients, acknowledge and rectify behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Takes explicit measures to become and sustain a diverse and inclusive organization <input type="checkbox"/> Learns from and owns mistakes and addresses the consequences <input type="checkbox"/> Is in touch with the realities of the sector, the communities, the staff <input type="checkbox"/> Uses setbacks as a chance to learn, rather than to punish <input type="checkbox"/> Sets a personal standard for performance that is exemplary

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Leadership Skills

The Social Services Leader creates A STRONG CULTURE	The Social Services Leader is A STRONG MANAGER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages transparency; gets others involved sharing their vision and objectives for the team and the organization <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes and respects diversity of perspectives and personal styles <input type="checkbox"/> Is a good listener <input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to the creation of a healthy organization where others have meaningful opportunities to contribute and the resources to fulfill their responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engages others; fosters development, supports and challenges others to achieve professional and personal goals <input type="checkbox"/> Builds teams: facilitate an environment of collaboration and cooperation to achieve results <input type="checkbox"/> Creates an environment that supports employee achievement <input type="checkbox"/> Takes the time to acknowledge and celebrate successes

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Ethical Innovative Leadership

Ethics

- Goals for Ethical Business Communication (Guffey, 2008)

- Abiding by the law
- Telling the truth
- Labeling opinions
- Being objective
- Communicating clearly
- Using inclusive language
- Giving credit



Exercise:

- In your groups review the competencies of a leader and create a posting with the competencies you consider the most important in a SS sector leader.

Self assessment:

- Review the posting and compare it with your own leadership capacity
- What are the 3 competencies or areas you feel the strongest about?
- What are the 3 areas or competencies you need or wish to develop?

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Definitions of Conflict and Negotiation

What is Conflict?

Conflict is a situation in which individuals, or groups use **conflict behaviors** against each other to attain **incompatible goals** and/or express their **hostility**ⁱ

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is defined by Harvard Law School as “the process of resolving a dispute or a conflict by meeting at least some of each side’s needs and addressing their interests. Conflict resolution sometimes requires both a power-based and an interest-based approach, such as the simultaneous pursuit of litigation (the use of legal power) and negotiation (attempts to reconcile each party’s interests)”.ⁱⁱ

Theories covering human conflict range from the Karl Marx’s historic Conflict Theory – the most fundamental conflict of humankind based on detailed historic analyses of the rise and expansion of (Western) capitalism- to the innumerable social conflicts affecting our society. The Western model operates within a system that accepts that negotiations will never happen on “a level playing field”, and that there always will be disparities. This is given as a reality that needs to be acknowledged and accepted. Furthermore, the setting for negotiation is analogous to a battlefield, where the better equipped, more powerful, and those with the best tactics and strategy will have the greater chances to succeed.

Conflict is an inevitable part of life. Each of us possesses our own opinions, ideas and sets of beliefs. We have our own ways of looking at things and we act according to what we think is proper. Hence, we often find ourselves in conflict in different scenarios; may it involve other individuals, groups of people, or a struggle within our own selves. Conflict may seem to be a problem to some, but it can also be an effective means of opening up among groups or individuals.

Examples of types of conflictⁱⁱⁱ:

- **Intrapersonal conflict**- The experience takes place in the person’s mind; involving the individual’s thoughts, values, principles and emotions.
- **Interpersonal conflict** refers to a conflict between two individuals. Often involves varied diversity of personalities, backgrounds, experiences, choices and opinions.
- **Intragroup conflict** is a type of conflict that happens among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings among these individuals lead to intragroup conflicts. It arises from interpersonal disagreements (e.g. different personalities which may lead to tension) or differences in views and ideas.
- **Intergroup conflict** takes place due to the varied sets of goals and interests among different teams /groups. Other factors which fuel this type of conflict may include competition, rivalry in resources or the boundaries set by a group to others which establishes their own identity, and differences in world views and ideas. (<http://www.typesofconflict.org/>)

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Definitions of Conflict and Negotiation

What is Negotiation?

The Cambridge English dictionary defines negotiation as a discussion aimed at reaching an agreement^{iv}.

The authors of *Getting to Yes*^v, one of the most frequently used books that teaches how to negotiate without giving in define negotiation as “a basic means of getting what you want from others” by “a back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.”

Other experts define negotiation using similar terms. Bartos and Wehr (2002) claim that negotiation takes place “when conflict parties agree to meet face to face to resolve their conflict.”

ⁱ Bartos, Otomar J and Wehr, Paul. 2002. P.13

ⁱⁱ <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/category/daily/conflict-resolution/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.typesofconflict.org/>

^{iv} <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/negotiation?q=Negotiations>

^v Fisher, R., W. Ury and B. Patton. 1991. “Getting to Yes”. New York. Penguin. (p.xvii)

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Diversity Wheel



Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Defining Cultural Competency

Definition 1

Cultural Competency: The ability to demonstrate the skills required to work in a diverse work environment, and to provide effective, appropriate and respectful clinical care or service to clients from marginalized and/ or diverse groups (e.g. gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, abilities, language, religion, sexual and gender orientation, etc.) This includes a critical understanding of the dynamics of power and social location in our society and demands personal reflection, accountability, transparency, and respectful inclusion and collaboration with diverse communities.

Definition 2

Cultural Competency: A set of behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together a system, agency or among professionals that enable effective work in cross-cultural situations. Culture” refers to integrated patterns of human behaviour that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious or social groups. “Competence” implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of cultural beliefs, behaviours and needs presented by consumers and their communities. (Based on Cross, T. *et al*, 1989)

Sorting out Thought, Attitude and Behaviour

Cultural Competency involves becoming aware of how we think about, feel about, and behave toward members of diverse cultural groups. Our thoughts, feelings, and actions may vary depending on the group to which an individual belongs. The group may be defined by race, ethnicity, or some other identifiable social characteristics. Whether we treat someone better based solely on the person’s membership to a group depends largely on our beliefs about the group and our feelings toward it.

Stereotypes- are about how we think, when we view an individual in terms of generalizations we make about his/ her/their group, we are **stereotyping**.

Prejudice- is about how we feel, when we have a corresponding judgmental attitude toward that person, based solely on his/ her/their membership in the group, we are being **prejudiced**.

Discrimination- is about how we behave, when we treat that person differently because of his/ her/their membership in the group, we are engaging in **discriminating**.

What is an ARAO Framework?

An anti-racism anti-oppression (ARAO) framework is a perspective or way of being in the world that confronts all aspects of injustice and inequality within society’s institutions, structures, systems and practices, and is intended to understand and eradicate racism and oppression in all its forms. ARAO is active not passive! It is Personal, Professional and Political

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Defining Cultural Competency

Group Exercise

In your small group, review the cultural competency definitions and identify the most important defining statements in each one.

1. Is there one definition that your group prefers overall? Why?
2. Can you come up with a definition that in your opinion best describe your own understanding of Cultural Competency?
3. Scenario #1

Barbara had always wanted to work supporting the most vulnerable members of society. The mission statement and the values related to anti-oppression, access and equity were the reasons she joined a reputable organization working at the community level. Barbara, a young supervisor was enthusiastic to recruit for a couple of social worker positions to provide service for some of the most vulnerable groups in the community. Her hiring committee included other Management representative, senior front-line staff and HR advisor. However, during the recruitment process, Barbara realized that a couple of members of the recruitment panel were biased and made inappropriate comments against some applicants that had nothing to do with the skills and requirements of these individuals to do the job. Their view influenced the rest of the committee and these applicants were disqualified based on "unconscious bias". Barbara and the committee were left to decide between some less qualified applicants who met the definition of "good fits" for most of the hiring committee members.

4. How do you think Barbara will cope with this situation? What are the challenges she will face?
5. In your opinion is the hiring committee:
 - a) stereotyping
 - b) being prejudiced
 - c) discriminating
6. Discuss in your group your understanding of unconscious bias and how it relates to cultural competency?
7. What do you think "good fit" means in the above scenario?

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Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive Dissonance Theory – applies to situations involving attitude formation and change. It is especially relevant to decision making and problem solving. Dissonance theory provides a useful framework for understanding and monitoring learning in the academic setting because learners need to make decisions regarding the new information that challenges their opinions and attitudes. New information (or cognition) that conflicts with an individual's ideas creates cognitive dissonance. (Tamara H. Rosier. What I Think I Believe. Using the Change Method to Resolve Cognitive Dissonance. In Encountering Faith in the Classroom. Turning Difficult Discussions into Constructive Engagement. Miriam Rosalyn Diamond. 2008

Egocentrism: too narrowly focused. Francisca Gino in Sidetracked. Why our Decisions Get Derailed, and How We can Stick to the Plan, (2013) explores how human beings tend to be egocentric and in doing so we find it difficult to move beyond our subjective experience of a stimulus. We find difficult to imagine how someone who cannot read our mind and who does not share our privileged perspective might evaluate it. When executing our plan involves making assessments about how much others know, she argues, our decisions can easily be derailed by our tendency to focus too much on ourselves. (p.78)

Group Discussion Exercise

Understanding Yourself and Others

Scenario#1

Maria is a refugee who fled her own country with her family a young woman, the daughter of very devoted catholic parents, who grew up practicing the family religion; she was planning to become a nun when her brother was imprisoned, tortured and has since made disappeared. She learned that some priests had been involved in peoples' torture under the military regime. Her parents refused to stop going to church as their devotion to Catholicism did not change. For Maria everything changed but she needs to accompany them.

1. How do you think Maria will cope with the cognitive dissonance of this situation? What are the challenges she will face? Can you think of any options for Maria?
2. Personal reflection: Think of a situation that exposed new information that challenged your worldview and or your attitude formation.
 - What are the challenges?
 - Has the new conflicting information effected change?

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive Frames

The Origin of Our Cognitive Frames and What to Do When They Conflict with Others by Sarah Kaplanⁱ

In our current environment, the basic meaning of a given situation is often up for grabs. What are the repercussions of all this ambiguity?

In many situations, people look around and realize that it's not clear what to do next. When so many changes are taking place, some important signals are visible, while others are not. The implication is that it will take some work to figure out what is truly going on. To complicate matters, not everyone in an organization or industry will make the same interpretations of the situation, because there isn't necessarily one right answer when attempting to understand the environment. There will always be multiple takes on what's happening.

What is a 'cognitive frame'?

It is basically a lens through which people see the world. That lens comes from a combination of our background, our education, the kind of companies we have worked for, the people we have met, the projects we have worked on – all of these experiences contribute to a repertoire of knowledge that influences how we see things. Individually, we tend to not be aware of the fact that we see the world through a particular lens. We believe that we see things the way they really are. If someone has a different sense of what is going on, we view them as being somehow biased or as being influenced by their personal beliefs.

How should we approach scenarios where our frames conflict with those of our colleagues?

This happens all the time, of course, and it goes back to the issue of being aware of our own cognitive frames. People often get into arguments or disagreements or complain about conflicts within their organization without understanding that, very often, the origin of these conflicts is the fact that different people are interpreting a situation differently. They don't understand that one of the fundamental reasons that people might be opposing each other is that they see the world in very different ways.

Once we acknowledge the possibility of different interpretations, these differences can be put on the negotiating table, and we can then explore how to bring the diverging views together in some way. Or, we can try to establish the legitimacy of our own frame in order to influence others.

Being aware of the fact that many conflicts originate from different interpretations can then lead to more productive ways of engaging in the negotiation of a joint understanding.

ⁱ Sarah Kaplan is an Associate Professor of Strategic Management at the Rotman School of Management and co-author of *Creative Destruction: Why Companies That Are Built to Last Underperform the Market — And How to Transform Them* (Crown Business, 2001). Follow her on Twitter [@sarah_kaplan](https://twitter.com/sarah_kaplan). Rotman research is ranked #3 globally by the *Financial Times*.

This interview originally appeared in 'Wicked Problems' (Winter 2009). <http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/Connect/Rotman-MAG/Back-Issues/2009/Back-Issues---2009/Winter-2009---Wicked-Problems>

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Communication

Ability to speak - Ability to hear:

Communicates clearly and consistently including both verbal and written communications; presents information, ideas or concepts in a manner that effectively communicates both content and intent. Translates information into concrete, understandable terms. Ensures the right information is communicated at the right time. Knows what information is relevant and to whom it should be communicated. Supports effective interactions and relationships by allowing others the opportunity to express their views; listens and considers what others have to say

Active listening:

Intentionally focuses on the speaker. The active listener listens attentively with the purpose of interpreting what the speaker says and confirming the speaker's feelings. It involves watching body language and mood changes. Active listening avoids misunderstandings through confirmation of what another person has said and is particularly helpful during conflict. When people feel you are willing to hear their concerns, they are more likely to open up and speak more freely. If both parties in a conflict use active listening, they may resolve their problems more quickly.

Critical listening:

It is a skill that uses analysis, critical thinking and judgment of the speaker's message. Critical listening helps a person understand and evaluate what is being said and how it is being said. It allows the listener to concentrate on the main points and evidence offered for each point and to determine the speaker's viewpoint and why he or she holds that perspective. With this approach, listeners determine which parts of the message to accept and which parts to reject.

Reflective listening:

It is a communication strategy similar to yet more concrete than active listening. The listener focuses on specifics rather than generalities and repeats or summarizes what the speaker says so that no breakdown in communication occurs. Reflection mirrors understanding of the speaker's emotional state with both verbal and nonverbal communication. Reflective listening builds rapport and trust with speakers by assuring them that you are understanding their point of view. This kind of listening helps others process their thoughts out loud and get to the root of their problems.

Exercise:

Review the video *Linda Listen*.

Based on the definitions above. Who in your opinion is the best listener? Why?

- Is anyone doing active, critical or reflective listening? Explain
- What is the emotional state of the speakers?

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Types of Power

People exhibit power in many different ways, unconsciously and consciously. Below are some examples to consider when you think of the types of power you bring to the negotiation table.

There are many types, manifestations and attributes of power. These can be used separately, in combination, by ourselves or with others. We can use “Power Over” or “Power With” others. There is the power of:

1. **Acknowledgement:** - The ability to recognize and make note of the feelings and actions of others.
2. **Association:** - Who we know and how well
3. **Assertion:** - Standing up for our needs while being attentive to and respectful of the needs of others
4. **Attribution:** - How people consciously and unconsciously attribute power to others
5. **Communication:** - How well we speak with other and the choices we make about the communication medium
6. **Curiosity:** - Our ability to be open, and willing to explore, what is going on, new ideas, perspectives, options and outcomes
7. **Definition:** - Our ability to define, synthesize or frame things
8. **Ending Something:** - Our power to say “This is over. I am done”
9. **Experience** - What we know from our experience
10. **Forgiveness** - Letting go of all hope for a better past
11. **Formality** - A role, position or authority given by society
12. **Giving** - In any form: of one’s self, tithing, support, material goods without expectation of return
13. **Habit** - What we normally do in similar situations
14. **Personal Character** - The power of charisma
15. **Innovation/creativity** - Our ability to make something new to solve a problem
16. **Intellect** - How we use our knowledge base
17. **Information** - What we know – expert on subject
18. **Hope** - The belief, no matter how faint, that things can be get better
19. **Humour** - The use of self-deprecating and appropriate humour
20. **Language** - The use of powerful language to convey important messages
21. **Legality** - Knowing our legal prerogatives
22. **Naiveté** - Not knowing and engaging as a “blank slate”
23. **Nuisance** - How bad we can make things for others
24. **Objectivity/Witness** - Having no vested interest in the outcome, only in a productive process and being witness to others experience
25. **Procedure** - How things work around here
26. **Politics** - How we can affect change through political action and process
27. **Risk** - Willingness to take a chance for things to change and/or get better
28. **Resources** - What we have control over
29. **Reward/Punishment** - How we can appreciate or sanction others
30. **Silence** - Simply staying silent and seeing what happens next
31. **Skill** - What we know how to do
32. **Structure** - Organizational hierarchy
33. **Style** - How we use who we are in terms of social, leadership, conflict and others styles to accomplish things
34. **Tenacity** - The capacity to hang in there no matter what happens
35. **Tools** - Developing and/or using many tools to create awareness, and results
36. **Vision** - The ability to image a different and usually better future, sometimes inconsiderable detail

“If all you have is a hammer everything looks like a nail” – Abraham Mazlow
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Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Traditional Approaches and the Uneven Table

- In most of the literature on conflict, conflict resolution and negotiations, authors ignore the socio-political and ideological dimensions of the negotiator and those of their environments. These often go unnamed and unaddressed.
- **Masks of Manipulation** - traditional training relies on psychological approaches to negotiation to “win”, supposedly focusing on relationships and the future, but teaching techniques of manipulation to help you end up with a “bigger piece of the pie”. Negotiations experts empower the student with tools and tricks to win and at same time that they caution negotiators to keep away from blurring into unethical and manipulative tactics. In fact, the emphasis is often placed on well intentioned methods to be obtained which are a source of double-edged power.
- **Knowledge is power**, but only if you know how to apply it to “the real world”. Experts claim you can gain knowledge, practice what you learn, and emerge a better negotiator.
- The good negotiator will need to master the know-how of and when to apply it in the real world.
- In most approaches, models and strategies **dominance power** is accepted as the central premise; the continued sustaining of existing power structures and inequalities is implicitly assumed.
- The goal is resolving the conflict at hand, not dramatically reconstructing social systems.

William Ury, author of one the best known and widely used books on negotiation, *Getting Past No: Negotiating with Difficult People*, describes a five-step strategy for dealing with hard bargainers and difficult people. Ury calls his method “breakthrough negotiation,” a way to “change the game from face-to-face confrontation into side-by-side problem-solving.” These steps are:

1. **Don’t react:** Go to the balcony – or anywhere you can go to step back from the brink.
2. **Disarm them by stepping to their side.** One of the most powerful steps to take—and one of the most difficult—is to try to understand the other person’s point of view. Ask questions and show genuine curiosity.
3. **Change the game:** Don’t reject—reframe. Instead of locking into a battle of will or fixed positions, consider putting a new frame on the negotiation.
4. **Make it easy to say yes.** Look for ways to help your opponent save face and feel that they are getting their way, at least in some matters.
5. **Make it hard to say no.** Use your power and influence to help educate your opponent about the situation.

<https://www.pon.harvard.edu/category/daily/conflict-resolution/page/2/>

ⁱ Lax, D.A. and J.K. Sebenius. 2003. “3-D Negotiations: Playing the Whole Game” *Harvard Business Review*.

Alternative Methods of Negotiations in the Social Services Sector

Alternative Approaches

Negotiating at an Uneven Table; Developing Moral Courage in Resolving our Conflicts by Phyllis Beck Kritek has two major premises; 1) that the resolution of human conflicts is a moral enterprise that is the responsibility of every human and, 2) that we humans have conflicts over many things, and we do not always engage in conflict because of dominance power concerns.

By dominance power, we understand it to mean the existing social order that reigns in the western world. That social order that it is maintained by functioning structures controlled by persons with disproportionately dominance power and the desire to maintain it. (Beck Kritek. 2015)

Kritek defines an **uneven table** as a table in which inequality, dominance power, control, and manipulation are almost constantly at play. Thus, the table represents the site of a negotiation, “set” by one or more negotiators, who attempt to ensure that the table is even. However, if one of its legs is too long or too short, broken, or missing, the table tilts, perhaps even collapses, and its “tableness” becomes doubtful, as does its utility.

Beck Kritek proposes an approach that rather focuses on the humanity of the individuals and recognizes them as capable of self-awareness and more importantly of change. This way of thinking departs from the western traditional approaches that emphasize aggressive personal traits and skill sets.

Beck Kritek’s offers ten ways of being at an uneven table. These are:

1. *Find and inhabit the deepest and surest human space that your capabilities permit*
2. *Be a truth teller*
3. *Honour your integrity, even at great cost*
4. *Find a place for compassion at the table*
5. *Draw a line in the sand without cruelty*
6. *Expand and explicate the context*
7. *Innovate*
8. *Know what you do and do not know*
9. *Stay in the dialogue*
10. *Know when and how to leave the table*

APPENDIX B
ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF NEGOTIATION IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

Alejandra Galvez

1 Day Workshop 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

EVALUATION

Name (optional) _____ Date: _____
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Please rate today's session by placing a mark on the line nearest to the description that best fits your experience.

I didn't learn anything new. I won't recommend this training	I-----I	I learned something new. I will recommend this training
The content of the session wasn't useful to me	I-----I	The content of the session was useful to me
There were not sufficient opportunities for discussion and sharing of ideas.	I-----I	There were sufficient opportunities for discussion and sharing of ideas.
The facilitator didn't encourage discussion.	I-----I	The facilitator encouraged discussion.
The facilitator didn't keep us on track.	I-----I	The facilitator kept us on track.
There was something missing in the session today—I was not engaged.	I-----I	Overall, today's session worked well for me – I was engaged.

Please provide comments to help us understand your ratings:
