



CARING SPACE

Centering Care in Facilitation

This resource is developed as part of
the Anti-Oppression Capacity Building Project

By Luna Aixin, GaGiNang Productions



自己人

GAGINANG

Productions



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Land Acknowledgement

Da Kay Ho! My name is Luna Aixin. Gyue Ai Sim is my Teochew name. It means “Moon of a loving heart.” I come to you today from the unceded Coast Salish territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tseil-Waututh) Peoples.

I am a settler that has been on these lands since 2001. I affirm and honour many of the land and water defenders still suffering and working to break away and heal from the devastating impacts of ongoing European colonial violence. Language bearers and cultural knowledge keepers work hard on essential practices of the land and sea that are swiftly losing life because of settler colonialism. We cannot continue to let this happen.

As a settler, I take responsibility and accountability to recognize that what happened to my ancestors and what happened to the Indigenous ancestors of these lands calls for healing and transformational work to liberate each other from systemic oppression imposed by unjust policies, practices, and mindsets. To transform harm into recovery, we must learn to be in the spaces of discomfort and confront the moments when we go silent in our allyship to Indigenous sovereignty and instead take action, speak up, act up, and learn what it means to be on these lands. As the Sto:lo poet Lee Maracle once said to a group of settlers that I was part of, “Since we (Indigenous Nations) no longer have the protocols and practices to naturalize you, the least that you (settlers) can do is learn how to be Coast Salish.”

Learning how to be Coast Salish is a lifelong journey that I bear to do right by Indigenous and First Peoples. I acknowledge the Indigenous, waters and peoples to the East, to the South, to the West and the North, and all in between, and remind each of us to practice stepping up as helpful allies to enable Indigenous sovereignty and that they are shown more respect and care.

Content Warning

Readers should be aware that there is a mention of suicide in “Section 2: Participants.”

I have omitted details other than using the word to highlight my identity as a survivor. However, because this guide is also written based on my experiences as a survivor, I have done my best to ensure that the words throughout the guide I use are gentle but honest. Therefore, please use some gentle care while reading this guide.

I send love and care to you.

Luna

Acknowledgement

This guide was made possible with the support of the staff of the Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership (TCLIP) Thábata da Costa, Elizabeth Mayorga, Bitá Rezaei, Natasha Camacho, and Timothy Chiu.

My gratitude to Graphic Recorder and Illustrator Adriana Contreras, who created a beautiful drawing from the Caring Space workshops held between March and April 2023. I want to thank Desiree Gabriel, who supported the sessions as a co-facilitator.

To the community members who came, thank you for your stories and insights highlighting how we share similar sentiments about care across cultures.

Teachers (so many to name), and Indigenous elders like Lee Maracle and others on these lands, have shared truths about our chronic disconnection with land, water, and sky through unsustainable ways of being and living. They urge us to return to a just and good relationship with our natural kin. Disability Justice role models like Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Mia Mingus, Akemi Nishida, and Alice Wong have taught me so much about myself and what my disability is really about. I found the entrenched fear of being disabled and abandoned by society. These teachers showed us we can do something to confront this fear and instead accept it as a part of life that doesn't need to keep us ashamed of our disability.

I also want to mention another dear mentor, Dr. Destiny Thomas from Thrivance Institute, who highlighted the importance of doing work that brings about dignity for and with the communities we connect to. She helped change and improve my understanding of facilitating dignifying community engagement and how to build communities by elevating access to dignity for all people.

I especially want to acknowledge all the facilitators who are doing incredible work to advance justice and equity, and liberation for communities that have been oppressed. This is hard work and because this is hard work, we need to care even more. My wish for you is to always feel cared for.

When TCLIP approached me to host this workshop, I was flattered and aware of my identity – a racialized, disabled, non-binary, neuro-different person and how we don't have these opportunities to share our insights and intelligence. To be able to share is an act of love. Hence, I affirm our acts of love and care and am thankful for this opportunity.

About Luna Aixin

I am a multiracial, disabled, neurodiverse, non-binary person. I use they/them pronouns. I also live with diagnosed Complex-PTSD. For those who care, I was born in the year of the Earth Horse and am a Virgo in Singapore, a small island country located by the Straits of Malacca and long-famed to be a port island of trade importance. I settled in so-called Canada in 2001 and became a “Permanent Resident” in 2006.

I am a first-generation settler and the only one in my family. I follow the footsteps of many of my diasporic ancestors, who, through multiple generations of migrations, eventually made home in what is today known as Singapore. Before British colonization in 1819, Singapore was known as Temasek. It was home to the Indigenous communities of the Orang Laut, Orang Seletar, and Orang Bugis in the Malay Archipelago. The island was a bustling trading spot with traders from all over, from China to the South Pacific Islands. Singapore then went through World War II, and my great-grandparents and grandparents went through the war, forced to work for the Japanese Army.

My grandfather was spared and eventually met my grandmother, who came from Malacca, home to many Peranakans, a hybrid cultural community blending local Nusantara cultures with Chinese cultures. By 1965, Singapore separated from Malaysia and became independent. I was born after independence and left Singapore in 2001 to escape violence and poverty. Unfortunately, while living here, I fell victim to racism and gendered violence, and it wasn't until the pandemic that I could focus on my healing and recovery. I share these things because they form meaningful contexts in how I have come to facilitate care.

Everything I will share with you comes from lots of lived experiences, ongoing learning and making mistakes. As a neurodiverse person, I continue to discover every day what it means to facilitate with the unique brain I have.

In my twenty years of facilitating, I have been taught a lot by many teachers and communities, making many mistakes, and learning from them. So, to share what I can with you, I thank you for building this learning relationship with me. Over the few sessions, I will share a few things that will hopefully be helpful to you personally and professionally.

About Adriana Contreras - Graphic Facilitator

Adriana Contreras Correal is an Interdisciplinary Artist, a dedicated auntie, bilingual Graphic Recorder, and Illustrator (English and Spanish), born in Bogotá, Colombia, living with respect and gratitude on the traditional unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Artistic expression has played a central part in Adriana's life and became an essential tool for navigating the world as a first-generation immigrant. Her migration journey profoundly informs her work and commitment to social justice at a local and global level. Adriana completed her BFA at SFU's School for the Contemporary Arts in 2006 and has worked and volunteered at numerous Arts and community-based organizations for over 20 years.

Adriana's role as a Visual Practitioner is to witness, listen deeply, connect ideas, and tell stories. All the drawings of the guide were made by Adriana Contreras. They serve as a living memory of the time we share in dialogue; it is a form of harvesting and mapping collective wisdom, stories, reflections, questions, and commitments for future action.

Learning from Sto:lo poet Lee Maracle

To guide us in our time together, I have invited a dear ancestor of these unceded lands, Sto:lo poet Lee Maracle, to start us from a specific point. The point in time was 2017. I was at the Museum of Vancouver. The keynote speaker was Lee Maracle. She said this to us, and we remember.

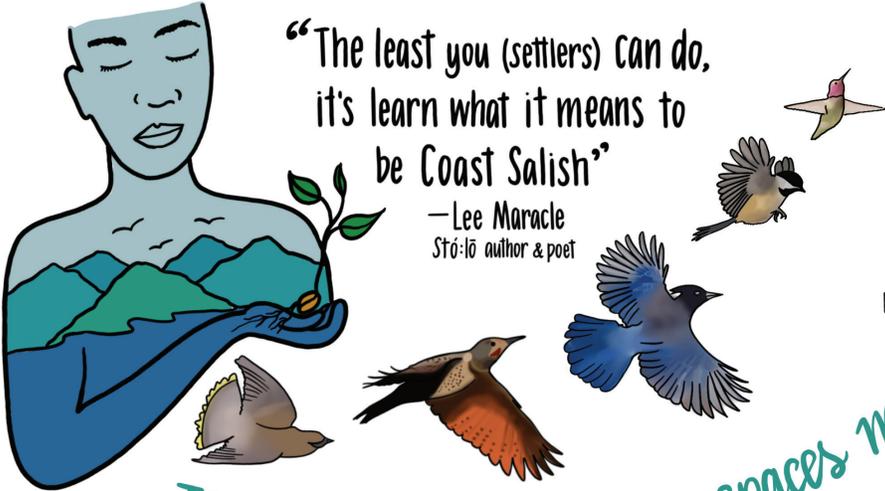
“When European colonization happened, our laws and protocols were forcibly removed from our lives. Hence, our protocols for naturalization were also lost, but we are still on Coast Salish and Indigenous lands. Without these protocols, people who came to so-called Canada became immigrants, participating in settler-colonialism. So, settlers, since our Nations cannot adequately have a relationship with you, I want you to remember that you are still on Coast Salish lands.

The least you can do is learn what it means to be Coast Salish”.

If you are a settler reading this guide, I would like you to reflect on this with me. What does it mean to be Coast Salish? More specifically, what does it mean to conduct activities, have conversations, and make decisions, on these Indigenous lands? How might building connections and relationships with the land make you a more grounded facilitator?

We shall explore all of this in the subsequent few sessions.

We need to take the time to reflect on our role as settlers & immigrants on the unceded & stolen lands on which we live. How are we being accountable to the Land & the people who have cared for it since time immemorial?



“The least you (settlers) can do, it's learn what it means to be Coast Salish”

—Lee Maracle
Sto:lo author & poet

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER with A SPACE WARMER ACTIVITY, INSTEAD OF AN ICE BREAKER

The way we name & enter spaces matters

How to use this guide

Section 1: Building Caring Spaces

We will warm up to what it means to create a facilitated space that centres on well-being, is approached as sacred, and applies decolonial, culturally relational ways of holding and hosting group spaces.

Section 2: Thinking about Participants (From a Survivor's Perspective)

Dive into the elements of working with participants from a survivor's experience and perspective. I share my insights as a survivor of systemic, relational, and interpersonal violence and how being a survivor informs my practice to create group spaces that are caring in consensual, trauma-informed, and gentle ways.

Section 3: The Process of Care

Let's dig into the facilitation process. What are the strategies and approaches when applying care to facilitation? How do we deal with emergent situations and information when facilitating group spaces?

Section 4: The Caring Space Facilitator

Let's breathe care into our roles as facilitators. I share reflections and insights in my learning journey to create caring group spaces, bringing to the surface ways we can approach facilitation as a practice for self-development.

Resources

I have included a list of resources relevant to caring space and how I facilitate my sessions.

Section 1: Introduction to Caring Spaces Framework

I want to invite you to reflect on these two questions.

“What is care? What is a caring space to you?”

One definition of care I love is by Akemi Nishida, an Assistant Professor who teaches Disability and Human Development and Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Illinois Chicago. In the introduction of her new book, ‘Just Care, Messy Entanglements of Disability, Dependency and Desire’, she introduces care like this:

“I begin this book by thinking about and understanding care as the energy and time we spend in intention to contribute to others’ well-being, vitality and lives.”

– Akemi Nishida

‘Just Care, Messy Entanglements of Disability, Dependency and Desire’¹

I often think of caring space as a sacred and relational space where I and others can be nourished, inspired, and treated with patience, understanding, dignity, comfort, safety, support, and stability. When these are available as acts of intentional and consensual care, we all benefit relationally.



¹ Nishida, A. (2022). *Just Care*.

As a disabled person, I don't take care for granted. Often, it's the hardest to ask for and most needed. Unfortunately, our society is co-dependent on transactional ways of being with each other. Care became profitable instead of relational. I want that to change so that we can live together in ways that strengthen our communities, and not companies.

Community thrives when we thrive because of care. To be a facilitator of care is to bring intentional care into the forefront of our personal and professional lives. As I age in my working and personal life, I am witnessing, especially since this pandemic, the need for group spaces in the communities to actively be caring while we all learn to bridge our differences, meet our similarities, live with and love each other as equals.



To illustrate this, I'd like to introduce you to a lovely way of care. HOTPOT. It is a food feast where hosts and guests cook and eat together. Plates of vegetables, meats, seafood, rice, noodles, and much more brim the edge of dining tables, chopsticks swooping in and out to add ingredients to the broth that's getting richer and richer with addition. Flavours converge to produce vibrant flavours and colours that bring warmth visually and literally. Hotpots can last hours. We get to share precious and delicious times, caring for each other by sharing food. How beautiful is that?

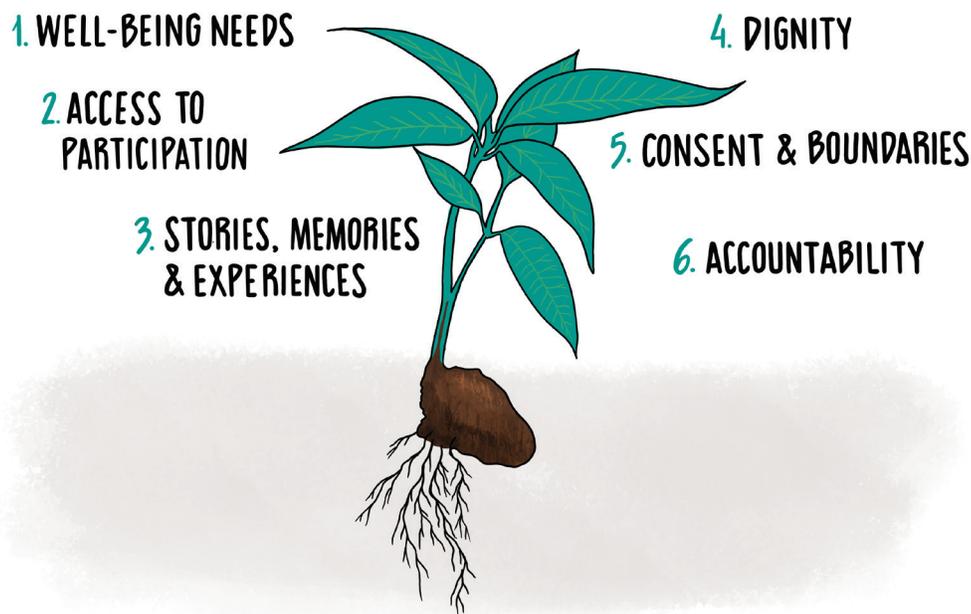
Caring Space combines the ingredients of a good hotpot gathering through acts of care. Everything from the host to the receiver, the aroma of nourishment bringing us together in joy, learning and understanding.

Fields of Care

When I say care, what exactly do I mean, and what do I care about in the context of facilitating caring spaces? Imagine that you are looking out on the land, and you spot some fields. Each of these fields forms the essential ingredients for a healthy ecosystem. Each one is essential on its own and to the ecosystem.

I think about six “fields of care” that contribute to how I apply intentional care to my facilitation work.

Care about what?



1. Centering Well-being and Needs

Whenever I hear people talk about things like joy and happiness or satisfaction and connection, I also hear them talk about how their well-being and needs were met. We know innately that when people’s needs are met, participation is more accessible. Gender-inclusive washrooms, sign-language interpreters at events, wide and flat surfaces for wheelchair users, inclusive communication, asking someone what they need instead of assuming - all these are acts of care that can significantly contribute to someone’s well-being and needs, who otherwise are not met elsewhere. As someone who lives this life, ensuring someone is cared for most adequately is personal to me.

2. Access to participation

Access to participation is hierarchized by how society values what is worth. Often, access to a “better life” is limited to the most enabled², as opposed to the disabled. Oppression is linked to the intentional act of barring people of perceived lower-class status from accessing basic human needs like food, shelter, mobility, knowledge, and social and ecological connection.

To actively work in anti-oppressive and caring ways is to put care into ensuring that folks who have been excluded, marginalized, and oppressed, get access to basic needs and to support them to participate in anything with their well-being and dignity in mind.

3. Stories, memories, and experiences

I consider stories, memories, and people’s experiences sacred. Stories are bridges to how we learn about and share space with each other. Stories contain memories, experiences, and reflections about life essential to survival. Without stories, there would be no knowledge of the past, present, and future.

Many of our stories are where we find dignity, worth, and meaning. When people share their stories with us, the least we can do is show the stories respect, dignity, and care. When we can treat stories as sacred and relational rather than transactional and consumeristic, we honour our life as human beings.

4. Dignity

Having grown up and experienced numerous ways of being undignified, I cannot assert how important it is to take care of everyone’s dignity as a facilitator. No one deserves to be shamed publicly or suffer any hatred or affliction. We deserve to be treated with human dignity. When we care about our and others’ dignity, we bring them life instead of shame and fear. Caring for dignity is a fundamentally existential part of my facilitation practice.

² To me, the opposite of disabled is not abled but enabled by systems of oppression that prioritize and reward abled-bodied and neurotypical people to live life with more ease while sacrificing care for disabled peoples.

5. Consent and Boundaries

One of the meaningful things I can share as a survivor is the importance of learning about consent and boundaries as it relates to facilitating. So many oppressed communities often have boundaries broken by oppressors without consent. Yet, when survivors show up in any facilitated space, we bring the courage and bravery to put ourselves in any space after experiencing harm.

Consent is essential when building relationships. Our boundaries are sacred to us. Without consent, our boundaries for our safety, dignity and even our bodies and mind will be meaningless. Sharing spaces is not easy, but not impossible. Consent is how we can ensure we leave space for learning. Learning to ask respectfully is a skill that elevates our social and relational intelligence.

6. Accountability

Accountability is often a touchy subject because, more often than not, we have learnt to equate accountability with violent and horrible forms of punishment. Criminal and carceral approaches to engaging with accountability often produce tragic results for many individuals, families, communities, and countries.

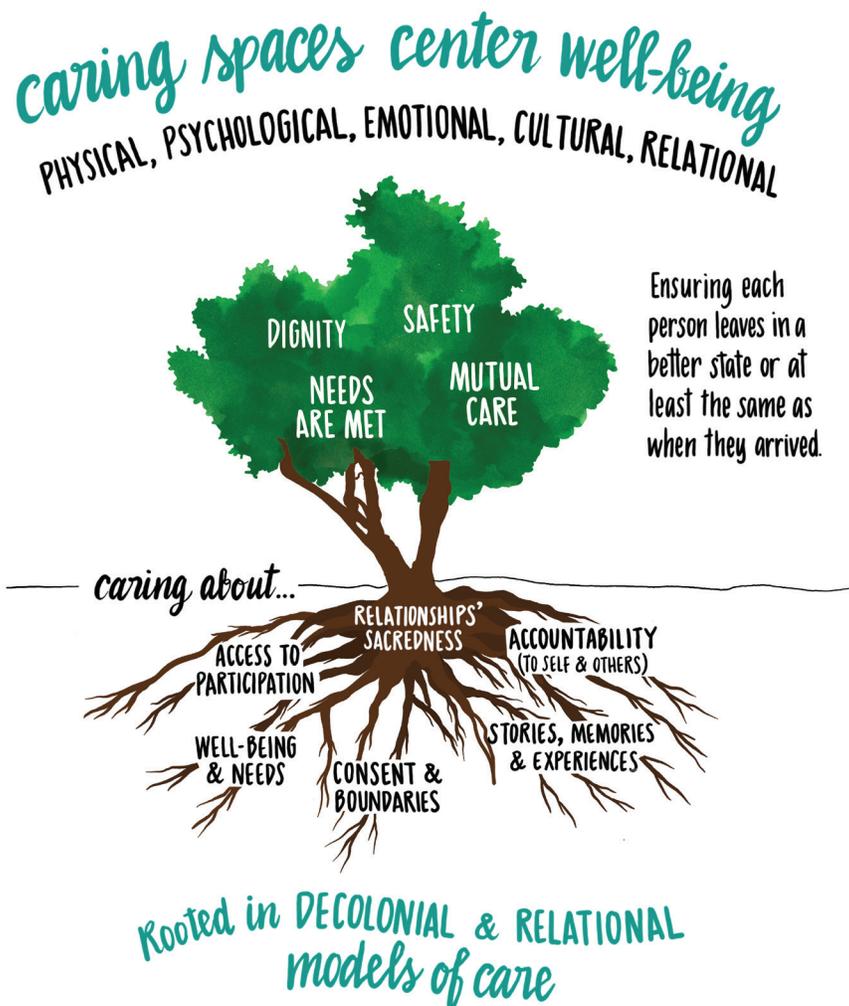
To facilitate anti-oppressive and caring spaces, we must change how we think of and approach accountability as a mechanism for just relationship building. In facilitation, accountability is a changing and ongoing process. Many facilitators in the anti-oppression movement, such as folks in the Transformative Justice (TJ)³ movement, advocate for an approach to justice that is not carceral and rooted in shame, fear, and punishment but love, compassion, and dignity to respond to violence, harm and abuse.

³ *Transformative Justice: A Brief Description*
https://transformharm.org/tj_resource/transformative-justice-a-brief-description/

Caring Space as Sacred Space

If you look at the space between us right now, what is between us? Is this space we share sacred to you? If our shared space is a garden, what would be in it? What would be sacred about this garden?

In reflecting on these questions, I came across this paragraph in a book called 'Sacred Civics. Building Seven- Generation Cities.'



“The sacred is all around us, always. The sacred is in our bodies, a miracle of life, water, and earth in our bodies. It is present in every object we touch, every wall and window we somehow believe separates us from our Mother. We each hold the beauty of creation in every fibre of our being. We are never far from the answer to the problem we have created - it is within each of us. Our greatest challenges are not scientific or technological; they are deeper than that - they are spiritual and cultural. Imagine shaping cities as if peoples, lands and natures were sacred.”

- Jayne Engle, and Julian Agyeman
Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook.

What if, as facilitators treated our work with the awareness that the sacred is all around us? What if we can create spaces where everyone is treated as inherently worthy of sacredness, dignity, empathy, respect, and a flourishing life?

And what if we can do this by putting intentional care into our work by asking the question, “How might I, with my capacity and ability, be intentional about bringing more care to the areas of my facilitation practice and for care to be extended to people who share space with me?”

To better illustrate this, imagine yourself sending care energies rippling toward those around you. Each person who receives your care energies immediately feels nourished and better. This is what I mean by treating the space we share and each other as sacred by caring for each other’s well-being. We move away from colonial and transactional ways of being and shift into decolonial and relational ways of living. (see graphic below).

Caring Space is:



These 3 characteristics of caring space are the heartbeats that guide my work and my life to create more caring spaces.

1. SACRED - Caring Space is about building sacred spaces where people’s identities, minds, stories, ideas, opinions, imaginations, stories, experiences, and memories can be cared for in spiritual and sacred ways.
2. WELL-BEING - Caring Space treats the bodies, minds, hearts, and spirits where identities, ideas, cultures, experiences, and more are guided and held by evolving care for self and each other. Thus, contributing directly to our individual and collective well-being
3. DECOLONIAL AND RELATIONAL - Nurturing accessible, brave, safer, accountable, and dignifiable spaces for everyone. Practice just, decolonial and relational ways of being together that are caring, loving, and supportive.

Reflection Exercise: How can any shared space care for you?

Something I have found helpful in my development as a facilitator is my experience as a participant. Being a participant at events has taught me so much about how to be a better facilitator. Taking this vantage point of being both host and guest, I love setting aside quiet writing time to reflect on my thoughts and experiences and record any insight.

I grew up using incense daily. My dad also used to work in an incense factory, so I love burning incense while I reflect. When the incense finishes, my reflection is complete.

I invite you to reflect on these questions. You can also use these questions to inform your Caring Space Framework of Facilitating.

- How would I like to be cared for in facilitated shared spaces?
- What does the facilitator need to know about my need for care?
- What might I feel comfortable sharing about myself with others in the space?
- Why is care in shared spaces essential for me?
- Finish the sentence: I would like the space to treat me ___.
- Imagine that the session had just ended. You turn off the camera, and the first thing you think, or feel is?
- What is the shared space for?
- Who is using the shared space?
- What can a shared space do?
- What can a shared space not do?
- Who is holding the shared space?
- What is needed in a shared space?
- How can a shared space respond to or address needs?
- What does my body need?
- What does my heart need?
- What does my mind need?
- What do my feelings need?

Casting magical protection as an act of care

Did I say magical protection? Yes.

I grew up with many stories of deities, gods, and fairies, and every single one of them had magical powers. No matter which culture I turn to, there are numerous of these supernatural beings, often having the ability to cast magical protection for themselves or the people they love. A shield, a sword, a dome, energetic portals. However, to put intentional care, we must tap into our magical powers.

Imagine when people come to your home, and automatically they are under the magical protection of your love and care. People who come to you, leave telling others how good of a host you have been, not based on what you have, but by what you offered. It's not about the luxuries or performance, but your sincerity and care. When care is nourishing, a word or a cup of water is enough.

When I facilitate, I love to imagine myself casting a protection layer around everyone. This layer is not restrictive. Anyone can come or go through, and they are protected and cared for when they are in the space.

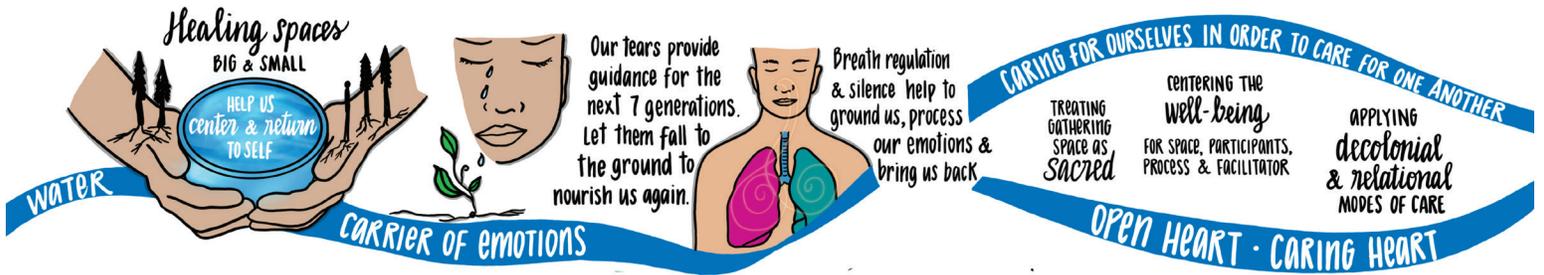
I invite you to imagine yourself casting a layer of magical protection over the whole group. What would that look like, feel like, sound like? What happens to everyone after the protection is cast?

Summary

Building a caring space can be an enlightening experience as it challenges us to rethink our notions of care in professional and personal settings. When I started to apply the caring space framework, my facilitation style, as well as my personal life, underwent a complete overhaul of the colonial framework I have internalized all these years. From relearning words to ways of thinking about relationships, I feel as though I am re-meeting the world each time.

Every person I come into contact with through facilitation has changed my worldview meaningfully. Now that I have introduced the framework to you, let's talk about participants!

Section 2: Participants (From a Survivor’s Perspective)



Remember the last time you attended a meeting or an event, and it was facilitated? How was that experience for you? Did your hands clam up? Did you find yourself having brain farts? Did the facilitator ask you to come up with something imaginative and all you can come up with is the image of the burrito you had for lunch this afternoon?

What about the last time the facilitator put you on the spot and you instantly remembered the last time this happened to you, and you had just frozen, and it’s happening again?

Also, there’s the time when you felt cold because the temperature of the room was too low and so you stuttered while you spoke while sweating from the nervousness of having to speak? There’s also this one time when the facilitator asked you if you were coming for the food or the conversation, in front of the rest of the 9 people that were there before you.

As you can probably guess, these are some of my “not-so-fun” experiences as a participant.

Being disabled, neurodiverse, racialized, and queer in a society that doesn’t accept us as we are can be challenging in group spaces. My experience as a survivor of violence and exclusion heavily informs how I live my life and do my work. I tend to work to create spaces for people like me, which can oftentimes feel unconventional for many.

In so many sessions I have facilitated, I have met at least one survivor who similarly has shared experiences like mine. So, when I have been able to share appropriate care with participants, I have met with acknowledgments and affirmations of the ways participants feel cared for. As a result of intentional care, people show up eager to learn and to support each other from toxic systems of harm into collective systems of learning and applying justice and care.



Look to justice movements for spaces that have centered well-being over notions of achievement.

Our commitment is to REPAIR, RENEWAL, RECONNECTION, re-relating to all the ways we can care for each other. CONNECTING TO LAND, WATER & ALL BEINGS. CHOOSING TO GIVE UP CO-DEPENDENCY WITH WHITE SETTLER COLONIALISM

The world has undergone brutal colonization, with families torn apart at every generation. My family came through WW2, and we are still paying for the harm to my family. And I'll tell you. So many of us recognize the pain and struggle in each other when we go through sessions where we have been shamed, called out, isolated, embarrassed, trapped and excluded when relational care is absent. The Tibetan Book of the Living and Dying⁴ has a sentence by Sogyal Rinpoche: "When you learn how to die, you learn how to live." I think the same applies to participation regarding survivors. When we learn how we have been oppressed by harm, we know how we can be liberated by care.

In many ways, experiencing becomes knowing. And knowing becomes wisdom.

I know what unsafe spaces are.

I know what fearful spaces are.

I know what uncaring spaces are.

I know what spaces that create hierarchies do to me as a minority.

I know how I am as a whole person, not just a thing, a number or a product.

I know what it feels like to be tokenized.

I know this experience of systemic and personal isolation.

I know and can identify what oppression feels like in my body, my heart, my mind and my relationships.

I know the feeling of witnessing others like me being harmed in unsafe spaces.

I know how to freeze and take flight, and I dislike fighting when I feel undignified, unwelcomed, excluded, isolated, and trapped.

I have also experienced what happens to me when spaces provide a sense of safety, care, and dignity. I share ease, more participation, new connections, new learnings, and often more helpful perspectives about myself as a human being that lives with intersecting identities and experiences that are considered the minority. When I, as a survivor, experience a level of care that is relational, it makes the participation experience meaningful and unforgettable.

That's why I facilitate the way I do.

⁴ Sogyal, Rinpoche. *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. San Francisco, Calif.: Harper San Francisco, 1992.

From Participant to Facilitator

Being disabled, non-binary, racialized, and neurodiverse has presented some interesting challenges when participating in any space. Barriers such as ableism, racism, sexism, classism, and casteism, are all forms of discrimination that punish, exclude, isolate, fear and shame people who are not white, cis, male, fit, healthy, lean, and not disabled.

Over the last 20 years, my role as a participant in meetings and workshops that often involve challenging topics. Whether it's a small gathering or a large event, there are a list of things I look out for nowadays when asked to participate. In addition, given my awareness of the various forms of discrimination, I have cultivated a more honest way of asking myself, "What is the cost of participation?"

In the many meetings, events, and workshops I have attended, I typically come across ways of facilitating which often are goal-oriented rather than people-oriented. These so-called engagement processes are often self-serving and extractive. Extractive facilitation types focus on the extraction goal and not on sincere engagement. It has taken attending many of these extractive activities that asking about the cost of my participation feels important.

Here are some questions I consider before deciding to participate in anything.

- Am I actually included?
- Am I tokenized⁵?
- Is my participation taken for granted?
- Is my participation cared for in ways that feel authentic?
- If there are barriers, what will be the cost of SHOWING UP?
- Am I being compensated for my time and labour?
- Who will take care of my needs?
- Might facilitators have the capacity and will to adapt to participants' needs?

⁵ Tokenization is "to do something that seems to support or help a group of people who are treated unfairly in society, such as giving a member of that group an important or public position, but that does not make changes that would help that group of people in a lasting way" - <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tokenize>

Listening to your body

An excellent way to gauge your responses before or during participation is by focusing on what your body tells you about body comfort and emotional ease. As someone who lives with pain, my body signals have become a meaningful way to assess what my body needs. When I practice engaging with my body, I learn a new language to better communicate what my body and mind need. Here are some of the ways I listen to my body.

- Assessing my breath - Am I holding my breath? Am I breathing faster? Or am I taking nice long deep breaths?
- Does my body hurt? - What parts of my body are hurting? Is it highly uncomfortable, or can I adjust and ease my pain? What might my body be responding to?
- How do I feel temperature-wise? A warm body temperature tends to allow us to open up. Conversely, a cold body temperature naturally makes us close in.
- What emotion is sticking?
- What thoughts are alive?
- What insights are coming through?
- Am I thirsty or hungry? Or do I feel friendly and full?
- Do I need to stand? Or take a break?

When we can ask these questions truthfully, it changes our experience as participants and facilitators. If we take these questions and flip them to each participant we facilitate, we will learn a lot of nuances about how care is and isn't experienced in group spaces. When we take into consideration that there is an actual cost for participants when they choose to be present, we can better understand how to reduce the burden of the cost by ensuring that participants come and leave in a better state of body, mind, and heart, as much as we can help it.

Making Efforts to Learn Inclusive Care in Diverse Ways.

Have you ever wished that you were provided with better care? Have you ever wished that someone bothered to ask you what you need when they invite you to a function or event they are hosting? How about wishing you don't have to lament when an access need is unmet? What happens when someone takes the time and effort to learn about creating better participation access for folks like me?

You might have heard of *The Five Love Languages*⁶ by Gary Chapman. I want to introduce you to the concept of “Care Languages.” I believe that each of us has a language of care that we are taught whether it's from our family, friends, culture, school, work, etc. Whether it's through acts of support, kindness, providing food and shelter or even just listening to someone as they go through a difficult time; all these acts of care allow us to connect with each other on a heart level. Building our care language requires us to be ready to give up words that are harmful, ways of perceiving each other that promote learning and understanding, and ultimately a world that really does include everyone.

In reflecting on my care language, I have found that as my life experiences change and evolves with time, so does my care language. In the past, my care language was expressed in ways that sometimes were not consensual and actually harmful. I also had many assumptions about others that led to me planning and facilitating inadequately in spaces that required lots of care for the nuances of people.

However, with deep reflection and intentional practice, I've developed a culture of learning about people. I study how I can care for participants to the best of my abilities. Developing my care language has led me to dive into learning how people like myself are excluded and what opportunities there are to counter oppression with care, love and empathy.

Caring space is my response to repair, renew, relieve, reaffirm, reconnect, and re-relate how we can care for each other in group space and beyond.

⁶ Chapman, G. D. (2010). *The five love languages*. Walker Large Print.

Summary

I invite you to take the time to reflect on your experiences as a participant to inform your facilitation practice and the development of your personal life. There is so much to learn as we traverse the experiences of being a participant and transmute these experiences into a more relational and caring form of facilitating.

In the next section, we dig into the facilitation process and how to instill care.

How can this shared space care for you?

- HONOURING OUR AUTHENTICITY**
TO BE WHO I AM & NOT HAVE TO CODE SWITCH
- WITNESSING & PRESENCE**
- SPACIOUSNESS**
 - TIME TO REFLECT
 - HOLD SILENCE
- MOVING FROM COMPARTMENTALIZATION TO INTEGRITY**
- CLARITY, CALMNESS, RESPECT, VALIDATION, EMPATHY**
- TIME TO KNOW WE ARE SAFE TO OPEN UP**
- NAME THE POWER DYNAMICS**
DECENTER WHITENESS & COLONIAL WAYS OF BEING

SET UP THE EXPECTATION OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE IN THE SPACE

BUILD THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO START WELL & END WELL. WE CAN MANAGE EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

RECOGNIZE THE TENSION THAT CAN EMERGE IN COMPLEX CONVERSATIONS

FOLLOW UP WITH PARTICIPANTS, TEND TO CONCERNS OR INJURY IF /WHEN THEY HAPPEN

Bring what you know about GOOD HOSTING into FACILITATION

AS FACILITATORS, WE TAKE CARE OF THE THINGS THAT ARE BROUGHT IN OR EMERGE IN THE SPACE

★ PRACTICE!
ATTEND EVENTS & SEE HOW OTHER FACILITATORS HOLD SPACE

HONOUR OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

FACILITATOR ↔ **PARTICIPANT** ↔ **SELF**
 SELF ↔ PARTICIPANT ↔ PARTICIPANT

Session 3: Process of Care

“Start Well and End Well”

I often say this when people ask me about facilitation insights. But, of course, starting and ending well is more complex and complicated than typing five words in a document. In my 20 years of facilitating, I've come to understand starting well and ending well has become symbolic of how I want my sessions to be every time.

When I was able to support participants to arrive and participate with ease, and enough care was put into the integrity and quality of facilitated sessions, such as meeting people where they are at, providing for basic needs, and attuning to individual requests for needs, when possible, that has allowed for care to be felt by participants more successfully.

Process of Supporting Participation Care

The practice of meeting participants' access needs is becoming increasingly common in facilitation practice to address the challenges and barriers that prevent active participation. In circles where decolonization, anti-oppression, abolition, and liberation work are active work, anti-oppressive, decolonial, caring, loving facilitators are calling for better ways to support the voices of marginalized communities to be heard in group spaces.

Here are some practical caring strategies and insights on supporting participants and your session.

Financial compensation

Honorariums are the most commonly used to compensate participants in sessions requiring them to provide labour to the organizer or facilitator. Honorariums amount tend to be dependent on the amount of funding available. In many cases, honorariums are not given, and free labour is expected from participants. That is not good practice. Participants' work should be treated with respect and worth.

A benchmark I use to determine honorarium amounts depends on the availability of time, the difficulty of the labour and the cost of one hour of counselling. The idea of one hour of counselling might be interesting. From my perspective, I have attended many sessions where I was providing labour but needed to go to therapy to process difficult experiences post-session.

The range of the costs for seeing a counsellor or therapist in 2023 is between CAD\$100 - \$150 per hour. These are also my suggested rates to you.

Childcare

I found the provision of childcare services or support to be extremely important for single parents. Depending on the meeting mode you are hosting, you can look for pop-up childcare and provide on-site services or reimburse childcare costs if the parent needs to hire a childcare provider.

For folks in the Metro Vancouver area, there are several organizations that offer culturally appropriate childcare services.

Communication Accessibility

A simple question to ask ourselves when thinking about communication accessibility is how can someone participate if they have little to no means to communicate with you? In so-called Canada, where English and French are used in many settings, it excludes the potential for many immigrants who don't actively use English or French to participate in meaningful community activities. This also includes deaf people who need sign language interpretation.

Other considerations also include people who are dyslexic or have learning and reading abilities that are different than ours. For example, for a dyslexic like me, any Serif font wrecks reading for me. It slows down my ability to read and comprehension speed, making it challenging for me to be able to easily participate if there were slides or visual materials. I encourage you or your designers to use Sans-Serif fonts if you use any printed materials. These are cleaner and easier to read. Harvard University has a guide⁷ on digital accessibility to better support folks with dyslexia to read.

Technological Accessibility

Access to computers, pads, phones, or any device that allows for digital capabilities to participate in the engagement.

Something to note about technological accessibility. Many elders, disabled, and poor people do not have access to digital technology or hardware to access the internet. When facilitating, consider how to provide technological access and support to your participants during your session. I often have a co-facilitator with me, helping to answer any questions or provide technical assistance to participants when needed.

⁷ *Digital Accessibility by Harvard University*
<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/disabilities/dyslexia>

Privacy and confidentiality

Your country might have specific rules and regulations for handling privacy, especially if personal information is collected. Be sure to check with your country's laws on how to deal with the collection, storage, and destruction of personal information.

One of the most common things for facilitators is sometimes asking personal questions such as "What is your gender?" One of the things that I have learnt about this is that many people, including myself, don't always feel comfortable sharing very personal information with people I have never met before, including the facilitator. Hence, I always make "passing" an option. Allowing folks to bypass answering a personal question creates safety for them.

We need to learn that no one owes us their stories and that we don't owe anyone any personal detail about us that we don't want to share. Helping to hold people's need for privacy and confidentiality is key to ensuring a caring and safer space for everyone.

Physical Accessibility

Take note of wheelchair accessibility, ensure that surfaces are flat, find spaces with lifts and elevators, and ensure the size of door openings, corners, etc.

Sensory Accessibility

Some folks are afflicted by chemicals often found in scented detergents, cleaning products, hair and body products, perfumes, and colognes. Multiple Chemical Sensitivities, also known as MCS, is a condition in which these chemicals can cause adverse reactions in people and cause them to become ill.

Adequate Funding

This is something I encounter the most in spaces where care is absent. There are many reasons why funding is often unavailable when it comes to providing participants with access support, but one key reason is the lack of attention and thoughtfulness, as well as the constant need to do the most with the least resources. This type of extractive approach, while seems efficient actually takes advantage of people through resource hoarding and inequitable distribution of resources.

In spaces where marginalized folks are involved, we have had to ask for help to better fully participate, only to be met with “we don’t have enough funding” reasons. The shared experience of being treated as a “knowledge dispenser, often for free or little compensation instead of as a human being, is why many marginalized people are still excluded from having their voice on essential things.

If you work in facilitation, where this is a constant challenge, I recommend you create an access needs budget for every funding request. So many funders need to be privy to the needs of communities, and that can be providing adequate funding to service providers. As facilitators or managers, we are responsible for educating funders on why providing non-negotiable funding for access needs is essential to ensure high-quality participation.

Ground your session in shared space guidelines.

Whenever time and agenda allow, one of the processes that I undertake is to establish space-sharing guidelines at the beginning of my sessions. As facilitators, we must ground our participants and let them know how we intend to hold space with them. The ten guidelines below support the facilitator and participants to start with some commonality and understanding of how we can share space.

1. Breathe often (regulation)
2. Acknowledge and honour the wisdom in the space (respect)
3. Autonomy to stay or exit (self-autonomy)
4. Practice self-care and space-caring (awareness)
5. Take the time to process space offerings (patience)
6. Let each other express without interruptions (inclusion)
7. Be dignified in our language when talking to each other (dignity)
8. Only speak from our experiences, not others (authenticity)
9. Share the learnings, not sensitive details, or personal information (confidentiality and privacy)
10. Normalize virtual awkwardness (humour)

Dealing with conflict, discomfort, and awkwardness

Disagreements or divergent views are common to facilitators. This is an area where many facilitators, including myself, can feel uncomfortable engaging. But this is why I chose to be a facilitator. I want to learn about different views and experiences as they relate to me. This continues to be an area of learning for me, and over the years, I have developed some strategies to help me be present and engage when conflict, discomfort, disagreements and awkwardness arise.

1. Set the space with community guidelines. For example, people expect diverse views but not hateful statements. Different doesn't mean it is malicious, but hateful ideas should not become shared spaces.
 - a. Something I do is to always name the things that are hard to name but true for me, such as no behaviours exhibiting racism, sexism, classism, etc., as well as positive behaviours, such as active listening, having patience with each other, etc. I feel that community agreements are often a mix of "How to care" and "how not to harm" types of agreements.
 - b. Whenever the session needs some ground, go back to the community guidelines and allow folks to regroup themselves with what they agreed to with the community guidelines.
2. How to notice when disagreements are getting out of hand?
 - a. Listen to and note how people respond and look into body language wherever possible to understand how the conversation is going.
 - b. Suggest taking a break if needed. And check in with folks who are affected.
 - c. This is where a co-facilitator is really helpful in supporting an assessment of what is happening and how to move forward.
3. Using a conflict resolution approach
 - a. Ideally, you don't have to do this. Still, if this happens, my priority is to constantly pause the session, check in with your co-facilitator and affected participants, and decide on the best way to de-escalate the situation.
 - b. This could be:
 - i. De-escalate.
 - ii. End the session early.
 - iii. Take a break.
 - iv. Follow up with participants involved individually to determine what is needed.
 - v. Seek advice and use mediation services if needed.
 - vi. Refer to Vancouver Tool Library Safer Spaces policy⁸ on how they navigate conflicts.

⁸ *VTL Safer Spaces Policy | The Vancouver Tool Library*
<https://vancouvertoolibrary.com/?p=4309>

- c. Something helpful for me as a facilitator has been taking up space to affirm what is happening, acknowledge what participants have said and ask everyone to take a deep breath. I then ask if everyone is doing ok and if a break might be needed. Usually, a break is always welcomed.

Closing the space:

I love this 10 min exercise to close sessions. Have participants be in pairs and ask them to share with the group if there is time.

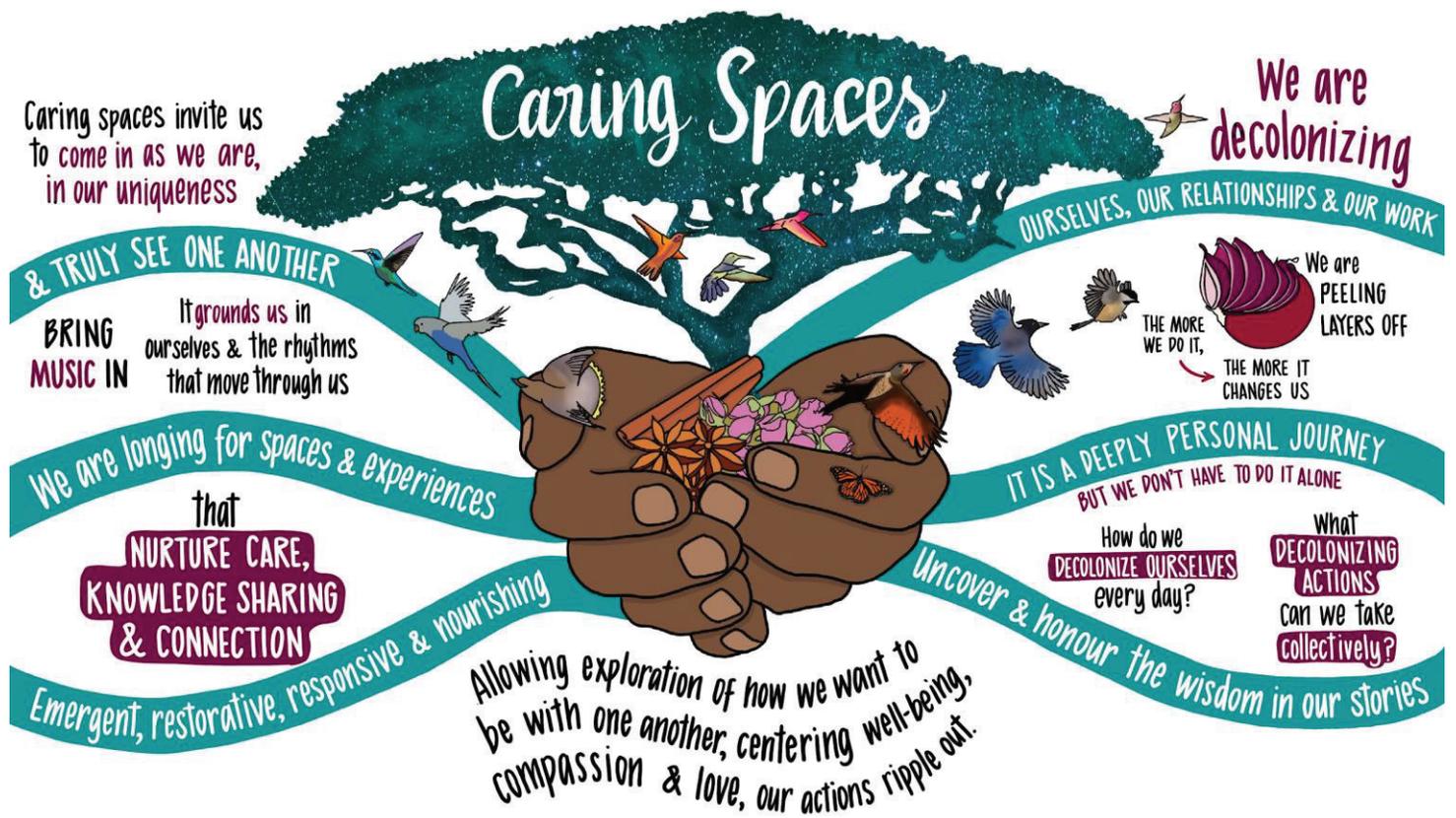
- Turn to your neighbour and tell each other:
- What is your name?
- What colour is your door?
- What do you have in your fridge?

Summary

I love it when things start and end well. When this happens, it means that the session was facilitated well enough. My process is constantly changing, and care is a core spine in the design and delivery of the caring space process. Your process is going to be different from mine, and I believe that if you can tap into the caring aspects of your relational being and apply it to facilitation, you will have your own caring space framework that brings benefits to communities, in ways that feel good for you and for those that you connect with.

In the next section, I will discuss the makings of a caring facilitator.

Section 4: The Caring Facilitator



I want to bring all this together. For me, the facilitator role is something that feels amorphous and ever-changing. I often think about shape-shifting as a way to transmit care in my work. How I shape myself as a facilitator is directly related to how I interact with the ecosystem I am in.

To be in a relationship is to recognize a bond. I grew up with stories of a deity like Cupid, except we call the deity a “moon elder” who is responsible for “pulling red strings” together between couples. Likewise, we were believed to have a red string connecting our soulmates.

Although this story is more for romantic couples, I believe we are all connected with strings and literally. When you think about the microscopic particles that our bodies are made of, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the space we share, we are more bonded to each other than we ever know.

For me, a facilitator is an observer of the world. Right now, there is a need for facilitators who can and are eager to learn ways of having conversation and dialogue that centres care. More than ever, I am seeing more natural disasters and emergencies. This has awakened something that tells me that intentional care is needed. We need to cultivate just, loving, equitable, balancing, compassionate and dignifying relationships in the community so that in times of emergency, our skills as facilitators can also be put to good use to support our communities.

As a facilitator, you have a chance to interact with the world. How are you going to engage with this interaction? What is the world you want to create?

I chose to step into justice because, in my personal, professional, spiritual or cultural life, I have identified and experienced the acts of injustice committed in cruel ways. In addition, I grew up in many spaces where I felt unwanted, so creating a caring space is also about nurturing spaces for people to be in shared spaces and feel wanted.

And to do this, we often only have the shared space of discomfort to start from. In this discomfort that we witness in each other, we learn to practice relational care.

To facilitate the world we are in today is to make it easy for each other, knowing that when we are all well, society is well, the community is well, our loved ones are well, and while we may struggle, we can at least struggle alongside each other, and not against each other.

My journey in facilitation has been lifelong in the making, and perhaps yours too. And if it is, I invite you to think of facilitation as a sacred practice that enriches your life in many holistic ways. I would like to share with you 20 ways to shape the caring facilitator in you.

Shaping the Caring Facilitator in You

1. Decolonizing
 - Moving away from worldviews and behaviours that only seek to overpower.
 - Moving towards worldviews and behaviours that seek to empower.
2. Practice Survivor Informed (and led) approaches to facilitation.
 - Learn to hold space with people who have trauma and are survivors.
3. Be Restorative
 - Like food, we can put care into our sessions so that they have the potential to restore people's trust and confidence in interacting with each other.
4. Be Relational
 - Take a relational approach to recognize that the space between us allows us to have a relationship with each other and that without you, that will be no me. So we take care of each other and the spaces we share.

5. Be Reciprocal
 - Communication and Cooperation are two-way and often many-ways streets. Reciprocity is essential for relationship building.
6. Reduce or Eliminate Harm and Suffering
 - Focus on doing no more harm and do more care.
7. Support Respect for wisdom holders
 - Everyone has wisdom regardless of their views. It is up to us to draw the wisdom out and not stifle it.
8. Be Accountable
 - Learn and relearn ways of being accountable with care instead of violence.
9. Model Peer Care
 - Model and Reflect ways of care that are compassionate, transformative, just and loving, as often experienced in peer-to-peer care.
10. Apply Equity and Justice Everywhere
 - Design systems and processes that counter the existence of injustice and inequity.
11. Be Dignifying
 - Support the space to be dignifiable. Do not let shame and fear dominate our humanness.
12. Treat space and people as sacred.
 - Everything around us is sacred and deserves a more relational rather than transactional approach.
13. Provide food and drinks.
 - Keep people fed and hydrated for better participation.
14. Treat spaces you facilitate like you would treat folks visiting your home.
 - Be a good host.
15. Focus on the well-being of the space as it relates to the well-being of participants.
 - A well set-up space prioritizes participants' needs.
16. Take the time to attend other facilitated events and take notes.
 - Go with an energy of curiosity, not criticism.
17. Learn diverse ways of caring.
 - Cultivate your Care Language in relationship to the people you want to serve.
18. Let consent, curiosity, and care flow into the space.
 - Always ask. Never assume. Be patient. Encourage care.
19. Let the land teach you about relationships and being in groups.
 - Nature has a lot to teach us about being together.
20. Be gentle with yourself.
 - Facilitation is not easy work. Care for yourself first.

Care For Yourself

Nothing defeats a facilitator faster than burnout. Over the years of facilitation, something that I love talking about with other facilitators is our “recovery rituals”. As a disabled person who is also neuro-different, I experience labour, exhaustion, burnout, and recovery in unique and challenging ways.

Here are my recommendations for your recovery ritual.

- Have a care team where you can debrief, process, rant, get affirmation and seek advice.
- Do an activity that helps your body release negative or difficult energy. For example, a shower, massage, swimming, and walking are all excellent ways to move negative or difficult energy.
- Rest. I need to recommend more sleep. Typically I will take a half day rest and recovery for every 2-3 hours of facilitation. For whole days, I take at least 2 days. I recommend allowing enough time for resting to avoid burnout.
- Go out to Nature and be with the land. It’s one of the best antidotes to stress and helps to rebalance our senses.
- I love making art and listening to my favourite music to decompress post-facilitation.
- I also eat a lot of comforting and nourishing foods as a way to celebrate starting well and ending well.
- Practice “Open heartedness.” Like an older person, I love putting my arms behind my back and letting my chest feel more open.

Summary

I am 44 this year, turning 45. When I turned 40, I gave myself the gift of stepping into eldership. I’m in my 5th year and always learn so much about what I don’t know. Facilitation for me has allowed me to channel ways of caring that I didn’t know possible. By learning how to care and how care can evolve as I age, I also learn how to facilitate better by learning to listen better, hold space, open space, protect space, and recognize how to practice better ways of interacting. I want to share what I do to care for myself.

The energy of Caring Space is that care is constantly moving and evolving, adapting to meet the needs of all in space. So it is naturally adequate that care comes back to you as a facilitator.

Final Thoughts about Caring Space

Sharing how I facilitate caring spaces gave me a lot of appreciation and hope, considering the state of our world. When I first encountered facilitation, I never knew I could cultivate a practice that informed my professional development and, more importantly, be a more intentionally caring person.

Whenever I encounter and connect with folks in the sessions I facilitate, I am constantly reminded of when I share space with those close and dear to me. I revel at the feelings of care that connect us to our journey in finding who we are, how we are, and why we are.

Caring space is a spiritual journey, a way of sharing the best of ourselves with the world that's brought to us. I savour the times when I get to listen, engage, and care for stories I never knew existed in this world, spoken and shared through the words of many who cared to bring about positive changes in communities by being the best facilitators a community can ask for.

I end this guide by returning to Akemi Nishida's definition of care *as the energy and time we spend intending to contribute to others' well-being, vitality and lives.*

Thank you for sharing this time with me. It has been my pleasure to host you throughout this guide, and I hope you have received nourishment engaging in this.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to say Gum Xia Gum Xia. (Thank you in Teochew.)

Luna Aixin

月爱心

May 2023

Resources

Section 1: Building Caring Spaces

- Podcast: *Decolonizing the Mind*
 - <https://www.ttbook.org/show/decolonizing-mind>
- Book: *Sacred Civics*
 - <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003199816/sacred-civics-jayne-engle-julian-agyeman-tanya-chung-tiam-fook>
- Article: *What is Disability Justice?* – Sins Invalid
 - <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/news-1/2020/6/16/what-is-disability-justice>
- Writing: *Safe and Brave Spaces Don't Work*
 - <https://medium.com/@elise.k.ahen/safe-and-brave-spaces-dont-work-and-what-you-can-do-instead-f265aa339aff>

Section 2: Thinking about Participants (From a Survivor's Perspective)

- Video: *Centering the Needs of Survivors*
 - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/ZeBuP7VCJyM>
 - Part 2: <https://youtu.be/MECKdunxjN4>
- Essay: *Decolonization is not a metaphor* by Tuck and Yang
 - <https://clas.osu.edu/sites/clas.osu.edu/files/Tuck%20and%20Yang%202012%20Decolonization%20is%20not%20a%20metaphor.pdf>
- Book: *Skin, Tooth and Bone, A disability justice primer*
 - <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/disability-justice-primer>
- Book: *Elements of Indigenous Style* by Gregory Younging
 - <https://www.brushededucation.ca/books/elements-of-indigenous-style>
- News: *IndigiNews*
 - <https://www.indiginews.com>

Section 3: The Process of Care

- Book: *Just Care. Messy Entanglements of Disability, Dependency, and Desire* by Akemi Nishisa
 - <https://tupress.temple.edu/books/just-care>
- Book: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire
 - <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/pedagogy-of-the-oppressed>
- Course: *AORTA Headwaters Facilitation Course*
 - <https://aorta.coop/headwaters>
- Website: *Racial Equity Tools* - over 4,000 resources
 - <https://www.racialequitytools.org>

Section 4: The Caring Space Facilitator

- Video: *Kampong Spirit as a Worldview*
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0e7Cvg81YA8>

An Introduction to Caring Spaces Framework

We need to take the time to reflect on our role as settlers & immigrants on the unceded & stolen lands on which we live.

How are we being accountable to the Land & the people who have cared for it since time immemorial?



“The least you (settlers) can do, it's learn what it means to be Coast Salish”

— Lee Maracle
Stó:lō author & poet



GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER with A SPACE WARMER ACTIVITY, INSTEAD OF AN ICE BREAKER

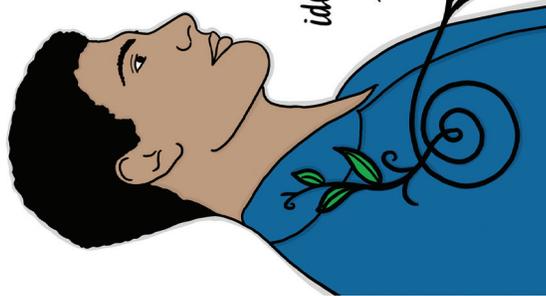
relationships matter

The way we name & enter spaces matters

To hold someone or something as sacred means that we would put *intentional care* toward them.

Building sacred spaces where people's *identities, ideas, opinions, imagination, stories, experiences & memories can be cared for.*

EVOLVING CARE FOR SELF & EACH OTHER.



NURTURING BRAVER, SAFER, ACCOUNTABLE & DIGNIFIABLE SPACES FOR EVERYONE



Being good hosts & good participants

THIS IS THE FIRST DIVE INTO



who we want to be...

in COMMUNITY, through facilitation

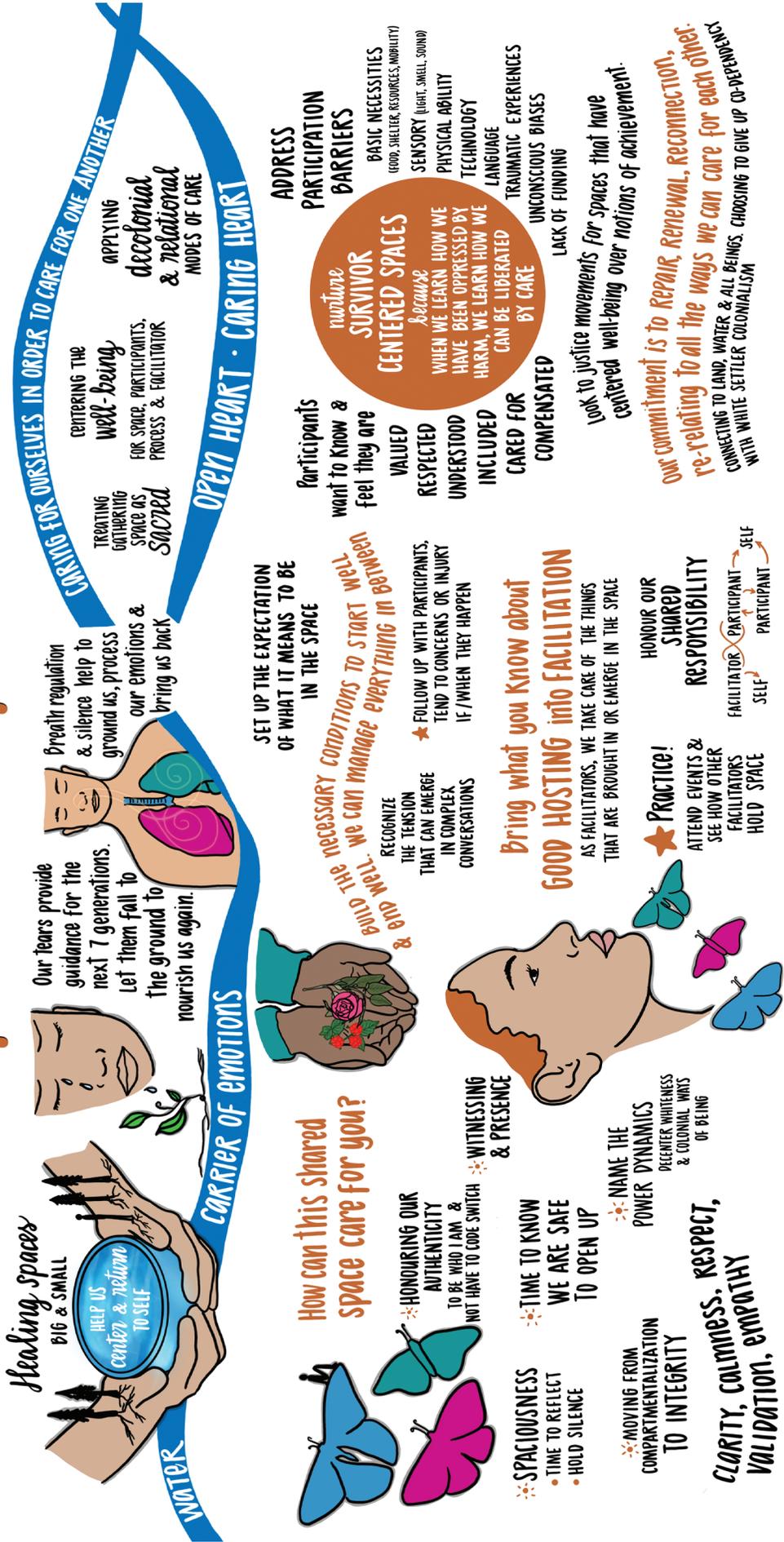
WE ARE creating magic



CASTING A SPELL OF SAFETY THROUGH *active care*

Participants & Space

BUILDING SAFER, BRAVER & CARING SPACES



Facilitation is Connection

Participants' well-being → well-being of the space
 WHO IS ATTENDING?
 WHAT DO THEY NEED TO BE AT EASE TO PARTICIPATE?

WE ALL NEED DIFFERENT FORMS OF CARE AT DIFFERENT TIMES
LET CURIOSITY, CARE & CONSENT
 FLOW IN THE SPACE. DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

PRACTICE CARE 'in all spaces you inhabit'

GENEROSITY OF TIME & ATTENTION
 EMBRACING THE MOMENT & THE WORLD AROUND US



YOUR ACTIONS create ripples

COLLECTIVE CARE & WELL-BEING = COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

How does care show up in your culture?
 HOW CAN YOU BRING THOSE ELEMENTS INTO YOUR FACILITATION?

Understanding Care as the energy & time we spend in intention to contribute to others' well-being, vitality, & lives
 —Aemi Nishida

TO FACILITATE IS TO BRING THE WORLD TOGETHER. REQUIRES INTENTION, ATTUNEMENT & OPENNESS
 trust & connection
 RELATIONAL NOT TRANSACTIONAL

When we share our stories, the land speak through us. It is how WE CONNECT to the past & the future.

Ongoing learning
 Being open to the things that provide guidance: OUR FEELINGS & INTUITION

Let the land teach you about relationships. Connecting to nature will transform how we relate to one another & how we facilitate.
we are nature too.

AS FACILITATORS, WE HAVE THE **POWER & RESPONSIBILITY** OF CREATING THE CONDITIONS & SETTING THE TONE FOR THE SPACE: WHAT IS EXPECTED, REQUIRED & WHAT WON'T BE TOLERATED. Eg: RACISM, VIOLENCE, SEXISM...

IF POSSIBLE **BUILD A TEAM** YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD THE SPACE ALONE

→ **MAKE THEM EXPLICIT** SO THAT PARTICIPANTS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

NAME THE POWER DYNAMICS THAT EXIST IN THE SPACE & IN SOCIETY & HOW YOU WANT TO CHALLENGE THEM IN THE MICROCOSM OF THE FACILITATED SPACE



INVITE PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT **ACCOUNTABILITY** INSIDE & OUTSIDE THE SESSION
 paint seeds for positive change

Write everyone to be part of the dialogue. Invite different views **but...**

- Name discomfort from the beginning
- Spot potential conflict before it happens
- **NO!** EVERY CONFLICT NEEDS DIFFERENT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES
- Have a care team & safety plan
- Invite people to be part of the dialogue. Invite different views
- In moments of conflict...
 - > Take care of those directly affected first, those who are always impacted.
 - DO NOT CENTER IGNORANCE, DISCRIMINATION COLONIAL VIEWS OR WHITE SUPREMACY
 - > Park topics aside if needed
 - > Pause, reformulate a plan
 - > Follow up with people
 - > Invite restorative action

