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**Ending Violence Against Women: Wellness as Social Change**

**Kata Issari**

**January 17, 2018**

>> Thank you everyone. Welcome. Good afternoon good morning. This is Diane Docis at Praxis International. We are happy to be with you. A special hello to everyone in class oh. Welcome to everyone to today's keynote lecture ending violence against women, wellness as social change. This keynote series is designed to expand our knowledge and inspire our imaginations as we explore different approaches to human rights advocacy. They feature practitioners, writers, scholars, thinkers and activists. We -- who are working for social change both inside and outside the violence against women feel. Today I'm pleased to introduce someone that I believe all of you in class have met either in person or virtually at some point during your time with ALC. Kata Issari. Kata Issari is the executive director of Praxis International. He's also a long ALC faculty member who has worked in violence against women and girls for 35 years. She is a founding member of insight women of color against violence and has been an advocate, therapist, fundraiser, clinical supervisor, administrator for grassroots, campus and national programs. Most recently before coming to Praxis Kata directed the Hawaii region of the joyful heart foundation providing local and national leadership to end sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse. Walk up to you Kata. Happy to have you with us.

>> Thank you. Hello. I'm delighted to be here with you.

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>> Before we turn it over to you Kata, we want to bring in Liz for some reminders about navigating the technology of our webinar. Liz.

>> Thank you. Hello everyone. Some reminders for our logistics for our presentation today. For this keynote, we will have the audio connection muted for the duration of our session but that does not mean we don't want to hear from you. We do. We always want to hear from you so at any point during the presentation we encourage you to share your thoughts or your questions with us in that Q&A box and I will make a point to get to your comments routed to Diane and Kata. Then we will respond within the audio component of today's webinar. I will also remind you to adjust the settings of that display boxes for your own preferences with the icon in the far right of each box. Remind you to send any technology questions or issues that you may be experiencing our webinar host TA2TA, Patricia. With that, I will turn it over back to you Diane.

>> Thank you so much. Again welcome to you Kata. I see the overview of what you will be exploring with us today. Do you want to highlight what we will be spending our time together thinking about?

>> Sure. I would love to. Welcome to our -- all of our participants. I'm happy to be happy -- be having this conversation with everyone. I've been thinking about this throughout my entire career. Start with a story to share with people. I got involved in this work 35 years ago. First because I was a social work intern and had a practicum at a county level domestic program and I will never forget the experience of working there and seeing how drained many of the staff were although they were committed and enthusiastic when they talk to women's and dish women and survivors. There was a supervisor that we would have group conversations with on how things were going in terms of our support, efficacy and counseling with women. One of the counselors on staff shared a discussion how

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challenged she was by a situation and the clinical supervisor started asking her questions about, that she attend to that cot did her supervisor supporter on that. All the answers were no. The clinical supervisor said, we really need to talk about this because if you don't attend to your own well-being it's like you are the walking wounded when you are talking to survivors. I was so taken by that graphic and somewhat disturbing phrase of walking wounded that I began starting to think about these four questions that are on the screen. What happens when we don't attend to our own well-being as advocates? What causes us to ignore or downplay our well-being? What's the impact of doing that and what can we do about it? I've been fortunate that this is something that was brought up for me through that interaction early in my career. I had a lot of time to think about it. I am very happy to talk about it with you today. I'm going to ask first so we can get into the conversation and begin with a self reflection of how it is that people are doing right now. That's what our conversation is about. I'm not going to ask our participants to respond to this question to each other or to me but I will invite everyone to reflect for a minute or 30 seconds about how you are right now in this moment. The question that frames that reflection is, if you had to describe how you're doing right now in terms of a tree in a forest, what metaphor would describe how you are? As those of you who have worked with me I always like to start every session especially one that's talking about our well-being with a opening round or checking about how people are doing. While people are thinking and reflecting about their answers, let me ask you Liz and Diane, what would be the metaphor of a tree in a forest that would describe how you are? Diane?

>> Not that I cheated but I did have the PowerPoint ahead of time. I came up quickly with a answer to this. I was thinking about a trees roots and feeling

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connected even when we are far apart. Thinking about our interconnected -- the way our roots reach out to one another across distances.

>> Thank you. Liz, what about you? What metaphor would describe how you are in this moment?

>> For me calling from Duluth, Minnesota where we are in the middle of a bitterly cold winter, I would say dormant. Staying as is and waiting for renewal and growth and warmth and light to return.

>> Perfect image. Thank you Liz. Hopefully now you can see on the screen some images of the kinds of things that I have heard from people over the years. This is an opening round that I use. Very similar to what Liz and Diane have shared. It is helpful when we are starting so I didn't to not only hear from people how they are so have a sense how we may interact with each other but also a good moment for all of us to pause and think about how we are because we don't often take time to do that or often enough. You will see from these images on the screen that I have gotten all kinds of responses. Connected or feeling the power of roots as Diane talked about. I've heard people say dormant or even frozen or paralyzed as you will see in the winter image. Sadly sometimes I've heard people say fire, emergency or lots of undergrowth that needs to be cleaned out. Feeling fading and withering away as you see the image in the corner. Some people will talk about a time of renewal or I've had people know in the work talk about seedlings. The message that I take away is not only how people are doing right now it speaks to us and how important is it about our well-being. The next question I will ask them is, what's it like to do social change advocacy work? I want to get a feel for people on how they are in relationship to the work itself. As you can imagine I get all kinds of responses that are very positive. I would imagine all of the dish all of us could do this work file connection and a lot of motivation to

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do it otherwise we would not. I think we joke in the Elsie that we do this work because of what it means to us and not because of the salaries. A lot of the words on the screen transformation cot justice, love is what I hear from advocates about what it's like to do social change advocacy work. I also as I keep going and talking with people about the work and other aspects of what it's like, I also hear words like you see now. Tired, exhausted, fatigued, depressed, stressed, emotional. I think it is important that we not ignore that aspect of what it's like to do this work. It's wonderful work and inspiring and rewarding but also very challenging. That takes us back to our first question. What happens when we don't attend to our own well-being as advocates? If we don't attend to the cost and how it impact -- impacts us it creates problems for ourselves as individuals but also for our organizations and the work. Let's keep going. Maybe think about what it means to be tired. I have come up with a phrase for this cost of advocacy work that I call I received fatigue. I want to back up and think about what it means to be tired. I will start when I'm trying to understand a situation, look at the dictionary to see what the words tell us. Language is such a powerful indicator. I was fascinated to look at the definition of fatigue. Not only does it say awareness or exaction but also says the temporary loss of power to respond. Tiredness/awareness says no longer interested, overused. I realized this was something important to consider because a lot of times I've been tired or sick and tired in my career and I thought about, I'm sick of tired of being sick and tired. When I thought more about what it means to be so tired I thought about stress. I looked up the definition of stress. I was interested in the way it is phrased in our dictionary. Constraining force. Resulting in bodily or mental tension or change in physiology. This gets to me about the impact of this work and how exhausting it is to do this work. It is compelling to me to think about both internal and external stresses that we

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experience. I think that begins to guide us. Let me read this out for people. This is the definition that is foundational to the conversation we are having today.

>> The normal expression of tiredness and stress resulting from little to no attention to our own well-being by our organizations and ourselves, in the context of oppression expressed through lack of resources, lack of value and limited power. Does that make sense Diane?

>> Looking at this and trying to take it in. It's very layered and complex. I will have time for you to break it down for us. Part of what I am thinking is already that you are framing this differently than I think. I've dish for many of us in this work we probably have had people say it must be so difficult to do that work and you must get so burnt out. I think we've resisted that in thinking that it seems to place the problem with us as advocates. In what you are doing is saying if located in all of these places. So describing what's happening in our organizations and happening in the context of oppression as well.

>> That's right. That's a beautiful summary. Thank you Diane. It's funny you raise that piece about people outside of this were commenting what it's like to do it. I'm sure we all have had those Converse -- comments over the years. You are very generous. I think I'm not a masochist. I don't do this work because is so terrible. I do this work because it's something that is meaningful and rewarding. It also means it sometimes hard to acknowledge the difficulties. What has happened for me is having these conversations over the years with advocates about the impact of the work and the framing question we have, it has led me to believe the importance of not taking it as a individual response as you just said but looking at what is it as it says here is happening at organizations and how is that affected by oppression and other factors in society. It's my own working time -- terminology. It's something that I've come up with myself.

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>> I think there have been more conversations happening in other -- and other terminology out there. I think of compassion, fatigue. So many of us have read or participated in webinars talking about vicarious trauma. What you are talking about is a little bit different.

>> Yes. I will say that some of my own reflection and growth and observation that has led me to come up with this term advocate fatigue comes from knowing and learning and teaching about compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma or secondary trauma. It is related but where is different is what we will explore today. First and foremost I think it's much broader than just being exposed to trauma and being worn out. The framework of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma really hones in on the experience of the exposure to other people's trauma and what it's like to experience that especially if you are powerless to doing any change. That's a legitimate and important discussion to have is when we are repeatedly exposed to trauma. I have found that that is not always the defining experience for an advocate especially social change advocate. I want to emphasize these four points that we will explore of this definition. The first I do get from looking at compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma which is normal to experience advocate fatigue. It doesn't mean there's something wrong with us or the work we are doing. It's a natural response to the context of the work that we do. To emphasize the second point that my experience working in this field for over three decades is that it is not a familiar experience for us to pay attention to our own well-being as advocates and especially as social change advocates. I've been encouraged that more and more over the last five or 10 years we've seen organizations do that. It's still a newer piece for a lot of us. The third is something you touched on Diane which is central. This is not an individual trouble of being worn out by the work. Too often the conversation that we have about if it's compassion fatigue or caregiver trauma takes it back to what the individual should do so they can manage the

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work whether it's meditation, deep breathing, take a walk or a bubble bath. All those are great strategies for managing the challenges of this work right I feel the fundamental piece that we have to focus on is the organizational and what organizations should do and the last piece which I think is unique is that it is about doing our work in the context -- context of oppression. That leads us to the next framing question. What causes us to downplay or ignore advocates well-being?

>> I am thinking what's different here is putting it in the context of oppression but I also think as you describe the organizational piece -- I'm thinking of conversations that I've been a part of or have overheard. Sometimes well-meaning advocates or administrators who may say, if we caring deeply about our work means -- I'm trying to think what I have heard people say -- this is not a 9-to-5 job. If we want to see a and to this then it's work that we do not stop. We do not leave it at work. It's something we are always doing. I think, yes it's never something I leave behind but I can see the ways that a organizational concept and theory can contribute to what you described.

>> There's two things I want to respond about what you said. You're getting to what I am hoping we will explore. I think there are two root causes here that lead us to ignore our advocates well-being in the context of this work which I will get into. What you said was so powerful in terms of is it a 9-to-5 job or life work? Part of a trap that we fall into in this work is thinking that life work equates to 24 hours a day. That's what you are alluding to. As both you and I have spent our life working around these issues and have dedicated ourselves to ending violence against women yet that does not mean that's what we do 24 hours a day. You are getting to the heart of the matter which is so important. You also mentioned concepts and theories. A little later I was going to talk about -- I think one thing that organizations will do -- will introduce the idea now -- to use that 8 methods



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as a way of examining how our organizations and advocates in the organizations organized or not organized to address their own well-being can -- one concept or theory that influences that which to me is the first root cause of why we don't pay attention to our well-being is the concept of work in the United States. I thought this was a powerful quote. America is a country that has long prided itself on sweat cot determination and hard work. We love stories about people putting in the hours working harder than everyone else and pulling himself up by their bootstraps to enjoy financial success. This is something I spent many years thinking and trying to learn more about it. It's been interesting for me that as someone who has spent most of my life in that United States, I rarely met anyone whether they've lived here a short amount of time or a long time that does not see that hard work or strong work ethic is part of a powerful value system. Over the years I've looked at descriptions of U.S. values and I've never read a article or magazine or anything where hard work or something about work is not listed as a important value in the U.S. What worries me is I feel like we've run away with that value. Of course it's something to be proud of when we work hard and invest a lot in our work and that is something that is a good source of pride. At the same time I feel we have evolved in the U.S. to a place where we just don't value work but we value overwork. A lot of our work has become bound up in our work. There are many statistics that addresses 20 .5 percent of the total workforce work at least 49 hours a week in the United States. Our most common workweek is 48 -- 40 hours. 11 million people work at least at 59 percent of hours. The statistics from a couple of years ago from mother Jones about how much people check emails when they are not working. Not only -- look at this 50 percent on weekends. 46 when people are sick but also 22 percent are expected to respond to work emails when they are not at work. I had friends and colleagues who have

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worked -- work on policies and procedures. Many people on-call are still expected to be available all the time.

>> It is very interesting. I think it's so true. It's so problematic. In part I'm thinking it's making me think of what I have heard from the field and friends working in disability studies and how problematic it is. Just the intersection of privilege and oppression and what it means to equate individuals value on what they contribute to a capitalistic culture. I am curious, I don't know, is it particular to the U.S.? Is it across cultures and countries?

>> That's one of the things that intrigues me about this. You went right to the heart of the matter which is acknowledging having a capitalist framework. It can promote this overvaluing of work but many countries around the world have capitalist framework and don't have this high level intensity around work. One of the stories I love to tell is in the last organization I worked for that you mentioned, many years ago we were doing a fundraiser that involved working with a French fashion company. This is the first time that the organization had been working with [ Indiscernible ]. We were in contact with them through phone meetings, email and in person. The U.S. office is based in New York is where the foundation's main office is located. Everything was moving along. An event was suppose to be in October. We started planning in the spring. We started to send emails and no one responded to the emails which was very unusual for the folks in the New York office. After that went on for a week or 10 days one staff members texted them to see what was up. The other person texted back and said in France the company shuts down for the month of August so everyone can take a holiday. The New York office follows what the French office does so we are off for the month of August. We will be back in September and be in touch with you then. I've always been so amused by that story because it was such a startling

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experience for us. Even though we knew they worked in a different context to really have this month off that they were not working and how wonderful that is. Wouldn't that be great for all of us. The answer to your question is, no, other countries whether they have a capitalist framework or not do not do this. They do not overwork in the same extent that we do in the United States. About a year ago I heard a story on NPR that in France they had passed a law that said employers could not require their staff to check email after hours or while on vacation. That communicates to me that many countries around the world have policies that support the worker and offset this tendency of working a lot. In the United States we do not have any kind of laws that support the number of paid sick days or the length of the workweek. We are the only country in the Americas -- is not just about the European phenomenon that doesn't have paid parental leave. With the only country in the world that does not mandate any kind of annual leave. This issue around vacations always blows me away. Countries around the world mandate that employers have to have a certain number of vacation days. In the United States we do not mandate that at all. I think there are pros and cons to having policies that enforce certain ways that organizations should work. It sends a strong message about what we value and what we do not value. What that does that trickles down to how we experience our work. Over the years it's been both alarming and fascinating for me to learn that job stress is usually the highest form of stress that people experience -- the most common form of stress I should say. More than 50 percent of U.S. workers are impacted and they don't take their vacation days. It's mind-boggling for me to realize that Americans take less vacation today -- this is statistics from 2016 -- than we ever have. When we do that we give up \$52 billion. Vacation is part of our benefits. It's part of our salary packages. When we don't take vacation we are losing leisure and rest.

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>> So much to think about and what you are describing. I think of the oppression framework and who benefits. I'm also thinking about all the consequences of this notion of overworking being the ideal.

>> Exactly. More and more not just in our work but across but the private sector, nonprofit and government there's more attention to the impact of job stress. Now we have different entities that study this regularly. We know things like healthcare expenditures are greater for people who have job stress. It's often more of a challenge to manage for individuals and families than financial issues for instance. This is also what I've heard from advocates over the years. I've had the opportunity to talk with advocates and find out a little bit about how does the negative aspects of this work impact you and what is the source of the difficulty. In other words what is it about the job that is stressful or exhausting that leads to that advocate fatigue? What I found is, it's very similar to what we find out what's going on in the broader culture. I've been collecting information from advocates for decades as I've had these conversations and workshops. Two years ago when I was at the [ Indiscernible ] foundation we had a project to support the impact of the work. We surveyed 200 advocates. I will share the results of that. The results of that survey of 200 advocates in one state was consistent from what I had heard from advocates over the years. The first top source of fatigue and stress was the type of work. Too much work, too little time, too many demands, too much staff turnover. That was connected to lack of resources and funding. Resources being insufficient to things like have enough staff, have enough time to work or that funding was uncertain and it would cause anxiety from that perspective. I also heard a lot about lack of organizational support and communication. Many of us work in wonderful organizations or have wonderful supervisors or managers that there is a consistent concern that there is too little or inconsistent information or limited access to leaders or poor leadership experiences. Often that contributes

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to staff feeling disconnected from one another. I was touched Diane by you saying your treatment for was the connection to the advocates that are on this call and in the ALC. That's something that offsets stress and fatigue and the negative sides of doing work which I will get to later. What's been interesting is that has been dish articulated by advocates as a specific piece that adds to the difficulty of the work. The last two that come up the most often is having lack of control and power. I had advocates say to me that that was the one biggest issue for them to manage and not feel fatigue which was not being able to control the community. That's coupled with our work individually and as organizations is your valued. Efficacy and social change work devalued, not visible.

>> I imagine you getting to this and thinking about the ways what you are describing how it intersects with larger issues of oppression in our work and our culture.

>> When you look at these issues of the lack of control or power, lack of value, lack of connection, it's reminiscent to me of the colors of oppression. That is something I want to take some time and look together at. Although I don't like the phrase burned out because I think it's a negative characterization of Andy individual and I do want to be called that, it did look at some of the research over the years that these two researchers are some of the original researchers in a academic context. I'm always fascinated when academia and traditional research models reflect and or mirror what's going on in our practical lived experiences. It's important to learn from research and that's a valuable tool but it's not the everything. It's fascinating to me when the two overlap. They identified the six areas that are what I share that contribute in any work that is burnt out. Lack of control, values conflict, and physician reward, work overload, unfairness. You could have insufficient information shared. And breakdown of community.

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Putting that all together just going back to your question -- it brought to mind the colors of oppression and thinking about how as we talk about oppression really works to separate us, isolate us, prevent us from coming together. Lack of control can mean lack of power or access to power. I've talked to many advocates and I myself and organizations have felt disempowered either by the organization or by the work. Values conflict that we are taught and socialized to value center. The insufficient reward or work overload is reflected in our being devalued in the context of how our society is framed to value those who have privilege and power. It also speaks to the devaluing of our work and who it is we are working to assist. Survivors and women and people from [ Indiscernible ] communities. It's fascinating to me that the recent me too movement is powerful as it is has been spot -- sparked about men of power from women in power. Those women in power don't have as much power as the men but have more power than most of us -- the women that have spoken out. As brave as that is it has a different meaning when you don't set -- have some of those characteristics. It's interesting to look at this advocate fatigue in the context of how we talk about oppression in the United States. I want to look at a couple of particular pillars but also want to take this moment -- I know we are throwing a lot of information -- if people have questions and I know Diane you are so good at helping that -- people have questions or comments about what it is that I'm saying or talking about, I hope they will put that question into the appropriate box so we can hear from you.

>> Absolutely. Please do that throughout and we will pull your questions and comments into the conversation. You can do that in the Q&A box. We are happy to hear from you. Thank you Kata.

>> Let's take this first pillar and look at that. I also get excited about this topic. It's one of my personal missions in life to undo all the advocate fatigue and change

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the way we think about work in the U.S. whether or not in my lifetime I don't know. Feel free to jump in. If you have questions or comments Diane -- I know I'm throwing a lot of information at everyone quickly. Looking at belief in the superiority of the oppressor. One of the pieces that is always very moving and challenging for me is we downplayed the importance of our well-being. If I ask any advocate, do you think you as a advocate for your coworkers deserve to be well cared for and deserve self-care, I'm sure everyone would say yes. In practice we are challenged to act on that. That's true for organizations as well as individuals. We somehow don't give ourselves the space to have an environment that promotes our well-being as much as that of the communities we work with. Similarly on pillar two which is make the oppressed into inferior objects, I think our devaluing of ourselves as seeing ourselves of less than and maybe not deserving as much care it's also reflected in how we tend to see ourselves and how society sees us as workers as somehow less than. You raise that point earlier Diane about people saying to you, how can you do that work and I've got that question over the years also. There's a little bit of a patronizing approach of this work is so horrific, how could you do it. There must be something wrong with you. I've experienced that from people when I've heard that comment. I think that seeing us in this context of inferiority. I have a colleague in Hawaii who was interviewed and she would say, when I go to a party if I tell people that I may crisis counselor ready soon standing by myself at that party. Somehow there's [ Indiscernible ] of us in the work that we do. Let me pause there and see if there are any questions.

>> It's making me think of many different things. We had a comments and I know you'll be getting to this. I want to make sure we have adequate time. Stevie asks recognizing one of the challenges, how can we take this and share this with leadership at the organization? It's tough to change the social norms of things like

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overwork if the supervisors and leaders are not on the same page or don't model how to take care of yourself as an advocate? He acknowledges I know there's not an easy answer but I wanted to pose that question.

>> Great question Stevie. Thank you Diane for bringing my attention to it. It is at the heart of this issue. That's why even in the definition of accuracy dish advocate fatigue -- that's my own personal definition -- start with organizations not attending to well-being. It is tough. Diane is right. A little bit later we will spend some time exploring what are some of the ways organizations could respond. The first thing I would say is even having the conversation and beginning to frame it as a societal issue in terms of how we value work and overwork in the United States. Secondly, making that connection to oppression. I found that framing it in that way for managers and leaders of organizations helps them a lot of the time step away from making it about the staff and making it about the individual choices of the staff which I really personally struggle with. Both as an Executive Director and as a [ Indiscernible ] because I feel that's very blaming of the staff. We had the solemn agreement that we don't blame people for the oppression they experience or we should not be blaming people for having advocate fatigue. That's a normal and natural consequence of doing this work. Great question. We will get back to that. The other response is that's why the story is so powerful because I think a lot of my experience is that people in the United States, unless they have something like when we talked to the French company that would shut down for a month, assume everyone else does it the way we do. I know for myself who is an immigrant to the United States and has been thinking and working on this issue for so long I'm always shocked at the level of support that workers and other countries get. Let me go through some of these other pieces around oppression and then we will get into the solutions. Let's look quickly at teaching the oppressed to submit. One of the experiences I had early in my career, I was



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not -- I was at a crisis center as a advocate. The crisis center was located in this old building that there were stairs to go up and that stairs work somewhat rickety. Sometimes we had to step on one side to get upstairs. I remember it did not have air conditioning that work. In the summer if it got to 80 degrees outside than inside will get to hundred. Then we would have to shut down and leave. It was a physical challenging environment. I imagine many people on the webinar have had experiences like that. I went as a new advocate to this organization to a meeting of a board member because we were planning some event or something. The boardmember was a lawyer. They worked in this high rise downtown. A very nice are being -- urban setting. We went into the elevator to get to the office. Everything was beautiful. We went into this conference room with this huge table and there was a refrigerator in the conference room with all kinds of snacks. It was so shocking -- I didn't even know that people work that way because all my work had been in organizations violence against women. What I realized is that I as a worker in this movement, I had been taught to expect to know better than what I got in the physical environment that I was in. That is one example of how it's reinforced for us that we should live this way and that we don't deserve having a refrigerator stocked with food in all our meetings. I think that is reflected in the judgment that we have of each other or that managers will have. That also relates to the splitting into the good and bad. One of the experiences a year ago talking about this issue with advocates at a nonprofit in another state was that they have a process where everyone gets evaluated annually and they had just had their annual evaluations and I didn't know. I started the session with them and several of them had been sick a lot in the prior year. They had Mark that down on their evaluations because they had taken so many sick days. As you can imagine they were furious and stressed. To me this was an example of how the leadership of that organization was splitting their staff into good staff who did not

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take sick days and bad staff who did take sick days. There was a consequence in that people do not get evaluated as well. It speaks to me how we just don't take the value of our worth as employees and as advocates seriously enough. It gets to this piece what's the impact? I will move this pretty quickly so we can get to the solutions. In order for us to understand the solutions we also have to understand the impact so we can counter that impact very specifically. Looking at stress you see on the screen" from the Mayo Clinic. We all know or have heard and there's a lot of information from the medical field about stress that's left unchecked. It contributes to many health problems such as high blood pressure, heart to see, obesity and diabetes. We know stress has a severe impact on Americans physically. This is American psychological Association describing how Americans report physical stress, sleeplessness, skipping meals or overeating. Also the same amount of Americans express emotional stress. When I do workshops on these subjects on how we are as advocates and social change workers I will ask people to tell me how they experience advocate fatigue and this is what I hear. Durability, nervousness, feeling overwhelmed, feeling overwhelmed. I also believe that the overwork culture in the United States also speaks to where we get our information and how we see ourselves. We know that stress in the United States and other factors lead to people not getting the recommended amount of exercise, not sleeping enough, not doing anything to relieve the stress. Sometimes I worry that's because people don't see themselves as deserving or valued. People say they don't have the time to exercise, time to sleep and yet that time that we don't have is given to us or defined for us by the people in power. We don't have the time because were not given the time. Our organizations and society do not frame it that way. I've been thinking about this over the last few years. The medical research tells us that most adults should have 7 to 8 hours of sleep at night. Typically when I go into settings and ask people how much they

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sleep at night I hear everything from four hours to six hours. It's rare that in a group of people more than a few regularly get 8 hours of sleep at night. I'm not judgmental of that. To me that's a symptom of this bigger problem. The CDC is getting ready to declare sleep insufficiency is a public health concern. When they do that that means it's at a high enough frequency and level that they need to take some action to intervene on that which I think would be really good. This speaks to the ways in which stress aggravate advocate fatigue and what it is the impact of that and how that takes place. Any thoughts dying and?

>> This really resonates when I think about my own experience. I think about organizations and workplaces that I've been a part of and how we have the best intention with the managers these things still end up happening. I see this reality play out very often.

>> One of the -- want to make it clear I'm not saying that of the take -- advocate fatigue is not just about stress. When we talk about how people are doing is characterized in terms of stress level. We can also get interesting information to help inform us and the frame how to talk about it from places that I've shown you in the statistics. I also want to talk about stress because I want to highlight this important piece that I found in the American Psychological Association. The APA and other medical organizations track the health of Americans over time. They do surveys to be able to capture that information. One of the things they track is stress. One interesting Diana this dynamic -- dynamic -- one stress level in the United States have decreased over time especially over the last 10 years. You will notice on the screen 72 percent say stress levels have increased or stayed the same and 80 percent say stress level has increased or stayed the same in the past year. Then they say except for people from higher levels of stress among parents, younger generations, women and those living in lower incomes. Those of us at

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the margin are not seeing a reduction in our stress or the impact of having high stress. To me this gets to the heart of what oppression is about. And why we need to be in touch with our own well-being and our own bodies. I was going to have everybody participate in this although I would not know if you are or not. I will share this information about what I call -- what is called a body scan. A lot of times when you talk about these issues one thing I noticed happening for myself as well for people that are in the audience or workshop with me is that we begin to feel the tension of what it means to recognize that negative aspects of this work and what it means if we are experiencing advocate fatigue. I encourage people to use this technique that comes from different annotation practices which is to do a body scan. There's instructions on how to do it. There's a lot of great sources on my -- resources online. It starts with sitting comfortably and breathing deep sleep. It starts at the top of your head, notice how you are physically feeling in this moment. If I were leading you I would say start with your head and then feel your neck, shoulders. I would name different parts of your body. You can do it for yourself at any time. It's a great thing to do when you are at work or may be driving at a stoplight. When I do this I find that I will come in touch with a sensation in my body that I was not aware of. Even right now I realize that talking about this issue not only to have a lot of passion for it but it comes with tension so I feel that in my breathing. I didn't even do the body scan. I just thought about it. That's a important piece in thinking what it means for us to look at how we are and connect to ourselves physically. It's not looking at advocate fatigue. Thinking about the roots why it's there and the impacts. As we think about that what I believe is the impact of advocate fatigue is that we disconnect. We disconnect from our bodies, from our spirits, from ourselves, from our loved ones and our communities. As you all know because you've heard me and Diane talk about it, if our belief is that social change is only going to happen

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through collective action and connection then that means that we have to be connected to ourselves and each other as well as finding ways to connect in our organizations. Not only does advocate fatigue cause all of the responses that you see in the word cloud but also causes disconnection that ultimately will undermine our ability to create social change. That also speaks to the ways in which advocate fatigue is fed by and feeds oppression. Certainly when we are told we don't deserve to be well cared for weather it's explicit or implicitly such as going to a lawyers office for a meeting and seeing all the ways in which there's care of employees. No one has ever said to me you don't deserve to take off. Many people say take care of yourselves. They're not the organizational reinforcers or community reinforcers for that. It's natural for me to downplay the importance of my own well-being. Similarly I think for those of us from central characteristics don't always recognize that we do have the benefit of being able to go get a massage and pay for that if we have a salary that allows us to do that. I find advocate fatigue exasperates tensions and horizontal hostility. I may take Blake in organizations and communities. It promotes myth of scarcity. We can't take days off because who will answer the crisis line or staff the shelter? Those are valid points but often we don't apply our creativity to thinking about different ways in which we can generate more funding to pay staff or convincing funders to give us more to pay staff or taking about ways where we can step away from our 24 hour day work. I think we need to expand to be thinking about this in the context of what we can do which will get us to our next question. What are possible solutions? Let me take a sip of water.

>> Thank you Kata. I want to remind participants to share questions or comments in the Q&A box. Also Stevie's comment and other conversations we are looking forward to this part.

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>> Is essential that the starting point be with the organization. Too often we fall into the trap of looking at related issues by thinking about what can individuals do. Although I believe that taking care of our selves individually is much more than taking long walks and bubble baths but also a holistic sense of keeping ourselves, minds, bodies and spirits in balance. Really it's on the organization ultimately our communities to develop and maintain strategies that promote that balance and wellness and build resilience. Addressing advocate fatigue, addressing the negative impact of this work whether it's from all of those factors I mentioned earlier such as lack of control, lack of visibility, fit dish is efficient reward or a woman that tells us about a challenging situation, addressing it has to be done in the context of it's not a one moment in time. It's something we are always going to have to respond to. Some days we will do it better than others. It's a lifelong journey that we address over time. It's the balance of organizations and individuals and changing attitudes and belief in the community about how to address this issue. I use resiliency as I think about what organizations can do because resiliency talks about our bounce back ability. How much can we stretch and bounce back. Recognizing this is not just one activity for a individual so not just taking a long walk or just one piece of work that a organization does, it's having a continual process on a pathway. First it's about organizations embracing and enacting it's the employees right to have healthy, balanced workplaces that address wellness. And if the organizations responsibility. If the organization sees itself as a social change organization then all the more responsibility on them to recognize that if we are invested in working toward our ultimate goal of ending oppression and ending violence against women, we have to keep ourselves healthy and whole along that path. We have to make adjusting wellness something built-in to the fabric of our organizations. Not something that's a add-on. Add-ons are nice. But it's not enough. I believe as a manager, myself, we have

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to make that balance and wellness a requirement in the organization and not optional. I mean -- I don't mean a requirement that it becomes punitive but that it becomes a normal practice that comes from clearly a tilt dish articulated values and philosophies. Normal practice means looking at all of policies, procedures and actions in the organization so they are adjusted to reflect and promote wellness. If we want our employees to have reasonable workloads we need to make sure they have sufficient time and resources to do that. We need to do the same thing. I remember as a manager walking around in a office saying to everyone, it's 5:30 PM why are you working. Go home. But I'm still doing work at my house. That was poor modeling on my part. We all need be able to promote balance and wellness. We need to slow down and come together for a common purpose which is creating a well workplace. Are there any questions or responses before I go ahead?

>> There have not been any additional questions. Part what occurs to me is for someone who is not in management position -- there's advocates on this call also LC teams. Some have their ED on the team but not all. What is the role of someone who is part of a organization but not the decision maker in helping to make this happen? It's making some big shifts.

>> Highlight the issue. In a moment I will talk about what we can do individually. A lot of -- there's great resources for individuals and a growing body for organizations. A lot of the individual to these kinds of challenges in our lives start with taking stock. We need to look at all policies, procedures and practices through a wellness thought. You could do a survey that asked to talk about -- we asked simple questions -- what were the challenges that were experienced in the work setting, what were the berries and then what supported wellness? We asked those questions at the end of a survey thinking that we will hear all these

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issues. What came back was what I shared earlier. It's consistent from what I've heard from advocates. It's not that we are not personally affected by hearing the stories of the violence that's been perpetrated. Of course we are. That's part of what makes us so dynamic, supported and compassionate. There are other factors that have bigger impacts. When I shared the results they were shocked because they expected what we would hear back was about how hard it would be to hear the stories or how hard it was to go to court with different people's or all the different challenges. Just having that kind of information that comes directly from the employees themselves, the staff can summarize and share that information. It's also important that organizations think about how to embrace sustainable practice. There are simple ways to do that. There's a lot of good information on how to make workloads manageable for people. How to create opportunities for supporting people and giving staff the opportunity to reflect. Flex hours is a thing that a lot of organizations don't do. Finding simple ways to change the physical environment. We thought to get someone to donate our space. To recognize the importance of having a positive physical environment. To give people sufficient time away from work. Give them opportunities to have fun with each other. We do a lot of staff retreats mostly to get work done but also to have fun with each other. Also to recognize that in the context of doing social change work we have to allow a opportunity for staff and organizations to engage in social justice work through their workplaces. I've worked in organizations where we allow staff to take 8 hours a month and go and volunteer at a organization that similar to our work. We want to keep alive the fire in our staff. We allow them to have those 8 hours on our dime. If there's a march, rally that's showing support for people who are homeless or who are bringing attention to the needs of changing a practice of a local business, allowing staff to go and be present in that context can be a great way to feel that social change, social justice

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side. There is a lot of -- that organizations can do. What if there are not -- managers on this call? It can be helpful to get a manager to talk to a manager. If you have someone in ALC or your community that has created some changes, I find and I say this out of my own self reflection for someone who has been a manager is that sometimes managers are like judges. The sometimes true for managers. There's a way that managers can resonate with the experience of another manager. Not that they don't value their employees. There is something different about having multiple responsibilities and still implementing and enacting sustainable practices within the organization that can resonate with a manager. I will say it is hard work. It's demanding. [Indiscernible - audio cutting in and out] let's talk about some individuals. Are there any questions or comments?

>> You touched on a question that Jessica had. I think you're about to say more about that. She was saying she wants to arrange some dedicated time for self-care every day in her office. Any thoughts on that?

>> That's fabulous. That's a great way to start. It reminds me of Abby who is the executive director of [ Indiscernible ]. You may have met her. They have been doing that for years. They call it [ Indiscernible ]. They may have yoga or other movements every morning at 8:30 AM. It is optional. People can come or not come but they have it every day for 30 minutes. People come together and do that. Not only is a wonderful activity for the staff that helps relieve some of the fatigue and promote self-care but it sends a strong message that the organization would make a commitment to free up staffs time to do something for themselves. Sometimes that's a small starting point but it's important. I support you Jessica and applaud you for doing that. I do think it's important to start with organizations but as I showed you in the diagram earlier it's really about the organization, community and individual coming together. As a manager I have

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provided the opportunity for people to do wellness activities and people resist that. Often it's because of internalized oppression or sometimes horizontal hostility. It is important for individuals for all of us as advocates and workers in this movement who are on the call to know having balance in the workplace is your right. I would say it's our responsibility as social change advocates -- one point that I not sure if I may -- when we don't take care of ourselves and don't promote balance and wellness organizationally or individually that we are feeding the oppression that we are trying to stop. It is so essential that we recognize that we have to be whole and healthy and balance to do this work. Doing this work is ending oppression. It feeds upon itself. If we don't recognize as both the right and responsibility. I encourage people and I do this for myself periodically is take stock. Be honest with yourself. Think about the ways in which we embrace wellness. I talked about the negative impact on our physical, emotional and spirit health. Think about where you may need to create change. Take steps to enhance that balance. Recognize it. It's a pathway and they journey. It's something you need to practice. There is not one moment in time where any of us have just got it. There are simple practices that people can do on a regular basis. We can learn from many of the different sources that are out there. Mindfulness, meditation, movement practices are on the rise right now. Whatever your personal choices are, recognizing that many of our community backgrounds embrace the importance of -- almost every culture has something about breathing and careful breathing. Almost every culture and community I've worked with celebrates movement. Some people it's exercise. Some people it's dance. Movement and being aware of your body -- we talked about the body scan earlier. Enriching our senses. For me individuals -- this can be reflective for organizations really need to look at this in the context of keeping your mind and your body in line. There are things about, plaintiff practices. A friend of mine just published of book about just

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sitting. It's a meditation guide. Also finding ways to connect and share our stories and express gratitude. We've heard a lot about that from different sources over the years. It has been proven that all these practices will invigorate, refresh and rejuvenate us. Those are thoughts on the individual level. Any questions that I should attend to before we wrap up?

>> No other questions.

>> The last thing is thinking about addressing to take fatigue and counter fatigue in the committee context. I believe that fundamental to our social change is recognizing that in order to do social change we have to sustain ourselves over the course of what that work is. It's challenging and demanding work for many reasons that we have identified today and that also we have not talked about. Fundamental to that is coming together through collective action in a deliberating weight. For me that is what it means to create a opportunity to help educate our communities. To challenge this dominant pair mine of work and overwork that we have in the United States. Just telling people stories like the one I shared. When I say to people in Europe they will shut down for the entire month of August so they can take holiday. People are shocked by that. Sharing that information starts people thinking differently about work. Also promoting wellness and balance as -- is much more comprehensive than just healthcare. It's really having balance in workload, in our work environment, in our lives and between work and life. Recognizing our liberation will only be helpful to us and women and survivors if they are healthy. Practicing sustainability for ourselves and our communities help to get people to think about it in a different way. When I worked at a organization that had 24 Christ -- 24 hour crisis line. we wanted to have the crisis line covered to maybe have our staff get some time off to do different things. We covered contractual staff to cover the crisis line. We supported staff by giving them a

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break and giving them time away. That to me is a example of facilitating sustainability. Not just for ourselves but educating the community about the importance of that. I talked with a small business owner who was a board member and a donor and when we talked about the importance of doing this for the crisis line they said maybe will do that for our staff. They changed their policy and now in the summers they only work four days a week. We don't do that but that was a wonderful example of how practicing sustainability and wellness can radiate out into the community. That brings us to the end of our time. I will turn it back to you Diane and thank everyone for their attention and participation. I enjoyed this conversation with you all.

>> Thank you Kata. So much food for thought . This is something that programs wrestle with. We hope it's a conversation that continues. Indeed we are able to create some of this change in our organizations and our movement. It is important. Love this Audre Lorde quote and her wonderful image to close this out today. We are grateful for all of you in class O and P for your participation. Especially grateful to you Kata for sharing your years of thinking and experience and struggle with us. A reminder that you will receive a link to a evaluation. We appreciate your feet back as always. We will be back with class P on February 13 for you next institutional advocacy strategy. Class O we will see you next week at your graduation event on Tuesday January 23rd. Thank you all. Take care of yourselves and each other and have a great afternoon. Goodbye everyone.

>> Thank you. Goodbye.

>> [ Event concludes ] <<