

The Real Work: A Podcast About Theater Culture and Transformative Justice

Episode 5: Applied Practice

TIERRA: The Real work: A Podcast About Theater Culture and Transformative Justice.

What does it really mean to practice transformative justice? Could doing so heal patterns of oppression, violence, and abuse, and grow communities where everyone thrives? What about in the theater community? Where would we even start?

This six episode audio series tells the story of 27 theater practitioners on unceded Lisjan Ohlone territory who gathered regularly for one year to explore using transformative justice or TJ and our creative spaces and our lives. We were guided by one of the founders of the Bay Area Transformative Justice collective, Mia Mingus.

This podcast is a report back and an invitation. May we invest in the real work it will take to end and heal all levels of violence for ourselves, our communities, and our future generations.

MUSIC BREAK

TIERRA: Episode 5: Applied Practice.

Greetings, y'all. It's Tierra here once again. Welcome back. I sincerely am so grateful for y'all returning once again. Last episode, we focused on the accountability part of community accountability. We explored how changing our behavior to live accountably is lifelong work, is violence prevention, takes building skills until they become muscle memory. Fortunately for us, Mia gave us many opportunities to practice .

MIA: Okay so we're gonna do communication and feedback. So we're gonna have a chance to practice our communication again, mirroring in particular, and we're gonna practice giving and receiving feedback, and then we're gonna practice giving and receiving feedback about the feedback that we've given.

Okay? There's gonna be multiple things happening. Don't be scared, we're gonna do it in front of the entire group. *[laughter]*

RAY: Everyone? Or just volunteers?

MIA: Just volunteers. But hey, you know, it's always good to try... First of all, I just wanna remind you all, keep reminding you all that. I know we've been doing this for a year, but even this does not prepare people to spearhead an entire community accountability process or a TJ intervention.

And of course you know, you do what you want to do and you deal with the consequences of that and, both/ and there's a lot that can come from innovation and you wanna also try to do as much preparation as you can. Cause you can actually, you can cause a lot of harm. And there's a lot of- TJ processes are messy anyways. And so we don't wanna make them any more messier than that.

Having said that, the reason why we're talking about communication and feedback is that we really have to know how to communicate well with each other if we're gonna be dealing with violence, harm and abuse. You know, I've seen even you all in your small groups, I've seen small groups get heated and if we can't even have good communication in this kind of a setting where there's not necessarily like active violence for sure happening and it's a pretty relatively safer space, how are we gonna be able to do it when things are, we're thrashing around in the middle of a TJ intervention, and when we have all of those things going on, the typical responses and trauma responses. Not just with the people who are in the intervention, but also the folks who are outside of it as well. Cause you're gonna get it from all sides.

So that is one reason why we practice communication. And I would really encourage all of you all to put time and energy and invest time and energy to actively practice your communication. Learn how to do mirroring well so that you can do it well enough that someone doesn't even know that you're doing it, well enough to weave it in and out of the conversation, for example, or in and out of support that you're doing.

The ability to be able to do active listening. So key. The ability to be able to share accountably, so, so key so that you're not giving monologues everywhere you're going like that you're able to do a give and a take.

And I know it sounds really easy when you say it out loud, but the amount of people that I know who don't know how to ask a question, a follow up question to somebody, right? In a conversation, or who don't know how to actually share about themselves, about how their day was in more than three words. We have to build muscle memory just like we were talking about within the grounding.

And they say that in order to build muscle memory, you have to do something 300,000 times of repetitions to be able to have it build so that you do it without even thinking of it. And that's what we wanna get to.

AMANDA: Can I ask a question?

MIA: Yes.

AMANDA: So you talk about you know, we're not ready. And I feel that like I am not at all arguing that I don't personally feel ready at all. But there's gonna be a first time for all of us, or there's gonna be some way where it's like we have to cross into doing something we haven't done before. And what is the balance of, oh, I'm not ready and I can cause harm, versus this feels really scary but I need to lean into this to practice or to do it. You know?

MIA: I feel like that's so hard cause it's so different for everybody. Unfortunately like only you really know that and only you can really make that assessment. A lot of it is just, you know, you making that decision. And being able to again, like deal with the consequences from that decision. I feel like, yeah, you're never gonna be completely ready. Most people, I feel like, fall into one of two camps. We have the folks who are just like, I took an intro to TJ, I'm ready to do it. I'm now gonna spearhead a community counter room process, and it goes to shit. And they're like, I don't understand why I didn't do it. You know? And like they don't do any of their due diligence. Or the people who you have to push out of the damn nest and be like, you are ready. Stop learning all the time. Like you've got, you have to practice sometimes, you know?

AMANDA: Yeah. Yeah.

MIA: And so I feel like it's just finding your own balance in there and your own integrity. Because that's also part of, I feel like taking responsibility and accountability that that's your decision if you decide to do it. But it's a hard line.

The only other thing I'll is that like I feel like a lot of us, the first gen and 1.5 gen of TJ, you know, I feel like we were pushed in the deep end of the pool. We had to learn how to swim while we helped other people learn how to swim. And it was terrible. And so we're all now trying to prevent that as much as possible.

And, both/ and I think there were a lot of things that we were able to learn through trial and error and learn the hard way, which I don't know if that's the best.

I mean, I want you all to do things. I just don't want you all to do things. So you take from that with you all. [*laughter*]

Okay. So the reason why we're gonna talk about feedback today is that I want you all to get really skilled at being able to receive feedback and not taking it personally, understanding that there's multiple truths, and being able to give feedback, and in a way

that's not just trying to please people. That's certainly not grounded in fight either, right? Cause a lot of people have to like weaponize feedback in this way of just oh, well I'm being honest. And it's no, you're really just being cruel and you need to figure out a way to not do that. Right?

So what we're gonna do is we're gonna have two people. You're gonna do this exercise, I'll give you a prompt. I was actually thinking you would use the same prompt that you could share about what you learned about communication growing up. And so we'll have one person be the sender in one person be the receiver, and then we'll have two people to volunteer to give them feedback. And then the rest of us will watch, and then we will give feedback to the people who gave feedback. Not every single one of us, but like maybe a couple of us.

Just in terms of feedback, things to keep in mind is to always remember that there are multiple truths. Just because this person is saying something doesn't mean that it's the end all be. Remember that not everybody knows how to give feedback, right? And that's okay. They're learning too. And both/ and remember that we need feedback. Honestly, the truth is that I think most people really crave feedback at the same time that they're terrified of it.

Most of us really wanna know what other people think of us, for example, right? Or how we come off. But we're also like terrified to hear what other people really think about us. And when I see feedback go well and be generative and transformative, I see people just relax and not have to feel so anxious. Even if the truth is kind of hard to hear, or that person's truth, there's a little bit of relief because I feel like our anxiety is always pretty high cause we live in this world where it's oh, it's not appropriate to tell somebody how they truly feel, right? Or that, you know, you vent or gossip about them, but you never actually have direct communication with them. And there's very few people, right? So sometimes a lot of people will talk about people who are very close to them that they trust, where they've had a track record of feedback and or like generative conflict, which is also a different kind of feedback.

So remember that there's multiple truths. Feedback, we always try to stay grounded in our values. The feedback is grounded in our values. So it's not just your opinion. You're trying to ground this in whatever the values you have or whatever the larger purpose is that you're working towards, right? So that it's in service of something, right?

So for today, it would be grounded in service of us being able to do transformative justice with each other, right? Whenever you give feedback, it should contribute to growth. And you are not- you are not honoring anybody's humanity by not actually saying what needs to be said. And it is really hard to say what needs to be said. And

oftentimes it's really shitty because a lot of people don't do it and then it usually falls to the same people to constantly have to do that work. Usually it's like emotional labor type work or usually it falls to the person who's in leadership, which is just shitty. It's just not fair to do that to people.

So how do we honor all of our humanity and take risks together and actually say what needs to be said? And that's a moment to practice courage, right? Cuz you can only practice courage when you are afraid. Feedback should build trust. It shouldn't destroy trust, which doesn't mean that feedback always has to be good or have a positive spin on it. But that, you know, I think all of us, even if it's hard to hear, we can recognize even if there are grains of truth in something. We know, right? We might be running from it inside of ourselves. We might just be more mad at ourselves than that person. But it should help to build trust. And one of the only ways we know how to build trust is through vulnerability.

And feedback is vulnerable for both parties. So oftentimes we only think of feedback as being vulnerable for the person receiving feedback, but it's really vulnerable to give feedback, to give really honest feedback, especially where you're saying something that might be hard to say and hard to hear. Feedback is not a weapon, should never be used as a weapon.

I consider feedback to be a very sacred thing and a sacred practice, and to sully it with harm or violence or manipulation is really just so crappy to do. And it fucks with people's trust and ability to trust, and that to me is such a shameful thing to do.

Feedback can also be positive. So many of us have problems taking in and hearing positive shit about ourselves. And for some of us, it's hard to give positive feedback. Like for some of us, we are very used to automatically seeing what's missing, what's at fault, right? We need to get better at actually saying oh, this is a strength that you have. Right? And I really appreciate this about you.

So feedback can be positive, negative and challenging, and everything in between. It doesn't- I think sometimes people think I'm gonna give feedback I have to say the worst thing, the hardest thing. You don't have to. But you also don't wanna shy away from it. You wanna strike a good balance, right? And no one- you have to make those calls.

You wanna be mindful always when you're giving feedback of the context and the relationship, right? So thinking about privilege and oppression, thinking about is this somebody that has power- you have power over, or that has power over you? What kind of relationship do you have with this person? If you're integrating humor into your feedback, maybe you don't have a relationship with them where that's a cool thing to do,

right? Versus maybe like with your friends, your close friend, you do have that kind of relationship. So just be mindful of that, right? Like you may not wanna give feedback when you're in a public place, in a busy restaurant, it may not be the best place, right? Think of the context that you're in.

I always find this really useful: speak what is true, necessary and loving. I always find that's a really good bar for me to think about when I'm giving feedback and especially the necessary part, what needs to be said. What is if you don't say it, you're really not honoring their humanity and their growth. And then in the BATJC we always say "feedback equals gift" cuz it is, it's a gift to get feedback and you may not like it. Right? And again, take what's useful, leave the rest, totally fine. Sometimes feedback to you tells you so much more about that person than it does about you, right? And it's also labor. Again, if you're constantly putting all of the work of giving and receiving feedback on like certain people, it's really unfair.

Everybody should be involved in giving and receiving feedback. Even if you're scared, you need to work on it then so that you can be able to give or receive feedback and do it in a way with our daily practices where you're staying connected to yourself, where you're staying connected to the other folks, as well as the group. Cause a lot of us, when we do scary things, we tend [00:13:12] to drop into some of our conditioned tendencies, right? We disappear ourselves, for example, right? Or we disappear everybody else.

Are there questions about this? I just wanna give you a little brief thing on what is feedback, what is it not, how are we thinking about it as we're giving feedback to these folks. Questions, thoughts, comments?

J JHA: Personally, I've found that 99% of the times when I'm- actually hundred percent have time when I'm giving feedback it's got something to do with me.

MIA: Absolutely. Like I said-

J JHA: -more than the person I'm giving the feedback to. So I need some of my own resolution at the end of that feedback process, which I should, when I'm aware of that process goes smoother than I think of when I'm just giving, and not open for what I need to receive from that process.

MIA: Journaling, writing it out first can really help cuz then once you write it out, you can say actually, oh, this is clearly my shit. This is clearly my shit. You know? . Absolutely. And again, we wanna practice this, right? Nobody's perfect at it right now. I mean, I

would assume that nobody in this room is completely perfect. Maybe you are, I don't know. But we want to practice it.

Any other things about feedback and about what we're about to do?

Yeah. So again, you wanna watch your body language, your energy. You wanna watch your tone, you wanna watch how you're communicating, even when you're not verbally communicating to folks.

Who would like to practice?

MUSIC BREAK

And then are there two other people who would like to give [00:14:51] feedback to our feedbackers? Great. And one more person. Okay, great. So we have Fenner and Emily.

So you wanna check how far you are from each other and check your body language, where you wanna be. And we give yourself a moment to get grounded in what you would like to share. Decide which one of you is gonna be the sender and the receiver first.

FENNER: I can send first if you want.

EMILY: Great.

MIA: Everybody else who's watching, we can all practice how to give them our attention. We need to practice how to be present for Kieran and Nina. A skill for bearing witness is actually a really important skill. If you ever do circle process, you'll be doing that a lot. Keep breathing, staying, present, all of that. So who's going first?

Okay, great. Thank you all. [*applause*]

And also wanted to just check in with all three groups of how that was. And I have some feedback as well. Just wanna name that I don't know, in terms of mirroring you did skip the summarizing part, Nina, at the end to summarize, and I noticed too that I don't know if it was you were about to say it or if it was that you jumped in too fast, but you didn't, Kieren, you didn't wait for Nina to say "is there more? Please tell me more," before you started in. And while I know that it can be like non-verbal cues, just because we got used to it. As we're practicing this though, like waiting for that consent so that if the sender- and maybe Nina was completely ready, but if the sender did wanna catch their breath or something, or just take a moment before they [00:16:30] invite you back in.

But also would love to hear how that was for the two of you. And then we'll go to the feedback people.

KIERAN: I do know Nina quite well, so it wasn't like super weird talking to them about that. Although it was strange like having an audience for it.

MIA: What? [*laughter*]

KIERAN: As far as receiving the feedback, the ways that it was delivered were very kind and I felt like it was very constructive and intended to be very helpful.

NINA: I'd say the same thing. Like I think I was surprised again, how like difficult this is, because I'm the type of person who wants to really understand you, so I'm gonna give you extra words, I'm gonna tell you anything. But it's no, just hear them like I don't need to give them anything. And you know your truth more than I do.

You know that, that resistance of I'm gonna offer you things. It's like I don't need to offer them anything. They have their truth right here for me. And yeah. And I totally forgot the summarizing, which is again, like I think I find summarizing hard because I'm trying to go like 30 steps further with you, so you feel like I'm understanding you.

But again, I think it's about practicing people and meeting where they're at and meeting them right with just what they told you directly. You know, like slowing it down, you know?

KIERAN: Yeah.

NINA: I'm surprised by how hard it was, especially with somebody I know so well. Yeah.

MIA: Yeah. And/or maybe you need to give some direct comments, direct feedback right then and there in the moment. Right?

RADHIKA: Okay.

MIA: You might need to say, actually, I feel like what you're doing is it's landing as victim blaming. I feel like we're minimizing and it's really not helpful right now. Or maybe you do it after the session. Right. Maybe you pull them aside and say, "Hey, I wanna have a conversation with you." But if you did it inside of the meeting, then other people might say to you, I actually didn't think it was victim- right? And so you're getting and receiving feedback in real time. Or the lead facilitator might have to give you some feedback. Does that help a little bit? Yeah. As like an example? Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely.

RADHIKA: I think the words that I heard Kieran say were instructive or explain. And then I think that Nina used alternate words. Perhaps like teaching and, but they checked with Kieran and you said it was, that was fine. And so two feelings came up for me, one is it fine, Kieran? And of course this is the lower stakes, you know?

MIA: Right. I mean, and of course, ideally it's great to use the same words, but sometimes it doesn't necessarily matter because what matters most is that you're capturing the spirit of what they're saying. But you know, for exercise purposes, try to use the same language just because we're trying to also hone our listening skills, our active listening skills.

And it, and also you have to remember the context. Kieran and Nina are friends. They know each other. So it's not like the end of the world. But if you were mirroring with somebody that you didn't know, right? And if it was something that was really personal to you, maybe like really loaded for you, the exact words might really matter, right? It might be like, I didn't feel helpless, I felt violated. Right? I wanna make that clear. Right? And I've seen people who are not practicing mirroring at all, but who are just in conversation, get those kind of small things wrong and it completely triggers somebody, right. Completely sets somebody spinning out. So it, you know, it always just depends on what kind of context you're in.

RADHIKA: Yeah.

MUSIC BREAK

TIERRA: In this episode, we are focusing on the community part of community accountability. Mia emphasized that transformative justice is not about intervening in or saving someone else's community. TJ is responding to harm, violence and abuse in our own communities. So as we built up fundamental TJ skills, she guided us to envision the changes we'd like to see in Bay Area Theater.

MIA: Let's start. Let's just start with a brainstorm of what are some of the real, what are some of the harms and violences that you all have experienced, experienced or witnessed in the theater, Bay Area theater community? And then we'll talk about what are some of the conditions that allow for those violences and harms to take place.

TIERRA: What's our time limit? [*laughter*]

MIA: We don't got time for all of it. I wanna get y'all started.

UNIDENTIFIED: The show comes above everything.

MIA: The show comes above everything. As a harm, or as a condition?

UNIDENTIFIED: It's a good question.

MIA: It can be both.

UNIDENTIFIED: I don't know, help me out here.

ERIC: I vote for condition.

UNIDENTIFIED: I think so too. Yeah.

RAY: Allowing people who are actively causing harm to stay in a rehearsal room or work at a theater because they're so talented. Because they're not replaceable in that way.

MIA: Yes.

ANNE: Body shaming.

MIA: Body shaming. Yes.

And also please say if your thing is a harm or a condition. I think that would help. You said body shaming was a harm also? I think it could be a both. Yes. Yeah, Kim.

KIM: The like hierarchical pattern or set of theater itself.

MIA: As a condition?

KIM: Yeah.

KIERAN: Union status.

MIA: I'm sorry.

KIERAN: Union status.

MIA: Union status. As a condition?

FENNER: Being severely underpaid as a violent condition and how short production time could be.

MIA: Right. Show before everything. Yeah.

LEEANN: Like fear of being blacklisted.

MIA: Fear of being being blacklisted.

UNIDENTIFIED: Conditions?

ERIC: Sure.

RADHIKA: The gray- grayness of relationships at the workplace because we engage in such intimate, you know, work. So I don't know how to put that.

MIA: Yeah. I think that's probably condition to me.

CLIVE: Condition, celebrity.

MIA: Celebrity, absolutely. Yeah.

FENNER: A condition of like kind of unclear systems. That there's not, that every theater experience kinda operates on its own rules in a lot of ways. " Well, that's how we do it around here."

SK: The fuckin' white audience! *[laughter]* Everyone is so financially dependent - or a lot of us are so financially dependent, inherited.

MIA: Yeah. Yeah. And I would imagine the white funders too, right?

RADHIKA: Unhygienic slash unsafe environmental conditions. A lot of theaters are just really dirty, but some are industrial spaces because of real estate issues, and so there's actually like cancer. Like there are neighborhoods where theaters exist in, and that there's, you know, there's a lot of unsafe spaces that expose people to diseases.

MIA: Yeah.

LEEANN: Instability. Both in terms of, housing specifically in the Bay, and then also the nature of like freelance life, not always knowing where, like it kind of comes to the blacklisting concern, but just like never knowing what's gonna be next.

J JHA: You know, I think it's a harm or violence, I think it's not a condition, but tokenism. Where you know, especially because we are an art community, we know how to pretend. And so, you know, standing up for causes that we don't believe in, starting projects that will lead to way more investment than we're actually ready to commit, boosting our resume. So, all that's violence.

MIA: Yes, for sure. Any other things you wanna add? Okay. Oh, go ahead.

RAY: Oh, just under harm and violence, I think both microaggressions and silencing.

MIA: Definitely.

RADHIKA: A lack of a, like an HR person, like in the other, like somebody you can report harm too.

MIA: Yeah, there's not?

RADHIKA: No, I mean if you didn't report it then it's, you're afraid of the whole blacklisting thing that you were talking about because there's not a, yeah, that HR person.

MIA: Yeah.

FENNER: All the different points of entry. Everyone is coming from such different places and like accessibilities. Some people are able to be performers because [00:24:45] they have family money that allows them to have an artist lifestyle and do trainings and all that stuff. And other people are like working four, five jobs supporting a family and like fitting enough time. So there's so many different levels of investment and access.

MIA: Yeah. I wanna also- and people can continue to name harm stuff, but I also want think about what are some conditions for transformative justice? And also if you have examples of transformative justice, right? It could be things like other artistic directors who can ally, who understand transformative justice. It doesn't have to just be full blown interventions, right? But then what are some of the conditions that we would need to make that possible? And just in general, what can help to make transformative justice possible?

NINA: Condition: time to do it.

MIA: Would be nice. Sarah.

SARAH ROSE: Systems of accountability for those in power positions on top. So not just the board, but 360 amount of accountability for behaviors and workplace environment.

MIA: Wow, what would it take to get that done? That would be amazing? Yeah.

SARAH: Perhaps like a shared values system, naming a set of values and practices and principles that as a theater community we're holding ourselves accountable to.

MIA: Yeah. Yeah. Like a UN or something for theater communities. Except not as terrible. Anne?

ANNE: This is a bit pie in the sky at the moment.

MIA: Yes! Do it! Sorry. *[laughter]*

ANNE: Public and governmental support for the arts so that there's more resources available and they spread around.[00:26:24]

KIM: More basic, I guess, but a shared understanding and value of transformative justice.

MIA: Yes. That would be excellent.

CLIVE: I think in adjunct to that is a shared understanding of what harms are.

MIA: Yes. That's very real.

KIERAN: To bounce off both of those, I was just gonna say like public education.

MIA: Other things?

RAY: What I'm thinking of is something more structured than like the whisper networks that were mentioned and like a reading a while ago. Cause I feel like that's how I heard a lot of "oh, this person does this, so just don't be like alone in the rehearsal room after." And I think there might be some version of that with like equity in reprimands, but how does that translate to like different theaters and different scales and things like that?

MIA: And more institutionalized. Or more formal?

RAY: Yeah.

ANNE: Well, just piggybacking on that, what if there were a code of just theater practices? Any company members or TBA members...

LEEANN: I'm thinking of the inverse of a condition that was named with the harm, like the intimacy that is often taken advantage of in this work. There is a certain level of like

vulnerability that is often present and so maybe transforming that into like deeper relationships and a greater sense of trust.

MIA: Definitely.

LEEANN: Like that I think is unique about-

MIA: And that is a great condition that you can use. Yeah. Fenner and then Sarah.

FENNER: Yeah, connecting that to like some kind of through line or ongoing connection that can occur. That's some standard for keeping a [00:28:03] community with people that we've made art with, a standard of maintaining connection after working together that keeps communication open.

MIA: Yes. Sarah and then J.

SARAH: We had talked about, as one of the conditions above, about the show above all else and kinda evaluating talent above bad behaviors, and so perhaps creating a condition in which we value the humanity in the room above all.

MIA: What a concept! Yeah. I love that. J.

J JHA: Yeah. I think I'm just gonna bring it back, I think not just inside the room, but also outside to be having a community centered existence rather than show centered or a career centered existence. What do you want to thrive?

MIA: Yeah.

VALERIE: I don't know how to do this exactly, but a way to speak about harm without feeling consequence of being, "oh, that's a complainer, that person's a difficult person." So I don't know what to call that or how that looks, but being able to say I'm uncomfortable or I'm in pain, or whatever it is, without having to feel like you're the difficult one who's going to get-

SARAH ROSE: I dunno exactly how to say this, but I think so much of theater is passed down as like apprentice learning. And so there's something about generational gaps that formed after that kind of period of apprenticeship where it's " And you're off! And then you're off and then you're kind of just natural [00:29:42] separation, I think, in many ways. And learning how we can keep in conversation with respect generationally. What would it look like to stay in conversation with those older and younger than us at the same time?

MIA: And that kinda generational space too. Yeah. Yeah. Any others?

NINA: Companies taking responsibilities for past harms, and being willing to admit it and apologize.

MIA: Just so easy. [*laughter*]

RAY: I think- can I add a point on?

MIA: Yes.

RAY: I feel like there are many smaller companies that are sort of around for a small period of time and then go away and close but have still had an impact. And then there are also larger houses that have been around for a long time but people changeover very quickly. But what does it mean to address what was done 5, 10, 20 years ago? Especially when like senior level, like artistic directors or executive directors have changed over, which I don't think that's unique to theater, but I think there's such a high changeover in theater and in the arts because it's not sustainable unless you have means for a lot of people.

MIA: Well, and also you know one thing that we do sometimes- I've done many times in interventions- is create timelines and I wonder if how, like a timeline, I mean, I don't know, but you know where everybody goes in and just what are the things that have popped up around this kinda settling in terms of harm, right? Or violence? What are the major points? And then the little points in between. Definitely. That oftentimes get forgot about. Right? They're just swept under the rug. And then, cause there's high turnover that nobody ever, nobody even knows happened.

RAY: Or, yeah. It's not in the institutional knowledge and conversation anymore.

MIA: It's not. And [00:31:21] what if there was a place where we could just map it out and then maybe start to see some patterns?

RAY: What is community and what are clear lines of accountability? Like not just within Cal Shakes, but to all these different communities that we want to work with or we think we're a part of, or- Cuz there's so many in the Bay Area, but... So I think that's where things get lost sometimes. If this harm was done five or 10 years ago, and it's not in the institutional knowledge, but like those ripple effects are still happening in different communities that we may not have the strongest tie with. Because accountability will have been taken that number of years ago if we don't have that relationship anymore.

MIA: Yeah. Is there anybody else you wants to add to this before we move on? Yeah.

SK: Two things. I just feel like some like general knowledge around like harm and institutional harm and like historical harm and trauma. So that when stuff does come up there's like some pieces for it for understanding maybe. And then I would also say a culture of consent and a culture of like conversation. I feel like a lot of theaters say that's what we're about or that's what our art is about. But in terms of having the difficult convo with that difficult person, regardless of like kind of where you are in relationship to them rarely happens and often is cautioned against.

MIA: Thank you all.

We can keep on visiting this but I do recommend people take a second and at some point next session, whatever. But just to keep starting to think about if you were gonna do this right, working on TJ in the Bay Area theater community, we might start looking at some of [00:33:00] these things and saying, okay, are there any things that we can do about this?

Right? Because it's not only just full blown intervention that TJ is. Some of it might be shifting some of these conditions, some of it might be just intervening to some of these smaller things that are not necessarily like full blown severe violence, but are definitely harm and violence in themselves.

MUSIC BREAK

TIERRA: Mia worked with the SEED group -that 4 person organizing team I was part of- to draft detailed fictional case studies our training cohort could use to practice applying TJ. This is a core method of the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective- to make time to practice how we might respond when we encounter harm, violence, and abuse, ideally before they happen, though we know they're happening all the time, so that when we're confronted with them, we are prepared to skillfully intervene.

In the first case study, the SEED group drafted, we imagined being approached by Laura, an actor, very new to the Bay Area theater scene. She's rehearsing her first show with a very prestigious company, Oakland Repertory Theater, or ORT. Laura's director Vincent is nationally renowned and well respected locally for [00:34:39] championing initiatives in equity, diversity, and inclusion in theater. Laura confides in us though that in the rehearsal room, Vincent's using abusive tactics in his directing. It's gotten so bad that when Laura wakes up, she dreads going into work, but recognizes that this opportunity at ORT could make her career here in her new home.

The training cohort broke out into small groups with printout copies of the case study. Our task: planning a community-led transformative justice response to Vincent's abuse of Laura.

Mia offered us a place to start: map out the relationships between the folks surviving, perpetrating, and witnessing the harm, plus their surrounding communities. It felt exciting and daunting. Who might we call on to form a pod to help meet the needs of the survivor? Who all are close enough to the harmer that we could call on them to form his accountability pod? Who might be able to get inside that closed fist?

VALERIE: I think we started by going, okay, who are the people? So this was Lisa's no, sorry. This is Vincent's sort of side, like people who seemed more allied are connected to Vincent, and then the blue was people who seemed more allied and connected to Laura and then the yellow were sort of institutions. And in some cases the institution had a person connected to it.

ERIC: Uh-huh. And we tried to place them kind of visually on the page, like to sort of geolocate them on the page in terms of their proximity to each other and relationships to each other.

SARAH ROSE: And we did that also [00:36:18] using stars, hearts, or x's. X's is a broken relationship. Star is a professional relationship, and a heart is like a close relationship.

MIA: Nice.

SARAH ROSE: Some people have two hearts.

ERIC: So we were, I guess we were operating from the point of view that Veronica was the "you." So we just assigned that role to you. Is that right?

RADHIKA: Yeah.

VALERIE: Yeah. By naming Veronica as the "you," we were then also looking at ourselves and where we would place ourselves in the different groups. Cause I remember Eric, you saying that you felt you should be on Vincent's team. Yes. See, you're, you were the accountability leader for Vincent's team.

ERIC: I did.

SARAH ROSE: So we also, we named the incidences of violence over here. We talked about what Laura's goals, or what accountability might look like for Laura. We talked

about different responses of harm from the case study. We went through what the goals might be for an accountability process, and we kind of went through some steps to get moving, which is what kind of where we talked about Eric's potential role and Radhika's role, and we talked about potentials for backlash, what that could look like, and what we would need to go through this process.

And then we also identified who would be watching some casting.

RADHIKA: And did we, we also talked about who's the harmer or who's the one who should go through the TJ process? Is it actually Vincent the individual? Or is it actually the theater? Is it ORT? And we discussed that in, in length.

ERIC: I think what, part of what we were talking about was just the case study seemed to offer an opportunity to enroll institutions into the [00:37:57] work. Yeah. Just because of their responsibility as the hiring agent and and creating these spaces where this harm was taking place. And just that whatever that responsibility comes from being the employer.

MIA: Yeah.

ERIC: And so we were really interested in that. I mean, I was struck by, for instance, how few, like relatively few blue post-its there are to the orange post-its. Just understanding this notion of Laura being an outsider and having come into this community recently.

VALERIE: I remember leaving feeling really like we, another conversation we had was we really couldn't see a way out for her where she wouldn't get blacklisted in some way. And I remember that being really sad. Like there was really no, we couldn't find that, so.

ERIC: You know, I was trying to hold the individuals centered in the conversation, but also I kept coming back with this notion that actually it's the institutions that if we can actually, if we can somehow move like an organization like Oakland Rep to recognize their role in the kind of perpetuation of these relationships.

MIA: Yeah.

ERIC: Right? That, you know, if there was a way to convince them that they had to fund, for instance, the TJ process. Because there's, I think, so much sensitivity at the institutional level right now around this kind of harm happening in their walls. And it seems like it's not that it's impossible to change behavior of someone like Vincent, but it seems like there's more capacity or potential around changing the behavior of the institutions.

MIA: Yeah.

SARAH ROSE: Yeah. And we did decide that Oakland Rep should fund, they should give space and snacks, like whatever the process is, should, they should be an integral part of, even if they themselves are not centered in the TJ process, cuz they couldn't really figure out exactly what that would look like.

ERIC: Yeah.

SARAH ROSE: But making sure that they were the kind of supporters of it, [00:39:36] not just financially, but in terms of personnel and just had complete buy-in, felt really integral to, not only Vincent and Laura, but just this entire ecosystem healing.

MIA: Thanks y'all. How was it in general for you all to do this?

SMALL GROUP: Fun.

MIA: Excellent that it was fun.

ERIC: There was a lot of self-examination happening at the same time. Going okay, who's this person based on? [laughter]

RADHIKA: The case is very close to home. It's very close to home.

MIA: Yeah. Yeah. There's no case study that never hits close to him. Like it's, cuz it's always all happening all the time, right?

RADHIKA: Yeah. Yeah.

MIA: So I'm wondering if there's questions from other folks to this group or now we can just open it up if you all had questions from last time to different groups or things that you know, you've marinated on and feel like you wanna share.

TIERRA: One only question that comes up for me that I'm especially hearing from y'all's group is that- this is my group's map- and like one thing that we did where you see the little like eyes we tried to then map like who have been bystanders to harm. And that includes thinking about okay, what does it mean for an ORT to hold a process? And the way we mapped it is a lot of people in ORT who have been bystanders and enablers of the harm. And so we definitely spent a lot of time in the tension and the thickness of who would we feel like we could trust.

That definitely was a place where like of a lot of discomfort and I'll say for myself, like mistrust and like really not sure about who should hold this and like why. How to be hopeful also, frankly. Engaging the institution and then holding the process. So like that tension I'm curious about other people's thoughts around?

ERIC: The thing that I [00:41:15] wrestle with a lot is actually this notion that there's a collective active bystanding, right? I think that in many instances of harm happening within the theater community, many people know about it. And we just don't have spaces where we can talk about it or we feel like we can talk about it. We maybe may not be surprised, but I think it would, people would find it surprising how much information is out there in the world. Whether in the form of a whisper network or, I mean, I think there are artistic directors who talk to each other who are like, yeah, don't hire that person. Right? And so that's also another thing entirely. So like we're all, I mean, I think part of it is about trying to own our responsibility in this and complicitness in it. I think there's immense potential for this kind of change happening within the field, because we are a kind of microcosm and because I think a lot of us have been either participant in or victim of, or harmed by, you know, these kinds of behaviors.

And we all know what it is. Like we all know it in some form or another. And I just and that's an extraordinary thing to, I think, hold.

J JHA: I look at this chart and I see Laura having- you, the you person is Laura's friend and I look at Vincent's side and who is the, or who is the instrument of change that we are trying to bring about. And I see the circle around Vincent and I don't find anyone who really has an emotional hook on Vincent who can actually understand Vincent, who Vincent can say, "I hear you. You had my back so I can open myself and see what's going on here."

RAY: Well, I think there are people who are [00:42:54] personal supports to Vincent, but I think, and this obviously happens within like many communities, including like Bay Area theater community, it's like friendships and business partnerships are really intertwined. And so it's like personal relationship, business relationship. A lot of bystanding going on along with that.

Like how we mapped that out is we drew like friendship and support and also harm and also like business relationships and a lot of people have like multiple colors. Cuz I think it's one of those things where it's like who are the people who are already in people's lives, who are supporting them and what are all the other things that are going on with that? Who are the people who you can actually tap into a process in a way that's going to be supportive and keep the work moving forward. And who are the people who are maybe personal supports to them and actually don't want the work to move forward in a

certain way? Or there has to be other work that is done before they're able to tap in, in that kind of way.

CLIVE: It seems to me Billy would be a very important person to be in that circle because he's a cis man. I just think it takes that kind of allyship to move accountability forward or it would for a Vincent.

SARAH: One thing I've been thinking, with a process like TJ taking a lot of time in conjunction with a, or I guess maybe indirect, like conflict with a process like theater and with someone like Vincent who goes from theater to theater and doesn't necessarily stay in one place, so causing harm in one theater and then leaving right after opening to go somewhere else: there's not [00:44:33] as much accountability to that community or a feeling necessarily of accountability to that community because Vincent isn't in that community all of the time every day. And how you kind of hold those two things together.

MIA: Yeah.

KIERAN: Bouncing off that, that really resonated with me, what Eric was saying about using it as an opportunity, not necessarily for Vincent's transformation, but for the transformation of the community and for the organization at ORT and the larger theater community as a whole, using this instance. Less opportunity for individual transformation and more for collective.

SK: Yeah I found, at least in our process, I found myself like we didn't even get to the like accountability process and like putting people in the place. And I think I was part of the, you know, my energy was like, let's slow down, let's slow down in some ways cuz I was like, where do we even start?

Like what is step one type the deal? But I do think it's useful to see it big picture, so then kind of work towards that. So just a reflection there. But yeah, I don't know. I also think like the whole structure of theater is enabling. The time crunch that people are under requires like this extreme power dynamic where like actors have to perform and get from A to B in this tiny amount of time. And if they don't then they're like not behaving well or something like, yeah, time and money is like, what is driving so much of these relationships. I just think about Laura and like how little power she has in relationship to entire systems, like enabling that [00:46:12] kind of behavior.

ERIC: I mean, I think we do have examples of emotional manipulation in the theater and it's almost any rehearsal room I've ever sat in. On some level, right, there are very concrete examples that are built into training and practices like the Stanislavski method,

or you look at Bill Ball. Like there's all of this stuff in there that is really about trying to trigger a kind of emotional response and vulnerability.

MIA: Yeah.

KIERAN: One thing just about the institution of theater too is realizing that power dynamic starts in the audition room, before we get to rehearsal. I was auditioning actors for a show a couple weeks ago and just feeling so icky about the fact that I am given the agency to choose who I want to work with, but there's no real like system in place for- to communicate with the actors and be like, this is what I'm about, do you wanna work me as well? [*clapping*]

So just finding ways to initiate equal agency from the beginning, from the hiring process, would be a way to ensure that those power dynamics are not abused within the rehearsal group later.

RADHIKA: Yeah, with the, I mean, such a other professions don't have a three minute interview where you're judged depending on, you know. Especially like a person like Laura, right? Like your union status matters and you're going into a big house to audition and then, or how you go through that process the first time you're working, you know, with a big house, all of those things. And we have this three minutes or that one reversal process. This is extremely important work to do, which to name those specific instances and just say, what are the kinds of things that happen? I think it [00:47:51] is important to be specific.

J JHA: The other thing that stands out is, and again, anchoring it really large on what does Laura want, that is the most important thing. But also remembering that and talking about ORT and institutions like this who stand by, what happens is changing the person doesn't change the practice.

Vincent can be replaced by many other misogynist you know, specimens of whatever. Change that we must have in this work, or not, can come in, and ORT can keep funneling them to keep coming in and doing that. And many more Lauras will go by who don't have the capacity to fight that, and they will just, you know, do this and this go away.

So there, for a Laura, there are like thousands went by without complaining anything.

RAY: I think that's where a large part of the problem is people, not just directors, but also actors and other folks like hopping from like place to place is like, where are the feedback loops? And so what- and if there's a feedback loop also, like what is like the

power dynamic that's in play there and everything? It's not like you're working at one office place where there's like an HR person or like regular check-ins or anything like that. So I think it's looking at, well, yes, okay, so like the entire theater industry or community needs to change, but what is the way that we can do that through a specific accountability process? Or like what are the doors that can open up?

And that was something that we were looking at. Like we had this box up here in the corner where it's creating community to stay involved and updated- or a way community can stay involved and updated. And I don't think we had figured this out. And I think it was [00:49:30] also like we were not sure exactly what Laura wanted.

But it was like, okay, well do we have an email address where people can also be like, "Hey, this happened to me." Or like a Google voice line that's set up where people can disclose what they want to in a way that can be anonymous or not to people who are like ready and signed up to receive all of that instead of just like disclosing to a whisper network.

Is there a community meeting where people can come and actually like talk about this stuff? Because I think that's where it is. Okay. Let's talk about Vincent, let's talk about the theater institution. Let's talk about like the larger thing. Cause I feel like that is the door that needs to be opened up.

KIM: Yeah. Just to follow on that and kind of what SK is saying too is it's the naming of the things and it's the bringing together, but it's also then the education of the community. Cuz we can talk all we want about, you know, these incidences of harm, power dynamics of how theater works. But that's coming from like the education and knowledge and history that we all have. And a lot of the community doesn't even have that so far. They don't even like really see the problem. And they don't have that education for that, or, you know, they're so used to the systems that they live in. So to me, like a lot of it is having more community meetings or like sharing of just this understanding in the first place. Which I think a lot of people, as soon as you hear it, you go "oh, right." But until you get that, you're not gonna, you don't notice, you're gonna continue living in that system of harm.

ERIC: Part of this process for me a little bit is trying to separate, right, what of this is the practice of theater, which comes in all different shapes and sizes and you know? And what of this is simply just abusive behavior, you know? And trying to [00:51:09] understand like where the gray area is and really focusing on that. Cause then there are some places where it's very clear it's one thing or the other. And then there's this gray area that I think is where we often get into the most trouble.

FENNER: Yeah. I think the thing that I hunger for as an actor that sometimes finds myself in a position where there's tension, right? There's this implicit consent that if we accept the part, that we accept the process and that we accept the power dynamic. And that's after that, it's well, you're in this ride and you've strapped in and you have to stay there. And I think what I hunger for is some kind of vocabulary or toolbox for actors, for people who are under these folks that are like running this whole circus to say " Hey, what is this tension?" in a way that's not indicting, that's not saying " oh, you're against the process." But there's just no tools there in a lot of ways for an actor to call time out without it becoming this huge thing.

And then also I think that most processes don't begin with enough information about what might happen. And you think about like weight training or athletes, there are all these things in place to get out in a safe way. And actors are not really, we're not given those tools in our training, and you know, even in ensemble work, that give us this like safety net. It's a systematic thing that, that if actors, if there was this like, universal thing that we could call like *parole*, you know, in the rehearsal room and say " Hey, we need to take a moment and be people to each other" in a way.

NINA: To add to [00:52:48] everything we're saying too, I find also the issue is when Laura does finally say, "oh I'm Laura, I'm gonna say something." It's like, you mentioned it once, a reaction to somebody calling out harm: "well, no, you're actually not being harmful. You're being aggressive or you're doing this. Now it's on Laura." And now she's looking like she's the aggressor when all Laura's trying to do is watch her own back and help her community. And that now places a problem. So it's just like a huge risk.

J JHA: And that's the situation that an actor faces when they walk into an audition room.

SMALL GROUP: Yeah.

J JHA: That if you raise a doubt on, "wait no minute, what are you doing?" It's a, "oh, there's a problem. Oh, you're not in the creative process. Oh!" And the institution, which is sitting behind watching this process happen, the actor implicitly thinks, "oh, you all know, cuz this must have happened before to the previous actor who came in the room. So this is happening in front of you so you all know that this is okay. So I'm not, this is not just my problem, but it's, and it's not just me and the director. It's me and all of you sitting over here thinking that's okay. While I'm thinking what's going on with me right now. And "Oh wow." So that in itself is a lot of power in the room, which is already stacked up, whether you are writer- Where is the conflict of opinion going to even start?

MIA: Right.

J JHA: When you're just like sitting and watching this huge tower standing in front of you asking you to do these 500 things. And there's not a single person who's looking at you and saying, "are you okay? Is everything okay? Is this process fine?" Nobody says that at all. Everybody is " yep, you're three minutes are up. Bye-bye."

RADHIKA: I have had an experience of mentioning to people over the last three years who've been friends with a person and their first thing is, "oh, really? They're such a nice person." And the [00:54:27] truth is that's the way life is . Like good people do harm. [*clapping*]

I mean, you know, and I have done harm and I consider myself a good person. It happens a lot to people of color: " am I imagining this?" You know? And so I feel like Laura is in that place where I don't even know that from the case study, if she knows what, she knows how she feels and she's using everybody as a sounding board, but nobody's really coming back with you are a hundred percent right, this is wrong. And that's the importance of that community around. But we're often just stuck in the, am I imagining this or am I, is this too much for me to ask? You know, to be treated.

MIA: Yeah I saw some other hands. Just jump in.

KIERAN: One thing I appreciate about this so much was the inclusion of Cam in this, because I think we have to acknowledge the rehearsal process. It's not just about how directors address actors, it's anyone subordinate, ASNs, PAs, assistant directors, anyone who is in a position where they are of a lower agency or lower power in the room is vulnerable to that kind of abuse.

SK: I'll just add on: I think because of capitalism, the entire way theater functions like the production team, the like behind the scenes is like in an appease trauma response. It is 100% of the time, how do we make this work? As opposed to like, how do we address this like head on, how do we actually pause? How do we like, you know what I mean? It's like you can't stop, there's this- yeah. So I think even if I think about all the times, you know, we hear about shit after it has [00:56:06] happened because the fucking stage manager didn't wanna stop, you know? Or didn't think they could stop. Or " Hey, actually this actor had a fit backstage and made someone else feel really unsafe."

You know what I mean? We hear about that like a month later or something because they were like, "contain the situation and keep it going." You know what I mean? That is the goal as opposed safety.

TIERRA: I don't remember any of our groups managing to design a full step-by-step intervention plan for Laura and Vincent in the time we had in the workshop that day. But we certainly learned a lot. Including that we needed more practice

MUSIC BREAK

MIA: What we're gonna do is literally map and rank out different types of harm, violence, and abuse. What I want you all to do first is to take a post-it and write the numbers from one to 10, 10 at the highest, one at the lowest, and put them down. You'll have different color post-its, and then everybody can just take some time to just write down any type of harm, violence, or abuse.

They could be real things from the theater community, if you want to write those things down. They can just be general things, write it down, [00:57:45] whatever you want to. And then we'll start placing them on the page. However, at whatever level you think. You just have between one to 10, so please don't make like negative numbers and more. I mean you can, but it kind of defeats the purpose. Like either way you're gonna have to rank them so. And then you will place your post-its notes wherever you think that the harm is.

Now, what I have seen people do that I think is also really useful is some people put their one to 10 in the middle. And they have one side for state violence and one side for interpersonal slash intimate violence. You can do that too. You can do it all together if you want to. But this is just a good way for us all to start talking about what is harm? How bad are these harms? What are the ones that we feel like are between a one and a three, for example, versus ones that are a four to an eight, for example. Right?

And so how do we then begin to think about all of the conversation we're having this morning? How do we begin to think about what we might need to actually build and do and practice in order to be able to respond to some of these forms of harm and violence? Right? Are there questions about what we're about to do? Okay.

ERIC: So nuclear war is like a 10.

MIA: Sure if you wanna start your 10 at nuclear war, you go for it Eric. And you see what happens. Yes. [*laughter*] I mean that in a genuine way.

If we count off- no, I'm just gonna have you select your own groups. Practice consent. You all can handle it. If you can't handle getting into groups [00:59:24] by yourself, you're not gonna be able to do TJ. [*laughter*]

Here's some paper. Three pieces of paper for each group. I'm gonna give you markers. You all find groups.

GROUP CHATTER: That was me handling, like offering...

Would you like to be together?

Yeah, sure.

Sure.

KIM: So what does it say? State? Oh, state.

RADHIKA: I said state. "Lion died to environmental damage." I don't know how to like,

KIM: So let's,

RADHIKA: like climate change is not real.

KIM: Yeah. Yeah.

RADHIKA: Amazon's not burning, you know, that kind of thing that happens, but it actually, it's killing people. Usually poor folks.

KIM: Well, not even the immediate killing, but it's going to kill all of us.

RADHIKA: Well, for sure.

NINA: Right. Yeah.

RADHIKA: Or even I mean, even people losing their homes, right? Or Hurricane Katrina or Paradise, California. There's always, it always involves bigger institutions and states ignoring things for years.

SK: Yeah.

NINA: Should I move this here? I don't wanna move anyone's post without permission.

KIM: Physical assault was one because like physical assault could be like a slap. Right? Or it can also be like a, like severe assault?

RADHIKA: I feel like gaslighting is psychologically so harmful.

NINA: Exactly.

RADHIKA: That for me personally, it's so high up because those are the little steps that then lead to a person's complete disbelief in themselves.

NINA: It can be sometimes worse than what they're being gaslit over.

RADHIKA: Yeah.

NINA: Because it's more constant. It makes them doubt in every aspect of their life. Yeah.

RADHIKA: Right.

NINA: Would you put it on multiple levels?

RADHIKA: Yes. Because we have multiple post-its too for gaslighting.

NINA: Right, yeah. So,

KIM: So you can put it pretty high up, but then we can also have 'em down here as, you know, small incidences.

SK: Maybe up by six, does that sound right? Seven?

NINA: Or it could it be next to torture or [01:01:03] near this realm? Because isn't that a form of torture to make somebody doubt every part of their psyche?

SK: I feel like yeah, gaslighting is a tool that has the potential to be torturous. Yeah...

TIERRA: I want to put in this place. And then I also, yeah, want to put genocide.

KIERAN: Yes.

ANNE: I'd say that's a 10.

FENNER: I'm gonna write down assault.

KIERAN: Yeah.

TIERRA: Physical-

FENNER: Physical assault. Here. And then sexual assault above it. Higher on the?

TIERRA: That's where I would put it.

VALERIE: Then a verbal assault is a threat?

J JHA: Yeah. Verbal assault threat.

VALERIE: Which is above those.

J JHA: Yeah. Yeah.

VALERIE: Can you add the word threat to that as well? Verbal assault-

TIERRA: Slash threat or?

FENNER: Yeah. This is making, this is maybe not in the right place anymore I feel like. Is sexual assault worse than a robbery? Yeah. Or verbal assault?

TIERRA: It's so subject-, it's cause, yeah. A subjective category.

FENNER: Yeah. Cause you're like robbing and you have a job, or...

TIERRA: Yeah, indeed. Right. It's not I think, yeah. I think that about violence also where like in terms of folks who feel entitled to use violence to do what they want. If it's physical, it's more stigmatized than if it is, for example, people at fucking Wells Fargo doing what they do, hurting so many people. But like somehow they're seen as less violent, even though it's- Yeah. And I think about that a lot in terms of that stigma that somehow doing things with your, yeah, like with your body is- you get more dehumanized than if you are further from physically enacting violence...

NINA: We have sexual harassment.

J JHA: Yeah. Shouldn't it be over here?

UNIDENTIFIED: One for every [01:02:42] line?

TIERRA: Yeah.

MIA: Some things that might have stood out to you that were hard from challenging? Yeah.

SARAH: One, one thing that we talked about in our group, and I think were struggling with a bit, was these kind of large theme "isms" that then contain so much violence within it and trying to break those down and scaling those.

MIA: Yes.

SARAH: Because those like the "isms" feel so large on the scale and then all of the things inside of it range.

MIA: Yeah.

SARAH: That was difficult.

MIA: Yeah, absolutely. And I noticed this group had a systems breakout like section over the time.

KIM: Helpful! Cause we couldn't decide what to do with that. So we made it its own section.

SARAH: Oh look at that! Okay. Cool.

MIA: Any other folks? Things that were challenging for you or surprising as you were doing this?

RADHIKA: We had to get specific. Like that was, that became, cuz we were like theft. What kind of theft, right. Or even things like what's a number for one person? Like for me, anything to do with being an immigrant is I'm going to put it on a eight or nine.

MIA: Totally.

RADHIKA: May not, maybe a one or two for somebody else.

MIA: Yeah.

KIM: Also the difference between the same type of harm, but whether it's at a state or interpersonal level and how much that changes if it's on a state level versus just one person.

RADHIKA: Right.

KIM: Yeah.

MIA: Did anybody struggle with like how to value each and every one of these things, but also acknowledge that there is a difference? Like everything can't be everything-

CLIVE: Yes, we had that-

MIA: -everything can't be a 10, but everything can be a te- you know what I mean?

CLIVE: But everything can be a 10. Yeah. No, we definitely struggled with that.

MIA: But there's real differences. Yeah. Do you all wanna speak to that?

CLIVE: Well, we also wound up with like very little [01:04:21] in the state-

MIA: The first one?

CLIVE: What did we say?

ERIC: It's a similar thing across state, institutional...

SARAH: ...like the systems and state policy...

CLIVE: ...sponsored or enabled by the state. Yeah. We found very little in the one or two range, or we were having a hard time placing it there. Then we wind with things like potholes.

[laughter] That's totally real!

ERIC: The assumption is that in that category, there's a scale of impact, right? That sort of, I think, resists the one or two.

MIA: Right. Right.

J JHA: And I feel that part of this exercise, while it was done, very conducive human spirit when crisis really attacks us, the one to 10 can become super muddy.

MIA: Very muddy. Yes. Very fast.

J JHA: So when I'm getting sexually harassed on the street, when I'm physically, personally going through that, kindly ask me one to 10 then.

MIA: Right.

J JHA: Tell me what- it's also that.

MIA: And especially when that could escalate really fast to a hate violence kind of thing. Or murder. Absolutely.

RADHIKA: We also talked about gaslighting, that came up for us. Is it a one, is it a five? Is it a, you know, and just psychological violence. On a day to day basis that's "oh, that's just, you know, at least you're alive." You know, at least you're, you know, and that, and then we, and that made us question the number thing, but then we also talked about what we've been talking about since the beginning of this process, saying that's why we've gotta take the one seriously. You know? And when the one is taken seriously, then the 10 will be prevented, but we don't take the one seriously, or the two, or the three or the four. *[snapping]* So that, that got us back to believing in the numbers system. *[laughter]*

MIA: Well and again, it's what we were talking about with Clive. Like it's a both and, right? There's a number system, but there's not, but there is, but there's, you [01:06:00] know, right. Yeah.

AMANDA: One thing that was helpful for us is -just in acknowledging the numbers, cuz it was hard, like nothing was a one cuz then we're just saying it doesn't matter- is like, to think back to like the spectrum that you were saying, you know? And that it's it's hard to deal with it when you're at the top and you have to deal with it when it's at the bottom. Right? And so if we're identifying and acknowledging like the ones, twos, threes, then those are like really meaty areas for us to get into like education and resources and all of the work that really truly needs to be done. That way we're not like someone's been murdered and we have to do a thing, that it's like someone told a racist joke and we need to work on what can we do here so that it isn't you know, always at the top.

MIA: Right. Is there a lot of murder in the theater community?

RADHIKA: Oh gosh.

J JHA: I mean, of art.

MIA: Yeah. *[laughter]*

But also in the conversation we were having earlier, a lot of you all started talking about some of this stuff. That even before you got up here, right? And like how can you even- that people don't even know how to intervene, let alone, I think somebody mentioned it, like even let alone how to recognize the beginning red flags in the beginning stages. Yeah. Other folks?

LEEANN: Mia?

MIA: Leeann.

LEEANN: This exercise made me reflect on like the higher up in this system- and it's not, yeah... and it also made me realize like my own sort of like internalized hierarchy of how like violence increases from like emotional or mental to physical. Like it's, once it becomes physical that's like the next level up or something. And I think it's making me reflect on like the ways that is and is [01:07:39] not valid. And the ways that violence that isn't physical is often minimized.

MIA: Absolutely.

LEEANN: And even in this exercise we like parsed out verbal abuse versus sexual abuse versus physical abuse. And I realized oh, for me I see those as ascending harms. Not necessarily in the order I just said, but I'm reflecting on that.

MIA: Yeah, absolutely.

TIERRA: I see for the state, not a call out, but like air travel being a two. And then it's also if your island is maybe not going to be here in 40 years because of climate change. Do you feel like that's a two? But that doesn't feel violent. So noticing that and I think my discomfort with talking about ranking things, but I think yeah, a way of, as people are shifting towards what are the ones, two, three fours, what are the things that make possible these other things that we would wanna put at a ten or a nine. Just acknowledging the connection between all of these things.

MIA: Mm-hmm. .. Yeah. I know it's hard. The ranking is hard and I feel like in this work though, we also have to keep some type of perspective and standard because if we're dealing with a murder case, that is completely different than if we're dealing with something around like a microaggression.

We can hold difference, everybody doesn't have to be the same. Right. And I feel like we get stuck in that social justice. Like, in that we can't actually hold difference, even though that's like what we're fighting for, we actually can't do it. And so like, how do we hold the actual difference in severity of violence, right? The complexity of being able to respond to genocide, for example, is very different than maybe some of the things down here. And it's not to say that it would be harder or better or worse, any of that, but it's to say that it's okay to have different kind of [01:09:18] tactics, right? Different strategies to be able to respond to different types of violence.

And that everything can't be everything. In the same way that like, conflict is not abuse, right? Conflict isn't necessarily harm, but it can feel like that when you're in it, it can feel

like, "oh my God, this is the worst thing how I, there's, it's insurmountable. I have no idea how to get through this." And both, and it doesn't even make this list, right? And so like how do we then reorient our perspective as we're dealing with not only violence and harm, but the things that are out here, like conflict, misunderstandings, hurt feelings, et cetera, et cetera. Yeah.

SK: I think it's such an interesting question about this idea of what does it feel like to be in it, and then what is actually happening.

MIA: Yeah.

SK: You know what I think there's value in naming it because you know, a lot of times like, and my reference is like in anti-racism work, you know, when folks are overreacting to something and causing more harm, that is really important, right? Is oh, your experience of this moment is that you're being attacked and you're threatened. What is actually happening? Like who has the power here? What, you know, to tease out what's going on.

And like just thinking about, you know, folks who cause harm and who've been like conditioned to dominate so they're actual physical experience is one of being threatened. And also in addition to this conversation, yeah, someone like hearing a microaggression, right? When it's tapped into this like systemic invisibilizing and harm that someone has experienced like from birth, that is real harm too. You [01:10:57] know, like that in that scenario you're like, "oh, what's going on? Oh, it was just a joke." It's it wasn't just a joke, actually. This ties into what are the power dynamics? What is at play?

TIERRA: Also to like what you were saying, Nina, I feel like it's woven in just how pervasive some stuff is. And so like we don't, like our baseline of what it could mean to be alive is so fucked frankly. And also in my group putting like body shaming, interpersonal, okay, sort of like lower and for people who deal with that, how that's every day how much psychic space and like emotional space, like all that energy could be going towards so much else. Like it's a form of social control. Same with cat calling. Same with these things where it's like how all of this, these ways that it gets internalized. And something I wrote thinking about all of this that like all of these warrant a response is like part of why they're on here. And so I think that's part of even just acknowledging the seriousness of all of it. That all of this warrants some kind of support intervention.

MIA: Yeah. Well thank you all so much. And you know, another reason we do this is because people have different definitions of what is harm, what is violence, what is

abuse that are definitely culturally based as well, experience based, different societies have different understandings of it. And so it is important to talk about it together because especially in the theater community, like to talk about the things that actually happen here in the Bay Area theater community and beyond, and how you all feel about them and where you would place them on something like this, in terms of severity, in terms of what the different things you might need to be able to respond to them.

Because you know, the thing about physical violence that is so different than like emotional abuse for example, not always, but most times is [01:12:36] that there's some kind of immediate medical attention, for example, that somebody needs, right? And so we don't always have those things, right? And so like how do we also differentiate what are the different kinds of things we might need to be able to make it so that artistic directors behave differently, or stage managers can behave differently, or that, you know, actors can be able to say, I don't feel comfortable with that. Right? Knowing that consent is actually really fucking complicated and not as easy as saying yes or no. Right? Which we practice like day two, I think.

And that so many people even have problems saying yes or no to people they like, let alone people that are, have power for them.

MUSIC BREAK

TIERRA: In addition to readings and videos from the abolitionist antiviolence movement, Mia assigned us an ongoing exercise: pick a low-stakes behavior we would like to change and make a plan with a partner about how to support each other in making our chosen changes. How and how often we would check in with each other, what should our partner do if we're not making progress, what should they do if we are—we were asked to get really detailed. This exercise drove home in a personal way how difficult it can be to shift patterns even when we really want to.

Mia connected all this to the work of being part of an accountability pod supporting someone who's caused harm. Here's our group, connecting our personal experiments with two [01:14:15] resources: a testimony called "Surviving and Doing Sexual Harm: A Story of Accountability and Healing," from the Creative Interventions Toolkit, and a panel from Building Accountable Communities: A National Gathering on Transforming Harm called "What Is Accountability?"

MIA: What helped you change your behavior if you were able to change it even in small ways? If you weren't, why? What stopped you? What could have helped? Right.

And then we were gonna talk about in the What is Accountability? panel, when RJ talks about how he had to learn how to quote, "to move in really close" with folks who have been called out for harm or violence, "my knee-jerk reaction was to act like I didn't know that person. I wanted to be with the good people. I had to learn how to break out of that for the sake of safety, accountability, and everything I believe in."

That's a core competency that I hope we can continue to build. What does this teach us and or reinforce about what we've learned regarding accountability and how accountability happens, as well as how does this relate to the BATJC's concepts of pods?

And we can jump in wherever. Yeah.

CLIVE: What is starting to shift for me in my own accountability process with my glorious accountability partner- thank you- is the idea that self-care is accountability. Accountability is self-care. And how that showed up in this person's story, that's something that they came around to understanding. And that's something that, it may have been you on the panel video that said the accountability process is like you [01:15:54] giving me the opportunity to live in alignment with my own values.

And what happened in my own partner practice is that I really want to do a good job with Sarah. Right? I really want to like, yes, I did my practice like I said I would, Sarah. I'm really being a good boy today. You know, like that over and over again, instead of what's starting to shift for me is " oh, actually though, Clive, doing your 10 minutes of meditation every morning before you leave the house or before you start work is good for you."

It's not just " okay, now Sarah thinks I did a good job."

SARAH ROSE: We're trying to tell you every day, babe. *[laughter]*

MIA: But that's a really important shift to get to. Because that's what we wanna get to, right?

CLIVE: Yeah. Yeah.

MIA: So that it's not because somebody tells you to do something, because that's how we also start to build our own moral compasses inside of ourselves. Right? It shouldn't have to be that somebody else has to tell you or that the person who was harmed has to tell you what to do.

GROUP CHATTER: Yeah.

SARAH: Something that resonated with me in the panel, and also then reflected in the story is that when you're working on and practicing being accountable to others, you're also working on and practicing self-accountability. And that those two things are in concert with one another. And just like the importance of that, that you can't be accountable. And you've said this 1 trillion times, Mia, so it was just like-

MIA: My work here is done. [*laughter*]

SARAH: -reinforcing what you've said and what we've been talking about. But to even like in the story that this person spent so much time practicing his own self-accountability and how like that manifested for him in a lot of isolation, but then that allowed him to get to a point where he could be accountable to others.

MIA: Yeah.

SARAH: And so like then reflecting that on my own self-accountability practice, which has not been going well and being like, okay, I gotta step that up, right. To like really be like grounded in this work. I can't just choose one and be like, I know how to do accountability because I can practice it for someone else but can't practice it for myself.

MIA: Right. And Philly stands up, remember they talked a lot about that, how sometimes in their processes it would be like helping somebody find a place to live or get a job or what have you. And that those pieces were not only important because it's like you can't really be involved in an accountability process if you don't have a place to live. But also as a part of their own self-accountability, like they have to learn how to take care of themselves to be able to be accountable.

SARAH: It just really redefined it for me because I think we use, and by we, I mean like society uses accountability and like wanting to ask people to be accountable for things. So that's such a quick thing to call for and that no one's really trying to be accountable to themselves first.

MIA: Yes.

RAY: Because that's not measurable-

SARAH: It's so much harder.

RAY: You know what I mean? It's, I feel like it's something we've been talking about a little bit that's come up, or that I've been thinking on too, are what are the accountability systems that I've been socialized to have or that have been promoted like, did you do your homework? Did you study enough to get a grade on this test? Did you fulfill this

box? Are you going in for a review and you've moved your marker from, you got a three out of five and now you're a four out of five? But what are the ways that you can measure being accountable to yourself and how do you prove that? You can't really, or not in ways that are quantifiable?

So I feel like we don't, a lot of people like don't value it in a capitalist society, you know?

MIA: But I also think if you have your own values, principles, and practices that can help become benchmarks.

RAY: Right.

MIA: But people don't have those either.

RAY: Right. And it's, I mean, I'm not saying that is how things should be, but I feel like that's all the work that we have to do to build it up in ourselves and what we should be going towards.

MIA: We're gonna do it. I saw hands press somebody's hand over here. Yeah.

SK: Two thoughts. One, I was really struck in this story just like I had a really like emotional response to reading like how self punishing this person was and them naming that. And how they like explicitly are like, I wouldn't recommend doing it this way. [*laughter*]

Yeah, just like how much they were kind of forcing themselves to do shit. Yeah. It just makes me think of, yeah, kind of like self-accountability and like self-care work. And self love work is a key to this. So thinking about kind of also the emotional work that it takes to acknowledge that something has happened, that you've caused harm, but then also hold your own self with that softness.

And then I'm also like so aware of how much we want immediate gratification and it is impossible. It's like a impossibility. And how it's this slow steering of things. I think about insights that I've had like now, even this year from stuff that happened five, six years ago where I'm like, actually, okay you know, that's how I like would've handled that better. You know, noticing my own frustration with like folks, I want to be accountable for their behavior. And also thinking about what are the railroad tracks that will help support that person, like kind of move.

And also like it helps me adjust my own expectations for the change that I'm looking to see in the world, knowing that it won't... You know, even if out of this work comes an

accountability process, like boom. You know, like knowing that is not gonna provide instant gratification. Or adjusting my expectations for a harmer.

KIERAN: Something that I saw in here that I just hadn't really thought fully through before was that even in the story in the longer one, when even when he was talking about he had started taking accountability, he had started building a support network, he had started changing his behavior, but then he still continued harming people and harmed two others before he realized that he hadn't changed behavior enough. And just like the idea that once someone starts in this process, they're still capable of causing harm. It's not like what they've started this, they're going to go all the way through it without any more issues.

RAY: And that's like what my understanding partially of accountability is, right? It's not saying, , oh, I'm never gonna do this thing again. And you just take accountability for it and then you're done. It's saying, it's like recognizing your, it's like when we're doing our exercise, continuing to track that and be accountable for it and make progress with it. You know what I mean? And I think that's actually what is really hard is like still engaging in this behavior. And just having to keep working on it. Now you have language for what it is and like, where are you meeting your expectations and not , that's a hard spot to be in.

MIA: Yeah.

FENNER: I look forward to a world, hopefully within a few generations where it's you know, what are you accountable for? What are you accountable for today, [01:22:30] kid? And making it this thing that's not a scary thing, but it's just like you have to weed your garden, you know? And normalizing the admission of guilt and the admission that you have personal work to do.

But the spaciousness that's granted is huge. It's unfathomable, the amount of possibility you have as a human when you can accept that your life is just a series of more and more growth. And when you invite that in, that supports accountability in your own life and then can spread to other people, just normalizing the conversation.

Even in doing this, I've brought that more into like my conversations with my friends where I talk about my behavior on a thing or like I'm trying to approach a project to avoid these things that I noticed that come up when I work with interpersonal things. And yeah just normalizing that, those kinds of like self-work conversations.

MIA: I was just gonna say if people have any thoughts, especially about RJ's comment around-

ERIC: I do actually.

MIA: -that move to moving close. Yeah, go ahead.

ERIC: So right around the time I was doing the reading and watching the video, my, my old mentor Gordon commented on a Facebook post of mine. And I've been meditating on that a lot lately just about this notion of self-accountability and like you said in the video, you know, that we're all in an abusive relationship with ourselves.

MIA: Yes.

ERIC: Because a lot of this work for me started with this thing that happened with Gordon that goes all the way back to my saying to SK I think we need to lean into this and see what's going on. So, so much of this journey of this has been on some level about that, you know, and I think the thing that I'm like very vividly aware of, you know, is I reached out to Gordon shortly after that happened, but I have had zero communication with him ever since.

And that's kind of what this quote is for me a little bit [01:24:09] about, which is just because my choosing not to be in community with him has meant that I have in some ways given up access to a decade of my life, because that's kind of what he represents in many ways for me. I can't access that period of time without some element of shame, of anger. And so even the relationships that were good that came outta that period of time, I have far less access to. You know? Like it's decimated this kind of period of my life. And just trying to understand like, what does it mean if I'm not necessarily the person that caused the harm but was somehow the person that was harmed or was a bystander to harm? Like how much is it on me to try and lean into that, to reconnect, you know, is the thing that I'm thinking should I be reconnecting? And then like I stopped there. That's as far as I've gotten with that question.

RAY: If I can offer like an observation on that, it sounds like it's one of those schisms of the gingerbread person, right? Connection or healing. Or connection or safety?

CLIVE: Safety.

RAY: And that's where this like the healing piece needs to come in, but it's probably not gonna happen until you're ready for it to happen in some sort of way. You know, just identifying it as well.

KIM: Well and it's just one of the areas that like is, as we were talking about, the #MeToo movement, right? There's such a big thing in our culture of shutting out the person who's done harm. And also like in the story of like how much it immediately

helps, right? To have anybody be like, I'm still open to you even if you've done harm. Like how much that clearly helps. Like we have seen so many [01:25:48] examples of it.

And of course that's why the pods exist and that's like why the whole structure around the harmer is, that's how that works. And yet it's so hard, you know, thinking of all of our own examples of knowing people who have harmed others are trying to battle the social framework that we- that's like telling everything in you, "no, don't talk to that person."

TIERRA: Yeah. I'm not moving in really close with every single person who has caused harm or violence. That would not be appropriate for me for all kinds of reasons. But if it was my best friend, which it could be, or my lover, can I even, can I do that? I feel very energized by really talking about this stuff and like building from small. I think that makes the most sense.

MIA: That is the perfect thing to close this conversation. We're gonna wrap this conversation up, but thank you. And I just wanna be really clear, and RJ even said it in the panel, we are not saying that the survivor should be the person who moves in close. Like the whole point of accountability is that it should be somebody else who's close to the harmer so that the survivor doesn't have to do, like, can you imagine a world where like survivors don't have to be like, can someone like hold this person accountable? But instead, if somebody did some harm, the people around them would move in immediately, right? Or even better, the person who caused harm would be like calling their people in and spearheading something and saying, "I just did this thing. I really need some help. I need support. I have to take accountability." Right? And also for other people who have been harmed, maybe they're not the direct survivor, those people get to make their own decisions. And for some of them it won't make sense to step in.

For others, it might, you know, like the first story [01:27:27] that we listen to around the domestic violence case in Durham, and with the Ubuntu story, you know, she's like "my mom, for whatever reason, she was willing to talk to him. He was totally raging, but she was willing to talk." So there might be bystanders who maybe they've been harmed to, but maybe they're willing to do it, you know?

And that's totally up to them and their choices. And as we work on our own trauma and build up our own capacities, we might be able to do some of those things, even if we've also been harmed. Does that make sense? So we are building our own capacity to do it, and part of that capacity, as Tierra so beautifully talked about, is also building up our own pods and doing our own work so that we can catch things at the beginning of the graph, even before the graph in ourselves and with these folks who we're committing to.

We're, I mean, if we're loving these people and caring about them, that's a commitment. And so if they do some harm or are accused of harm, then I feel like it's part of our responsibility to then step in. You know, as a survivor, that's what I would've wanted from all the people who harmed me, but that didn't happen. You know what I mean? And that's what I hear over and over again from every survivor.

Okay, so we're gonna close. So let's just do maybe one word go around. One word, one word. You could do two if you really need it. Three if you're absolutely bursting. Just whatever's on top for you, wherever you are at. Do you mind to start us off, Ray?

RAY: Emotionally processing.

ERIC: Steady.

ANNE: Appreciative.

FENNER: Full.

J JHA: Someday.

SARAH: Full.

SARAH ROSE: Daunted.

EMILY: Full. [01:29:06]

VALERIE: Relationships, community. Those two are both like flippy floppy right now.

KIERAN: Concerned.

AMANDA: Pensive.

TIERRA: Self-accountable.

KIM: Tired, hopeful.

RADHIKA: Rest.

SK: Inquisitive and pursuing

NINA: Focused.

LEEANN: Sharing.

MIA: Grateful.

Thanks you all so much. Please be ready for the next session and know that we will be dealing with sexual harm in the case study, so do what you need to do to prepare yourself. And please come ready to spend the day working on it.

Is there any other SEED announcements or things that we need to remind people of?

ERIC: We'll be getting the case study before-

MIA: no-

ERIC: -in advance?

MIA: No. We'll read through it together.

SK: Please take leftovers, there's so much food.

SARAH: If people don't mind stacking chairs...

MUSIC BREAK

TIERRA: Our penultimate workshop day was dedicated to working on a second fictional case study drafted by the SEED Group. We imagined being approached for help by the head of a local organization serving the Bay Area theater community. That organization had recently given a highly-lauded, nationally recognized award to a well-respected local director, Chris Wong, the first time a man of color has ever received the honor. After news of the award hit the press, the organization [01:30:45] giving the award was approached by Alex, a former student of Chris's. She says that 10 years ago, when she was 18, Chris initiated a relationship with her that ended in sexual assault; that she told the directors of the theater school she attended about it, and they seemed to do nothing; and though she's tried to put it past her, seeing the name of the man who assaulted her all over social media and news outlets for winning this award has brought the memories rushing back. She doesn't want to be involved, but she does want something to happen. We imagined that after hearing from Alex, we discretely started asking after Chris's conduct with actors in his shows, and learned that he has a pattern of initiating what some call "showmances" with young women in his cast. We also heard about the significant positive impact Chris has made with his career, in an industry still hostile to artists of color.

I remember this being the hardest day of the yearlong training. At the beginning of the year, Mia had led us through a level set of standards of consent – that it must be

informed, specific, ongoing, able to be revoked at any time, and uncoerced, including by the power dynamics of a situation. Yet I remember folks in the room struggling to square that standard with what for some of us is a commonly observed dynamic of in particular cis men directors engaging in relationships with folks [01:32:24] they direct on their creative teams. What would it mean if that's a very common practice in theater spaces, and that the power dynamics inherent to those situations erode possibilities for authentic consent?

We struggled to balance how to support Chris to soften his fist, with what might most help Alex heal, and how to think of ways of responding that wouldn't get exploited under white supremacist capitalism to further reduce opportunities for artists of color. Again we grappled with - what is the difference between consequences and punishment? What does it mean to be survivor-centered, even when a survivor declines the labor of spelling that out? How do we as a community ensure that our creative spaces are places where everyone can thrive? How might a community determine amends for a harm? How do we know when someone's truly changed?

J JHA: J, all pronouns. I think one of the things that we spent as two pairs talking about was that even though it was a case study it became pretty high emotional stake kind of conversation. And the reason why it went that way is because underlying that conversation were definitions of what values, practices, and principles were coming into sort of like head on with each other and what are being prioritized and what are not being prioritized and the principles behind that decision.

So to arrive at that point where everybody feels sort of understood, heard of, [01:34:03] and looked at, it's a lot of practice. That literal practice that needs to happen in the same space with those people. So it's, this is fantastic we've done this for eight sessions, but when such an issue of conflict comes up a lot more work must go to proceed that "Oh, let's try to do this."

SK: Yeah. Well, a lot of patience in working with our group, the groups that we've had in particular, you know, eight people trying to work together to make some sort of assessment or decision or what have you.

You know, in thinking about what to do next I feel like in the group sessions that's so easy. It's "okay, talk to this person, talk to this person, do this and do this." And then in my real life, non hypothetical life, when I have encountered incidences, which have happened all the time, all throughout the year, I struggle with wanting to hold, like survivor centricity, making sure I'm survivor centric. And I would say in 90% of the instances, someone who something happened to or whatever, is just like "no, I don't

want, I don't wanna, I don't wanna do anything. Oh, actually I just wanted like space to share this with you."

Yeah. It's just like a pretty consistent no, and really respecting that.

SARAH ROSE: But also realizing how hard it was to get to okay, what does an accountability process look like, felt like, I mean, and I think Mia said this to all of us, like she would've been surprised if we had all gotten there.

But just the contrast of that hypothetical, because it was so personal and touched me at least feeling like kind of very much involved in this hypothetical versus a conversation with my friend, right? It was very easy to be like, oh, well this is the next step. And why did that feel easy? Because I was like five degrees removed from it.

LEONTYNE: Isn't that perhaps the benefit of, that there's a benefit to being five people removed from, and that's who perhaps are the best people to deal in a situation than me, and it's you when we're right here. Yeah.

AMANDA: Amanda, she/ her pronouns. I had a similar experience in the first case study and the second case study that we mapped a lot of harm and did get stuck in that. Even just in like, how do we make the key and what do the colors represent and parts mean this, or Xs mean that just felt really important cuz we all wanted to be on the same page about what stuff meant. And cuz it's like permanent marker, so it just has to look really beautiful. And then coming up with a whole lot of questions.

But then that's where we got to and just feeling like we had this whole list of questions to answer around what are we gonna do next? What does the process look like? And just not being able to get into that place. And so, but it also was hard, like I was like, I feel like I'm starting to get real good at mapping harm and I don't have any idea what happens in steps three, four, and five.

TIERRA: Tierra, she/her, they/them. Crossing the debriefs of the different questions, it's come up for me when I was talking with a partner about committing to healing and growth, like outside of the group as being really key. And I really appreciated different times when there's been a question or opportunity to reflect on how is this work affecting us? Or like actually what else might need to shift for us? Or what's an opportunity to grow to be in more alignment with this work if we're called to do it? And [01:37:21] that's something that I wanna take more time to, to think about what is the individual transformations or even just like work that's required to be able to show up in, you know, in some kind of way, especially when it is someone you're not five people removed from, when it is someone closer.

MUSIC BREAK

With that, we've reached the end of episode 5. Where do we go from here? Let's imagine a way forward together in episode 6.

For this episode's optional take-home exercise, consider making time to engage with a TJ case study. In the show notes we're linking case studies developed by the BATJC, and the theater-specific ones developed by the SEED group. If you're up for this, I recommend getting good and grounded first and regrounding as you go because it is real work to even imagine putting TJ theory to TJ practice. It's necessary, dare I say, essential work, though. Thank you for your labor.

MUSIC BED

TIERRA: Thank you for listening to The Real Work: A Podcast About Theater Culture and Transformative Justice. Please check out the show notes for the transcript and for plenty of links and resources to tide you over to the next episode drops, and please consider sharing this work with your communities.

Thank you [01:39:00] to the Center for Cultural Innovations Investing in Artists Grant, the City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program, and to Cal Shakes for initially incubating this project.

Our theme music is by Zanda of DiaspoRADiCAL. This is a collaboration with We Rise Production, and we'd love to hear from you. Connect with us at WeRiseProduction@pm.me, on the socials, and at weriseproduction.com.

MUSIC FADE OUT

TIERRA: Do we wanna close with a collective breath?

SARAH: Sure.

SK: Sure.

TIERRA: All right. That's a wrap.

Show Notes

Sogorea Te' Land Trust: <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/>

Save the West Berkeley Shellmound: <https://shellmound.org/>

Story F.4. “Surviving and Doing Sexual Harm: A Story of Accountability and Healing” from Section 4.F: Taking Accountability in the Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence: <https://www.creative-interventions.org/toolkit/>

“What Is Accountability” panel recorded at Building Accountable Communities: A National Gathering on Transforming Harm on April 27, 2019 at Barnard College, NYC featuring Shannon Perez-Darby, Esteban Kelly, RJ Maccani, Mia Mingus, Sonya Shah, and Leah Todd, and moderated by Piper Anderson:

<https://bcrw.barnard.edu/videos/building-accountable-communities-what-is-accountability/>

Theater-Specific Case Study #1 - Abusive Rehearsal Room:

https://f2606a71-bda8-4907-8ea6-d848e7fd6671.usfiles.com/ugd/f2606a_5869addf765749b99d63019969bf0ceb.pdf

Theater-Specific Case Study #2 - Award-Winning Director + Sexual Violence:

https://f2606a71-bda8-4907-8ea6-d848e7fd6671.usfiles.com/ugd/f2606a_310f018b45de437bb24639f478166068.pdf

BATJC Case Studies: <https://batjc.wordpress.com/resources/case-studies/>

Mia Mingus: <https://www.soiltjp.org> & <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com>

Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective: <https://batjc.wordpress.com/>

For additional resources, including this episode’s ASL video:

<https://www.weriseproduction.com/therealwork>

zAnda of DiaspoRADiCAL: @diaspo.radical on Instagram &

<https://soundcloud.com/diasporadical>

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