

The Personal Remains Political: a practice-based inquiry into the use of feminist consciousness-raising and printmaking as participatory methods for working with women

Appendices

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APPENDICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendices.....	0
Table of Contents.....	1
Appendix 1: Introduction to Consciousness Raising, New York Radical Feminist, 1975	2
Appendix 2: Invitation To Participate.....	10
Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet	11
Appendix 4: Consent Form	15
Appendix 5: Photograph and Recording Consent Form.....	16
Appendix 6: Group Agreement	18
Appendix 7: Interview Recording Agreement.....	19
Appendix 8: Online Session Plans	21
Appendix 8.1: Session One.....	21
Appendix 8.2: Session Two.....	24
Appendix 8.3: Session Three	28
Appendix 8.4: Session Four	31
Appendix 8.5: Session Five	36
Appendix 8.6: Session Six	37
Appendix 8.7: Session Seven.....	38
Appendix 8.8: Session Eight	40
Appendix 8.9: Session Nine.....	43
Appendix 8.10: Session Ten	45
Appendix 9: Equal Opportunities and Evaluation Data	48
Appendix 10: Online Session Transcripts.....	53
Appendix 10.1: Session One.....	53
Appendix 10.2: Session Two.....	78
Appendix 10.3: Session Three	106
Appendix 10.4: Session Four	138
Appendix 10.5: Session Five	175
Appendix 10.6: Session Six	198
Appendix 10.7: Session Seven.....	225
Appendix 10.8: Session Eight	258
Appendix 10.9: Session Nine.....	286
Appendix 10.10: Session Ten	316
Appendix 11: Talk Transcript	344
Appendix 12: Evaluation Transcripts.....	364
Appendix 12.1: Pauline	364
Appendix 12.2: Lesley	368
Appendix 12.3: F	378
Appendix 13: Exhibition Comments Books	401
Appendix 13.1: Glasgow Women's Library	401
Appendix 13.2: Dunfermline	404
Appendix 14: Exhibition Interpretation.....	406

APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTION TO CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING, NEW YORK RADICAL FEMINIST, 1975

New York Radical Feminists

INTRODUCTION TO CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

"We'll have our rights; see if we don't; and you can't stop us from them; see if you can. You may hiss as much as you like, but it is coming. Women don't get half as much rights as they ought to; we want more, and we will have it."

-Sojourner Truth, 1853-

One of the purposes of consciousness raising is to make us aware of the societal pressures that oppress women. Some women use the awareness gained from consciousness raising solely in their personal lives without becoming active in the women's movement. This is a valid purpose of consciousness raising. It is hoped, however, that consciousness raising will help to radicalize us, as women, to participate in whatever action is necessary to change our society.

Women often feel competitive with other women or isolated from them. It is another purpose of consciousness raising to break down these barriers and encourage open, honest communication among women.

A third purpose of consciousness raising is to develop pride in being a woman through identification with other women.

The method of consciousness raising may vary from group to group. However, through practice and experience we have developed a format that we have found to be the most effective. Try to follow this format that we have found to be most effective. Try to follow this format with your consciousness raising group for awhile. If it works, fine. If not, experiment with new procedures and stick to the one that works best.

SELECT A TOPIC. A topic is usually selected at the previous meeting so that those who wish to may have time to consider it. The suggested list of topics that follows is meant as a guideline and not as a questionnaire. Refer to the list when you need to and include what you like. Sometimes you may even wish to spend an entire meeting on a single aspect of a topic. It is a good idea to discuss BACKGROUND EXPERIENCES before moving on to ADULT EXPERIENCES, etc. This is invaluable for developing trust and intimacy within the group. If you plunge into a "heavy" topic such as marriage or lesbianism at your third session, there may be women who will feel threatened or defensive, as you will still be relative strangers to one another.

GO AROUND IN A CIRCLE. This creates a kind of "free space" where women can talk about themselves in a way they may never have before. Going around in a circle enables women who are more reticent to have the same opportunity to talk as more aggressive women. It also helps us to listen to each other and breaks down feelings of competitiveness among us.

ALWAYS SPEAK PERSONALLY, SPECIFICALLY AND FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE. Try not to generalize, theorize or talk in abstractions.

DON'T INTERRUPT, except to ask a specific informational question or to clarify a point. If someone else's experience reminds you of one of

yours, you might take notes so that you remember what it is you wish to say when it is your turn. Everyone will get a chance to speak.

NEVER CHALLENGE ANYONE ELSE'S EXPERIENCE. Try to accept that what another woman says is true for her, although it may seem all wrong to you. Keep in mind that she may never before have had a chance to talk about herself without being interrupted or challenged.

TRY NOT TO GIVE ADVICE. The purpose of consciousness raising is not to help you solve your day-to-day problems (e.g. "How can I become less dependent on my boyfriend?") but to help you gain strength through the knowledge that other women share many of your feelings and experiences.

SUM UP. After each woman has related her personal experience with the topic, the group should try to find the common element and see what conclusions can be drawn. This is one of the most important parts of consciousness raising because it is here that we can begin to discover the nature of our oppression.

We have found that 8 to 12 women is a good size for a group if everyone is to get a chance to speak. Each member should have the names, addresses and phone numbers of the other members. A group usually meets once a week and lasts for about 3 hours. Skipping meetings or perennially coming late can create bad feelings and isn't conducive to on-going intimacy and growth. By the same token, it is not a good idea to add people after say, your third or fourth meeting.

Groups usually meet in a different woman's home each week. It is important to create an atmosphere of informality and comfort. It helps to have coffee and something to eat standing by that members can help themselves to during the meeting. Also, the group should have privacy. Husbands, roommates or parents should either be out of the house or in another room for the duration of the meeting.

Consciousness raising is different from therapy and encounter groups. Although it is often therapeutic, its purpose is not the solution of personal problems. Some of the means used in therapy to get at the "truth"-- confrontation, challenge, acting-out -- are all foreign to consciousness raising. Consciousness raising is, rather, free space to talk about yourself as a woman.

It is a good idea to periodically devote an entire meeting to reviewing what each member expects from consciousness raising and how the group can best achieve these goals. In addition, to re-evaluate the direction of the group, this kind of meeting might also provide an opportunity to air personal dissatisfactions and group problems. This is best done in the usual consciousness raising fashion.

We have found that many of the problems that arise within the group are the result of carelessness in using consciousness raising technique. Often problems can be eliminated simply by paying particular attention -- for the next few meetings at least -- to the consciousness raising format.

Occasionally, a member of the group might have an urgent need to discuss a current personal problem. An effective way of dealing with such a situation is to let her be the first person to speak. Then, when

she is finished, try to identify her main emotion or feeling in the situation (e.g., loneliness, anger, dependency) and use this as the topic for the meeting. In this way, the woman who has brought the problem to the attention of the group feels that her problem is shared by each of the other members. This is another way in which we can show support toward one another.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

BACKGROUND EXPERIENCES

1. Childhood training for your role as a woman:
 - a. Were you treated differently from boys?
 - b. What toys did you have? What games did you play?
 - c. What activities were encouraged? Discouraged?
 - d. What did you think it was going to be like to be a woman?
2. Early childhood sexual experiences:
 - a. What experience did you have with children your own age? With adults? How did you feel about these experiences at the time?
 - b. Did these experiences affect your view of sex? Did they affect your view of yourself as a woman?
3. Puberty:
 - a. How did you feel about your bodily changes? Breasts? Body hair?
 - b. What happened the first time you got your period? Were you told what to expect beforehand? Was it a surprise?
 - c. What attitudes did you encounter toward your bodily changes from your peers? From adults?
4. Adolescent social life:
 - a. How did you spend most of your time? How did your parents feel about how you spent your time?
 - b. What sort of relationships did you have with girls? Did you have a best friend? How did you feel about girls your own age? What did you talk about with other girls? What were your activities? Were there older women that you admired and wanted to be like?
 - c. What sort of relationship did you have with boys? Did you date? Was there pressure from your peer group to date? What were your parents' attitudes toward dating? How did you get your dates? What kind of boys did you date? What kind of boys did you want to date?
 - d. How were your relationships with girls affected by your relationships with boys? Which was more important?
 - e. What were your adolescent sexual experiences? Did you "neck," "pet," "make out," "go all the way," etc.? Were you concerned about your "reputation?"
5. First adult sexual experience:
 - a. What did/does your virginity mean to you?
 - b. Describe the first time you had sex. What did you think it would be like? Did it live up to your expectations? Was it voluntary? Was it planned? Were you raped, seduced or pressured?
 - c. Did you want to do it again?

- d. How did you feel about yourself afterward? Your partner?
 - e. Did you tell anyone about it?
6. Education:
- a. What were your parents' attitudes toward education? Did you feel they had the same attitude for girls as they did for boys? What were your parents' academic expectations of you?
 - b. What were your teachers'/guidance counselors' expectations of you? Did you feel they had different expectations of female and male students?
 - c. What were your own aspirations? Were there courses that you wanted to take but were discouraged from taking? What subjects interested you most? Did these interests change as you went through school?
 - d. What kind of student were you? Were you competitive? With whom did you compete?
 - e. Were you involved in any extracurricular activities?
 - f. Was your education relevant to what you do now?
7. Religion:
- a. What part did religion play in your childhood? Does it play the same part now? What effect did it have on you as a woman? What was your religion's view of women?

ADULT EXPERIENCES

1. Masturbation:
- a. Have you ever masturbated? If so, when did you begin? What connotations did masturbation have for you?
 - b. How often and under what circumstances do you masturbate? How do you masturbate? Do you have an orgasm? Do you fantasize?
2. Orgasm:
- a. Have you ever had an orgasm? Have you ever faked an orgasm? If so, why?
 - b. How do you feel if you don't have an orgasm?
 - c. Describe what brings you to orgasm. Can you describe your feelings and sensations during orgasm? Compare the orgasms you have during sex to those you have during masturbation.
 - d. To have an orgasm: are you physically aggressive? Do you communicate to your partner what will bring you to orgasm? Do you depend totally on your partner?
 - e. Is it necessary for you to have an orgasm in order to enjoy sex? Is it necessary that your partner have an orgasm in order to enjoy sex? Do you feel that your orgasm is as important as your partner's? How important is orgasm, anyway?
 - f. How do you feel about the following: vaginal orgasm, clitoral orgasm, simultaneous orgasm, frigidity?
3. Contraception: (withdrawal, rhythm, pills, diaphragm, condom, foam, IUD, vasectomy, hysterectomy, tubal ligation, etc.)
- a. Do you use contraception? If so, what method? Have you ever used any others? How do you feel about the methods you have used?
 - b. Do you use contraception, or does your partner? Are you satisfied with this arrangement?

4. Abortion:
 - a. Have you ever had an abortion? Describe your experience. How did you feel about it? Would you have another one?
 - b. If you have never had an abortion, can you imagine yourself in a situation where you would want one? How do you think you would feel?
5. Lesbianism:
 - a. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a sexual relationship with another woman? Have you ever felt sexually attracted to another woman? Have you ever had a homosexual experience?
 - b. If you are not a lesbian, how do you react when you meet a woman who you know is a lesbian? If you are a lesbian, how do you feel about women who are not?
 - c. What are socially accepted ways of expressing love for another woman?
6. Rape:
 - a. Have you ever been raped? By a stranger, a husband, a friend or by someone you knew? What happened? Did you feel you provoked it in any way? Did you call the police? If so, what was their reaction?
 - b. Have you ever been coerced into having sex? Have you ever felt pressured to have sex with someone when you didn't want to?
7. Prostitution:
 - a. Have you ever had sex in exchange for: money, food, entertainment, gifts, security, approval, etc.?
 - b. Have you ever wanted to be a prostitute? What do you imagine it would be like?
 - c. Have you ever used your sexuality to get something you wanted?
8. Marriage/Being Single:
 - a. Are you, or have you been, married or in a marriage-type relationship? Why did you get married? Does/did being married live up to your expectations? How does/did being married affect your self-image? Did/do you find yourself operating within the traditional female/male roles?
 - b. If you are single, how do you feel about it? How would being married affect your self-image? Do you feel pressured by your family or society to get married?
 - c. Do you feel more important, or different, as part of a couple, or on your own?
9. Housework:
 - a. How important is it to you to have a clean house? How is your self-image related to the condition of your home?
 - b. If you're living with someone, who does the housework? Is it a shared responsibility? If so, is it because of an agreement, because one person nags the other, or because both feel equally responsible?
10. Pregnancy and Childbirth:
 - a. Have you ever been pregnant or borne children? How did you feel about yourself during pregnancy? What was the attitude

- of those around you (i.e., the father of the child, your parents, your employer, other women, men?)
- b. If you have not been pregnant, do you want to bear children? Under what circumstances? How would being pregnant affect your self-image?
 - c. If you became pregnant now, what would you do?
 - d. How do you feel about giving birth? If you've had a child, was the labor and delivery what you expected? How did you feel about the child when you first saw it?
 - e. What are some of the myths of pregnancy and delivery?
11. Motherhood and Childcare:
- a. How does, or would, being a mother affect your self-image? How would you feel if you couldn't have children? How would deciding not to have children affect your self-image?
 - b. If you are a mother, what is it like? Does being a mother live up to your expectations? Whose decision was it to have children? Is being a mother different from being a father? How did becoming a mother change your life?
 - c. If you live with someone, do you share childcare responsibilities? If so, is it because of an agreement, because one person nags the other, or because both feel equally responsible?
 - d. Do you consider childcare equal in status to paid work? What is your attitude toward working mothers? Working fathers? Do you, or would you, use daycare facilities?
 - e. What are some of the myths of motherhood?
12. Divorce:
- a. Have you ever been divorced or separated or close to someone who has been? How did you feel about it?
 - b. If not, how would being a "divorcee" affect your self-image?
 - c. What is the marital status of most of your friends?
 - d. If you have been divorced, why did you stay married as long as you did?
13. Employment:
- a. What were your parents' attitudes toward work? Toward women working?
 - b. Did your family expect you to get married? To have a career? To get a job and support yourself? Or what?
 - c. What kinds of jobs have you had, if any? What did you like/dislike about them?
 - d. Describe your relationships with bosses or employees of lower rank, both male and female. Do you feel you have certain problems or privileges in your job because you're a woman? Do you think your job duties would change if a man were to replace you?
 - e. How do you feel when people ask you "what do you do?" What do you say?
 - f. If you work full time, do you consider it a "job" or a "career?" Why?
 - g. What role does your job play in your life?
 - h. If you are married, or in a marriage-type situation, whose job is considered more important? Who earns more money?
 - i. If there were a machine that could give you any job, what button would you push?

14. Aging:
 - a. How old are you? How do you feel about this age?
 - b. What age do you consider to be "old?"
 - c. What relationships do you have with women who are considerably older than you? Younger?
 - d. How do you feel about getting older? Have you noticed any changes in your body?
 - e. Are you satisfied with the attentions you receive from men and women of your own age? Older? Younger?
 - f. Do you, or have you ever, disguised your age? How do you feel when someone mistakes your age?
 - g. How do you feel about menopause? What do you know about menopause?
15. Medical/Psychological Care:
 - a. Psychological Care.
 - (1) Have you ever been in therapy? Was it with a male or female therapist? Why did you go?
 - (2) Do you think your therapist has/had any prejudice about women?
 - (3) Did your therapist ever make any sexual advances toward you?
 - b. Medical Care.
 - (1) Have you ever been to a gynecologist? Have you ever had a bad experience with a gynecologist -- i.e., condescending attitude, inadequate explanations, careless or brutal treatment, sexual advances?
 - (2) Do you think your doctors understood your problems fully and had confidence in their treatment?
 - (3) If you've ever had a vaginal infection, how did it affect your feelings about yourself?

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Here are some questions that concern women. These may be discussed in any order and should be approached both from personal experience and with abstract thought.

1. How does the media present women?
2. How do you feel about your body? Fashion? Makeup?
3. Describe some patterns in your relationships with men.
4. What is friendship? What is love?
5. What part has competition played in your life?
6. What is femininity?
7. What is your mother like?
8. What are some of the myths of womanhood (i.e., Prince Charming)?
9. What kind of fantasies do you have?
10. How do you handle street hassles and threats of violence? Do you feel you can defend yourself adequately?
11. What makes you feel secure?
12. How do you manage money? How important are material possessions to you?
13. How do you feel about the following: monogamy, polygamy, communal living, voluntary celibacy, living alone?
14. How do you express anger?
15. What is non-sexist child rearing?
16. What are your personal goals?

THE LIBERATED WOMAN

1. What strengths do women have?
2. What is a liberated woman?
3. What are some of the problems/pressures of a liberated woman?
4. What is the best way to deal with a woman who is antagonistic toward the women's movement?
5. Can a woman with a "raised consciousness" still relate to men?
6. What is equality? Is this what you want?
7. What are the goals of the women's liberation movement? What are the goals of your group?
8. Is consciousness raising a political action? Is it enough?

For more information: New York Radical Feminists
P.O. Box 621
Old Chelsea Station
New York, New York 10011

APPENDIX 2: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE



CONSCIOUSLY RISING – a creative discussion group looking at women’s lives

A new women’s* group in partnership with Glasgow Women’s Library is forming, and you are invited to be part of it!

This is a group that will meet online every two weeks to share experiences from our own lives and imagine changes we would like to see in our society that improve women's lives.

For many women, the outbreak of COVID 19 has brought into sharp focus the structural inequalities that exist across British society. This group will be a safe space for discussion where we can share things we have in common and examine our differences, informing and enriching perspectives on women's lives today.

The core of the sessions will be the discussions, but these will also lead to creative making activities. Alongside this, we will look at objects in Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) collection and archive, learning about past feminist campaigns and struggles and connecting them with conditions today. The sessions will bring women together to connect through shared experiences that will build confidence, create solidarity, and help personal development.

We will talk together, learn together, and explore how to use creativity to create change.

Visual artist Helen de Main will lead the group. In her art practice she works in printmaking, creating vibrant and engaging artworks that celebrate the lives of women. She is interested in women's everyday lives, historically and in the present, and uses archive material and works with women to engage with these ideas. This project is part of Helen’s PhD research at the Glasgow School of Art in partnership with GWL.

The sessions will take place online (via zoom) every two weeks, initially for five sessions starting in the week of 1 February 2021. The time and date is yet to be confirmed. *This series of workshops are open to women-only and are inclusive of Trans, Intersex women, non-binary, and gender-fluid people.

If you would like to take part, or are interested to find out more, please be in touch with Helen via h.demain1@student.gsa.ac.uk

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Research Project Title: **Consciously Rising**

Lead Researcher: **Helen de Main**

Contact Details: **h.demain1@student.gsa.ac.uk**

Invitation:

You are invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide if you would like to be involved, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you want to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

This research project is designed to explore the relationship between 'the personal and the political' in women's lives by taking part in group discussions and creative activities. The 'personal is political' was a term coined by second-wave feminists in the late 1960s, which connected experiences in women's personal lives with conditions and structures in society. Material generated through the workshops will be used in the creation of artworks and other creative responses. This project forms part of visual artist Helen de Main's Ph.D. research.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been selected to participate in the study due to your links to Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) or another organization that works with women in the community. The study will include 10 to 12 other research participants, all of who are women. All women-only events are inclusive of Trans, Intersex women, non-binary, and gender-fluid people.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you choose to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

If you withdraw your personal contact details will be deleted, and you will be offered the opportunity to review your consent forms regarding data collected to date.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be invited to take part in a series of workshops and activities.

For many women, the outbreak of COVID 19 has brought into sharp focus the structural inequalities that exist across British society. This group will be a safe space for discussion. We will share things we have in common and examine our differences, informing and enriching perspectives on women's lives today.

The core of the group sessions will be discussions and creative making activities. Alongside this, we will look at material in GWL's collection and archive, learning about past feminist campaigns and struggles and connecting them with conditions today.

The sessions are designed to bring women together to connect through shared experiences that will build confidence, create solidarity, and help personal development. We will talk together, learn together, and explore how creativity can be used to create change.

Visual artist Helen de Main will lead the group. She works predominantly in printmaking, creating vibrant and engaging artworks that celebrate the lives of women. She is interested in women's everyday lives, historically and in the present, and uses archive material and works with women to engage with these ideas. This project is part of Helen's Ph.D. research at the Glasgow School of Art in partnership with Glasgow Women's Library.

The sessions will take place initially between February and April 2021. They will take place every two weeks and last for two hours. The sessions may extend beyond April 2021, at which point you will be asked if you would like to continue.

You will be invited to an initial introduction session, where you will be able to find out more detail about the project and what taking part will involve.

Given the current COVID 19 restrictions, the sessions will be taking place online. These will be hosted on Zoom and the meetings will be password protected. The sessions will be recorded, and a separate consent form will be provided giving full details of this.

It is hoped that when restrictions ease, it may be possible for the group to be able to meet at GWL.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. However, should any discomfort arise, then please be in contact with the researcher to discuss.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those participating in the project, it is hoped that participants, through sharing experience, will connect with other women, leading to increased confidence and health and wellbeing.

What if something goes wrong?

Should you wish to raise a concern or complaint at any point during the research project, you should be in contact in the first instance with the lead researcher Helen de Main. Should you feel your complaint has not been handled satisfactorily, you can contact Adele Patrick or Susannah Thompson to take your complaint further (see below for contact details).

Should the research stop earlier than planned, you will be informed and a reason given.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any ensuing reports or publications unless you wish to be. Any data collected about you will be stored securely, protected by passwords and encryption.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The sessions will take place on zoom, and this will be used to record them. The audio and video recordings made during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission. No one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. All recordings will be securely stored, and password protected.

You will be advised prior to the first meeting of how to set your username on zoom, should you wish to user a different name or nickname during the project.

Some recordings may be deposited in the GWL archive. However, in this instance, additional consent will be sought. You are under no obligation to consent to this, and the lead researcher is happy to answer any questions that you might have about this.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results from this research project will be used in my Ph.D. thesis, which will consist of a written thesis and a portfolio of artwork. Personal data will be stored until the research project and Ph.D thesis are complete, after which time they will be securely deleted.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is organised by Helen de Main as part of my Ph.D. research at The Glasgow School of Art.

Contact for further information

Helen de Main; h.demain1@student.gsa.ac.uk

Adele Patrick, Glasgow Women's Library; adele.patrick@womenslibrary.org.uk; 0141 550 2267

Susannah Thompson, The Glasgow School of Art; S.Thompson@gsa.ac.uk; 0141 556 1109

You will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Thank you for taking part in this research.

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM



Research Consent Form



Research Project Title: **Consciously Rising**

Lead Researcher: **Helen de Main**

Contact Details: **h.demain1@student.gsa.ac.uk**

*Please delete
as appropriate*

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above study | YES/NO |
| 2. I have had an opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily | YES/NO |
| 3. I agree to take part in the above study | YES/NO |
| 4. I agree to the results being used for future research or teaching purposes | YES/NO |
| 5. I am happy to be contacted about any future studies | YES/NO |

Your rights

You have the right to request to see a copy of the information we hold about you and to request corrections or deletions of the information that is no longer required.

The Glasgow School of Art is committed to processing information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The personal data collected on this form will be held securely for no longer than five years. It will only be used for administrative purposes.

I have read and understood the conditions of use and in signing I give my permission to take part in the above study.

_____ Name of participant	_____ Date	_____ Signature
_____ Researcher	_____ Date	_____ Signature

APPENDIX 5: PHOTOGRAPH AND RECORDING CONSENT FORM

ADULT PHOTOGRAPH CONSENT FORM



Research Project Title: **Consciously Rising**

Lead Researcher: **Helen de Main**

Contact Details: **h.demain1@student.gsa.ac.uk**

Name: _____

Helen de Main would like to take your photograph and make audio and video recordings for the purposes of her research. To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, we need your permission before we take any photographs or make any recordings. Please answer the questions below and sign and date the form where shown. We will not use the images and recordings made, or any other *Please delete as appropriate* information you provide, for any other purpose.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. I agree to being; | |
| photographed | YES/NO |
| audio recorded | YES/NO |
| video recorded | YES/NO |

as part of the research.

I wish these to be anonymous / I wish to be named, using the following name

(please state).....

*Please delete
as appropriate*

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 2. I agree to; | |
| photographs | YES/NO |
| audio recordings | YES/NO |
| video recordings | YES/NO |
| being made publicly available in publications, presentations, online, reports or
examinable format (dissertation or thesis) for the purposes of research and
teaching. | |

I wish these to be anonymous / I wish to be named, using the following name

(please state).....

3. I grant permission for any photographs taken to be used for publication in - *please delete as appropriate*:

- Exhibition YES / NO
- Online Communications* YES / NO
- Reports (incl thesis or dissertation) YES / NO
- Conference papers YES / NO
- Journal Articles YES / NO
- Other [researcher to insert] YES / NO

**please note that online communications can be viewed globally and that some overseas countries may not provide the same level of protection to the rights of individuals who are protected by UK/EEA legislation.*

4. I understand that no personal details will accompany publication of my image but that I will still be identifiable from that image YES / NO

Your rights

You have the right to request to see a copy of the information we hold about you and to request corrections or deletions of the information that is no longer required. You can ask The Glasgow School of Art to stop using your images at any time.

The Glasgow School of Art is committed to processing information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The personal data collected on this form will be held securely for no longer than five years. It will only be used for administrative purposes.

I have read and understood the conditions of use and in signing I give my permission for my image and recordings of me to be taken and used as above.

Signed (participant)_____

Date_____

Signed (researcher) _____

Date

APPENDIX 6: GROUP AGREEMENT

- We want to ensure these sessions are inclusive and enjoyable for everyone.
- We agree to be kind and respectful to each other by listening to each other's contributions and accepting where others are at.
- We are aware of issues of privacy for ourselves and others when we take part in the group. This means using headphones or being in a different room than other members of our household and asking not to be interrupted where possible.
- We understand that background noise can be particularly distracting for some people, and we agree to turn our microphones off when we are not speaking to try and make it easier for us all to listen to each other when we are speaking.
- We agree to respect others in the group by keeping our discussions confidential between group members. Suppose group members want to talk through anything that the session has brought up in more detail outside the group setting. In that case, they can contact Helen to speak one to one. Suppose anyone needs to talk to someone outside of the group about issues that the discussion has raised. In that case, we agree not to speak specifically about anyone else's experience but discuss the issues that this discussion has raised for us.

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW RECORDING AGREEMENT



YOU'RE MAKING HISTORY!

GENERAL COPYRIGHT CLEARANCE AND DEPOSIT INSTRUCTIONS

Your story is a unique and invaluable part of history. We want to make sure that it is well looked after and that it can be used as a public resource in the future. The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that your contribution is added to the collections of Glasgow Women's Library in accordance to your wishes.

May the stated recordings, transcriptions and other archival material be used by the researcher (Helen de Main, Glasgow School of Art PhD Research) within her PhD thesis?

recordings	yes/no
full transcriptions	yes/no
redacted transcriptions	yes/no
other archival material	yes/no

May the stated recordings, transcriptions and other archival material be used by Glasgow Women's Library for research, consultation and archive purposes?

recordings	yes/no
full transcriptions	yes/no
redacted transcriptions	yes/no
other archival material	yes/no

We will use your responses to the previous questions to provide the details of the permissions for the following questions. If, for instance, you've granted permission only for the use of transcriptions above, then this will apply to all the following questions. The questions below relate to further potential uses for the recordings, transcriptions and other archival material being submitted.

May a copy of the stated recordings, transcriptions and other archival material be made for the use of readers of the library and other interested parties?

yes/no

May the stated recordings, transcriptions and other archival material be used by the researcher (Helen de Main, Glasgow School of Art PhD Research) and Glasgow Women's Library for educational purposes: educational publications, talks, exhibitions or broadcasts, including their website?

yes/no

May the stated recording, transcriptions and other archival material be used for broadcast and/or publication?

yes/no

May our volunteers, with written permission from Glasgow Women's Library, use the stated recording, transcriptions and other archival material for their research and/or non-commercial purposes?

yes/no

Would you like your name as the contributor to be used (you can choose to be anonymous)?

yes/no

If yes, how would you like it to appear?.....

Do you wish to add any other instructions or restrictions in relation to your contribution?

yes/no

If yes, please give details:.....
.....

I hereby assign the copyright in my contribution to Glasgow Women's Library. I understand that it will be stored and used as detailed here.

Signature: Date:.....

Name (in block capitals):.....

Address:.....

.....

Email:..... Tel:.....

GWL staff signature:..... Date:.....

Name (in block capitals):.....

Course/project title (if applicable):.....

Archive refs.: 1. Transcript..... 2. Ref no:.....

APPENDIX 8: ONLINE SESSION PLANS

APPENDIX 8.1: SESSION ONE

3-5pm

3.00 – 3.10pm	10 mins Welcome, chat, zoom rules etc
3.10 – 3.20pm	10 mins Name game
3.20 – 3.25pm	5 mins Consent forms
3.25 – 3.45pm	20 mins CR principles and quick circle, as to why people came / interested in joining?
3.45 – 4.25pm	40 mins Group agreement
4.25 – 4.30pm	Comfort break
4.30 – 4.40pm	10mins Waiting video. Topic for next time
4.40 – 4.50pm	10mins Things to be thankful for
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Goodbyes and questions

Have the GWL zoom slide up when people join

Changing your zoom name:

If you would like to change your name on zoom click on “participants” at the bottom of the screen. This will bring up a box on the top right-hand side. Hoover over your name and a drop down box will appear called “more” click on the arrow next to this and select “rename”. You should now be able to change your name to whatever you would like.

We want to ensure these sessions are **inclusive and enjoyable** for everyone. We request that everyone treats other participants with respect and listens to each other’s contributions. Anyone engaging in abuse or oppressive behaviour and they may be removed from the workshop.

General zoom rules:

Mute your microphone when you are not speaking, as this prevents background noise from interfering.

Cameras:

It is fine to have your camera off. This may make you feel more comfortable whilst we get to know each other, it may help you to feel more relaxed. You can add a photo or picture to your profile if you like, and then other people will see this when your camera is not on. It is also fine if when you have your camera on, you’re not looking all the time into the camera, looking away, looking out the window for example is fine.

Name game:

Put everyone’s name in the chat in alphabetical order. Take it in turns to say your name and what you are bringing to a picnic – the thing that you bring needs to start with the same letter as your name. Helen is bringing hazelnuts.

Consent forms:

Thanks everyone who has returned them.

Chat about recording? Opportunity for anyone to ask questions? Say what they might feel uncomfortable about?

I am recording, so by staying the meeting you are consenting to being recorded. I will be only keeping the audio element, not the video part.

Anyone want me to send them a copy in the post?

We can keep reviewing these regularly, so it is possible to make changes at any point.

CR:

Run through the principles – share slide, read out CR principles.

Group Agreement:

This is an agreement that we will come up with together to set out the boundaries of the group and what people feel comfortable with. This is not a fixed document and it is something that we can revisit regularly and add other issues to it, as they come up.

So there are some things that I think should go in it, that I will bring up, but you are welcome to suggest things as well.

Privacy – headphones ? unless you are home alone.

If anyone doesn't have headphones, or can't get hold of some, let me know and I can send you some.

How do people feel about talking when their words might not be private in their home space? For example, I know that sometime other people in my house can hear me when I am in meetings and this might effect what I say. Is there anything we want to do about this? Accept is as part of the conditions? People to write things in the chat? Write things after the meeting that can then be shared? Make audio recordings after the meeting that can be shared? Talk about software?

Communication – in the meetings and outside of them

There are ways of communicating that preference some people over others, so I just wanted to have a bit of a discussion about how we communicate and how you'd like to receive information.

In the meetings – chat function? There may be instances where people would rather put things in the chat than say them out loud. I will ask people if they would like me to read them out, before doing so.

If there's something in the chat that I've not seen, then please let me know.

Some people may not feel comfortable using the chat – I personally find it quite hard being present in the meeting, and then also writing things in the chat at the same time, so it is fine if you don't want to use the chat function.

If you want to ask something just put your hand up or use the raise hand button.

Confidentiality:

How are we going to approach this? What does it mean to people?

Do a circle?

Talk about experiences of using privacy / confidentiality as a way to silence people. It doesn't necessarily give a chance for people to explore their feelings in relation to something. Example of my childhood – told to not speak about things, but I found this affected how I was able to process things, and always made an association of guilt, if I did talk to anyone about things.

An example would be for a member who has shared deeply in the group that her father's alcoholism ruined the family. He was physically and sexually abusive, and eventually lost his job because of it. In this type of sharing other members would talk about the causes and effects that similar situations in their own families generated for them.

To maintain confidence outside of the group, while still being able to share, members would be taught that when talking about the group to others you leave all the identifying material about the other member out of the conversation, and you say what got activated for you as a member in the group. Your reaction is yours to share, and in the origin of it, the details of it, are kept confidential.

In the above example the member wanting to talk about her reaction to it would say something like: " My group was talking about problems with addiction in the family growing up, and got me to thinking that my mum was actually addicted to prescription drugs. I'd never thought about it before, but our lives were in orbit around her mood."

Do we need to put something in about respect, or is this implied through confidentiality?

Note down what the agreement is.

Topics that people don't want to talk about? Feel uncomfortable?

What to do is people get emotional / upset?

Anything else that people would like to add in? Can look at it again next time.

Waiting video and set topic for next time:

Topic – covid?

Things to be thankful for:

To close we are just going to take a bit of time to think of what we are thankful for and share it with the group. This could be something small or something more significant.

On my turn I might say for example, I am thankful that my partner had the vaccine on Friday or I might say I am thankful that I had soup for lunch. Just whatever comes into your head.

Goodbyes and questions:

Thanks all for coming. If you all want to unmute and say goodbye to everyone.

Next session is Tuesday 23 Feb, 3-5pm

I will stay around for a bit longer if anyone wants to stay on and ask any questions.

APPENDIX 8.2: SESSION TWO

3-5pm

3.00 – 3.10pm	10 mins Welcome and communication methods
3.10 – 3.20pm	10 mins Group agreement
3.20 – 3.40pm	20 mins Margaret Salmon audio piece and mindful doodling
3.40 – 3.50pm	10 mins What creative activity are people interested in?
3.50 – 4.00pm	10 mins Comfort break
4.00 – 4.30pm	Consciousness Raising circle; coping during the pandemic -
30 mins	
4.30 – 4.40pm	10 mins Padlet
4.40 – 4.50pm	10 mins F to introduce next session's activity
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Goodbyes and questions

Welcome

How is everyone doing?

I'm going to post the plan for today's session in the chat, just so everyone can see what we are aiming to fit in.

Zoom

General zoom rules:

Microphones:

Mute your microphone when you are not speaking, as this prevents background noise from interfering.

Cameras:

It is fine to have your camera off. This may make you feel more comfortable whilst we get to know each other, it may help you to feel more relaxed. You can add a photo or picture to your profile if you like, and then other people will see this when your camera is not on.

Changing your zoom name:

If you would like to change your name on zoom click on "participants" at the bottom of the screen. This will bring up a box on the top right-hand side. Hoover over your name and a drop down box will appear called "more" click on the arrow next to this and select "rename". You should now be able to change your name to whatever you would like.

Communication:

Putting my number in the chat and I have also emailed it all to you. I'm happy for you to text me or call if that's how you prefer to be in touch rather than email. If you'd rather receive information about the group by either of these means too, then just let me know.

Are people able to use the reactions buttons? We are going to try out using these to see if we have agreement on this.

Messaging:

It was great to see people using the chat function last time and please continue to do this. You can put questions in there if there is something that you would like clarifying. Would anyone be happy to keep an eye on the chat through the meeting and let me know if there

is anything in there that has not picked up and share that with the group? I didn't quite manage to keep up to speed with it last time!!

I also just want to let you know that you can also message me privately during the session if there is something that you would like to ask but don't want to do this to the whole group. Where it says to, you just select my name, and it will say in brackets "privately".

Group Agreement:

Go through the items that we discussed last week. Copy each point into the chat and ask a group member to read it out. Ask everyone to respond using the thumbs up reaction but if they agree. Chat through if there are people unsure.

We want to ensure these sessions are **inclusive and enjoyable** for everyone.

We agree to be kind and respectful to each other by listening to each other's contributions and accepting where others are at.

We are aware of issues of privacy for ourselves and others when we take part in the group. This means using headphones or being in a different room than other members of our household and asking not to be interrupted where possible.

We understand that background noise can be particularly distracting for someone people, and we agree to turn our microphones off when we are not speaking to try and make it easier for us all to listen to each other when we are speaking.

We agree to respect others in the group by keeping our discussions confidential between group members. Suppose group members want to talk through anything that the session has brought up in more detail outside the group setting. In that case, they can contact Helen to speak one to one. Suppose anyone needs to talk to someone outside of the group about issues that the discussion has raised. In that case, we agree not to speak specifically about anyone else's experience but discuss the issues that this discussion has raised for us.

Are there other things that people would like to add to the agreement now? I will put up on the padlet / online page and people can comment on this and suggest any amendments, or rewording of things, as well as suggestions of additional points to put in.

What creative activities people are interested in?

Use the whiteboard to write down a list of things, if people can't access the whiteboard, then you can post things in the chat or call them out

Writing
Journaling
Drawing
Collage
Printing
Screen printing
Mono printing

Crafting
Crochet
Knitting
Sewing
Taking photos
Mapping
Doodling
Yoga
Music
Singing
Book making
Zine making

Are there any skills that people have that they could share with the group? You don't need to be an expert, just something that you have an interest in, or an enjoyment doing. For example, F is going to lead us through a collage activity next time, which she will tell us more about later on.

Shall we do another whiteboard? Or do people just want to put something in the chat?
Raise a hand?

Break:

In the break create a poll from the activities that people have said that they are interested in

CR:

Topic – what strategies have people come up with for coping in the pandemic?

Put the slide up of the rules whilst we talk through the practicalities

If everyone can see the chat, then I will put everyone's name in there in a list. Then when you finish speaking on your turn, say that you are done and say the name of the next person you are passing to. For example, that's me, I pass to Lesley.

So we're going to go around in a circle, and if you don't have anything that you want to say on your turn, you can say pass, or you could just allow us all to sit in silence and think about some of the things that people have said before – don't be afraid to hold the space. You may alternatively want to type something in the chat which I'm happy to read out for you. Go around the circle once. Should we go around again? Maybe what someone else has said has brought something to mind that you would like to share? Ask people to raise their hand if they would like to speak again?

Summing up

This is the part of the sessions that I have always found most difficult to do successfully and perhaps we can find a way to evolve the process together.

We could for example use the circle process to offer one word, or a short sentence each to the summing up and then move to people raising their hands if they want to say anything more in detail.

Does this process allow us to come up with our topic for next time?

Set our topic for next time – self care, work, housework?

Padlet:

Put link and password in the chat:

<https://en-gb.padlet.com/helendemain/Bookmarks>

Password – women

Set this up – have people had a chance to look at it?

Do people feel comfortable / confident in looking at the information in this way?

Use the thumbs up button

I will update it between all of our sessions.

People can comment and like

You can also make your own posts too. There was an approval setting on there, but I've taken that off. What do people think?

You can post other types of media as well if you don't want to write something. I've got various friends that send me voice recordings rather than text messages because they find this much easier than typing something out. It always feels nice – personal to hear someone's voice! Anyone want to have a go at posting an audio comment?

Conversation column – I've made a Conversation column and have posted a place where people can leave comments about the sessions. But this can also be opened up to any other lines of conversation that people want to have. Is there anything specific?

Highlight

In Conversation with Gauri Raje

Gauri Raje is a storyteller, educator and workshop facilitator working with adolescents and adults from multilingual, multicultural and disadvantaged backgrounds. She works with different genres: folk tales, fairy tales, epics and myths, mainly from non-European regions, and autobiographical storytelling. She tells stories in various languages and is especially interested in the concepts of witnessing in storytelling, translation, multilingualism and embodied nature of creating stories.

F to introduce next session's activity

Tying in with our next topic?

Collecting collage material

Any other resources people need?

Goodbyes and questions:

Thanks all for coming. If you all want to unmute and say goodbye to everyone.

I will stay around for a bit longer if anyone wants to stay on and ask any questions.

PUT IN CHAT

Next session is Tuesday 9 March, 3-5pm

The sessions after that are:

Session 4: Tuesday 23 March, 3-5pm

Session 5: Tuesday 6 April, 3-5pm

APPENDIX 8.3: SESSION THREE

3-5pm

3.00 – 3.10pm	10 mins Welcome and how are people doing?
3.10 – 3.20pm	10 mins What creative activity are people interested in?
3.20 – 4.00pm	40 mins CR
4.00 – 4.10pm	10 mins Comfort break
4.10 – 4.50pm	40 mins Collage with F
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Goodbyes and questions

Welcome

How is everyone doing?

I'm going to post the plan for today's session in the chat, just so everyone can see what we are aiming to fit in.

Dorothy

[redacted]

F

[redacted]

Sarah

Helen

Lesley

Joy

Pauline

Anonymous

Joanne

Play a quick game as a way of getting to know each other better – each person to say what they had for breakfast and something that they are excited about.

Post in the chat the link to the padlet page and remind everyone that the group agreement is there, if people want to remind themselves of it or revisit it at anytime.

Put link and password in the chat:

<https://en-gb.padlet.com/helendemain/Bookmarks>

Password – women

3.10 – 3.20pm 10 mins What creative activity are people interested in?

Use the whiteboard to write down a list of things, if people can't access the whiteboard, then you can post things in the chat or call them out

Writing

Journaling

Drawing

Collage

Printing

Screen printing

Mono printing

Crafting

Crochet
Knitting
Sewing
Taking photos
Mapping
Doodling
Yoga
Music
Singing
Book making
Zine making

Are there any skills that people have that they could share with the group? You don't need to be an expert, just something that you have an interest in, or an enjoyment doing. Shall we do another whiteboard? Or do people just want to put something in the chat? Raise a hand?

40 mins Consciousness raising circle – “expectations”

Dorothy
[redacted]

F
[redacted]

Sarah

Helen

Lesley

Joy

Pauline

Anonymous

Joanne

So last time we used the circle method when we were going around sharing our experiences, but then when it came to the process of summing up that we free formed more a bit. There was some discussion, that I'm not sure we completely resolved about the idea of giving out advice. As we had set out in the CR rules, that we were to try not to give out advice, and then there was a feeling that some of the feedback that was coming through via the chat and the conversation that we had in the summing up part, did feel more like advice.

The idea of not giving out advice is so counter to what we are used to, that it can be really hard to change behaviour. When I've used this method before with groups, often it is the not interrupting that people find really hard, but I think that this is easier to navigate in an online space.

So, whilst we don't need to stick rigidly to the CR rules, and we do want to find what works best for us as a group, I am going to suggest, that for today's session, we don't post anything in the chat, whilst we are doing the CR circle, unless it is your contribution. And that we try to do the summing up using the circle too. So, after everyone has given their contribution to the circle on expectations, that we take a minute and then we do another circle where people contribute their thoughts to the summing up and what they found commonalities between what people had spoken about.

We may find that this doesn't work, but I suggest that we give it a try to see what we think. People may want to make notes for the summing up part whilst other people are talking, or you may feel like you want to just say what comes to you when it is your turn. But let's give it a try.

We may even want to use the break to think about what people have said and then share the summing up after that.

F

Lesley

[redacted]

Joanne

Anonymous

Pauline

Dorothy

Joy

Helen

Sarah

What's our topic for next session?

4.00 – 4.10pm 10 mins Comfort break

In the break create a poll from the activities that people have said that they are interested in

4.10 – 4.50pm 40 mins Collage with F

F to lead on the topic of expectations.

See notes from F.

4.50 – 5.00pm 10 mins Goodbyes and questions

Thanks all for coming. If you all want to unmute and say goodbye to everyone.

I will stay around for a bit longer if anyone wants to stay on and ask any questions.

PUT IN CHAT

Next session is Tuesday 23 March, 3-5pm

The next session after that is:

Session 5: Tuesday 6 April, 3-5pm

3-5pm

3.00 – 3.10pm	10 mins Welcome and how are people doing?
3.10 – 3.50pm	40 mins CR - school and education
3.50 – 4.00pm	10 mins Comfort break
4.00 – 4.40pm	40 mins Mark making / drawing
4.40 – 4.50pm	10 mins summing up
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Plans for next session, goodbyes and questions

Welcome

I'm going to post the plan for today's session in the chat, just so everyone can see what we are aiming to fit in.

Thanks everyone who has been posting things on the padlet page. It's been great seeing some of the collages going up there, and it's also been really helpful to read the discussion about how people feel our ways of working together are evolving.

There seems to be a consensus on there that using the more structured way of doing the circle in order without using the chat function and then also doing the summing up in order, has worked well. Someone suggested a word cloud tool to me the other day, so we are going to have a go at doing that for our summing up and see how that goes. It's a new tool to me, so we will see what happens!

I'm just going to post a link to the padlet now if anyone wants to take another look.

<https://en-gb.padlet.com/helendemain/Bookmarks>

Can I remind you that our group agreement is on there, if anyone wants to revisit that.

I've also posted a few more links to some collage artists that people might be interested in checking out, as well as a few more links to some events that are taking place. Specifically, at Glasgow Women's Library over the coming couple of weeks, as I thought there might be things of interest. Please comment on any of the posts up there if there is something of interest to you, or a reflection that you have.

I have sent you some further materials in the post, which you should have received by now. If you have not got these hopefully you have been able to find some other materials around your house that you can use. We will be doing the creative activity after the comfort break, so you will have chance to collect anything else together then that you need.

How is everyone doing?

Joy had posted on the padlet about doing "personal weather" for a check in – Joy would you like to explain what this is and we could give it a try?

3.10 – 3.20pm 40 mins CR - school and education

Okay, so our topic is school and education and we will do the circle in the same way that we did last time. I will post everyone's name in the chat in a random order, and then if you pass over to the next person on the list when you are finished that would be great.

Joanne

Dorothy

[redacted]

Pauline

Lesley

Helen

As I mentioned we are going to do the summing up after we have done the creative activity. We are going to try doing our summing up in a few words. So as you are listening to people you might want to make some notes, or just have a think. Then when it comes to summing up we are going to try everyone just contributing a maximum of five words and see what we come up with.

So, off we go - Joanne

So just before we go off for our break, I wanted to check in with you if you have all received the packages I sent you in the post? Do you want to put your hand up if you have not received one and then I can let you know what to collect together during the break.

For those that did receive them, you will see that I've sent you a couple of tubes of paint and some paint brushes. If you want to get yourself a pot of water for cleaning your brush in the break and a plastic container for mixing your paint up in.

I also sent you a slightly funny chinagraph pencil that I got in the print workshop at the art school. It's actually really hard to buy materials at the moment, because so few shops are open. I think I'd hoped to send you some pastels or chalks for mark making, but hopefully this pencil will do the job. If you sharpen it, you need to sharpen it from the end where you can see the lead. I sharpened the other end and there's actually not any lead right at the end, so I had to sharpen it for ages, before I reached it. I have also actually lost the one that I bought for myself. I sharpened it in my kid's bedroom and I think it has been subsumed by their collection of art materials!

3.20 – 4.00pm 10 mins Comfort break

4.00 – 4.10pm 40 mins Mark making / drawing

We are going to spend the next 40 mins mindfully mark making and spending some time reflecting on the four sessions that we have spent together because we are going to produce a small one-page zine at the fifth session in a couple of weeks.

So, the plan is that we are going to collect together some different materials together and print these to make a one sheet zine. I will send this to you in the post and you can then fold it yourself, and work on it further at home.

So the booklet that I sent you in the post, that is a riso print for anyone who is not familiar with the term. Riso printing is a mechanised printing process that makes print in individually colours, one at a time. So for example the cover of the booklet is printed in three colours – there is a swirly pattern in yellow that you almost can't see, and then a strong textural pattern in orange which is taken from a painting my kids did together and finally the text is printed in a strong blue colour.

So we are going to make a one page zine or booklet together.

Show folder blank A3 sheet to show how the folding and cutting works.

Show Sadie's one page zine made to show how it works with content.

So we are going to collect together material today and over the coming week and I am going to ask you to post this on the Padlet page, email me, whatsapp me, or send me things in the post. You will notice that I mailed you an envelope with my name and address and a stamp. I have set up a new column on the padlet page called "Our Print Material" for us to post content to. But as I said you are welcome to send it to me in other ways if you do not feel confident to upload things here.

The deadline for getting all this material together will be next Monday (29th).

I am then going to compile these digitally onto an A3 sheet and then get this riso printed. I was going to get this printed at the art school, but they are not doing a print run next week, so instead I'm going to get it printed at a place called Tenderhands Press in Govanhill, that is run by a very talented artist Saffa Khan. Anyone on social media might want to check her out on Instagram, as her work is gorgeous and I will also post a link on the padlet page.

<https://tenderhandspress.co.uk/>

<https://www.instagram.com/tenderhandspress/>

<https://www.instagram.com/memorylikealight/>

We're going to make a two colour print together that I will then post out to you out before the next session, with instructions of how to fold and you can make these into your own zines. You can then add to them, using any different media you like, and we can do this in the final session together. So you might want to collage onto the zine, write, draw. Any other creative and reflective inputs and we will see what we come up with.

So the material we are going to collect for printing could be a real range of things and I think that we have things already on our padlet that we could use.

The artist's book that I sent you, came out of a project I did previously, so the content of the book is relevant to what we are talking about. But it also gives you an example of how you can combine different types of image or text within a print. So we talked already about the cover but if you look through it you will see there's lots of different types of material combined together – photographs, text, drawing, painting, images of book covers and other things.

Show a few examples:

So there's lots of different ways you can contribute content and we're going to work on producing some hand drawn elements today. The sound of this may take you out of your comfort zone, but I can assure you that there is no pressure, and in fact I find that print making as a great way of incorporating things that maybe don't look like so much on their own, but when combined either next to or over the top of other elements, can be much more pleasing than anticipated.

So this afternoon we're going to spend half an hour or so, just slowing down and drawing a few shapes and patterns, and just enjoy the process of it. You can share things you have made in the end, or not if you don't want to.

So these are some small paintings and drawings that I made last week, which I just made observationally from things in my house.

Show examples and talk them through these.

So some of these are done in paint and some in chalk, so have a go with what you fancy. It doesn't matter about the colour, because to convert into files for the riso print, I will need to change them all into black and white and they will then get printed in the colour of ink that we select.

So for many of us we have spent a lot of time in our homes over last year, so you might want to make some simple studies of things that surround you. Or you may want to go into the realms of imagination thinking about other places, or drawing on some of the conversations that we have had over the last few weeks. You can select the topic or inspiration, and really don't worry about it needing to look like anything specific – blobs and squiggles work well in print making.

Time check – finish at 4.35pm

So next time we will be working on the zines together and I'm just going to spend five minutes or so running through a few things that you might want to contribute. I am suspecting we might get more material than we can squeeze into one page together, but we can always carry on collecting it for our next project.

Photography

So you might want to contribute some photos to the group material. Most people now have access to a digital camera, a lot of people have these on their phones, but might also have access to a separate camera. This is great for contributing a whole range of images. You might want to take a picture of an already existing picture, for example photographing a photograph, or one of pieces that you have just made.

If you just spend a few minutes setting up the picture, it is likely to result in a better quality of image. The main thing to think about is lighting. It's best to photograph things in natural daylight, as the processor in your camera is likely to struggle in low light and give a grainy or "noisy" look to your picture.

So when using natural light you ideally want to avoid very strong light that is coming from one direction and uneven light. Find a spot that is light but does not have strong shadows falling on it.

Then if you are photographing something like a photograph that has straight edges, you want to try and get your camera as directly above it as possible, as if you have it at an angle it will distort the thing that you are photographing. However take into consideration where the shadow of you and your camera fall.

Don't be afraid of taking a few of the same thing and then looking back of them and seeing which you think is the best. Even though you are photographing the same thing from the same angle you will find that some come out better than others.

These are just some tips that might help, but of course we are not expecting professional photographs.

Remember that all the things we are going to print for now are just going to be in one colour. So I will need to convert all your images to black and white, and then the printer will process them in one colour.

Text

You might want to contribute text to the collection of materials. You can think about the types of text that you could contribute....

And you can also think about the ways in which the text will appear. For example you might want typed text or you might want it hand written. Even things like whether the text is in capital letter or lower case letters can make a difference to how it appears.

We could decide that we want to include the words that we generate from our summing up today, or a selection of individual words that relate to some of the previous summing up sessions. You could include some reflective writing on the experience of coming to the sessions or some creative writing.

Once we have the printed copies back I will probably send you two or three copies so that you can keep one as it is, and then we can work on one again in a hands on way at our next session – this could be where you include some writing.

You don't need to contribute lots and lots of things, as we are just going to make one A3 sized folded print together. It has eight pages in total, so it's not a huge amount of content. However I will play around with combining different text and images on pages together.

We will also be working on them together in the next session, adding further content through drawing, collage, writing, painting, doodling or whatever you fancy.

Tenderhands Press have eight colours set up in their riso printer. In other places there are more, up to about twenty, I think. This limits what colours we can use. I've made a poll to see what colours people specifically like – otherwise there will be colours that I will naturally gravitate towards out of taste. Obviously, we won't be able to use exactly the colours everyone likes, but it would be good to get your thoughts on which you might like.

There are also of course colours that work in different ways, for example printing in yellow can only really be used for certain things, because it is less visible than the colours in other stronger hues. You can see for example in the booklet that I sent you, some of the colour combinations work better than others, and some work better for different types of image or text. For example, if I was printing the booklet again, I would print less things in the fluorescent orange that I think I may have got a little carried away with, as some of the text is very difficult to read in this.

Launch poll

So I appreciate that that was a lot of information. Is there any questions that people have? Okay great, now we're going to move on to our summing up.

4.40 – 4.50pm 10 mins summing up

So we are going to try using an online tool called slido. I'm going to share my screen. To access the page you can scan the QR code with a phone or device – you could for example do the slido on your phone whilst still being on zoom on a laptop.

Alternatively you can go to the slido site online

I am posting the link in the chat

<https://www.sli.do/>

and from there you type in our hashtag which is women

From there you should come up with a screen that allows you to type in your words for the summing up. As you type them in they will start to appear on my screen. We can then look at these altogether.

4.50 – 5.00pm 10 mins Plans for next session, goodbyes and questions

Next time is the last session in this block. I am keen for the group to continue, but the end of this first section will allow us to reflect on activities to date and where we should go from here.

Post in the chat

Tuesday 6 April, 3-5pm

I was thinking to set us a topic for next time, but I think it would be best if we just use the time to work on our zines together and reflect on the sessions that we have had and think forward as to where we might like to go from here.

So a reminder that the deadline for material is the end of Monday next week – 29th March, and if you have any questions, just send me an email, or message or give me a call.

Look forward to seeing what we produce together!!

APPENDIX 8.5: SESSION FIVE

3-5pm

3.00 – 3.20pm	Welcome and how are people doing?
3.10 – 3.20pm	Evaluation
3.50 – 4.00pm	Poll on days and times
4.00 – 4.10pm	10 mins Comfort break
4.10 – 4.50pm	40 mins working on zine
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Goodbyes and questions

How are people doing?

Evaluation

How have people found talking about their personal experiences?

How have people found the creative activities?

Are there other experiences people would like to talk about?

What have people particularly enjoyed?

Has there been anything that people found surprising?

Plans for next sessions

Do people want to continue to meet? Those who do, let's do a planning session next time.

Is the time good for people – poll

APPENDIX 8.6: SESSION SIX

3-5pm

3.00 – 3.20pm	15mins Welcome and how are people doing?
3.20 – 3.50pm	40 mins CR Topic - childhood
3.50 – 4.00pm	
4.00 – 4.10pm	10 mins Comfort break
4.10 – 4.50pm	30mins Journaling
	15 mins summing up / setting topic
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Goodbyes and questions

Journaling

People might find it useful to explore some of their feelings and experiences in relation to some of the topics that we have covered outside of the sessions, through some of the creative activities that we have tried out and also through journaling or diary writing. Lesley mentioned that she had enjoyed some of the writing in the booklet that I sent you in the post. I developed most of the pieces in this from things I had written in a journal or diary. For me personally exploring some ideas, experiences and memories in this form, helps me to process things and also to draw connections between things.

When I was thinking about today's session, I began to make some notes and this drew me off in lots of different directions, thinking back to my childhood, but also connecting this with relationships with other members of my family and memories of times spent with them.

Thinking about the process of journaling broadly, there are a number of different ways that you might approach this and that you might want to use the practice for. I have a notebook that I use. I enjoy the physical process of writing, the way that the pencil feels on the paper. For me this is a process of slowing down thinking and writing more meditatively.

When I began journaling, I thought that I would only do this in the notebook, and couldn't imagine engaging with this digitally, typing my thoughts into a computer. The formality and regularity of the type that is produced, I thought did not fit with the type of writing that I wanted to engage in. However then the reality of the fact that I can type quicker than I can write came into play. And also as I began to use some of the texts both in my art practice and in my research project, the practicality of typing them seemed more efficient.

I have also recently brought another tool into my journaling kit and that is an audio recording software called otter. This allows you to make audio recordings and then the software transcribes them for you. Of course, its transcription is not perfect and they always need some kind of editing. The use of this software came at the suggestion of one of my supervisors and at first this felt extremely awkward. My dad had used dictaphones for his work when I was a child and I had strong associations to this when I thought about using this method. I remember listening to some of his tapes and how extremely formal and boring they seemed to me. There were also him making recordings for his secretary to type up. When I found myself alone with the recording device, I felt silly expressing myself in this way. However, I have persisted, and have gotten over the awkwardness of hearing my own voice, voicing my own thoughts in this way, and again have found it a useful way of recording some reflections.

We're going to spend some time doing some writing activities today, creating another space to think about our own stories that we have shared and those by others.

APPENDIX 8.7: SESSION SEVEN

3-5pm

3.00 – 3.20pm	20mins Welcome and how are people doing?
3.20 – 4.00pm	40 mins CR Topic - adolescence
4.00 – 4.05pm	5 mins Comfort break
4.05– 4.35pm	30mins archival material
4.35 – 4.50pm	15 mins summing up / setting topic
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Activities for next time and goodbyes

3.00 – 3.15pm

15mins

Welcome and how are people doing?

Thanks for completing evaluation forms

3.15 – 3.55pm

40 mins

CR – topic adolescence

Group agreement on the padlet

<https://en-gb.padlet.com/helendemain/Bookmarks>

Summing up as a separate section after a break and some writing activities. Explain the slido software.

Topic perhaps a bit too large!

Could be useful if people give a bit of context about when and where their experience relates to – ie I was a teenager in the 90s in the North of England.

How did you spend most of your time? How did your parents feel about how you spent your time?

What sort of relationships did you have with girls? Did you have a best friend? How did you feel about girls your own age? What did you talk about with other girls? What were your activities? Were there older women that you admired and wanted to be like?

What sort of relationships did you have with boys?

Did you date? Was there pressure from your peer group to date? What were your parents' attitude towards dating? How did you get your dates? What kind of people did you date?

What kind of people did you want to date?

How were your relationships with girls affected by any romantic relationships with boys or other girls? Which was more important?

What were your adolescent sexual experiences? Did you “neck”, “pet”, “make out”, “go all the way” etc? Were you concerned about your reputation?

Anonymous

Lesley

Fatima
Helen
F
Joy

4.05– 4.35pm 30mins archival material

Usually handling archive material has a physical component that is absent here.
How did people find thinking about adolescence?
Can people relate to the ideas and views presented?
What do any of the materials tell us about the conditions in which they were made? The time? What was it commissioned for?
What about visual elements?
How do the zines differ from diaries?

4.35 – 4.50pm

15 mins

Summing Up / setting a topic

www.slido.com

women

Topic for next time, activism, community empowerment, etc.

See Red poster

4.50 – 5.00pm

10 mins

Activities for next time and goodbyes

Taking photos?

Topic

Archive viewing

Making links between thoughts, writing and visual material

Set an activity of sharing photographs – do in the group and in the time before the next group?

APPENDIX 8.8: SESSION EIGHT

3.00 – 3.20pm	20mins Welcome and how are people doing?
3.20 – 4.00pm	40 mins CR Topic - freedom
4.00 – 4.05pm	5 mins Comfort break
4.05– 4.35pm	30mins Prints / posters / making works together
4.35 – 4.50pm	15 mins summing up / setting topic
4.50 – 5.00pm	10 mins Activities for next time and goodbyes

3.00 – 3.20pm

20mins

Welcome and how are people doing?

Thanks for completing evaluation forms

3.20 – 4.00pm

40 mins

CR – topic freedom

Group agreement on the padlet

<https://en-gb.padlet.com/helendemain/Bookmarks>

Topic - freedom

What does freedom mean to you?

What does freedom mean to you, specifically as a woman?

Do men in your life have more freedom than you?

Do you see different levels of freedom, either more or less, for different generations of women and girls in your life?

Have there been specific moments in your life where freedom has been a particular issue for you?

Are there moments in your life where you have felt your freedom has changed?

What are the obstacles in your life to freedom?

Has lack of freedom held you back at any time in your life? Have you felt it is possible to change the amount of freedom in your life?

Lesley

F

Helen

Anonymous

Joy

Fatima

Summing up as a separate section after a break and some writing activities. Explain the slido software.

4.00 – 4.05pm 5 mins

Comfort break

4.05– 4.35pm 30mins

Prints / posters / making works together

- Look at the posters of See Red Women's Workshop and Sister Corita
- Discuss prints – what do people like? Visually / in terms of content?
- Seven demands of WLM – how far have things come since here?
- Do the demands of the posters speak to concerns today?
- Talk about Feministo / Postal Art Event
- Women in the '70s created a network of communication via artworks being sent between one and another.

Making works / prints together

There is a democracy to making prints together, as it allows multiple contributions to be combined in one work. Brings together different types of materials. Allows multiple copies to be made, so that we can all have one!

What would people like to make?

Prints? Zines? Publication?

Things to consider:

- Size / orientation – what is a good size for people to work on at home? Standard paper sizes allows us to size up or down
- Colours
- Talk about creating content in layers so that it can be brought together

Watch short you tube vid

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orTHvZ_bUlg

Ways that people could contribute:

Text – creative writing, text drawn from our conversations, facts/found text

Drawing / mark making

Stencils / paper cuts / shapes

Photos – found or own

Topics to date:

- Freedom
- Adolescence
- Childhood experiences
- School and education
- Expectations
- Coping strategies during covid
- Thankful

4.35 – 4.50pm

15 mins

Summing Up / setting a topic

www.slido.com

crwomen8

Use the slido as a discussion point for where we could move to for the topic for next session

Possible Topics for remaining sessions:

Work / employment

Bodies

Sexual experiences

Motherhood / parenthood / childcare

Violence against women

Marriage/relationships/being single

Housework

Aging

Medical / psychological care

Guilt

Rage

4.50 – 5.00pm

10 mins

Activities for next time and goodbyes

APPENDIX 8.9: SESSION NINE

3.00 – 3.20

Welcome and how is everyone doing?

Run through what we are doing today:

Looking at our topic from last session

Making some creative responses to this and thinking how these can come together to make a print / series of prints

3.20 – 3.40

Run through materials:

Acetate / truegrain

Tracing paper

A4 paper plain / stencils

Chinaograph pencil

Posca pens

Paints

Self addressed envelope / A4 board

3.40 – 3.55

Freedom:

In pairs in breakout rooms talk through what you found interesting from last session and what you might want to look at again.

3.55 – 4.00

Break

4.00 – 4.40

Come back and share what was discussed in breakout rooms

Making activities

Decision about what to do next session –

Where have people got to with their making? Do they want to send things to me in the post again?

Continue making?

Cover another topic?

Possible Topics for remaining sessions:

Work / employment

Bodies

Sexual experiences

Motherhood / parenthood / childcare

Violence against women

Marriage/relationships/being single

Housework

Aging

Medical / psychological care

Guilt

Rage

APPENDIX 8.10: SESSION TEN

3.00 – 3.20

Meet up IRL – Friday 25 June 10am – 12pm

Lesley, Sarah, Pauline, Dorothy

Mon 21 – 10am – 12pm

Anonymous and Fatima

Events – Guerrilla Girls Sat 26 June, 8-9.30pm

We've been invited to submit a question to the Guerrilla Girls!

Lots of events on GWL site – Fatima event

Dardishi festival -

Welcome and how is everyone doing?

Run through what we are doing today:

3.20 – 4.00

CR - bodies

During puberty, how did you feel about your bodily changes? Breasts? Body hair? Other changes?

What attitudes did you encounter toward your bodily changes from your peers? From adults?

What happened the first time you got your period? Were you told what to expect beforehand? Was it a surprise?

How do you/did you feel about periods throughout your life? Physically and emotionally?

How do you feel about menopause? What do you know about menopause?

Do you feel pressures around body image? If so, where do these come from, and how do they make you feel?

Do you feel you have been treated differently in health care situations because you are a woman?

Do you think your doctors understood your problems fully, and have you had confidence in their treatment?

Do you feel health issues specific to women are treated differently than other types of health issues?

Have you ever been to a gynaecologist? Have you felt differently about seeing a gynaecologist compared to other types of doctors? Have you ever had a bad experience with a gynaecologist?

Have you felt differently about your body at different times in your life?

How do you feel about your body now?

1. Fatima
2. F
3. Joy
4. Lesley
5. Anonymous
6. Helen

4.00 – 4.05

Break

4.05 – 4.40

Creative activities, sessions continuing, exhibition / event

From August onwards I suggest that we continue to meet, and that we continue our discussions, s I think that there are some topics that would be interesting to cover, and that we work in a more focussed way towards some kind of public event.

Poll to see who wants to carry on meeting?

Yes – Joy, Fatima, anyone else?

Action / Artwork

Could the creation of artwork be seen as an action?

How do people feel about sharing some of your reflections with a public audience?

Would people be interested in creating a series of prints together / zine / collaborative work?

What part of the creative process do people enjoy? Find challenging? How could we work together to overcome some of the challenges?

How can we use creative methods / artworks to expand what we're wanting to say?

Layered / nuanced

Creative activities

Look at the material together that Joy sent in?

Photo from Caroline

Artwork with vinyl lettering

Carry on with creative activities if there is time

4.40 – 5.00

Summing up

Slido

<https://wall.sli.do/event/a18riean?section=e8119539-743b-46da-a5a1-22af73fff5a9>

#crwomen

Where to go from here

Possible Topics for remaining sessions:

Work / employment

Sexual experiences

Motherhood / parenthood / childcare

Violence against women

Marriage/relationships/being single

Housework

Aging

Guilt

Rage

APPENDIX 9: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EVALUATION DATA

Consciously Rising Group Equal Opportunities and Evaluation Data

May 2021

Online Survey Monkey link sent to 11 participants. Nine participants completed the survey. The questions are adapted from GWL's feedback evaluation form.

How would you describe your gender? (eg. woman, non-binary, prefer not to say)

Woman	8
Female	1

How would you describe your sexuality? (eg. lesbian, heterosexual/straight, not sure, prefer not to say)

Straight/not sure	1
Straight	4
Prefer Not to Say	1
Heterosexual	3

How would you describe your religion? (eg. Muslim, no religion, prefer not to say)

Roman Catholic	1
No religion	3
Bit of Catholic, bit of Buddhist	1
Spiritual not religious	1
Christian	1
Church of Scotland	1
Sikh	1

Do you have a health condition or disability?

Cognitive or learning disability or difference	2
Hearing impairment or Deaf	0
Mental Health condition	4
Other long-term or chronic condition	4
Visual impairment	0

Other	0
Prefer not to say	0
No	3

How old are you? (enter age or prefer not to say)

18 – 29	1
30 – 39	2
40 – 49	2
50 – 59	0
60 – 69	3
Prefer not to say	1

How would you describe your ethnicity? (eg. Pakistani Scottish, White Scottish, prefer not to say)

White Scottish	2
Scottish	2
White English	1
White British / Scottish	1
Scottish Pakistani	1
Indian Scottish	1
White	1

1. Following this series of workshops, do you feel they have:

Led to an increase in confidence?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
4	4	1
44.44%	44.44%	11.11%

Led to improved health and/or well-being?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
6	3	0

66.67%	33.33%	0
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Helped your personal development?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
6	3	0
66.67%	33.33%	0

Helped your professional development?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
3	3	3
33.33%	33.33%	33.33%

1. How did taking part in these workshops make you feel?

- I like trying new things and approaches.
- Happy
- Really involved, lots of new ideas and concepts presented and very interesting participants, Helen is a fantastic mediator as well and made sure everyone was involved
- Connected to other women
- Taking part helped me feel hopeful about making positive changes in my life
- Stimulated Energised
- Connected with people. Grateful.
- Encouraging
- Quite good in general.

2. What would you have liked to be different?

- I don't know
- Nothing
- Really enjoyed them so nothing really
- Nothing really. Maybe just a more stable group, but realise that sometimes people have to drop out of groups.
- a time machine to slow sessions down; the time flew in!

- More visual art output
- Earlier focus on discussion topic.
- Nothing it was nice sharing our thoughts
- I think everything was fine as it was. I probably struggled to fit in but that's on me.

3. Could these events have been more accessible or easier for you to enjoy?

- No
- Possibly different timing but very hard when trying to accommodate so many different people so not a criticism at all
- No. Moving the group online was a good decision in the circumstances
- The sessions felt accessible enough for me to be able to participate fully
- No. Zoom made it more accessible for me as I did not have to travel to Glasgow. I live in Fife. I wouldn't have taken part otherwise.
- No, very accessible.
- They were fine by me
- No

4. Is there anything else you want to say about this experience?

- I feel like I am doing something very GWL which was good as I don't think I could ever protest. I know GWL isn't a verb or the type of word that would have made sense in that sentence but I hope you understand.
- No
- Very interesting and worthwhile, wish I could have participated in more of the sessions
- Enjoyable and a great opportunity to connect with other women in a group where listening and trust were foregrounded
- I have really welcomed the opportunity to make true space for myself and to visit experiences (both good and bad) from my life
- Helen has been very inclusive and kind. She made me feel welcome. She is not judgemental nor over-bearing. She does not impose her opinions or objectives.
- Enjoyed thinking about different things associated with art. Liked the mutual respect in the group. Valued Helen's obvious commitment to the group and considered efforts for it to run well.

- Enjoyed the company
 - No
5. **As part of the project, Helen introduced the feminist practice of consciousness-raising (CR). The principles of this practice formed the basis of the discussions that followed. Did you find the process used different from other discussion groups? If you did, please could you describe in what ways?**
- I found it challenging in a new way because I had to use my critical think a lot more to formulate my responses. But also less challenging because our turn taking was spelt out and easier to understand.
 - No
 - Yes very different and really interesting having that set out at the start, I am not sure that I managed to consistently uphold it as it is hard not slipping into usual habits
 - going round in a circle is different from groups where the discussion is open for anyone who wants to speak. That latter practice can lead to more confident people speaking all the time and others not being heard, so it was important to hear all voices. Some groups also include feedback from others, which again was not a feature in this group. That sometimes felt frustrating, as sometimes there can be a strong urge to say something supportive, but heightened the listening and non-judgemental approach.
 - the CR principles allow for a much more structured format in the group, helping us all to know exactly what is expected of us. In other groups I've been in, these things have not always been as clear. It was comforting to have this structure as it allowed me to challenge myself and learn new skills. In other groups though, it has been easier/less stressful for me, from a learning disability perspective, as it is a symptom of my condition to want to talk alot/interrupt. I think the CR principles caused me a bit more anxiety than I would have normally experienced in other groups, as I was hyper-aware of trying to control these aspects of my condition...although this did mean i got to sharpen up my listening skills, so not all bad!
 - It was very different. You were specifically asked not to comment or express a view on what someone said. This is very refreshing and once I'd got used to it, it was very liberations just listening and thinking about what had been said rather than jumping in with a response. I am now trying to apply that in my daily life rather than being judgemental or "helpful."
 - More rigid than previous groups but understand that was the method.
 - Have not joined in any other discussion group
 - No, I don't think so. However, I can't really compare

APPENDIX 10: ONLINE SESSION TRANSCRIPTS

APPENDIX 10.1: SESSION ONE

Tuesday 9 February 2021 • 1:39:32

SPEAKERS

Em, Joanne, Lesley, [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], Joy, Helen, F, Dorothy, Anonymous, Pauline

Helen 00:02

Oh no, it doesn't say anything. Sometimes they say in this really funny American voices, "this conference is now being recorded", but—

Em 00:09

Mine's is being recorded. I can see it flashing up the corner.

Helen 00:12

Okay, cool. Okie dokies, right, so— I think everybody, bar a couple of people, I've kind of run through, so this is— it's a discussion group for women. It's based on the principles of feminist consciousness-raising, which is something I'm interested in, I've kind of run through this with everyone, apart from maybe [redacted], who's maybe new to this, so— I'm going to revisit my favourite New York Radical Feminist's guide to consciousness-raising and read a bit of that out to you again, just as a kind of like, reminder. It's just a way of kind of marking out a space and then we can take those as our starting points and decide how they work for us, but I'm just going to share my screen and bring up a little picture. That's not the right one. That one. Can people see these, kind of, brightly coloured brainy things? So, with consciousness-raising, there's kind of like these seven principles that I've been using with people, and I'm just going to read them out to you now and then we can just maybe try a little group, a little circle. So, "Select a topic. A topic is usually selected at the previous meeting, so that those who wish to may have time to consider it. The suggested list of topics that follows is meant as a guideline and not as a questionnaire. Refer to the list when you need to and include what you like. Sometimes, you may even wish to spend an entire meeting on a single aspect of a topic. It's a good idea to discuss background experiences, before moving on to adult experiences, etc. This is invaluable for developing trust and intimacy within the group. If you plunge into a heavy topic, such as marriage or lesbianism at your third session, there may be women who feel threatened or defensive, as you will still be relative strangers to one another. Go around in a circle. This creates a kind of free space where women can talk about themselves in a way that they may never have before. Going around in a circle enables women who are more reticent to have the same opportunity to talk as more aggressive women. It also helps us to listen to each other and breaks down feelings of competitiveness amongst us. Always speak personally, specifically and from your own experience. Try not to generalise, theorise or talk and abstractions. Don't interrupt, except to ask a specific informational question, or to clarify a point. If someone else's experience reminds you of one of your own, you might take notes so that you remember what it is you wish to say. Everyone will have a turn; everyone will have a chance to speak. Never challenge anyone else's experience. Try to accept that what another woman is saying

is true for her. Although it may seem all wrong to you. Keep in mind that she may never before had a chance to talk about herself without being interrupted or challenged. Try not to give out advice. The purpose of consciousness-raising is not to help you solve your day-to-day problems. For example, how can I become less dependent on my boyfriend, but to help you gain strength through the knowledge that other women share many of your feelings and experiences. Sum up. After each woman has related her personal experience with the topic, the group should find the common element and see what conclusions can be drawn. This is one of the most important parts of consciousness-raising because it is here that we can begin to discover the nature of our oppression." So, I thought we could give it a go, basically going around in a circle. See if we can get to grips with that. We did alright right on the zoom on— the name game and just take that little bit of time for everybody to say something. If when it's your turn you don't want to say something you could maybe put your hand up or say "pass" because I don't want people to feel uncomfortable but equally, it's about sharing experience in a safe space. So, I suppose I thought we could just maybe, as our topic, just like, why did people come here today? Or what drew them to joining a group like this just to find a little bit about out about people and get to know each other a little bit. So, I could go first, break the ice. It is obviously part of my research, but I think what drew me towards consciousness-raising in part was— I've got a very lovely family, but always, as a child, there were certain things that we weren't to talk about. Nice people don't talk about politics, religion, money, all these things. And it and it felt to me that it closed down conversation in some areas that didn't allow me to explore what my feelings or relationships were towards those. So, I think I kind of was drawn towards this method. I think I'm naturally quite private person probably having grown up in that environment, but to push me towards exploring how I feel about things and also to hear what other women feel about things. I don't know. So, [redacted] you are alphabetically first. You are the newest to the group. So, you could just say something short, or whatever you like, or you can pass—You're gonna pass? Okay. Okay, onto [redacted] on to you.

Em 06:54

Is it not Annabel first?

Helen 06:56

Amanda, I put Amanda in there. But Amanda's actually not here. So— you're on mute.

[redacted] 07:05

I'm relatively new as well. So, I just heard about this group through another group that I'm with. And they asked if I was interested in joining, and especially nowadays, when you can't get out and about, I thought, why not? So, I think it was it on Friday, it was I just seen a couple of you. So, I think I'll pass the now as well, see what everyone else is thinking. I'm not so sure what the group's about, I don't want to say something that you know, is not relevant or whatever. So, is okay that I pass?

Helen 07:50

Yeah on to Anonymous. But just to say that the process is— all experiences valid, so don't worry about saying anything wrong.

Anonymous 08:03

Well, the practical reason I came is because there was the email saying that you're doing your research and could we help. But also, erm thinking about the expression, you know, walk in someone else's shoes and things, but also a bit like your family, in there was things you weren't supposed to talk about or ask about, from teenage experiences, I realised that religion was not a safe topic and stuff. But if you can't ask questions, and you can't hear about other people's experience, then you don't know what you shouldn't say your what's okay to say, and it seemed a safe enough space to come to.

Helen 08:53

Thanks. Dorothy.

Dorothy 08:58

Hi, I joined this group, first and foremost with Joanne in mind, but I don't want to speak for Joanne. But I also was very interested in Helen's work and I'm just— I'm very curious, very curious. So, thank you.

Helen 09:29

Thanks. M.

Em 09:32

I was interested in joining, very curious, wondering if there's anything I can contribute to it. Hopefully lots of positive vibes and basically sharing my experiences about how I got from A to B and seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, and more or less found a life. That's about it for the moment.

Helen 10:09

Okay, thanks. On to F.

F 10:15

So, I, I've worked with Helen before in a couple of other groups and have had first-hand experience of consciousness-raising, and working in a group with that kind of structure, I've got a first-hand experience of how it instilled a lot more confidence in me, and has helped me in kind of those types of life changing ways, which sounds quite dramatic, but actually, is the truth of how it's been. So, I've had quite profound personal experiences, because of using consciousness-raising. I'm also part of another Research Group, which I just joined before the end of last year, and although the topic is slightly different, I was really interested in how group dynamics and things like that work. Also, I should say, I'm an artist as well. And I'm interested in how groups can work in a more conscious way together. So, like there's bits of professional interest that I've gotten this, but it's definitely a lot more personal, and yeah, like Helen's already said, there's definitely no wrong answers. Everything is right. Everybody's experiences are valid. And don't ever worry that you're saying something that you think is wrong, because that's just not a thing in this type of group setting, I know, and I can tell you, that is not going to be like that. But yeah, it's partly professional for me, but partly personal, because I think in the last 12 months, as well, has given me an opportunity to really delve deeply into my own character, and what motivates me in life as well as my professional life. So yeah, those are my reasons for coming and joining the group.

Helen 12:16

Thanks for that. That's great. Joanne.

Joanne 12:21

I'm gonna pass I'm not really sure.

Helen 12:23

Okay, that's fine. Joy, shall we move on to you?

Joy 12:32

Yeah, the consciousness-raising approach really jumped out at me when I saw it, because it reminded me that I was in a consciousness-raising group in the '80s. So, I was just remembering back to that. And it was just really interesting to see that term, which you kind of don't see so much now. It's not so kind of current I suppose in the women's movement. So, I was just really interested to maybe rejoin a group and again, have that experience. Obviously, it will be different because it's— obviously I'm in a different place in my life. But I'm just really curious to once again experience the atmosphere of a consciousness-raising group, because I have really, really strong memories of the group that I was in and the people I was with, and just how important that particular group was, for me in many ways. I was also very interested in this sort of creative side to it, because I'm not at all somebody who knows how to make things. Not at all. There are other kinds of things I enjoy doing, but making things is something that I've always found extremely challenging. So, I was quite interested in that link with a slightly more creative kind of artistic aspect, which obviously wasn't in the group that I was in before. So yeah, so I suppose it's that kind of awareness of having done something like this before, but being interested as to how will it be different this time? And what might come up this time?

Helen 14:09

Okay, great. Thank you, [redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 16:19

That's great. Thanks, [redacted]. And Lesley,

Lesley 16:23

I came to this group through a social history project that I'm involved in recording the lives of women in the town I live in both past and present. It was initiated initially by Glasgow Women's Library, so that's how I got the email about Helen's project. And it pricked an interest in me, because of the work I've been doing in the social history project, where women have been— their contribution is so underrepresented and under recorded, it's quite staggering. And as a young woman, in the '70s, where I was an activist, and thought that I was really going to change the world, I am very disappointed that 40 years on, the women who are coming behind me are still having to do the same work, the same leg work, to establish themselves and their voices that I was having to do in the '70s. I'm an artist, and

Helen's project is blending a lot of areas of interest for me both in empowering women and the artistic side and using that as a voice for women.

Helen 16:59

Great thanks, Lesley. Pauline.

Pauline 18:06

So I was sent a flyer for the group from a friend. So, I didn't have any knowledge of Helen's previous work. I don't have any past experience of consciousness-raising groups. I'm at a stage in my life, where, we have a granddaughter who's one. And I've been reflecting on the changes that my daughter as a mother, is going through compared to some of the things that I went through, when we had our family, and how things have similarities, but also differences. So, I guess, just reflecting on how things have changed for some people compared to what I experienced, you know, sort of 30, 40 years ago, made me feel interested in what the group could bring to me and what I could contribute. And I think because of lockdown, there's been a lot more time, really to think about life in general, and so the timing of the group seem to be good for me to be able to think about things in detail, and as has been said before in a safe space. In my work life, I worked in a predominantly female orientated sector, so I was especially interested in you know, just being able to voice my thoughts and to hear what other people thought to say. I am not at all artistic, I can make curtains and use a sewing machine, but again, I thought it was interesting that a research project may also be about you generating art as it goes along, so that seemed really interesting, so I guess I'm here with quite an open mind, and happy to go with the flow of what comes up in the group.

Helen 20:17

Great, thanks, Pauline. So, I suppose we've done once around our imagined circle, but is there anything anybody else would like to say we could maybe like— just kind of if, if there's things that— what other people have said or brought things up for you, if you want to just take a few minutes to— [redacted], do you want to—

[redacted]

Helen 21:19

Okay, that's totally fine, [redacted], you're very welcome to stay for as long as you like. And I'm happy also speak to you between if I can give you maybe a bit more information. But I guess just the general premise, is kind of making space for time to talk about things. The kind of idea of consciousness-raising is that you look at your own personal life and talk about things from a personal perspective and a personal experience, and then come together as a group and see if those kind of ripple out into society and what we can kind of maybe think about how that talks about things more broadly in society.

[redacted]

Helen 22:05

Got a couple of comments in the chat. I'll just— F's saying, "it's lovely to hear everyone's reasons for joining so wide ranging and interesting." And Anonymous' asking, "what kind of

art will be creating?" "Will we have to create— will we all have to create in the same way?" And I suppose these are questions as we go forward, I think it kind of thought maybe we just use today to chat a little bit and get to know each other. And then we can kind of maybe start to think about what creative ways of working that people are interested in or enjoy, and we can kind of start coming up with a list, but it's to be shaped by the group, so we can see how that evolves. I guess one thing that I wanted to— consciousness-raising kind of, like creating this type of space, it's necessary for us all to feel comfortable and confident about what we're talking about and sharing in this quite unusual online space, so if we were together in a space in the Women's Library, for example, like there would be certain kind of rules and etiquette that we would keep to, and I just thought we could spend a wee bit of time just talking through some of those so that people feel, that they understand what the parameters are. And obviously, any suggestions that people have to kind of make it the best and most comfortable for everyone. So, I kind of written down a few things I thought we could discuss but also if there's anything that occurs to other people. So, what makes people feel able to speak in this environment? Normally it would be a private space, and do people feel comfortable that sharing things on Zoom works in that way? Or are the things that we could do to make the space feel good for everyone?

Joy 24:21

I suppose one of the big things maybe for me, maybe for other people as well, is about confidentiality, isn't it? It's about, you use the word private there, so it's that idea that things shared in the group, stay within the group and people and— If I think if you know that then you feel a little bit more able to open up maybe about things which are quite private or quite personal or something that's happened in the course of your life. So perhaps quite a big one would be, for me anyway, would be confidentiality and I suppose with that goes trust as well. The fact that you trust people to keep that confidentiality. How did you do it in your previous group Joy? Was it a kind of thing that you talked about? Like— It was something that we talked about at the beginning, yes. The fact that things that were shared within the group sort of stayed in a group, if you like. It was, I suppose it was a more informal organisation, we didn't have you know— And I suppose it was a different time as well. So, we didn't have you know, the consent forms, and obviously, all the things that you have to do, obviously, because you've got the research behind it. But there was very much that discussion around, you know, trust and confidentiality and the fact that things that people said, weren't then, you know, mentioned in other contexts, as it were, it just stayed within— between us. And that worked very well, it did work, because people respected that they really did sort of feel that that was important.

Helen 26:04

Great. F you've raised your hand, did you want to add something to that?

F 26:10

Yeah. Other groups that I've been involved in that, understanding that nothing that said in the group leaves the group, is usually, right up there, near the very top and any other group agreements, I've either helped write or that I've been in a group that they have used. And, like Joy's saying, it's a kind of mutual trust. This is a scary experience, and I think there's definitely advantages to it being done over a virtual space that you don't necessarily have in physical spaces, but I suppose with a physical space— like I'm hiding my camera, then

disclaimer, that's because I've got ADHD, so it's difficult for me to look at myself on the screen when I'm talking. It's very confusing. So that is why I'm not showing my camera, but if we were meeting in a physical space, we would all have the luxury of seeing each other as we are that day, knowing that it's definitely a real human sitting there, and so perhaps those types of rapport and trust are easier to build in a physical space. However, it can really be as simple though as everybody agreeing that whatever you hear within that group 100% stays within that group, and then you honour it. I mean, I don't mean to be flippant about it, but you know, things can be done in simple ways like that. But yeah, I just wanted to say that confidentiality thing is always up there, usually in the top three, I've noticed there anyway, so I would second that one that Joy added there.

Helen 27:54

Great. Thanks. [redacted] got her hand up, and then Lesley.

[redacted]

Helen 29:44

Thanks, Lesley, did you want to say something?

Lesley 29:47

Yeah. Just it can be quite daunting speaking out, and, at the beginning in a group like this, and maybe it can be more comfortable just to, to write what you're trying to say in the chat.

Helen 30:36

Yeah, I think that's a good thing. [redacted] got her hand raised, but I'll just come to you in a moment. Because that was something that I was thinking about, cos, I got my headphones in at the moment, which means that anybody else in my space can't hear what anyone on the call is saying, which is a way to protect other people's privacy, because we don't know who else is in people's home environments.

But also, when there are other people in your space, then you don't feel—I know that I've been in other meetings and I thought that I had been talking to people privately, and then somebody else in my house will have said "oh, yes I knew that, because I heard you talking to so and so". So, I think using that kind of switching between the chat, if people are wanting to share something in this group environment, but don't actually feel comfortable saying it out loud, for whatever reason, but then obviously for some people as well, writing some things down is not a way that they feel comfortable communicating, so I think that we are going to have to try and kind of finesses what works for us and just keep, keep thinking about it and keep referring back to it, so, yeah I think putting things in the chat could be a good as well. And I am happy to read out anything that anybody—if on their turn they want to,— we could just all sit quietly while somebody types and then have it read out. [redacted] you had your hand up. You still have your little emoji hand raised. Oh, you're on mute.

[redacted]

Helen 32:47

Okay, yeah, no, thanks for saying that, [redacted], because it's—you know, the etiquette of online meetings is hard to navigate, isn't it? Like, it's not necessarily that people aren't

wanting to share, its internet connections, or, as F talked about, like conditions like ADHD that's maybe can come across that you're not conforming to the kind of normal ways of communicating, but I think like, I'm interested in us kind of unpicking those as well, because I think we do live in a society where we as women are not the dominant group, so I think a lot of our main modes of communicating and ways of going on are not necessarily drawn by women. So, I think just having a— taking a little time to question some of those things can be really interesting. Let me just see if there's other things in the chat. F's saying, she agrees that the chat is underused in these types of group settings. Anonymous' saying that she has a sore ear, so headphones are a good option today, but she's kicked her husband out of the room and the door's closed (laughs). What do other people think about headphones? Is that difficult for people? Or—

F 34:19

I stay on my own, so unless there's bugs in the wall or something like that, a cat in my eaves, I'm not going to use headphones. But that's also to do with how the ADHD affects my sensory processing. So if I have headphones on, I'm probably not going to pay as much attention, which sounds counterintuitive, but it's kinda how my ADHD works. So, I think flexibility is going to be a good thing for us all.

[redacted]

Helen 34:56

Yeah, so I suppose you know, we've had— we've kind of discussed that together like M, you're saying you're you've got bad ears, so your earphones are out. I suppose it's just talking about what creates trust, and I think there's a kind of, seems like there's a general understanding that it's respectful to one another. But we can't all necessarily be doing exactly the same as one another— we're adapting to our circumstances, aren't we? Has anybody else anything else they wanted to say about the confidentiality? I know, I know, [redacted] she said the motto like "what's said in the group stays in the group". I wondered what people think about, you— Sometimes things get shared, and you want to like not that you wanted to reveal the kind of content of that, but like, I found that sometimes conversation can get quite intense, and that you just maybe want to share a little bit of that with somebody, but you wouldn't necessarily, like, give the details of it away, like, do we need to be more specific. I'll just read this little thing out that I wrote down before we joined, I was just reading something on a kind of psychology about group dynamics. And it was kind of talking about a group situation where some— one of their participants had talked about there being alcoholism in the family, and how that had ruined the family, and it caused all kinds of problems, and it said, "to maintain confidence outside of the group, while still allowing members to share some of that experience", it was taking out that kind of like specific information about who and exactly what was said, and relating it to your own experience. So, "in my group, somebody was talking about addiction problems, and that led me to think about how in my life, such and such happened". Anonymous, you've got your hand up there.

Anonymous 37:20

Yeah, because I've often been in a situation like this, where people want things to stay in the group, but I've been terrified that, somebody will say something that will confuse me or

upset me, and perhaps even trigger me, and then I'll not be able to speak to someone like my husband or a doctor or something somewhere where they're supposed to be similar confidentiality, and where they don't know anybody in the group, so they wouldn't judge anyone. And I just feel the need for— to be able to say in my group this was discussed this, like, whatever particular thing really upset me was said, can you help me to figure this out?

Helen 38:01

Yeah, I think that's really valid—

Anonymous 38:06

—person who doesn't know anyone in the group.

Helen 38:09

I think that's a really valid response, definitely. And, I suppose, like, in the kind of normal—, like, when the consciousness-raising groups were set up, they were supposed to be like, without a— no leader, no hierarchy, but obviously, I've got a different interest in this than everybody else, because it is part of my research, and perhaps that also means I could act as a go to person if, if there is anything people want to talk about, the outside of the larger group setting that people can chat one-to-one with me if they would like. But I wonder if anybody's got any feelings about what Anonymous just shared there?

F 38:56

I'm not sure I was quite understanding what Anonymous was trying to say. So, I'm sorry, I've maybe not quite picked it up, right, but if it could be explained in another way, or if Anonymous could explain a little bit further, that would be really helpful for me, please. Thank you.

Helen 39:14

Yeah, I think I maybe got the sense of what you were saying Anonymous, that, if some if in this group setting somebody shares something that may be triggers, experience of your own, that you find quite intense, and you leave the group and you still have that very intense feeling that's actually verging on getting overwhelming, that whether it's possible to share some of what has been talked about, but without necessarily using specific names or letting some of that— letting— allowing you to process some of that outside of this group setting.

F 39:57

Oh, yeah, I understand that now, thanks. That makes sense. Yeah. And just to kind of take it back to other groups have been in similar situations have arisen, that's usually how we've handled it. You're not giving the full details of everything, but you can speak about something in order to have, like you're saying, to yourself to process it? I think that's a good suggestion.

Helen 40:31

So, Helen, can I just ask to clarify what Anonymous has spoken about, are you going to take on that role, then if one of us needs to talk out further, a reaction to something that's been discussed in the group that obviously it's not going to be, it's going to be in a one to one, or

you're going to take that role on or will be that there'll be somebody else who will do that? Yeah, no, I'm happy to take that on. Because I suppose like, if we were meeting in real life, you know, and somebody got upset, then, you know, maybe I would nip out the room and make them a cup of tea, and we'd have like a little chat one to one, like, my zoom skills are not that advanced. But I think you can go into a little room one to one, I'll maybe try and do some experiments with that before we meet next time. Like whether there is a kind of, you know, if people get upset whether people want to... I'm not saying that what we're talking about is intended to upset people. I'm not saying that what we're talking about is intended to dig deep down into everyone's soul. But I think just through creating a space of trust and respect, often people find that they do want to share things and until you've said it, you don't necessarily know what the emotional effect that is going to have upon you. And I think I definitely feel heightened emotions at the moment with all that's going on around us in the world, like it's quite an intense time. Do we need to have a kind of way of you know, if somebody gets a bit teary, like, of dealing with that? Anonymous you've got your hand up there?

Anonymous 42:21

Er Helen I have absolutely no problem with you, but I happen to know Dorothy better than yourself, and the sisters who may both still come if they were to speak to each other about something in the group with no one else around, but it wasn't in this space and this time would that break the rules? Yeah, what do people think? [redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 43:13

I think that's what people's concern, isn't it? Yeah.

[redacted]

Anonymous 43:29

Sorry, I didn't mean to suggest you would I was just trying to use examples of people—

[redacted]

Helen 44:07

Has anybody got anything else they'd like to— F has said in the chat, like, breakout rooms are a good way to manage one to one chat. So, I will endeavour to test that out. Maybe F, you would be willing to try and test out a breakout room with me before we meet next time?

[redacted]

[redacted]

Joanne 46:07

No, I don't I don't really comfort with my brother because he's, not judgmental, he's just— You need a lawyer present with him. So, you do, you need another person to explain to him what you're trying to say.

[redacted]

Joanne 46:31

It's terrible. My brother's terrible. You can say something to him and then it something different, and you're like, but that's not the conversation I was having with you. You just don't talk to him.

[redacted]

Helen 46:49

M was something you wanted to say?

Em 46:51

It took me a long time to learn how to deal with my emotions. I went through a long, long, long process. And I found that er, it was how I was taking things on board somebody maybe saying something that, just like that, would trigger me. And then I had to start recognising why it was triggering me. It wasnae actually the person or what they said or what they've done, that was purposely like kinda sorta upsetting me. So, if somebody said to me something over the years, I used to get worked up and into a state and what have you. And then I thought Em calm down. It's just about—don't take things so personally, people aren't deliberately going out there to attack you or put you down or what have you. It's probably my insecurities played a big part in it. And I've learnt to deal with my emotions in a completely different way now. And I see I can understand if somebody takes something on and you see—you want to say to them, oh I'm sorry, I didn't upset you, I didnae mean that. Please don't take that the wrong way. So, I understand when somebody, is on the opposite end of the coin sort of thing. Soo you can sort of kind of bear away from someone who gets a wee bit upset or something over something or other, because I've been there. So, it's just about working through and supporting them and, recognising what's going on with them and how you can help them that's just basically from my point of view.

Joanne 47:16

I get where you're coming from, because I'm, I'm totally the same. Like the full lockdown I had a problem with one of the girls at work and it kinda bugged me, she was quite cheeky to me and I'm like—and I came home, and I just took it out on my mum. And then see later on that night, I was like, I didn't mean that. So, I'd get my—So it could be something like say that you said something to me, but I could take it the wrong way.

Em 49:04

That's right.

Joanne 49:05

And then come back to you and go but that's not what I meant and then yer explain it that's—

Em 49:10

Aye.

Joanne 49:10

So I get where you're coming from I just take whatever you say I'll take—

Em 49:13

You can try and get a wee thing in your head, a wee thing from about 20 years ago or something or other. So, it's just about thinking to yourself, did she actually mean it then she did it upset me or did—I think if you've spent a long time doubting yourself and other people have doubted you, and you've come through a long process that—there's always wee things there that you still sort of go to deal with over the years. And as time goes on you get stronger and stronger, and now I don't react. I just think to myself, if yer—well to cut a long story short, I'll make it as quick as possible. I do genealogy and I found four brothers and I'm in contact with one of them who's got a really, really, really bad attitude, really bad. I've had this conversation just like that—I'm not speaking about his business, erm I'm just speaking in my tight bubble about the way he speaks to me, very very cheeky and he's putting me down and what have you. But he was given away at birth, and he spent 18 years in a children's home. And as much as I recognise that must have extremely really tough for him, erm, I'm still not prepared to take the backlash off him. He should respect the fact that I've spent a lot a lot a year's searching for him to fulfil my granny's wishes. She wanted to know where he went, how he'd done, er, is he alive, is he well? What kind of family did he go into, that was my Granny's last wish. And I have done that. This guy has no reason to be bad to me. And I'm thinking to myself, do not take it on board. It's his background, it's what he's came through. But I'll be drawing the line. I'll be drawing the line, I need to say to him, I have nae done anything to you, so don't treat me that way. Whereas before, before— before I got to where I am today, I would have been in tears, I would have been in tears, and emotional and I would have been pulling my hair out. I'd have been phoning everyone saying, why is he doing this to me, I've not done anything to him? And now I was thinking, no, no, you're not getting into my peaceful world. I know the issues but there not going to be landed on me. So, I've learned a lot, an awful, awful lot. I know to not let some of the issues upset me or get to me. I've not actually done anything wrong. But you can—if people have told you for years and years and years that you're wrong. You shouldn't have said that, shouldn't have said that, shut up, sit down, your unimportant. That stays in your head. So now I'm well all past that. I'm like, no, no, no, no, I am important. You're not gonna treat me like that. I know you've got issues, and I'm prepared to talk those through with you, but you're not gonna treat me like a piece of dirt. So that's the kinda—I've learned lots through that. It's about other people's emotions themselves. So, I'll let somebody else talk?

Helen 52:42

Thanks for sharing that M it's kind of good to know, like, the different things that shape us isn't it? Would people mind just if—Sorry, just—if—put your mics on mute when you're not speaking. I think there's maybe some background noise there. Oh, that's great. Okay, cool. So, I think a kinda—a mutual, a mutual kind of environment of mutual respect as what everybody—I think we're all in agreement. I'll maybe kind of go through the kind of chats

that we've had and try and draw up a little kind of simple statement that we can share next time about what our kind of parameters are, and we can keep just revisiting and reviewing it, and learning as we go along. Was there anything anybody else wanted us to think about in relation to that kind of agreement? I think, privacy and confidentiality are the kind of the biggest ones really, like, is there anything else?

F 53:53

I think there's something around, us all taking ownership as well, of our own emotions and how we are that day. To an extent, because there's definitely something that is welcoming about being part of a group where you can actually just be yourself and express yourself and whatever way that is, you know, as long as you're not like you're saying, going out your way to hurt people or be really disruptive, but there's definitely something around, people accepting how you are that day, like meeting you where you are, if that makes sense to people, you know, because some of us have whatever going on in our lives, so from one day to the next, we can be in very different emotional states. And I think being able to just be met with respect where you are, at the time you're in the group is a really important thing as well. I don't know what other people think about that.

Helen 55:00

Yeah, thanks F. Yeah, it'd be great to hear what other people—I think in the kind of—that's one of the rules that are like in the New York Radical Feminists, the kind of never challenging anyone else's experience and try not to give out advice, that just allowing people to say things and it to exist amongst the group, and for that to maybe bring something to mind that you might want to relate to your own experience, but not to necessarily be trying to solve other people's problems in in the group because I guess we have our other spaces to try and do that kind of work. And I think sometimes just hearing other people's—the way they've dealt with things I know Anonymous' popped in the comments, there like, taking strength from other people's openness is something I've really found that this kind of group experience can bring. Lesley's just popped in, can I send a link to this New York Radical Feminists Manifesto, or consciousness-raising packet? Yes, I can do definitely. And I also, as people have been sending me their addresses, I'll also send—I can send people copies in the post if they were like—I think if your lives are anything like mine, a little bit of excitement of something coming through the letterbox can have about as good as gets at the moment, so I was going to post you out little kind of packs of things. I can send you a copy of this artists book that has a lot of things that we're kind of talking about, and you know, maybe if we were in real space, we'd all be having a cup of tea together, so maybe send you some little teas to drink and things like that, and any other kind of comforting things just to try and make this space a little bit out of ordinary or a little bit of kind of notion of care. [redacted] you've got your hand up.

[redacted]

Helen 57:16

Yes, that is a good idea. We're at 20 past four. So, let's just have a couple of minutes where people can have a comfort break, go and get themselves a little drink. So maybe what five minutes—and equally people can stay around and just chat. So, my clock says 4.18, so if we come back at like 25 past.

[redacted]

Helen 57:44

Yeah, okay. Okay, great

F 57:46

No worries.

Helen 57:53

And I'm here if anybody wants to say anything.

[redacted]

Helen 58:06

Hi [redacted]

[redacted]

Helen 58:19

You can, so at the bottom, can you see a button that says chat? It's kind of in the middle.

[redacted]

Helen 58:30

Click on that then you'll see the 26 little messages that have—

[redacted]

Helen 58:47

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, give it to me now. And then, you can either post it in the chat—or just I'm sure nobody's going to come up— Yeah. Or if you're happy to say I can just write it, I've got a pencil here, go for it.

[redacted]

Helen 59:01

Uh huh.

[redacted]

Helen 59:02

Uh huh.

[redacted]

Helen 59:15

Yeah.

[redacted]

Helen 59:18

Oh you were too fast, it's g...

[redacted]

Helen 59:23

Uh huh.

[redacted]

Helen 59:27

Okay, okay, Brill. And you—and I can email you a few things as well?

[redacted]

Helen 59:42

yep, yep. Yeah, I can send you those in the post and a little envelope to send them back again. No problem.

[redacted]

Helen 1:00:02

Yeah, that's fine. That's fine. Definitely.

[redacted]

Helen 1:00:14

No, that's all right. Yeah, I think I'm more of a listener generally, I don't know how I've got myself into the situation where I'm instigating a chat, a discussion group, but—

[redacted]

Helen 1:00:29

So, I'm an artist, and maybe—I could maybe give you the kind of chat that I gave other people before we met today. So, I'm a printmaker mainly, I do a lot of screen printing. But I work a lot with groups in the community, doing these types of sessions as a way to kind of like, generate material to be included in artwork. So, I worked with a group of women up in Easterhouse and we did a similar discussion group, and then I had an exhibition and I included little bits of their words alongside some of their photographs from their own collections. So, I could—if you fancy little zoom chat another day, I could show you some of those.

[redacted]

Helen 1:01:21

No, is for anyone really. So, I will be making some artworks as the group goes along, and we can chat about whether people want to be involved in in, in making those so. So, I've worked with groups where, like the content—like the discussion that we've had, I kind of built that into the artworks that I've made. And then I've also worked with groups where we've actually done printing and things together as part of the group. So, people have been making their works alongside me. But it's all, it's all dependent on what everybody's interested in, and what we can manage to do, in our new online world where we're not able to screen print together in a community room.

[redacted]

Helen 1:02:23

I would say yeah, bit of both really. So, I suppose just kind—I'm very interested in the development of the feminist movement. So, this way of facilitating group discussion was come up with by the second-wave feminists, so at the end of the 1960s, early 70s, so kind of 50 years ago. And is that still a good way to try and talk about issues within women's lives? Have women's lives changed a lot since that time? What are the challenges that women are still facing in society? Those are the kind of questions that goes through my mind.

[redacted]

Helen 1:03:20

I know, your sister's thrown you in.

[redacted]

Helen 1:03:33

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right. All right. Okay, we're 25 past.

[redacted]

Helen 1:03:39

I think so.

Anonymous 1:03:43

We're mainly, are we mainly sharing our own personal stories about whatever the topic is that week?

Helen 1:03:51

That's the kind of idea. Yep. Yeah.

Anonymous 1:03:54

And erm, any week, would we be able to, say we would prefer not to share?

Helen 1:04:01

Yes, yep. I suppose when we did the little circle earlier, people did say pass if they didn't want to share. And I think we can carry on doing that, because there may be subjects that people don't feel they want to talk about, or they're maybe still having a chance to think about what it is they wanted to say. Right, so 25 past, so just meet for a little bit longer, because I know it's quite tiring being on zoom. So, I thought I would maybe show you a little video of an artwork, and then we can maybe have a little chat about what we might talk about next session. So, the video—let me find it. I can't find it. Just bear with me a moment. I've still got too many things open on my computer. I am definitely not a Zoom pro (laughter). And try again. There it is, right, okay. Right so and this is a video that's made by an American artist called Faith Wilding. And it was made, I think in 1969, and it's a video called "Waiting". So, I can just tell you a little bit—the kind of feminist art movement, which might be something that people know a little bit about, or not so much about, but the kind of second-wave feminist movement in their kind of late 60s, early 70s, artists also started to get involved with feminist ideas. And there was quite a famous Feminist Art Program in California that was set up by a couple of artists, and Faith Wilding was one of the students on that programme. And it was quite kind of radical at the time, because the Feminist Art Program occupied a space outside of the art school and they made a project called "Womanhouse" where they kind of made artworks in all through this kind of domestic space, and then it was open to the public and kind of 1000s of people came to see. But the idea of occupying the entirety of this space—and they also did lots of performances and things. So, Faith Wilding's piece is a performance piece. And I just thought I would play it for you. And then we could maybe—because I think it raises a few interesting questions. And this is the only clip I could have found on it on YouTube and it has some French subtitles on it. Like don't let those put you off. I don't speak French myself, so I'll just be listening to the English version. So, it's only three and a half minutes. So, let's just listen for a moment.

1:07:57

At this point the group watch video documentation of Faith Wilding's work *Waiting*. This can be viewed by following the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM_Km5tgBZk&t=3s

Helen 1:11:43

Shall we just do a little—go around and see—I just thought that was quite a kinda an interesting—I feel like we're a little bit of a period of where things are on pause, so the idea of waiting was quite interesting. But I think also, while some of those things are still relevant, I think it shows its age as well a little bit that video, but— shall we try another little circle? I'll just put in the chat everyone's names again. And if just anybody wants to say anything that that video made them think of—if it didn't, then it can pass but we'll just give it a go. So, we maybe start at the bottom this time, maybe we'll start with Pauline first, give [redacted] a break from being the first person. If that's all right with you, Pauline?

Pauline 1:12:42

I probably need a bit of time to think about that, to be perfectly honest, because I felt a sense of hopelessness listening to that, as though that person had no control over what she was going to do. And life was pretty hopeless and so dependent on other people for what they would do or what the expectations were. And so, my initial thoughts were that's hopeless.

Helen 1:13:15

Okay, thanks, Pauline. Lesley.

Lesley 1:13:19

I think as you said, Helen, it's slightly dated. I think it's a—it's a performance piece of its time when women were much more kept in their place. And were waiting to be told, and however, it still has residents— resonance today in different contexts with the waiting. So yeah, I actually found it a very powerful piece. Very powerful.

Helen 1:14:04

Thanks, Lesley. [redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 1:14:57

Thanks, [redacted]. Joy.

Joy 1:15:05

Yeah, it—my sense of it was, is that it is kind of of its time, obviously. But at the same time, I felt that it was still really very relevant. I just feel that a lot of the time it, all of us, maybe we can at different times in our lives get drawn into kind of thinking, well, once such and such has happened, then, you know, things will open up, like, I'll get that job and it'll all be great. Or I'll get that promotion, or I'll lose that weight or, or, you know, those kind of things is that sort of sense of once such and such as happen, then, you know, great things are gonna come. And then of course, that thing happens, and there aren't great things because that's just, there's just more other stuff. So, you—there can almost be that kind of sense of just waiting for something to happen, rather than just getting on with how it is now, which I think is, you know, even still now, I think it can still be something that we can all experience maybe. And perhaps sometimes needing to—I kind of have that sense of wanting to remind myself, don't keep waiting for stuff to happen. Just get on and do stuff. Just get in there and get on with it. Rather than thinking that there's a—like this, this is some kind of paradise, it's going to come at some point, because probably it's never going to come. Just get with it (laughter).

Helen 1:16:30

Thanks, Joy. Joanne, did you want to share anything?

Joanne 1:16:34

I think I'm kinda like with Pauline, I'm like, bit—more confused on what it was meant to— thing-a-me, because I am young. I've not really—never been that, like—how to explain it? I'm gonna get my words all mixed up, now. I was a bit confused, and with it—but got half of it, if you get what I mean, like the waiting bit. For example, like a previous relationship, I felt as if I was constantly waiting, to now the relationship that I'm in I'm not, if you get what I mean.

Helen 1:17:19

Thanks Joanne. F.

F 1:17:25

So that's actually the first time I've seen that. And I did feel the hopelessness, that Pauline, and I think [redacted] did talk about and Joanne mentioned there. But what I really liked was, it kind of made me think a bit the same way as Joy, like you can't wait forever. I do get that sense of when this one thing happens, then this will happen, and this will happen. I really got that from the piece as well. But the other thing that really made me think about is, I'm now in my mid 40s. And I've chosen not to have children, so my body hasn't performed a lot of those functions that were discussed in that piece. It's going to make me actually look at, did I make the right decision about having kids or not. But I do for myself still think I've made the right choice. But yeah, there's something in it about the repetition that gets used as well, the fact that "waiting" keeps being emphasised, and the way that is repeated, was really forcing us to wait for, for, Faith to get through the poem, to get through her piece. So, with the ADHD brain it made me think a million things, but those are just the ones I can vocalise quickly just now.

Helen 1:18:51

Thanks, F. Can I just pause for one moment, I'm just—my computer's about to run out of power. So, I'm just going to run and get my charger, but I'll be just one—if you just wait.

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:19:18

Not good at waiting if I can't do something, so I, so I'm knitting.

[redacted]

Helen 1:19:35

Okay, great. Sorry about that, go for it Em.

Em 1:19:38

I could relate to it very, very much. I just feel that we sort of programme ourselves, we've got to go through these stages. And this—it'll get better if I do this. It'll get better if I do that, get better—and you get to a certain stage in your life and—naw, just like Joy says you start realising these things aren't going to happen or what you're waiting for? I'd be a millionaire if I had a pound for each day that I wasted sitting waiting about and now I'm at a stage in my life—No, there's no more waiting. There's no more waiting. No waiting to see what's gonna happen tomorrow or next week or next month. My shoes are on and I'm away to do what I want to do and no expectations about how it's going to be all perfect, then because the chances are pretty unlikely. Just going to try my best and make—keep it at the moment, keep myself happy, but certainly, certainly no way, and certainly, no past the stage of what—what sort of, I don't know if it's the right thing, but what the programme for women sort of thing. You know, like a waiting for the man, waiting for the perfect man, waiting to have a child—No, that's all gone. That's definitely gone, I've had too many experiences to know that that's never gonna work out. So now, I'm just out, and I'm away doing exactly what I want to do and who knows what's round the corner. But I could definitely, could relate to that. Definitely.

Helen 1:21:21

Thanks, Dorothy.

Dorothy 1:21:25

Yes, I can agree with what's been said before, and—being quite an old person I can relate to being like that actor, and as a young person, and I think it was a powerful, powerful, erm performance, with a variety of emotions, you know, going through my head while I watched it, and I'm glad I'm not like that now (laughter). That's me.

Helen 1:22:13

Thanks, Dorothy. Anonymous.

Anonymous 1:22:17

I'm quite ashamed in my reactions, I'm a bit worried that I've become my parents. Because at first I was doing it through—I was thinking of my reaction through their—What I suspect they would have done, but they're my reactions. I'm so glad I wasn't there. I would not be able to stand and watch I would have been there and shaken the person, going stop waiting, pick up a pen, pick up a book, pick up needles, pick up a key and leave the house, you know, I even had myself asking, how on earth did she get to university or art college or whatever, if she needs everybody else to do stuff for her? I've got a word that my dad often uses, but I'm not sure if I can say it right. Stop procrastinating and mum's expression, life's what—life's what happens when you're making plans? I more or less wanted to shut her up.

Helen 1:23:16

Thanks Anonymous. [redacted]

[redacted]

Helen 1:24:53

Thank you. [redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 1:25:29

Yeah, I think at times, I felt like that I could relate to what she was saying and how things in society hold us back and make us feel like we're waiting. But then other times, it felt like kind of anticipation of quite excitement for those new facets of life. But I just kind of thought it covered quite a like a broad range of things that might help us think what we might want to talk about, next time we meet to select our topic. If there was anything that that brought up that we might want to talk about, or whether there's anything—any ideas that people have of things that we could use as our kind of cornerstone for discussion next week, and not next week, the week after next. And I'll kind of find some other things like that that might relate to the subject to get us thinking. [redacted] popped something in the chat, perhaps we have interiorized the need to obtain permission to do things externally, instead of given that permission ourselves. I think it is really interesting, isn't it, sometimes I

do feel like I'm waiting for—to be allowed to don't do something in my domestic space, and then other times I feel jubilantly taking the space to do that myself. It just really varies.

[redacted]

Helen 1:27:36

Perhaps we can make our own waiting poem.

Anonymous 1:27:40

I think perhaps that upset me so much, because um mum says as a baby, like, I would never do anything for myself. I had like two big sisters and two big brothers, and I would just scream until somebody did what I wanted. So, it probably just hit a nerve with me.

[redacted]

Helen 1:28:11

Should we—I don't know. I can see my family returning out of the corner of my eye, so I'm trying to concentrate before my private space becomes more chaotic. Erm, is the experience of the pandemic—do you think that could be a point that we could talk about?

[redacted]

Helen 1:28:38

That it might then bring up—It might allow us to get to know each other a bit more and could bring up a kind of variety of different things that are going on in our individual lives that maybe relate more broadly.

F 1:28:57

I'm okay with that, depending on what kind of angle because to be honest, I'm sick of the pandemic. I'm sick of it being in my awareness. I'm fed up of talking about it. I'm doing what I need to do to stay safe, that's not what I mean, but like it's a lot. So, there is something in that though, using that common theme, because that is something that we are all having to get to grips with just now. But yeah, just depending on what kind of angle you were using it to talk about the pandemic, but I think that's a good suggestion.

Em 1:29:31

Just, sorry,

Helen 1:29:33

Yeah, no, go for it Em.

Em 1:29:34

And just about how we've coped through it, and what's kept us going. How we've managed to stay positive. What's kept us—Our plan of action to get through each day. What are hobbies are. Basically what's got us through to the end of it.

F 1:29:53

I like that. Sorry. Just to say quickly. I like that because it's not asking about—Most things when they're asking about the pandemic, it's all been what have you struggled with the most?

Em 1:30:03

Yeah.

F 1:30:03

So, I like that positive spin on that Em. Sorry, that's me.

Em 1:30:07

Aye definitely, definitely get a plan of action to get you through each day.

Helen 1:30:14

Okay, yeah, no, that does sound like a good idea to kind of keep focusing on the positive and not allow us to get too further exhausted by the, the many pitfalls. Okay, well, we'll have that as a loose theme.

Anonymous 1:30:35

Is that the 23rd?

Helen 1:30:36

Yep, that's so the next time we're gonna meet is two weeks today, the 23rd, three till five. And I'll send people out the meeting link and things like that. I wondered whether we just maybe do one really quick thing before we say bye. I'm just gonna close my door— Because I can hear some people laughing. I don't—And if we just go round, and to finish on a positive note, just to say, either one or two things that you feel thankful about. As a way to kind of close down our conversation, so you know, maybe it could be something like, I'm thankful I had soup for lunch, or I'm thankful that I, my partner got the vaccine on Friday. So, it could be something quite light, or something a bit more meaningful for you. And then we'll just say our goodbyes for the afternoon. So, we'll go—We'll start at the end of the alphabet again, Pauline, we'll start with you.

Pauline 1:31:50

So, I'm thankful that today, I was able to take my dog out a couple of times and have a nice walk in the snow, as it was lovely and bright. And I enjoyed that. Do you want a second thing?

Helen 1:32:08

No, I think one's good. That was lovely. Thank you. Lesley.

Lesley 1:32:17

Well, I'm thankful that a snow plough came today and dug me out. However, it has snowed all afternoon, and some of the work has been in vain. But however, it's a lot better than it was.

Helen 1:32:36

Thanks, [redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 1:32:59

Great, thanks, Joy.

Joy 1:33:05

I'm thankful to have two hours on a Tuesday afternoon that I can actually devote to being part of a group like this and I'm not worrying about not having the time or kind of fit in or just knowing that I've got that time and I can take that time. I'm very thankful for that.

Helen 1:33:24

Thanks Joy. Joanne

Joanne 1:33:28

This might sound cheeky, but I'm actually grateful for having less than five minutes to talk to someone, than ma wee one. Even though she has been back and forward, with—she's nosy, Dorothy knows it, when Sky's, like so—

Helen 1:33:41

That's great, thanks Joanne. F.

F 1:33:51

Erm I'm really grateful that I've got gas in my boiler because I've needed it and it also super grateful to have the wee electric fan heater because the gas wasn't quite heating the house up enough. So yeah, that's been a godsend.

Helen 1:34:11

Thanks, Em.

Em 1:34:14

Well, my health hasn't been great over the past, since about October. So, I've been struggling a wee bit, but I'm taking a wee bit step—not mental—it's just I need my gall bladder out. Er so I've been feeling a bit better. So, I'm just grateful that I'm healthy enough to get up and get out and about do a few things I want you to do. I'm not struggling, I'm gonna cope a wee bit better until the operation comes about. So just thankful for that. I'm having a good few days.

Helen 1:34:48

That's great. Thank you, Dorothy.

Dorothy 1:34:58

I am thankful for lots of things that you've all said so far, very similar. And just really, for the moment thankful for the past two hours, that it was lovely to meet everybody, and I feel more informed, and I feel part of part of the group now.

Helen 1:35:23

Thanks. Anonymous.

Anonymous 1:35:27

I'm thankful to have shelter from the cold wet snow.

Helen 1:35:33

Thank you. [redacted]

[redacted]

Helen 1:36:02

Thank you. [redacted]

.

[redacted]

Helen 1:36:13

Ah, thank you. Is that everybody? Did I miss anybody off?

[redacted]

Helen 1:36:20

Oh, yes. I'm thankful that you all came and joined me and that we had this time together. It's been really nice to get to know you all a little bit. And I look forward to seeing you all again in a couple of weeks. And—yeah, I'll stay around for five minutes or so if anybody wants to ask any questions. But if you just want to all unmute your mics and say goodbyes, and then anybody who wants to stay around—Yeah, Joanne, did you want to— Okie dokie

Joanne 1:36:56

The next time we meet, I might be working, I might not be, but I'll let Dorothy know. Yeah, I might not if I'm if I'm not working, I might not be able to stay on for the full two hours because I have training for work. —that day. So, I'll hopefully know by next week but before that with that Tuesday.

Helen 1:37:18

I know that the whole—everything so changeable, isn't it? I think we just have to take each week as it comes. And yeah, just keep in touch. It would be lovely, if you can make it—

Joanne 1:37:28

My fingers crossed that Nicola says we don't need to go back to work (laughter). Yeah, that. I've enjoyed the time, but I would have happily have Skye go back to nursery. That's the only thing that I would be happy for. If I hear one more time "mummy can I go back nursery?" I will, I'll cry. Yeah.

Helen 1:37:49

All right. Well, thanks very much, everyone for your time. And I'll see you all in a couple of weeks.

Lesley 1:37:56

Okay, thank you. Bye.

Em 1:38:01

Bye.

[redacted]

Helen 1:38:15

And no, yeah, just you left. I know everybody desperate—Two hours on Zoom is enough for anyone.

[redacted]

Helen 1:38:30

Yeah. It's hard to know, isn't it? We can, maybe we'll finish a little bit sooner next time. But—

[redacted]

Helen 1:38:52

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So maybe think about—

[redacted]

Helen 1:39:06

I'll your sister will be keeping you—It sounds like you'll be in trouble if you don't come next time.

[redacted]

Helen 1:39:16

Okay, nice to meet you. Bye, bye.

SPEAKERS

F, Lesley, Dorothy, Audioshare, [redacted], Pauline, Helen, Sarah, Anonymous, Joanne, Joy, Em

F 00:00

I'm going to work with a group of guys and try and get them to learn techniques that will help them handle difficult emotions. So, I had to kind of rewrite some of that this week, so that was a wee bit of pressure I wasn't expecting, but was really looking forward to coming back into the group and just being in the space with everyone again, it was a really lovely experience last week, and it is blowing a gale here, but I did wake up to blue skies, so like, they might come back. I'm staying positive too. So, onto Joanne.

Joanne 00:38

Hi, I'm good. As you can see, I don't have my third arm, due to her being back at nursery. So yeah, I'm fine. Erm, pass it to Joy.

Joy 00:59

Hi, everybody. I don't think I have anything special to report either. Just keeping doing the same things, I suppose quite a lot of work from home, teaching from home. Connecting with people online, probably similar to what a lot of other people are doing. Kind of aware of maybe a bit of a need, sometimes for a bit more variety. It feels like I'm doing a lot of the same things with seeing the same people, ie not really seeing many people at all. So, there's kind of a bit of a kind of a desire there for maybe just a bit more variety. But that will come eventually, I suppose. So, I kind of aware a little bit of that. But other than that. Yeah, everything's fine. Thank you. And I think [redacted] is next.

[redacted]

Lesley 02:18

Yeah, I'm in a good place. I would say I try to go out every day walking. I really like to see the changes, small changes that are happening outside in nature. It's been a fascinating year from that point of view to be able to watch that. And as I said, yesterday, I just had this glorious walk-through carpets and carpets and carpets of snowdrops. And I met a man who is a hedge builder. I've never met a hedge builder before. I don't know if anyone else has. He builds hedges. Incredible.

F 03:01

I am mind blown by that. And I've never met anyone else.

Lesley 03:04

No, I know. Neither have I. Anyway, to be continued as I find out more about hedge building. That's me, so over to Pauline.

Pauline 03:27

Can you hear me? Yeah. Uh huh. Good. And so, I've had a good couple of weeks. Like some of the rest of you have been out walking, I was out this morning for an hour and a half. It was really wet; it was really windy. But again, walk through an area where the crocuses were up. And they were such lovely colours, really vibrant purple, and really, really deep yellow. And that was nice. And I had a good gossip with the friend that I was with, which was really lovely. As Joy was saying, trying to keep things a bit varied, it takes a bit of time to think about even if it's the food that you're trying to cook and trying to make something a bit different. But the one thing that really surprises me is how quickly the days and the weeks go in, even although I seem not necessarily to have a specific purpose, or task or on certain days that the time seems to fly by. So likewise, I've enjoyed the fact that the days are stretching a bit. And although it sounds really boring, I had a washing out in the garden yesterday and it dried. And I feel as though I've turned into my grandma because that might have been the kind of thing that she would have got excited about. And here I am. But you know, and these days we were so restricted in what we can do, that seemed to really be a big thing. So that was that was a joy yesterday, boring or not, so, erm yeah, I am good. Likewise, like F I thoroughly enjoyed the group a couple of weeks ago, and it seemed as though it would be quite a while before we met, but I found myself yesterday thinking where has that two weeks going. So yep. So over to Sarah. That's me.

Sarah 05:25

Hiya. I'm good, thank you, I feel—I feel like the past few days when the weather was a lot better, like everything seemed to shift a lot. Erm, I'm trying to read a bit more and cook from scratch a bit more. So, I read, Tracy Emin's memoirs the other day, which I found quite entertaining, like kind of obnoxious and kind of entertaining as well. Erm that was Friday night, for the first time I started using recipes to cook. So, I think just trying to introduce more variety into things is—like trying to make the most of the time at the moment.

Helen 06:13

Thanks, everyone. I suppose I probably should have put myself on the list as well.

F 06:19

I was just about to ask you, so you couldn't get away with it anyway, it's okay. How are you doing Helen this week? (laughter)

Helen 06:26

Thanks F. I am—yeah, I'm doing I'm doing all right. Erm, the kids are back at school that said, I just saw them come in just there. And it's not a day to make them go out in the outside for the hour, couple of hours that we're meeting. So yeah, it feels like a time of shift for me. But still, yeah—I guess all the adjustments just take time and mental space, don't they. So, I still feel like I'm catching up on myself, like, still not reached any kind of even keel. But I was enjoying the nice weather when it was here. I've tried to start doing that "couch to 5K" app, I don't know if anybody's done that the running app. So, I've been out about three times just running around my neighbourhood trying to build up some stamina. So yeah, the normal kind of activity of my normal, like—life, when we're not in a pandemic, I'm really noticing like how inactive I am comparatively. So, trying to take up some new practices.

F 07:41

That's awesome. I do know someone else is using that app, I think. And she said she was just going out and running randomly in her neighbourhood until she couldn't run anymore, but that the app is actually managed to build her up properly. So, you're onto something good, I think.

Helen 07:57

Yeah, it's very straightforward to use, which is good. And yeah, it does seem like it builds you up slowly gets your stamina going. So, who knows, I may be a runner yet (laughter).

F 08:09

It's awesome. No, I'm totally impressed by how much of your body's like making a point of doing exercise as well, because I've got chronic health conditions, it's more difficult for me to maintain that. So, I would like to do stuff a lot, but can't. So, it's good to hear that other people know that that's an important part of like keeping yourself sane right now.

Helen 08:35

Yeah, it feels important, doesn't it? So, I suppose today, I've got a variety of things for us to do together. Maybe ambitious, I'm looking at a little schedule I made might be over ambitious for what we can get done. But we've got no obligations to anyone, so whatever we managed to get through is good, and whatever we don't, can pass along to the next time. So, everybody's feeling fine about using Zoom, I think, would that be fair to say? Any technical queries? People have been changing their names I see and feeling comfortable with that. I was keeping an eye on the chat last time, but I don't think I was kind of able to follow it as much as—I kind of looked because the—Zoom app saves it for me afterwards. And I was looking at it yesterday, and I was like, oh, there was a whole like level of dialogue going on that wasn't quite keeping up to speed with. So that's really nice that people were getting involved with that—Hi, Dorothy.

Dorothy 09:50

Hi. I am sorry, I'm late.

Helen 09:53

Oh, that's all right.

Dorothy 09:55

Anonymous is just about to join as well.

Helen 09:57

Oh, great. Okay, Brill. We just did a little round of saying how people were doing. And I was just chatting about what we're going to get up to today. So, should be able to follow on what we're doing. Erm yes, so people were using the chat. I don't know if anybody would mind being a kind of chat—I was going to say monitor, but that—that sounds so school, school like. But if anybody wouldn't mind keeping an eye on the chat, and then if anybody's posting any questions or anything in it, that want to be shared with the group, then to keep us all up to speed, because as I say, like, I was like, oh, this is really nice that all this chat's been happening, but I had missed some of it, that's for sure.

Dorothy 10:45

I don't mind, doing that, if you want me, and I can do that.

Helen 10:50

That'd be great. That would be really great. Thanks, Dorothy. And I also wanted to say that, like we were using the kind of chat to everyone, function, but there's also a private function as well that if anybody wanted to send, I suppose specifically me a message about anything, during the group, like, say, for example, somebody, mic was making a lot of background noise, and they wanted to turn off and they could send me a wee private message. That's fine about anything, they didn't want to go to everybody in the group. That might be a function people don't know so much about. And I also want—

Em 11:31

How do you do the private message if I need to?

Helen 11:34

Alright, so do you see on the chat, where it says, there's like a little drop down that says "to" and it says, "everyone"?

F 11:43

It's at your bottom right—

Em 11:45

Oh, right, right, right. I've got it. So, do I just change that?

Helen 11:49

Yeah, you can just change that.

F 11:52

A menu will come up with everyone's name?

Em 11:54

Okay, got it. Sorted. Yeah.

Helen 11:57

Okay, Brill. And as well, I realised that I've got all your contact details, but haven't shared my mobile number and things with you all. Like, I'm going to put that in the chat just now. Just if you ever needed to text me or give me a call about anything, then you're all welcome to do that, if you're not able to make the session or there's something that you wanted to talk to me about. That is there for you all. Okay, yes, and the other thing was do people—have people use the reactions buttons before I know, [redacted] used it earlier. Do people know how to use the thumbs up and things?

F 12:45

I keep forgetting they're there, but that's a good reminder. I love emojis.

Helen 12:53

So, we could maybe use them for like—Oh, yeah, Joanne's got one up.

Em 12:58

Do you know where they are?

Helen 13:00

So, are you on an iPad or a tablet Em?

Em 13:05

iPad.

Helen 13:07

So, they should be down at the bottom called reactions?

Em 13:12

Ah, gotcha. Gotcha. I'll write that down.

Helen 13:18

Okay. Right, so—

Joanne 13:26

I won't be able to stay on until the full two hours, because I need to go and get Skye at half past four.

Helen 13:33

Okey dokey.

Joanne 13:34

So, if I need to say to you that I need to leave—

Helen 13:38

Yep, that's no problem at all. It's nice that you're—yeah because you didn't know last time whether you're going to be back at work just now or not, but—

Joanne 13:49

Yeah, I might not be able to—I can do the next one, but the following one I might not be able to do because I see that the schools will be going back—the school's will be going back on the 15th.

Helen 13:57

Oh right, yeah, they've set the roadmap out today haven't they. I haven't seen that yet.

Joanne 14:02

Yeah. So that so far, because there's only P ones and twos and threes, I can't go back to work. Because they can't open out service for just like a wee drop kids. So hopefully by

when the rest of the primary school kids can go back, I can go to back work. So, I was quite happy on Wednesday when I got the text saying I can't go back work. So yeah.

Helen 14:22

A few—a couple more weeks.

Joanne 14:25

Unfortunately. Yeah. It just happened that Skye's back at nursery. So that's—weight off my chest.

Helen 14:34

Yeah, I bet it is yeah. Right, I'm gonna put in the chat— This is our ambitious sched—Oh, goodness, has that worked? Mm hmm. I was going to put a little plan of what we're doing in the in the chat, but I think it's just gonna garble it all into—Yeah, that doesn't look very helpful, does it? That was meant to make it kind of like, clearer about what we might be up to. But that's just like an overwhelming amount of information. So feel free to ignore that.

F 15:13

I was gonna say maybe between us all, we could decipher it, but it's not that bad looking. Maybe if you're on a pad, like an iPad, it might be smaller. There's times on it, I can see those right.

Helen 15:25

Uhuh. Hi Anonymous.

Anonymous 15:31

Hiya.

Helen 15:31

Hiya. We were just gonna spend 10 minutes relooking at our group agreement that we started up last time, because I've tried to kind of type up some of the things that we've kind of, outlined between us that were important. And so, I thought that if I put in the chat each of the points and read them out. And then if, if people feel like that, I've got it right, from what we talked about, we could maybe use the reactions to come to an agreement. That's part of what we're doing. So, and let me find the first one. Okay. Does, anybody want to read them out? So, it's not always me.

F 16:30

I don't mind reading them if no one else will, because it can be a bit intimidating, I suppose. But I don't mind, so, if anyone else would rather do it, on you go. But otherwise, I can do it.

Helen 16:41

Do you want to do the first one F and then we can see?

F 16:43

Yeah. Other folk might get braver. So "we want to ensure the sessions are inclusive and enjoyable for everyone".

Helen 16:54

Okay, so do people want to—What are the reactions we could do? Yeah, thumbs up?

F 17:01

I don't know if I've got them. Hold on. I know. Well, so I've joined from a browser. I've not downloaded the app, so maybe that's why because I think there's a reason, I've never used them in here yet. And that'll be it.

Helen 17:14

Right, right. Right.

F 17:17

I could type it in the chat, though. I can try.

Helen 17:20

Yeah, yeah, maybe.

F 17:23

It's okay.

Helen 17:24

Trying to make these things work well, but the thumbs up only last for a certain amount of time. Maybe you should use the raised hands because you've got to kind of like—un raise your hand for it to come down because I was like, okay, there's a thumbs up and then then there were going down again after a few seconds.

F 17:39

That sounds easier.

Helen 17:41

Okay, so if we're in agreement with that one, raise your hand, either virtually in the emoji or window—Yes, Lesley, with your real hand or type in the chat or shout out. Okay, I think that was a consensus. Okay, I'll put the next one in.

F 18:10

You need to lower your hand again though.

Helen 18:14

Yeah, otherwise it doesn't make any sense of it does it, lower hand. Thanks, F. Okay, so "we agree to be kind and respectful to each other by listening to each other's contributions and accepting where others are at". I need to put my own up. Okay, yeah, that's a full agreement. And as well as there's just things people want to contribute—

Anonymous 19:05

There's still a few raised hands in the comments—in the reactions.

Helen 19:16

Does anybody else fancy reading the next one out? Go Lesley.

Lesley 19:25

"We are aware of issues of privacy for ourselves and others when we take part in the group. This means using headphones or being in a different room than other members of our household and asking not to be interrupted where possible".

Helen 19:55

Does everyone feel comfortable with that? We don't—I guess all these are kind of like, our good intentions like, we're gonna try our best to keep to them. It seems like it was a general consensus. How many more are there? There's just two more.

F 20:20

Mine was up, I put it back down because I thought you had counted it, sorry.

Helen 20:33

Okay. There's another one. Anybody volunteer to read?

Em 20:41

I'll read it. "We understand that background noise can be particularly distracting for someone—people and we agree to turn our microphones off when we are not speaking to try and make it easier for us all to listen to each other when we are speaking".

Helen 21:02

Excuse my typo.

Em 21:06

I thought I was reading it wrong.

Helen 21:16

Okay, brilliant that seems—that seemed like everyone was in agreement. And then Dorothy, if you wouldn't mind reading the last the longest one.

Dorothy 21:32

Yep, that's fine. "We agreed to respect others in the group by keeping our discussions confidential between group members. Suppose group members want to talk through anything that the session has brought up in more detail outside the group setting. In that case, they can contact Helen to speak one-to-one. Suppose anyone needs to talk to someone outside of the group about issues that a discussion has raised. In that case, we agree not to speak specifically about anyone else's experience, but discuss the issues that this discussion has raised for her—for us".

Helen 22:15

That was more complicated to kind of word. I don't know whether that's clear? But—

F 22:24

No, I think it makes sense. Because you've given examples of what your what it is that you're trying to— erm like what circumstance you're talking about.

Helen 22:36

Okay, that's good. Yes, I entered it into a kind of—Grammarly like this editing software that suggests better ways to word things. And it definitely had some suggestions for making it clear. So, I'm—clearer. I'm glad that it's come across.

F 22:54

No, it's really clear. I like that. I might have to look this thing up.

Helen 23:03

Okie dokie, well, I think that—that seemed like there was a general consensus across all of those. I don't know if there's anything that the session last time brought up that anybody wanted to add into that group agreement. But we can just keep talking about it as we go along. F you've got your hand up, I don't know if that's just a remnant from—

F 23:31

Yeah. Sorry. I was taking notes.

Helen 23:40

Okie dokie. Right, well, the next thing that I had planned for us to do together was to—to listen to an audio piece that I have found on—online that an artist called Margaret Salmon made during lockdown. And I just thought it could be a nice thing to listen to, we don't need to necessarily feedback on our feelings about it afterwards, just to kind of like, it's about—what just a little bit of information tells me about it. Too many bits of paper. It's about—"it uses field recordings spoken word musical sounds, and it's based on scientific and oral intuitions. Margaret Salmon presents a listener's companion to cumulus clouds, tears, rivers and more in this imaginative rumination on interdependency and restorative release. She traces a path of water from our terrestrial bodies into the sky then back to earth." So, I thought we could listen to that. And I know I'd promised that we would do creative activities together, like I went to a workshop a little while ago where they did a thing called mindful doodling. I don't know if anybody's ever done anything like that, let me try and find—Just—I did do a little drawing. Usually, my notebooks got funny other people's little drawings in them. Just as I was listening to it, as just in pencil—

F 25:32

I can see it now.

Helen 25:35

I just listened to the sounds of the audio piece, and just made some wee little marks on the paper. I'd sent out in the post, I know some people definitely got them, wee little set of notebooks and things and pencils. If you would like to, you're welcome to kind of like just take your mind off into another space and just do some marks in your notebook or just listen to the audio. And it's like 13 minutes long. And then we'll come back and chat some more. Right, let me share the screen to get it up. Where is it? Can people hear that?

F 26:57

I'm not getting any sound coming through.

Helen 26:59

Right. Okay. Okay. I will try again. Maybe if I just play it and keep my—

F 27:18

I did that for the Zoom thing the other day and the other person could hear it, even though they weren't even looking at the tab I had it open. So maybe it will work if you just—you just press play.

Helen 27:28

Yeah. Can people hear that?

F 27:41

Yeah, yep, I can hear that.

Helen 27:45

Okay.

F 28:44

Is there supposed to be sound just now, because I can't hear anything again? Oh, I can hear it now, but it's dead faint.

Audioshare 28:54

At this point the group listened to Margaret Salmon's audio piece *Clouded*. This can be listened to by following the link: <https://soundcloud.com/user-360820893/margaret-salmon-clouded>

Helen 40:39

I get the impression that maybe a few people are doing some drawing then, that's nice. I was just taking the time to sit quietly and listen to rain in my headphones as well as rain outside in reality. I just thought that that was quite a nice piece because—it's by visual artist but it's been written during lockdown and related specifically to Glasgow. I'm sure that many people probably could imagine the river Kelvin and that so—I don't know if anybody wants to share anything with the group? Oh, thanks, Anonymous. I'm going to put you on—That looks like lots of different things going on. That's great. I'm not so familiar—I think there's good ways of sharing screens. Lesley's got something on—some nice marks. Yeah, that looks— sleeping and I can see various things there. Thank you. So, in the wee schedule of things, we we're going to have a little break from 10 to till four and then come back and do our little circle on our topic this this session, which was to be the pandemic but positive aspects of coping strategies, things we've learned about ourselves and that kind of thing. Not the—not our usual, when will it end dialogue. So, if people just want to—my clock says it's 3.52. So, if we want to come back—if people want to just go make a cup of tea, or just turn your mics off and turn the cameras off and just have a few minutes to yourself and then we'll come back again at four o'clock.

F 43:02

Thank you see you at four.

Dorothy 43:07

Thanks. See you soon.

Em 47:36

Helen, is it all about drawing?

Helen 47:40

No.

Em 47:42

Because I can't draw

Helen 47:44

Do you know what Em I don't feel like I'm much of a drawer either (laughter).

Em 47:49

I really something that none in my family have ever been able to do is draw. My kids— And I thought please don't make all about drawing because I'll not be able to do it.

Helen 48:00

I was going to ask people what kind of things they might like to do. But we maybe have to leave that for next time. But yeah, no, don't worry, like, it's not all drawing.

F 48:17

Can I just... sorry Em, it was just to interject as well. Maybe don't look at it as drawing, maybe just look at it as trying to put some marks on the paper. Because that's like, like Helen saying, she doesn't draw, but she is an artist. And there's an assumption that I think lots of people have that they think all artists draw. And art practices are really varied, and it's not actually really like that at all in real life I would say you probably find not a lot of artists draw because it takes a lot of time as well. But I kinda use it as just another form of communication. So, I don't even necessarily draw pictures. I just put marks onto the canvas or the paper, like abstract style, there's like there's different ways you could approach it you know? That was just to say that you think that you can't draw but maybe it's not about drawing maybe it's just about putting some marks on the paper. I'll stop talking now, sorry.

Helen 49:17

I think we get so used to don't we at school like, like—drawing has to look like the thing you're supposed to be—

Em 49:25

Aye, aye.

Helen 49:25

Like it's representational and like—

Em 49:28

Yeah, aye

Helen 49:29

My poor wee one who is five was getting quite upset during like when they were off school just there, she would she'd stop drawing because she said, oh, it doesn't look like the thing it's supposed to do. And I suppose when she's in class, normally she'd see like all the other P1s their drawings don't look like anything they're supposed to either and it's just the kind of process of like making something as I've said, but we've definitely all got hang ups about these things. It does make me feel a bit uncomfortable being an artist and not being a competent drawer.

F 50:06

Naw, like, I think that's what the problem is school are telling us to approach it with the wrong frame of mind. That's what it is. So, you assume you have to make it look like that. But I always used to try and make it not look like that. And the teachers didn't like it very much. But I've never actually given that up, even though I do art now. I had a long break Em. But yeah, try and think of it as just expressing yourself on the paper. Because I think of it as like, something about it for me, that's like painting your nails, or putting a nice face of makeup on, or styling your hair really nicely. Those are all expressions of yourself as well. So you can kind of apply that to like making the marks on the paper. Like I've drawn things when I had a migraine one day, you can tell I had a migraine that day. There is no picture on the paper, there's just an explosion of swirls and dark colours. And do you know what I mean?

Em 51:06

Understand.

F 51:07

Hmm, it can be more interesting when you approach it that way. Because it's a lot of pressure to put on yourself. And there's Helens wee one aged 5 already feeling that pressure to make it look like the thing is supposed to. Like that's quite a lot, isn't it?

Helen 51:25

Yeah, it definitely is.

F 51:29

She's a wee soul.

Helen 51:33

So I think we're all back. Erm, so if we're going to spend maybe 20 minutes or half an hour, kind of just using our circle idea. Let me just put those little—remind ourselves of that kind of consciousness-raising, going around in a circle, speaking personally, specifically, and from our own experience, not interrupting other people when speaking, and not challenging whatever people say, and trying not to give out advice. And then we can see how we get on with the summing up. So if we use the same method we did when we were going round

earlier. Anonymous and Dorothy, just a second—What I did was I put everyone's names in the chat, which I'm just going to do now. And then—So if when Anonymous speaks, then when you're finished, you would say that's me, I'm done, and I pass to Dorothy, and then every person passes on to the next person down the list. So yes, our topic was positive strategies or coping strategies in the pandemic that we'd like to share with each other. Gosh, knocked my phone off— Anonymous, do you feel happy to start us off? I know it's a hard slot to be the first person who goes but also, a reminder you that if you want to pass when it's your turn, you can say pass if you don't feel comfortable saying anything. Or you can also just hold the space and sit in silence and we can have a few minutes to kind of reflect on things that has been said before, or if you feel more comfortable typing something in the chat, and then I can read it out. So, Anonymous, are you happy to go first?

Anonymous 53:46

It's a bit worrying but I think maybe it'd be better if I go first and then I won't get worried about when my turn is and stuff. The—I'd been finding the topic really quite difficult, because I do enjoy lockdown, erm because I don't usually like to go out all sorts of places, but I wasn't sure what to talk about. And also, Dyslexia Scotland, I'm a member there and they're doing their next members magazine, and they wanted submissions about, the pandemic and positive things and stuff and I would normally submit to it, but I couldn't come up with any ideas or anything. But I think I have got one to talk about here. My real positive from lockdown, and the pandemic is having learned to shop online for groceries and everything because my husband had to shield so we really had to shop online. And I realised how much well how much was saved and also how much more efficient I am. Like there's not bright lights there's not the all the noises of the tills, there's not people jabbing past me or looking at me wrong. Erm, there's not, oh, have I remembered to write a list or what was on my list or oh, that isn't available, so I guess I have to get this, this and this. Or oh the magazines, let's have a look at the magazines. Erm, so I've learned a lot about shopping online I still make mistakes and get the wrong sizes and stuff, but you can fill a trolley or basket or something and then you can walk away from the computer and come back, you can think about it properly. You're not, well, with my fibromyalgia and stuff, probably if I'd been with my mum, she would be saying I was too fat and couldn't walk the length of myself or whatever. But you've got that issue on the—when you're out in a shop, you have to get then, or you have to come back. Erm, so I guess that's my positive I hope thing. I'll pass the Dorothy.

Dorothy 56:21

Okay thanks Anonymous. I think for me I become a bit more disciplined with taking exercise, I've always been a person who has enjoyed taking exercise and being careful with my weight, but I think it's become more of a routine since the pandemic and a bit more discipline. I used to teach exercise actually and at the start of the lockdown—I used to teach exercise a long time ago, but at start a lockdown I just found the sitting in front of the laptop, at times it was really really tough. So I suppose I've forced myself into a routine of regular exercise and yeah the nice weather of the first lockdown was amazing, it's been a bit harder with the weather the way it's been. But I think that's me, I'll pass on to M.

Em 57:52

I'm sitting here writing my list so that I don't forget. What I tended to do was, I made slots. I had a slot in the morning, and I had a slot at night, and I had a slot in the evening whether it was just for an hour, an hour and a half, whatever. And I made sure that I always done something in the morning, something in the afternoon, and something in the evening that had a purpose. It might have not been a great purpose but I always have something to do, which occupied my day. So, I've not done a wee list that this is— during the first lockdown and the second depending on the weather I do a lot of walking. So that's not a problem, I carried that on. I joined yoga online to keep—I do suffer fae a bit of anxiety, and if I sit a about long enough and think about things for long enough, I can feel anxiety coming on for nae reason. So previously I've done Buddha so well I'm in I'm doing yoga online, outside I'm getting the fresh air along with the walking and I can clear my head. I'm also doing a BSL I'm onto level two BSL. So that's something else that I slot and, in my day, for a period of time. I do a lot of reading through my genealogy, so that's another slot during the good weather I went fishing because I'm a fisherwoman. So that was also good exercise, an' fresh air and very mindful I've learned to eat very, very healthy. After I discovered in October that I need my gall bladder out. So, I've been doing some amazing recipes and I am well chuffed because before it was just fired in. I'm really making an effort and I've lost a stone in weight. And the one main thing that I probably am through all the lockdowns is I was in a lot of situations—in particular—in particular places with particular people. Reflecting back on that, I've asked myself, why I was there? What needs was—how does it meet my needs, and it wasn't. And I found a before I was going out and I was doing things and I was going to places that just wasn't satisfying me. And I was with people, that just wasn't on the same wavelength at all. And because now, I've been distanced through the lockdown. I really don't miss a lot of situations or a lot of people. And that's been brutally honest with yer. So, I've had my eyes opened, and I'm going into the next phase in my life, I've joined about eight different groups. And—walking groups, exploring groups, yoga groups, quiz groups, exercise groups, going away for the weekend, which I love doing, which I normally go myself. I've got all these groups all lined up. And I'm just waiting for the go ahead and my shoes are on and I'm off. So that sums up everything I've been doing and thinking about. Oh right, who's next F.

F 1:01:51

Thanks, M. So, I've wee got a couple of different things that I've found as positive coping strategies during lockdown. I did actually really struggle with it last year; I didn't have a good time at all. And any time I went out in the sunshine, it was just making me sick so even when the weather was braw, I couldn't get out, which was extremely frustrating. But I just kind of eased into it instead of fighting it so much that I would have to agree with what I think it was Dorothy that was saying that the weather this time has made it feel even more difficult to deal with. So, like I say, I've been welcoming the light every day that it's a wee bit lighter. But my main—my secret weapon, and I encourage you to try this, but probably with whatever music in particular you listen to, that I'm somebody who used to go to a lot of nightclubs or raves, stuff like that. And obviously I've not been anywhere like that for well over a year now. So, I've started having living room rave sessions, in my pyjamas or in my onesie to whatever DJ stream I want to listen to that night or that weekend. Because for me going to nightclubs and listening to music is actually part of my like, maintenance routine, helps keep me sane. It helps me expend a lot of energy. And I get to listen to some nice music. I love music. So yeah, I actually didn't expect that I would get into it as much as I

have. But I have regular and I'm talking about I'm on my own in the living room with the music on the live stream. So, it kind of feels like you're in a nightclub, but not really. But it still honestly has been amazing for uplifting my spirits. Then the other things I've been kind of working on are like refining my daily routine. I'm also a bit like Dorothy, I'm trying to work on my discipline at the moment. And that fluctuates some days I have more success than others. But yeah, like working on my daily routine by watching some motivational videos, but more than more kind of practical methods, discussions around practical methods that you can utilise, to improve your daily routine, or to retrain your brain the way it thinks. And so, I've kind of been like watching those types of things. It's not necessarily self-help videos like that, it's more like, it's something called biohacking I think, where you learn to understand how the human body works and why it does those things. And then you can sometimes almost like interrupt the programme, the brain would run naturally. And you can teach yourself a more efficient way to do things. Or like for me with ADHD memory and stuff like that is an issue. So, it'll be wee hacks just to help me improve those things. But the other thing I have been doing, which I've really enjoyed is cooking from scratch. So, I never get into cooking really at all when I was younger, although I've always enjoyed eating, not a fussy eater. But cooking never really interested me. And even though I lived on my own for a very long time now, I've only just learned how to cook macaroni cheese from scratch, like a couple of months ago. I could make some stuff, but none of it was really stuff I would cook all the time. So yeah, cooking from scratch has been another one. It's definitely satisfying to have got all this stuff together, and for me anyway, managing to keep it all cooking without burning anything, or forgetting to put something in the recipe, or injuring myself. Those are all major achievements for me. Yeah, being able to do all of that, and then sit down and eat a tasty thing you've made it then that's pretty cool. So that's been good fun as well. But I definitely advise having a wee rave in your living room in your jammies, one day (laughs). And now, it is, Joanne.

Joanne 1:06:05

Thanks F. Pretty much what I've been doing is—first lockdown I got to spend some more—some time with my wee girl. And I cos, I feel as if I could see her grow a wee bit better and understand what she liked because obviously when she was wee I went back to work before she turned one. So, it was my mum that was getting to see Skye grow. But when I was back from work, it was like it was bedtime time, the time I was getting in from work. So yeah, that was good the first lockdown, but the second lockdown I feel as if she wasn't wanting to do anything. Because now she'd been to nursery, before the second lockdown happened. So, she was feeling it. Erm the—the first lockdown I managed to—I like drawing, so I started drawing again, in the first lockdown. I'm not a big fan of reading, as Dorothy knows, but I managed to read a full—a book during the second lockdown that we were in. And the first lockdown I managed to write a story about Corona. So yeah—and I've tried to lose a wee bit of weight, I done the couch to 5K app. So yeah, I've done that, but this time around I've just had no energy, nothing—nothing, just can't be bothered doing anything. Joy.

Joy 1:07:39

Thank you. Yeah, I was thinking about what kind of helped for me during this period. And I came up with basically kind of three, three main things really. So, the first one was yoga, that's practicing yoga, teaching yoga, but also the philosophy of yoga. Because often when we think about yoga, we kind of think about the postures and all of that, but what I find

really helpful is, if you like more the philosophical side, so one of the aspects—one of the concepts, if you like, this talked about quite a lot, in yoga is letting go of things, not trying to be in control of stuff, which can be quite hard, actually, I mean, I tend to quite like to plan things. And when I have a project, I kind of, you know, get into it and make sure it happens kind of thing. And I think throughout this entire period—As a result, I initially particularly found it quite hard to let go of things to have to say, well, that's just not going to happen, that's just not gonna be possible. But it was really helpful to have that sort of, if you like, philosophical background, just kind of reminding me that sometimes you do have to let go of things. And it's not just, you know, a failure or anything like that, it's just, those are the circumstances, and you don't you're not in control of them. And the more you keep saying, I don't want to let go of it, you know, I want it to happen—It's you know—that's, it's worse, you just make it worse. So, all of that I found really helpful, just reminding myself that this is a really kind of particular unusual period, and you can't just do stuff the way you normally would you—there is a lot of things you're just gonna have to give up on. So that was kind of maybe obvious, I suppose. But it was a little bit of a kind of a learning thing for me on that. The other thing—so the second thing I find really helpful, it's been actually, throughout this whole year, I felt like I've done quite a lot of learning. And it's been online learning, obviously. But again, I think before the whole pandemic period, if somebody has said to me, would you be keen to get into online learning, I'd have said no way I you know, I don't want to be on the screen learning stuff. I want to be in a room with people. You know, I want it to be that hands on experience thing. But actually, I have found being able to connect with people online in a variety of different ways and just learn a load of stuff as has actually it's been really, really enriching, actually, and really helpful. So, I think when I kind of looking back on this period, potentially, you know, a little way down the line, I think what I'll remember from the year also is just how much I've learned about different aspects of—yoga, but other stuff as well. That that's been really important. And then, and then the final thing, perhaps that has been helpful for me, I think, has been being able to some extent to establish a bit of routine, and familiarity. I think M was talking about that as well. Initially, when the whole lockdown started last year, I was thinking, oh, great, you know, I'm going to have fewer things, I actually have to do a particular time this is going to be good, this is going to be you know, give me a lot of freedom. But then it started to feel a little bit too much uncertainty. And I kind of needed maybe just a little bit more routine, a little bit more familiarity. I think now almost a year on, it's perhaps moving a little bit the other way, and I'm starting to feel there's almost too much routine. So, it's kind of interesting, it's gone from feeling, you know, great, not too much routine, that's going to be brilliant to needing the routine to now being a little bit more actually, if there was a bit more unpredictability, or a bit less familiarity that might be quite good as well. So, I can kind of see a bit of an evolution there, in how I've reacted to that. And then perhaps to finish just one thing that I've learned, I think about myself, but just in general is just about how adaptable human beings are. Just thinking back, I just find it amazing the way we've adapted to living our lives completely differently. The whole social distancing thing, masks, the way—it just feels as if we have had to adapt at such a fast pace, to a completely changed, situation. That, that, that has really amazed me how human beings actually are really creative, and really adaptive to situations. Thank you very much. And I think the next up is [redacted].

[redacted]

Lesley 1:13:23

Well, at the beginning I find lock down really hard. It really stressed me. And I became very anxious, which I knew wasn't good for me. And like other people, yoga was my absolute saving grace. My yoga teacher went online, and she was just such a positive inspiration. And my husband who had never done yoga before he did it with me, we did it virtually every day she did a—she was she herself was extremely dedicated and gave herself really unselfishly to us. Which was a huge gift that she gave to us for three months, and it just made me feel so much better. I can't say I got any better at yoga, but I just felt better within myself. It just—when I went—when we went out every day to walk, I felt stronger, I felt I had a bounce in my step. And I just saw a huge difference. And this time with lockdown, I discovered Spotify, I got a three-month free trial. And I'm able to choose—I am. Me. I am able to now choose the music, I want to listen to. It's not somebody else's choice, on the radio or wherever. And that has just been an absolute revelation to me, I just love it. When I go out—If I'm out walking on my own, not with my husband, I just put my buds in and I've got music that either takes me back to when I was a young woman, or music that I can just—I can just dip in and say, oh, I want to hear a bit more of this. And that has been, that has just been great. I love it. And I think I'm going to have to fork out a subscription when it ends at the end of March. So, I'll pass over to Pauline.

Pauline 1:15:46

Thanks Lesley. I think for me the biggest—The biggest thing I consider about lockdown has been the gift of time. Because from last March, when there was such a lack of availability, of being able to be spontaneous, I was able to turn my mind to things that I might not get around to doing. And it was just simple things like doing a jigsaw, which I hadn't done for years, and to be able to sit and pour over my jigsaw and take my time and not feel any pressure to have it completed because I had something else that I needed to do. That actually in itself became something that was a benefit, helped me relax, and helped me appreciate the time that I had. So, I think for me, the gift of time to do things that I wouldn't normally do. Some of the things some of you have already mentioned, like cooking, looking at different recipes. I've got a sewing machine, I don't use it very often, but our granddaughter who was one in January, when I thought about what I could give to her at Christmas time, I decided that I would make a fabric advent calendar, which took me quite a lot of time to do, because there was quite a lot of—not fine sewing, but it was quite fiddly. So, I took my time, I worked through that, and at the end of it I was quite chuffed with myself at the outcome of it. And thought my granddaughter will have that for some time to come. So, if we hadn't been locked down, I wouldn't have really turned my mind to do that sort of thing, because I might have been busy reading my book for my book club, because I'm in a book group and we read a book every month. And what I find myself usually doing is reading what I want to read, and then the week before the book club, then I try and cram in the book for that. So, the overriding sense that I've got is just the time, also the time that I've taken to make sure that I'm in touch with family and friends. So more regular phone calls or Zoom calls, and that has given me a sense of purpose, when there are so few things that might otherwise have been doing that have been available to me. So, I think in some ways, the simple things have been intensified because I've not being distracted with saying, and you know, what show am I going to see tonight, what have I got tickets to go in and see. And likewise, music has become much more important to me again. And even on Sunday, I was listening to radio 2 and it was Sounds of the 70s, and that really floated my boat, and I

found that and the kitchen I had lots of energy as I was preparing in a meal and at the same time doing a little bit of dancing around the kitchen too. So quite a few things that are simple in themselves, but for me they've become quite meaningful. So that's probably as much as I would say. And so, I'll pass on to Sarah.

Sarah 1:19:31

Thanks. I found the lockdown like the first one it just a massive, massive break from—like everything was just so busy before and it was really, really nice just like not having to commute to work and being able to do—being able to do yoga before work, because I start work at half seven. Just like before I had—I would have felt really—I used to feel guilty if I had like I would call it boring weekends. I would have been like, what am I doing with my—what am I doing with my life, I should be out, like doing stuff if I was if I didn't have plans, like I felt that pressure to be busy all the time. And I started really learning to enjoy being at home and I like—I would never really have considered that to be something that I found like a massive pleasure. Now I think it's like the best thing—like, the best thing in my life really is just being at home. And in the second one—I used to not let the cats like sleep my bed because, like they play in the middle of the night, they can be quite annoying, and one of them is quite nocturnal. And then in the second lockdown, I was just like, God, it's just so depressing, like getting a bit of oxytocin, like the cuddle hormone, I was just like, I—I'm just happy having that. And now I don't have any, I don't have any concerns about them sleeping in with me, it's just like, erm, it's just—it's just nicer for all of us. Like that's—Yeah, that was really nice. And like, even just not being under pressure to finish stuff like, I think just not having—I started sanding down woodwork, and then just got a bit bored of doing that and I haven't finished yet but ordinarily, I would feel like a time pressured that things ought to be complete. And I just like not having that—I like just not having that pressure, which is all kind of self-imposed. So, I think it's just a massive, massive change of priorities, which I think will be good when—looking forward to—to changing but I will want to hold on to some of these things like when it does change, because I just don't see your point in—like fear of missing out or like putting yourself under time pressure to finish off, it doesn't have to be done.

Helen 1:22:14

Thanks, everyone that was so nice to listen to everyone's different experiences. I could relate to something pretty much in everything, everyone—in something in everything—in what everyone said individually. I suppose for me—for me, lockdown has been very full and very busy, because similar to Joanne, kids take up a lot of the space at home. But it has been really nice to see—to be involved—I wouldn't want to homeschool them forever. But, you know, normally they would only tell me a snippet of what they're up to at school and to be there and kind of like seeing them, like progress in their learning. And the things that we're getting excited about has been really nice. And it's kind of made me realise, in the way that Sarah was talking about the kind of pressures that society put on us, like, I went back to work when my kids were small, like they started at nursery, the youngest one started when she was seven months or something and we're kind of in this whirlwind, aren't we that where by necessity or by societal pressure, like back into the world of work, for a lot of people and that actually means that you miss out on some of the things that are really important. And yeah, I think it's been really important time for me kind of recalibrating, although there has been very few moments to even kind of catch a thought on its own.

Joanne 1:23:51

I think—I think like during lockdown you've got—you've had that—you've created a new bond with your children. Where I mean, when you're at work you don't get to bond—you're bonding either other people's children or you're bonding or some other people. You've got that bond back. That's the way I feel anyway. But yesterday, obviously with Skye back at nursery I did feel lost for a wee bit. Then she came home and I'm like, can you not go back to nursery? (laughs) So yeah, that was like—you feel lost now that their back to normality. And you just—it's hard, but it's good.

Helen 1:24:41

So, I suppose—the kind of process of consciousness-raising we're supposed to try and sum up what we've kind of shared and discussed, which I always find challenging to bring all those experiences together and I don't really have a good suggestion for how we could do that? I don't know. Do people just want to chip in kind of common themes that they felt they saw across what we were talking about? Or what the kind of things where—Has somebody got their hand up, oh Anonymous, Anonymous.

Anonymous 1:25:20

And I think that there may have been sort of, common themes between, I think, it was Pauline, and possibly—sorry, I'm not sure who the other person was. But they were talking about, having time to be creative and do jigsaws and just time the gift of time in lockdown. And in a way, that's what I feel, along with the talk of societal pressures, because there is no pressure, in fact, we're not allowed to be either host or hosted. And we aren't encouraged to be out all that much, because that—I would probably rather—like home is my safe place, and I don't really, pretty much a crowbar is needed to get me out. So, there's one common theme that I saw, I did begin to think I was the only person who liked lockdown. But there were a few people who sounded like they were—understood anyway.

Helen 1:26:34

Joy, do you want to—have you got something you'd like to share?

Joy 1:26:39

Yeah, that was just a couple of things. I mean, one thing that struck me from you know, what, what everybody was saying was that one common thing seem to be people finding things that they just enjoyed, or they just made them feel good. So, whether that's cooking, whether that's sewing, whether that's listening to music, whether that's yoga, I mean, there are different ways that people have done that. But there seem to be that sort of finding stuff that makes you feel good and happy, seem to be quite important. And then the other thing that was really interesting was, the thing that Anonymous just mentioned, there was the kind of the inside outside things. So, Sarah was talking about having been a lot more kind of outward focused before maybe on you know, not wanting to be at home, because being at home is boring, and, you know, finding that being at home can actually feel, you know, happy and enjoyable and nourishing as well. So, the people who maybe started out, already quite liking being at home, and as a result, to some extent, almost finding lockdown, quite, maybe not so challenging. And others who initially perhaps, weren't so much people

who like to stay at home, but who have discovered it. So how that kind of being at home, being outside thing is kind of balanced stuff out, if you like.

Helen 1:28:13

I guess I was writing down a few words. Well, I guess people talked about watching and listening, paying attention. I found it inspiring hearing people—how they found self-discipline, and things that work for them, I suppose. Life often feels like it's kind of dragging us along doesn't it and to change the rhythm and to be able to find what it is that motivates—that really motivates you, I think is really an amazing thing to learn.

Em 1:28:56

I think just probably staying positive is one of the—one of the main things that I can think of just staying positive and just realising there's light at the end of the tunnel and just accepting the change that's come about. You can't do anything about it. You've just got to rearrange your life until it's over. There's no point being negative about it. It's just about being positive and just being happy, that we're all still here and that we'll come out the other end of it and we'll be able to get on with our lives. A lot of people will not be able to do that. So, I think there's worse things than being stuck in the house for a few months.

Helen 1:29:49

Does anybody think we've got anything that we can have can naturally move on to as a topic for our next meeting? Does it feel like there's things in that that could be—that what we've talked about today that we could explore in more detail or do we want to kinda have a total change of scenario, total change of different type of thing?

F 1:30:22

I had taken a few notes just while everyone else was talking. So yeah, time is definitely a theme, but something about time being freer. So maybe it's about a new—the new gift and appreciation of time. And being inventive it sounds like everybody's been quite inventive, and managed to solve some problems, whether you feel it successful or not, but you've still managed to navigate all these challenges in lockdown. So, I thought there was something around being inventive. And I really liked the letting go. I think that that's quite an important thing because M is, right. Like, there's nothing we can really do about this. We've all just got to knuckle down until they say, okay, we're all allowed out again. I'll be raving. But yeah—

Em 1:31:20

My shoes are sitting at the front door (laughter).

F 1:31:24

But yeah, then I thought just when you were talking about the inside and the outside, because a couple of people did bring that up. And I have noticed that myself. So maybe there's something about transitions as well. Because it's not always just about the being inside and outside maybe this period of time is allowing people to transition in different ways and different areas of their life. But that's what I had in my notes. It was just a chip that and oh and missing oxytocin. I thought that that was fabulous. That's exactly what—I need cats. I don't have anything to cuddle apart from toys. It's not the same. There's no heartbeat.

Em 1:32:03

Food, food.

F 1:32:06

Trying to lose weight! (laughs)

Em 1:32:09

Throw your frying pan out and your deep fat fryer and buy a steamer. That's what I did anyway.

F 1:32:15

But yeah, those had been the notes I had kind of come up with while everybody was talking.

Helen 1:32:24

Anonymous' popped something in the chat about society's expectations, or what people feel about the judgement, as a concept.

F 1:32:34

Yeah, that was one of the other ones because I think people have talked about, like, the pressures of time that we've put on ourselves and society. So, I quite like that topic.

Anonymous 1:32:51

I've just felt some of the comments in the chat, and some of the things said in rounding up have sounded a bit like advice and judgement on other people's experience, so I just wondered if maybe we could chat about that, maybe? Sorry, I'm probably just oversensitive.

Helen 1:33:17

Yeah, I guess that's fair enough, isn't it? That's one of the kind of things I laid out in the—in the kind of the rules of the consciousness-raising that was about not to be offering advice or like commenting, specifically, on people's experience, but trying to think more broadly. It's kind of interesting, isn't it? It's actually quite difficult to do that. I suppose we're so used to aren't we like that way of interacting with— with people where we're responding directly to what they're saying? I don't know whether there's something in that, kind of communication methods, the way we talk to each other. Joy?

Joy 1:34:09

Yeah, yeah, I was just, I was just thinking that maybe that connects with what Anonymous was saying in the chat there about expectations. I think, to some extent, when there is a group of people and people are sharing opinions, experiences or whatever, there is almost an expectation that you're going to have a response. You're gonna say, "oh, yeah, the same happened to me" or you—there's going to be some kind of response isn't there? So, I think it's quite challenging for all of us to just kind of be listening and not having a response because it sort of feels as if it can almost feel as if there's something missing. As if you kind of expect yourself to respond and you're thinking maybe other people expect you to respond, even though as you've said, Helen, that's kind of it's not expected, but we're

obviously kind of a little bit conditioned, aren't we to, to think, you know, we're having an exchange and so I should respond. So, it's kind of challenging not to, I think.

Helen 1:35:09

Could that be our loose theme then, expectations and kind of, we can interpret that how we want whether that's family expectations or societal expectations or self-expectations.

Joanne 1:35:34

I have to go and get the wee one, but I'll see you all the following week.

Helen 1:35:39

Yeah, that's no problem, Joanne, really nice to see you.

Joanne 1:35:43

See you later. Bye, bye.

Helen 1:35:50

Okay, well, maybe we can kind of just leave that kind of posing at the back of our minds for a moment or two. Its coming up to quarter to five, time has speeded on we were going to do a creative activity next time with—F was going to lead us through something. So, I don't know if you want to give us a little intro to that?

F 1:36:21

Yeah, I'll do my best to be concise, but I just jotted some notes down. So, I think everybody's going to be asked if they want to do it, like lead a wee creative exercise suggests something, so I haven't been singled out for special treatment here, it's just to let us all know that, okay. But I use collage, sometimes as a creative technique. And I was thinking that maybe we could try and do that together next session. So, if you've got any, like, printed material at all in the house, whether that's old magazines if you buy them, or like those free bits of junk mail that come through your door, I know, old bits of wallpaper, like it can be totally random, any old scraps like that, or you might have the wee bits of cardmaking stuff in the house. I was just thinking that we could try and do that, maybe around whatever theme we're going to work on that day. And it would just be a nice, easy way to try something creative without any expectations. Because even when I start a collage, although I might know what it's going to be about, I never have any idea what my final thing is going to look like, or what I look like at any stage actually. So, like, just to put a bit of context, I use art to help manage my physical and mental health conditions. And some days I've got too much pain in my hands, so there's no way I could draw or write or do anything like that. I do crochet and can't do that when my hands are sore. So, collage is quite easy for me I've found, and you could be as messy or as precise with it as you like. Some days, I've got the energy I can be bothered to use a craft knife to cut everything out. Other days, I'll use just a pair of scissors. And sometimes I've even just ripped what I wanted off of the paper and done it in a really rough style like that. So, it doesn't actually just need to be about getting all your bits of shapes or pictures together. I add in little bits of text sometimes or draw words in. Or I'll go back in and draw on top of my collage later. So just to kind of give you an idea that it could really be as simple as you like. Or you could really go for it, layer everything up and make it more complicated. I kinda treat it like a bit like a jigsaw puzzle,

but maybe none of the bits fit together and you're just trying to make it look what you think is pleasing or nice or whatever. So yeah, don't be too put off hopefully. And if you want to try and gather up a wee bits of materials or the other thing that I've done for something I didn't have relevant source material so I was able to actually have some printouts, pictures printed out on my printer at home. I've even had other people print stuff out for me and then send me it so I could cut that up. So yeah, if you want to try and gather every few bits, or else I know that Helen had put in some scraps and your wee books that came and we can have a go at that next week. If you've got scissors or a craft knife that is really helpful or like I say just use your hands and rip things up. And maybe some glue if you've got some but if not a roll of sellotape would even do if you wanted to stick everything down. You could just make wee double-sided tabs out of that. So yeah, I don't know if that's any clearer for any of you.

Helen 1:40:05

Anonymous' got her hand up. This is something you'd like to ask Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:40:10

No, this is more of a probably overshare. But earlier, people were concerned about drawing and whether they were any good are not. Third year high school art class, I think we had homework over a September weekend or something. And it was the day of parent's night, the teacher was treating us as if we were already in art college, and pretty much it was a crit. And unfortunately—I know this because my sister's been to art college and she more or less went "why was she treat—why was she giving you crits in high school.?" I knew my homework was rubbish. I'd actually spent most of the weekend trying to do it, because I thought I was quite artistic, and stuff and it just wouldn't work. Sorry, I'm getting—I'm not well at the moment as well.

F 1:41:00

No, don't stress yourself, Anonymous, sorry not to interrupt you.

Anonymous 1:41:05

She ended up because she, she went on about it so much. And even once she made me put it in the bin, she still wouldn't shut up about it. And I ended up in tears. And it was so embarrassing. Just to let you know.

F 1:41:19

Well, I can guarantee you that I'm not going to be critiquing anybody's work, right? That's not really the point of the exercise. It's just to get you to explore a wee bit with the paper, okay, Anonymous. And the other thing I would say to everybody is that if you make your collage and you don't want to share that, then you don't need to, nobody needs to see it. I mean, I don't even have my camera on. So how are you guys supposed to see what I make? Do you know what I mean? So, I would say please don't stress yourself out about it unnecessarily. But that I can totally appreciate how you could see this as an extremely stressful thing Anonymous and I honor that.

Anonymous 1:41:59

I'm so sorry. I, I felt—

F 1:42:03

nothing—that's—you don't need to apologise.

Anonymous 1:42:06

I shared this time, I'm sorry.

F 1:42:08

No, no, it's much better that you are able to say what's possibly going to be difficult for you. And I think that that's maybe what the point of the group is that we all learn how to communicate a bit better. Probably with ourselves, as well as with other people. But please don't feel stressed. And like Helen has said before, if there's something that you feel you can't manage, or it just seems too tricky for you, you don't need to do it. There's no pressure or expectation in this group that way. So, I hope that you feel a wee bit better, okay. And you're not too worried.

Helen 1:42:46

I think perhaps like today, like we had the sound piece to listen to, and people could do the drawing activity if they wanted, but to know, I just use the time to sit and listen. I could perhaps pick some music or something that we could have on for that, that time and just—people can kind of go off schedule, you know, you don't need to do that necessarily—I sent a little notebooks and things for people like—and I'd hoped that maybe today we could come up with a list of things that people like to do. But maybe you would, you would want to spend the time just writing a few things in the book or, or literally just looking out the window. It's about it's about marking out space between us, I think rather than necessarily the products of what we're making. So—

F 1:43:37

I would agree with that Helen, yeah.

M 1:43:42

Helen, the wee bit the material you sent to us, any particular reason for that, what was—I was curious what they were going to be about.

Helen 1:43:53

I just wanted to send you all something that—so you've got the two notebooks and then I sent a selection of pencils and, and things and then the wee scraps of paper. The paper scraps were because F and I had spoken about doing this collage activity, so that was to kind of start your collage list off because you know, I've got lots of—the kids, have got lots of bits of paper and things laying around, and then a few of them were kind of old screenprint tests of mine, so I kind of thought I'd share those with you. But the books were really like to do with what you kind of wanted, you know, I sometimes have started a journal, which I fill in very, very sporadically, but sometimes it's just nice to have that little space that's kind of belongs to your thoughts and feelings and kind of related to the group. So that was the intention. So, we're five to five already I was just going to show you the kind of little web page thing that I had set up, but I don't really think there's necessarily time. And did people have a chance?—I know that some people did, because—to click on the link, I made a like a

little web page that's got some of the resources we've been looking at and some just some events and different things.

Em 1:45:28

Where was the link Helen?

Helen 1:45:31

I think I sent in one of the emails. I'll put it in the chat just now.

Em 1:45:35

All right, I'll need to check it again. Probably scrolled by it.

Anonymous 1:45:41

I think I remember—

Lesley 1:45:42

I had a quick look at it just before we started, and I thought it looked really interesting Helen. Thanks for sending. It requires a bit of time to kind of navigate around it and look after but yeah, it looks really interesting. Thanks.

Em 1:45:58

I'll take a wee look.

Helen 1:46:00

It's just like a little online notice board. Yeah, but it's one of the things that you don't—it's not something I've used before, but somebody told me about it. And it doesn't—you don't need to be kind of have an account with it or anything, you can just click on the link. And you can add stuff, you can all comment on things. I had got it so that people could post stuff, but then it needed to be approved, but then I've taken that restriction off, so anybody can post anything on it. And just to kind of wee space for us to chat and share things in an—in a non pressurised way. Like you don't have to participate in it. But it's just got some of the things that we've kind of—like a link to the video that we watched last week, and I'll put the audio piece up there and those kinds of things.

Pauline 1:46:50

Yeah, thanks. I found it as I scrolled down the email that you sent with the link for today's meeting. And I've read some of it, and I've signed up for one of the discussion groups, actually, so that was really useful. Thanks.

Helen 1:47:08

Okay, great. Well, I'll send the link again, I'll put it in the chat here. But I'll send you a link—maybe send you an email after the meeting today. And I'll also send the link for the next meeting. So yeah, when are we meeting? We're meeting on the 9th of March. I'll put that in the chat as well, and then the—and I'll maybe send out the—the meeting link on the morning of the ninth again, because I know these like links disappear off in the kind of endless emails that we can be receiving. I think somebody—one other member wanted to join, but I think she clicked unfortunately a different link. So, I'll have to send her my

apologies that she wasn't able to she was in another Zoom room waiting to be admitted unfortunately. The pitfalls of technology. So, we're going to have our topic as expectations, interpreted broadly, and some collaging and just sharing a space together. So, if people want to say their farewells or ask any questions, then—

Joy 1:48:44

I'm off. Thank you, everybody. Nice to see you all again. I need to leave now. But I'll see you in two weeks. Thank you, Helen.

Helen 1:48:51

Thanks, Joy.

Lesley 1:48:53

Yeah, yeah, I'll pop off too I'll see you all in two weeks' time. And on the 8th of March is International Women's Day. So, don't forget and the topic is 'choose to challenge'.

F 1:49:14

Thanks for reminding me.

Dorothy 1:49:23

Bye, bye.

[redacted]

Helen 1:49:29

Nice to see you all. Take care.

Joanne 1:49:31

Bye everyone. See you in a couple of weeks.

Helen 1:49:35

Bye, Pauline.

F 1:49:42

Okay, I'll see you all in two weeks. I'm offski. Take care everybody. Bye.

Helen 1:50:01

Yeah, no it's alright.

Sarah 1:50:03

I felt really bad because I know F—like, I didn't realise that we were a group probably, not breaching the adjustment thing, like. I think Anonymous might have been cross about the chat—I'm not sure like so it says like, was that not appropriate for the judgement?

Helen 1:50:25

Yeah, maybe I wasn't quite following what? I'm not sure. Was it in the chat that—

Sarah 1:50:30

Oh, I think so. Like, I don't know. Like, I was like, we were we were talking about being able to go raving like after, like, big—Like, she said, big speakers are best and I was like, oh, yeah, they are whatever. And I don't know if that was my judgement or something afterwards, I was like, oh, like, I just didn't think of that at all. Like it's a bit—anyway. I suppose it's good to be aware of like, more like being careful in the chat for upsetting—

Helen 1:51:02

Yeah, yeah, it's hard to—Yeah, we don't want to kind of set ourselves too many rules that we end up stilting having a conversation but yeah, a kind of respectful way, is, it's a hard line to tread

Sarah 1:51:15

It is everyone's got different, different perceptions, I suppose of like, what judgement works—I maybe I'm just completely misinterpreting it, and she might have been feeling somebody else's or societies judgement. But afterwards, I was like, is that saying, oh—I don't know, is it saying something's the best? Is that societal judgement? I don't know. Like, maybe that wasn't appropriate. Never mind, it's better to be aware for next time.

Helen 1:51:41

Yeah, sure. I don't think—I think we had a bit of a chat. So hopefully—

Sarah 1:51:47

Yeah, that was great today. Thank you so much.

Helen 1:51:50

Yeah, no, it's lovely you could make it along.

Sarah 1:51:52

Yeah, I really enjoyed it. It's so interesting hearing other people's experiences. I think it's um—

Helen 1:52:00

Yeah, no, it was really—I was like, making notes, oh I was like I need to do that, need to get that in order in my life.

Sarah 1:52:07

Yeah, I think it's amazing how well people are managing and like for people who said that they felt that almost like—I think there's an expectation that you shouldn't be enjoying the lockdown. But I think actually, a lot of people have found benefits, which is quite nice hearing about that today. Like—

Helen 1:52:25

Yeah, no, it was definitely.

Sarah 1:52:27

Yeah. Oh, well. Thank you so much. It was nice to meet you.

Helen 1:52:31

And do see you in a couple of weeks.

Sarah 1:52:33

See you later. Take care, bye.

APPENDIX 10.3: SESSION THREE

Tuesday 9 March 2021 • 2:05:13

SPEAKERS

Helen, [redacted], Anonymous, Lesley, F, Sarah, Dorothy, Pauline, Joanne, [redacted], Joy

Helen 02:06

Hi everyone.

Lesley 02:09

Hi, hello Helen.

Sarah 02:16

Hello how are you doing?

Lesley 02:19

Good thank you how are you?

Sarah 02:21

Good, thanks

Helen 02:41

How people doing?

Joanne 02:44

Good.

Helen 02:49

Were you back at work on Monday, Joanne?

Joanne 02:51

Yeah. So this'll be my last one.

Helen 02:56

What time is—What, what time do you start work?

Joanne 03:00

Half two.

Helen 03:01

Half two. See if we can shift timing around. Shall we just start by—people can say how they're doing this week. Just nothing too serious. A wee check in. I'm home alone for the time being, my partner left to pick the kids up with a pair of roller boots in his backpack. So, we'll see how successful that is in the park.

Sarah 04:03

That sounds like fun.

Helen 04:04

Yeah, it does doesn't it. My older daughter's seven she's dead keen to be roller booting.

Sarah 04:09

Oh, great. Are they happy to be back at school?

Helen 04:20

I—for the main part, they're feeling a bit sensitive, I think. The kind—of their emotions go up and down a bit. Particularly the little one who's five.

Sarah 04:35

Yeah, I can't imagine what it's like for kids at the moment. I think the chopping and changing as much as anything.

Helen 04:42

Yeah, I think that's hard for us all, isn't it?

Sarah 04:44

Yeah.

Helen 04:45

I've got a friend whose son said, okay, he'd go back to school, but he wanted this to be the last time it switched from one to the other and back. If he was going back, then he was back.

Sarah 04:57

Well, fingers crossed, it might be.

Helen 05:00

Yeah.

Sarah 05:01

It's hard to believe it like especially after the weekends like it just seems like it changes all the time.

Helen 05:08

Yeah it is isn't it.

Sarah 05:09

Yeah, really strange.

Helen 05:15

Hi Anonymous.

Anonymous 05:17

Hiya.

Helen 05:23

So, should we just go around? Does anybody want to volunteer to be first just to say how they're doing and then they can pass it over to somebody else.

F 05:45

I'm being quiet on purpose. I'm like—someone else can go first please.

Joy 05:51

I'll go first if you like, yeah. Yeah, I'm not sure what to report. I'm not sure there's been anything particular, it kind of feels like I've been doing the same things. I've been doing you know, the kind of online things I've been doing I'm still doing those and the real-life things, going for walks they've seemed very kind of similar as well because I've been going mainly to the same places I suppose there hasn't been a lot of change there. It's been nice seeing, I think may have said this last time, but it's been nice seeing the spring flowers obviously and the you know, the lengthening days all that that is that is kind of a change which is which is nice. And today I got an appointment to go and get vaccinated in two weeks time so that's quite exciting. So that's something to kind of feels like progress I suppose. So that'll be that'll be quite good. So that's me I'm gonna pass on to Dorothy.

Dorothy 06:57

Sorry muted. Hello everyone. Sorry I'm a bit late we just come from another meeting that finishes at three. I'm fine it's been a busy fortnight. Like Joy I have—my blue envelope arrived [COVID vaccination appointment] so that was interesting receiving that. I had estimated it might be April but it's Saturday so, that's good. Yeah, the flowers can't come quick enough my garden for me I'm just so—I'm impatient for Spring I am trying to nurture everything and talk it into life and I've got a little row of plant pots and my window here you probably can see, full of seeds and hope. Okay, that's me. Do we just pass on to somebody else? We're not doing anything in order. Okay, I pass one to Joanne.

Joanne 08:21

I knew you were gonna do that. I've got nothing really important other than that Skye's enjoying nursery and I'm enjoying the peace and quiet. I'm back at work next week unfortunately. I think that's it. Pass to F.

F 08:44

I'm glad you're enjoying the peace and quiet (laughs). I don't know, it's been a weird week. The way that you're talking about your wee one and having the ups and downs, I honestly keep forgetting what is going on in the outside world. Because I really haven't gone out a lot so but I've been watching the weather from the window. And the couple of times I have been out have managed to see a few carpets of flowers starting to bloom. So that's been really nice. The weather has been really changeable though. So, it's been lots of light, which has been good, but it's still been really chilly up here. So, I hope that you all keep in warm. And I will pass to Anonymous.

Anonymous 09:30

Hello, I am okay. I managed to get my vaccine on—Wen—last Wednesday, which is good. I didn't have too many side effects, which is good. And then I got quite excited that we may get back to our places of worship and well my place of worship, because they're talking about putting your name down for some of the first services, but then my husband reminded me that even though we've both been vaccinated, he's still shielding so it won't really make much difference. So that was my sort of disappointment. So anyway, there you go. Pass to Lesley.

Lesley 10:15

Well, yesterday was International Women's Day, and I helped organise a Zoom event for 75 women last night. And we talked about women from Dunfermline and both past and present. And it was very moving actually, some people's stories that we'd researched, and we'd found out about them. So that was really good. And just to pick up on bulbs, I live in a flat but I'm a ground floor flat and my crocus's have come up and they're just lovely. Their purple and white and they're really cheery when you go out the door. I pass to [redacted].

Helen 11:02

We're just doing a little hello and how you week's been.

[redacted]

Pauline 12:00

Thanks, [redacted]. I was a bit late joining. Sorry about that. So, I've had quite an interesting week or two as well. I get my blue letter about my vaccination at lunchtime today, and I'm really excited about that. But my daughter who's got asthma and who lives alone had a vaccination done last week. So, I drove her to the Louisa Jordan [COVID vaccination centre in Glasgow], for her to get the vaccination. And it's the first time that I've been in Glasgow, probably in over a year. And I was quite surprised at how different it looked when I drove along Finneston and I saw that there was now a Lidl, there used to be SeaWorld, and there's another hotel being built. So, when my daughter went in to get the vaccination, I had to walk across Bell's bridge and back and a wee bit farther along by the Crowne Plaza Hotel. And it seemed really unfamiliar to me, and I am a Glaswegian, so that was quite an interesting outing last week, and I'm looking forward to my own—next week for my vaccination. Other than that last night, I listened to one of the webinars, which was a link that you put on Helen in the Padlet. And it was also part of the International Women's day events. And it was about Jenny Lee, whom I didn't know anything about. And she was, you know, a Labour MP. She was a co-founder of the Open University, and obviously a very persuasive and influential woman. And I really enjoyed it. It was only on for an hour, but it was a panel discussion, and the panelists were all really interesting, and I wished it could have gone on longer. And that's probably all from me, so I presume then everyone's spoken. Yeah. So, is it over to you Helen?

Helen 14:06

[redacted], you could pass to [redacted].

Pauline 14:09

Oh, I beg your pardon. Sorry about that, because I was late coming in I didn't know if I'd missed anyone.

[redacted]

Sarah 14:42

Um, I—I'm fine. Like I feel really tired. It made me like I don't know if it's just like, I think the situation is quite tiring, really like it's—I think its um sort of like ups and downs everyday but I went over to Edinburgh for work, on Friday, and I really enjoyed just not being in Glasgow like it felt like such a treat, being given a reason for work to go somewhere else and I had—I just had such a nice time, like I had to do reporting. So, I had speak to loads of people. And it was just such a nice change just being out and like it felt quite normal. So that was really enjoyable. And yeah, I can't really remember, like nothing, especially nothing especially notable, really. But yeah, that was a nice change.

Helen 15:41

Okay, great. I think that it is kinda of interesting, isn't it? That kind of collective sense of—I know when I was walking back from dropping the kids at school this morning, there was a general chat about people feeling inexplicably tired at the moment. And what was that that was making us feel so exhausted, I definitely know that by about eight o'clock, I feel ready for my bed, although and then stay up way later than I should. And that's—that's probably I probably just come to the conclusion there in itself, I should go to bed when my body's telling me I feel tired. But yeah, we—in our house, where I've just been doing kind of getting on with uni work and doing a bit of gardening and just keeping things ticking along. Hoping for the seasons to change. But we're not quite there yet. It feels like still a bit chilly, a bit windy and wet. Looking forward to the Spring definitely. So, in terms of things we are going to do today, we were going to talk about—dedicate quite a bit of the session to talking about our topic, which is expectations, and then another chunk of the session to doing some collage together. But before that, I was going to have a quick go at using the whiteboard on Zoom, which is not something I've used before. So hopefully it'll be—it'll work well, but we'll have to work it out, if it doesn't. It sounds like a few of you been going on the Padlet. Let me just post the link to that in the chat. So that's the web page where I've been putting events like the Jenny Lee event that Pauline mentioned last night. And there's also the group agreement up there. So, I don't think we need to spend time going through that together. We talked a bit about that last week [redacted] the—our kind of like intentions towards each other and a little kind of ways of carr—of operating together. So that's always there for you to comment on or just remind yourselves about. So, I thought, because we're supposed to be doing creative activities, and we are doing creative activities, but it be great to get a bit of a sense of like, what people might like to do, like what people's interests are. So, I was going to try doing that on the whiteboard. Let's give this a go. Right. Can people see that?

Joanne 18:38

Yeah.

F 18:38

Yeah.

Helen 18:43

And then the theory is that you should all be able to type things on there. Does anybody want to give that a go see if that works. It might be different on iPads and different kinds of devices.

Anonymous 18:58

Do you not need to go to the view options bit first and do annotate and then pick text from annotate?

Helen 19:07

I don't know Anonymous. Have you used it before?

Anonymous 19:13

We sometimes use it on conversation cafe. So, I think that—

Helen 19:17

So, I need to do that?

Joanne 19:21

Down at the bottom of my screen it says Helen's screen and a pencil on it.

Helen 19:25

Right.

Lesley 19:26

Yeah, no, she's right. I'll just post this.

Helen 19:30

Alright. I can't see—I think it was me—Oh right, oh right. Yeah. Okay. There's just a little bit of a lag on it. So it was that you Lesley that you said you'd posted something on? Yeah. So, do people want to have a go at trying to write things on like maybe like drawing, maybe like creative writing, knitting? Just we'll just kind of like collect them all together on the screen together. But if people can't add stuff to them do you want to put things in the chat and I can add them on?

F 20:13

Yeah, I can't add anything to that because I'm not using the app of Zoom I'm just joining from my browser so I'll just put my thing in the chat okay.

Helen 20:21

Yeah, that'd be great.

[redacted]

Helen 20:30

Yeah.

[redacted]

Helen 20:35

I know these things say they're straightforward, but not always the case.

[redacted]

Joanne 20:56

You just need touch the screen

[redacted]

Joanne 21:00

If you click the pencil it comes up, that line right you just press type and then click the screen and it will come up.

[redacted]

Joanne 21:16

See if you click text then click the screen.

[redacted]

Joanne 21:24

That's you then.

[redacted]

Joanne 21:27

You're welcome.

[redacted]

Helen 21:39

It should be at the bottom.

Joanne 21:42

If you click you're screen again it should come a wee bit saying "mute" or "stop video".

[redacted]

Helen 22:06

What about—anybody into photography, or taking pictures, singing

[redacted]

Helen 22:41

Book making, zine making, anybody done any of that? Journaling.

F 22:48

Some journaling or zine making I would suggest.

Helen 22:53

I'll put that in.

F 22:59

That was too long type that's why I spoke it.

Helen 23:03

Oh, don't worry that fine. It's easier if you speak it, I've got like a small computer and lots of different things open.

F 23:10

Okay, sorry.

Helen 23:15

What else? Printing—oh screen printing got on there.

[redacted]

Helen 23:20

Zine making, there like—like little kind of homemade magazines I suppose. They usually quite kind of personal in content. But you can just make them out of like from one sheet of paper or just a few sheets of paper so I guess it's like a little bit like bookmaking. Have we reached the end of everyone's—So we've got writing, journaling, drawing

[redacted]

Helen 24:05

Yeah, yeah, put that down definitely. I'll put that on.

[redacted]

Helen 24:20

Mapping is that a creative thing? Crafting that's quite generic as far as—different types of printing. Okay, okay. All right. Well, that's useful. I will draw up a list of those and we can have a think what we might like to do on one of the subsequent sessions. Right, I'm gonna stop sharing and hope that Zoom saves that. Trust in the power of Zoom, okay, brill. Okey dokey. So, I guess we'll just move on to our consciousness-raising circle. And we'll maybe dedicate about half an hour, 40 minutes to that and then have a break. So, we talked about expectations being our topic. And I've—where did I put it in fact, I spent a few minutes pulling a bits of paper out a bowl earlier, to put our names in a non-alphabetical randomised, you have to trust my bowl picking out skills, so that we're not always going in the same order. So, it's not always up to the person with a name starting with 'a' to go first.

So, we're going to go round in a circle, and everyone's going to get a chance to speak. Now I know last time, there was a bit of chat about—so there are the kind of different consciousness-raising rules that I kind of introduced everyone to, one of which is to not give out advice. And there was a bit of chat about that last time and what constituted giving out advice. Because there was kind of things going along—discussion going along in the chat at the same time as people talking. So, I wondered if maybe this time, we'll just try, that we'll not use the chat while people are giving their contribution to see how it works. Unless you want to actually type your part in the chat when it's your turn, and then somebody can read it out. So, we'll try and just give that space over to each woman as she's talking. And then maybe in the summing up part, we can also try doing the circle method as well. But we'll do the initial—Does that sound, does that sound sensible to people? Is there a general—

F 27:27

Yeah.

Helen 27:28

Okay. Okay, cool. So, Dorothy, you were the first out of the red bowl that I made little paper notes. So, if you're happy to go first, that'd be brill.

Dorothy 27:44

Okay, never happy to go first. But I'm, I am happy to go first—

Helen 27:51

Sorry Dorothy, I just thought of something that I was going to say.

Dorothy 27:56

Okay.

Helen 27:58

Yeah, with the summing up, I thought we could go around in the circle as well. And rather than kind of like all chipping things in that, we just give that a go. So, so, so I think that's the kind of for me, and we talked about that a little bit last time, that's kind of difficult, bit kind of listening to what everybody is saying. And then trying to find some commonalities amongst ourselves, but without slipping into this advice-giving role that we're all so used to. So, it might be useful while you're listening to other people just to make some little notes that anything that springs to mind. And then you can refer to those when it's your turn in the summing up or you can just say what comes to mind, but that was just something that I thought I would personally find useful as, as we're going along. So sorry, Dorothy, back over to you.

Dorothy 28:52

That's okay. So, not really very sure that I have much to say. Do you want us to talk a little bit about expectations, Helen? Yes. I find generally that I'm quite tough on myself about other people's expectations of me. And that's probably my downfall a lot of the time, you know. It gets me into probably difficult situations that I need not be in because I think other people have higher expectations of me than they actually do. But at the same time, I think

it's, you know, it's a confidence thing, I think. Yeah, it's a confidence thing. I'll probably maybe add more later on, but that's me just know.

Helen 30:30

Okay, great. Thanks, Dorothy. [redacted] it's you next if you want to when you're finished if you say you pass to the next person whose F is after you. That'd be brill, thank you.

[redacted]

Helen 31:45

We'll just use the little—I don't know if you can see in the chat, I just put a little kind of random order, but if you pass to F.

[redacted]

Helen 32:02

Yeah, that'd be brill. Thanks.

[redacted]

F 32:15

I suppose it is a difficult discussion, because maybe we don't really know where to start. But I've been kind of thinking about it a wee bit this week, because I made a couple of examples for the exercise later. But maybe that there's different expectations that we encountered in society. And I know for myself like, I grew up in a household where there were a lot of expectations placed on me, culturally, and because of my gender. So, I feel like I've spent a lot of my life trying to fight back against other people's expectations of me, just to kind of be myself and work out what are my own expectations for myself. But there's maybe even a wider discussion again, because expectations could maybe also be about the things that we would all expect as people who live in society together. What are the things that we all expect out of each other as people that live together and need to look after each other as well as ourselves? So, it was a wee bit linked to when we did the group agreement exercise, I thought because we were thinking about what things we would like to expect from the group and from each other a wee bit. So maybe that will help unlock a wee bit in your thinking of how you kinda tackle expectations and daily life I don't know. But it's a really big big discussion that could be had about it. So, I'm passing to [redacted] now.

[redacted]

Helen 35:41

Sorry, say that again.

[redacted]

Helen 35:50

Just—you can interpret it how you want so for the group, for yourself, for different—

[redacted]

Sarah 36:43

I kind of feel like expectations can cause quite a lot of problems, like, you can—like if you feel that a lot of expectations on you, when you're growing up, for example, to behave—I don't need to behave in certain ways can just end up not being, like not being very constructive ultimately, or if you have expectations or in other people that they will behave in certain ways, you know, quite often that isn't the case. So, I think that there's no, I don't know, there's—it's kind of easier if you just don't really expect stuff, because that way if stuff happens then you can just kind of accept it for what it is rather than expecting that certain things will happen and being disappointed if they if they don't or being surprised if they don't go in the way that you think that they will do. And but I think the gender thing is absolutely enormous, like the things that are expected of girls, when they're growing up, I think are really different from how boys are expected to behave and like the criticism of certain things, like just, I don't know—And again, actually in the workplace as well, like, I think the way that if women are assertive that could be perceived as being bossy, whereas like men that's perceived as being—you know, them being assertive. I think it's I think gender is a massive factor. And can I pass on to—Sorry, Helen.

Helen 38:37

Thanks, Sarah. Yeah, I think there's so many expectations on us across society, family, relationships. Yeah, I was trying to think about this during the week, but it's hard to be articulate about it. I think, I expect a lot of myself but it's hard to perceive, how much I'm influenced by the expectations of society like I feel like I feel like—You know this time that we've had during lockdown to kind of slow things down in some ways and spend more time with family if, like me, you've got young children at home, that has been a really, it's been a great experience for me, and I feel like I've kind of got myself in a position where I went back to work when my kids were really small, because that's what I perceived a successful progressive woman should do. That, like to hold up, working and having a family and all these different things was what a successful woman looked like. But it's just not possible. It's just not, you know, like, there's just not enough hours in the day to do all these things. And by trying to squeeze them all in, we're just burning ourselves out more and more. And I just, I have really appreciated this time to spend with the kids and, you know, get to know them a little bit more than I normally do when they're at school. And it's made me think, like, how—what, what is what is it that needs to change to enable us to live a more rounded life, like, our society is geared up in a certain way. And yeah, I've found myself believing that kind of story that's been told to me. Anyway, yeah, I feel like Sarah, that I've rambled a bit, so I will pass to Lesley.

[redacted]

Joy 42:35

Thank you, Lesley. Yeah, I was thinking about this in terms of social expectations, family expectations, personal expectations, and which I think you've all touched on already. And in terms of social expectations, we're kind of all affected by that, I suppose. But I was, I was thinking that, for me, of the three, this was the one that I was possibly the less, aware—the least aware of. So, thinking back to when I was growing up, obviously, you know, I was being

affected by, you know, the society around me. But I can, I can kind of remember at school, sort of feeling as if, as long as you, you know, do well and pass exams, and etc., etc., you can, you know, it's not because you're a girl, that you're not going to be able to manage things, you're not gonna be able to do things. So, I think the social expectations for me, as I say, obviously, they were there, because you can't be immune from them. But I don't remember being vastly, really, really aware of the gender aspect of that. I can remember, for example, being really amazed, when I discovered that some girls might potentially pretend not to be very academic, because they thought it wasn't a feminine thing to be, you know, good at schoolwork and stuff. And being totally amazed that that would be a thing. I mean, that sounds, probably sounds quite, quite naive on my part. But it just seemed to me, why would you do that? That just seemed like completely crazy. So, I think the point when I perhaps became more aware of those sort of social expectations is probably at work. It's actually beyond the whole school and university thing. It's actually there in the world of work. But I think it was something that maybe became more evident to me. And in terms of the family, I think there, again, thinking back, I really can't say that though my parents, wouldn't have said we're particularly progressive at all. They're just sort of, you know, pretty average kind of parents. I was never, there was never any sense. I don't think either for me or my sisters that we couldn't do certain things because we were girls, or that we had to do certain things because we were girls, I don't really remember any discourse around that. It was very much if you want to, you know, if you do well at school, if you want to go to university, etc., etc. Then, then go ahead, that's great, you know, so the expectations are not so much in terms of gender, it was more than there were expectations. But it was more that you were going to work hard that you were going to succeed that you're going to get a good job, if it was those sorts of expectations, rather than, you've got to get married, you've got to have children, you've got to X Y Z because you're a girl. So, I don't really remember anything about those kinds of expectations from my parents. And then in terms of personal expectations, I think like, again, a couple of people have said, I think there's a perfectionist side, that means that sometimes the expectations, personal expectations can be quite high. And that is, that is sometimes a negative thing, because you can put quite a lot of pressure—I find personally myself, I can put a lot of pressure on myself, I can expect a lot from myself. And it's not always helpful. Having said that, I was thinking about the kind of the negative and the positive of expectations, I think often we see expectations as being negative. But I was also thinking to myself that sometimes they can be positive, because you can set goals for yourself, you can have kind of aims. And also thinking back to when I was a child, just imagining maybe if my parents had hadn't had any expectations for me at all, if it had been kind of well, you're not going to manage to do anything because, you know, you're not going to amount to much whatever. That would have been terrible in an in in another kind of way that could have been really distressing, I think, to have had parents that just didn't expect you to do anything. Because, yeah, because you hadn't got any ability or whatever. So, kind of I think it could be negative, but it can also be quite positive to sort of hope for something from somebody. And then maybe just one final thing is that the thing that I was kind of wondering about expectation was maybe they're a little bit more kind of helpful when the expectations are to some extent realistic. It sometimes seems to me that if we have expectations, which are way beyond you know anything that's realistic, whether we're expecting it from ourselves, or we're expecting things from other people that just aren't realistic. That I think can lead to quite a lot of suffering, because we're expecting things that just are never going to happen, they just can't happen for whatever reason. So

that that kind of element of realism, I think, for me seemed quite important as well. And next is Pauline.

Pauline 47:28

Thanks, Joy. I actually found this really difficult, because when I thought about expectations, I just thought how wide it is and thinking about my own life in terms of growing up with a sister, you know, how my parents approached us and, you know, what they hope to help us to achieve through going to school, to getting into employment, I found it really difficult to pick out specific things. There are lots and lots of examples of where I think there were expectations that influenced what has happened in my life, and I'll just give one example. So, when I had my son, for example, I worked for the National Health Service, and I had a certain grade of job. And when I went back to work after maternity leave, I wasn't allowed to continue in that job because I didn't want to work full time. So, there was an expectation there not just about that if you did have a child that you wouldn't—Sorry, there was an expectation there that if you chose to have a child, then you wouldn't have the privilege of choosing to continue in that role that you had, but not to work as many hours. And that's something that always stuck with me. And the contrast that I see now with our daughter, who's going back to work after having a baby where she's had the choice of retaining the job that she did, choosing the hours that she did, I think, for me is a positive thing to see how expectations have changed. I also remember that in another pregnancy that I had, when I told my line manager that I was pregnant, and I was told very, very rudely that she wouldn't employ another female again, because all we did was have babies. And the thing that surprises me now is that I didn't challenge that at all. I accepted that that was her view. And that actually it was pretty tough, if you wanted to have a career and have your children and I suppose a bit like what Helen was saying about trying to do everything. But I found it really difficult to kind of pinpoint what I really thought about society's expectations because they're so wide ranging. And so, I came round to thinking about my own expectations of other people and of services, because we've been in lockdown, and likewise, you know, like Lesley, I'll be hoping in a certain number of weeks to get my vaccination after I've had the first one. But in terms of other people's behaviour, I feel that I've become very much more aware of what I expect of other people. And just simple things that I mean, like going to the supermarket, I find myself getting really quite upset if there are people who are not following the guidance and regulations in terms of social distancing, or wearing masks or going into the supermarket, and they don't clean their hands. And for some reason, that has taken on, take up quite a bit of my headspace, if I go to the shops, and I see that kind of thing, and I come home, and I've really got to work to get that out of my head. So, I found it quite difficult generally, to think about expectations, because, as you say, F, it's such a big discussion. But I'm much more aware of my expectations of other people now, because maybe I've just had more time to think about it. Or I've had more time to think about the implications of other people's actions on me. So that's a bit of a—it's kind of unfocussed, but that's, that's where they're at the moment with expectations. So, I won't say any more and I'll pass on to Anonymous.

Anonymous 52:04

Thanks, Pauline. I'm afraid that I got quite worried about this. And it was on my mind a lot. So, I wrote something. So, it might be a wee bit different from everyone else's share, so I'll just read it out. Hope it's alright. Each of us is an individual with our own history and

journey. You may think X marks the spot for everyone. You may know that through—that it is through Y and Z that X is reached. Your treasure lies at X or does it? Who told you to run, jump and crawl towards X? I know someone who's passing A and wants to rest for a time before plan—planning how to get to B. They are secretly terrified of struggling towards C and that B marks the end of their rainbow. As for me I believe I began at M passed B and D in early life. Saw a lot of E F and G and primary school caught a glimpse of C B and B in high school and uni and now I am now staying at P and Q. I'm currently catching my breath and deciding whether to aim for A or Z or what the heck even T. It's my decision my journey my rainbow no one else gets a say. No one else gets—no one else is on this trail. No one else can carry my load. So, no platitudes please, no it'll be okay. No, you'll just have to get—keep going. And definitely no chin up comments thanks. I know that—I know there's nothing else for it often there's no other way but through and oh boy I—do I know that life is not a dress rehearsal. Words are cheap and easy to say and then forgotten. Through thought and attempted understanding take time energy and work but allow minds and hearts to open consciousnesses to rise and combine. Okay so sorry about that, preparedness there and thanks for listening. Pass to Joanne.

Joanne 54:31

Thanks Anonymous. My expect—my expectations like myself like grown up having a gran that pretty much expected me to be like—I'm not like—I liked doing boy's stuff, liked I playing football, I liked hanging out with the boys and—but my gran didn't like that. My gran expected me to be—go to dancing and gymnastics. Everything that a girl would probably do. She didn't like the fact that I wore boys' clothes, she didn't like it. She pretty much—Growing up I liked, I liked food, I always do. Everybody likes food. My weight wasn't helpful. So, she would call me fat from up the close. So, she was expecting me to be skinny. She expects me to be like my cousin's they've got good peers. Like, the school, I got bullied in school. I was like—I didn't like school especially growing up my brother he practically got himself in trouble every other day. Ma gran would go out and buy him a new tracksuit, take him out for dinner. I never got that. So, I didn't get the expectations that my brother got. Now that—now I'm a mum, I'm expected expectations are not letting her do the stuff that I want to do. Such as I shouldn't be dressing ma wee girl up in boys' clothes. I shouldn't be letting—shouldn't be letting her, like Spiderman, I shouldn't be letting her like superheroes and that apparently that's not right. According to her, now that that I've got a wee girl I should be dressing up like a mum, I shouldn't be dressing like a boy, I shouldn't be dressing up like this the next time. Pretty much growing up, I like hated myself. And pretty much tried to be what my gran wanted me to be. I still am. But there are days where I'm going like no, it's my life, I can do what I want. It's not hurting anybody. Unless it's—it's not hurting me. I couldn't care if it's hurting anybody else. So yeah. Thanks.

Helen 57:03

Thanks, everybody, is there anybody who wanted to add anything else who maybe didn't say everything they wanted in their kind of first around? If anybody wants to put their hand up, or—[redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 57:47

Yeah, if you just want to add to what what's been said, and then yeah, have a little break, and then we can do the summing up.

[redacted]

Helen 1:01:03

Thanks, [redacted]. Does anybody else have anything else they would like to add to the circle? Well, shall we take a five-minute comfort break? And then we can come back and just do our summing up? Just a wee bit time to think so if we come back at five past four and we can share some thoughts then. Okay, thanks. Is everyone back? Maybe not quite everyone. Joy, is Joy back? Joy and Dorothy have still got their cameras off. Okay, great. [redacted] had to leave unfortunately so she's just popped off. So maybe we'll go around the circle again it was—I found it really powerful hearing people's different experiences and thanks so much everyone for sharing things from their own lives. My little red bowl pulled F out there—out first for the summing up phase if that's alright with you?

F 1:09:20

Yeah, but I'm not really sure. What like what kind of summing up are meant to be doing so.

Helen 1:09:26

I think for me, this is the difficult part. So, let's give it a go and see what we come up with and we can—

F 1:09:36

Okay.

Helen 1:09:37

—keep trying different ways each time.

F 1:09:43

I think it seems like there's something around confidence that's linked to expectations. Or that's what like—I'll just kind of give my reflection on what I thought were some themes perhaps, but I wasn't surprised gender came up as much as that or motherhood actually, even though I don't have kids myself, I do appreciate that it's not probably an easy decision to make about trying to keep your career and be a mother at the same time because our society is not set up that way to help you, to facilitate you in that. So, from my own perspective, it was interesting to hear how some of you have kind of battled against that but there's definitely something about societal expectations and what is realistic but I really liked what [redacted] brought up there when she added in her extra bit, when she was saying like, who gets to decide what as a realistic expectation and what isn't? I thought it was a really really interesting discussion as well and it is such a wide topic it feels really big but actually listening to everybody talk, it felt like a much more tangible thing. Thanks. Oh, sorry and pass to Lesley sorry forgot another list.

Lesley 1:11:28

Well, summing up the three words that for me that sum up what I've heard, are confidence, gender and silencing. That's it for me in a nutshell. So, I pass to [redacted] now.

[redacted]

Joanne 1:12:51

Hi, pretty much all I heard mostly was the gender and the confidence. So yeah. I'll pass it to Anonymous.

Anonymous 1:13:06

Hi, I'm trying to put my notes together here, I'm—I heard from quite a few people about trying to decide whether to talk about society or family expectations, societal ones. And then from that we seem to talk about gendered expectations. And think, Dorothy's and Joanne's spoke to me quite a bit because it was about being tough on yourself because of what you thought other people thought. And expectations being used to bully people at school or to talk about body shape and things. That I got a sort of question from Helen that was like more or less, what does a successful woman look like? I find myself asking that as well. But I'm never going to reach that, so it was never going to be a particular issue for me. Joy also sort of I heard a lot about my own expectations that were, I suppose put on me from Joy when she talked about her and her sister and her mum and dad just wanted her to work hard and be successful. I suppose my question related to Helen's there, would be what does success look like rather than just anything else? And it appears, my Mum and Dad, used to always say like, as long as you're happy but happy is debatable. I think I better stop waffling. Thank you, I passed to Pauline.

Pauline 1:15:12

Thanks Anonymous. I think for me just a few words in summing up of the things that I have quite a lot of where the personal expectations, family expectations as much as the wider societal and employment as well. So, I would leave it at that and pass to Dorothy.

Dorothy 1:15:44

I think I was encouraged by listening to everybody's sharing. And I think that the only few words I'd like to say is that even though it was probably not mentioned that often, I think the word encouragement just comes through for me in that in the discussion that we've had in the past half hour I feel encouraged. I beg your pardon; I pass on to Joy.

Joy 1:16:37

Thank you. Okay, so I think some of the things I've heard, maybe the first one was, the meaning of expectations, and just how everybody had, how everybody had interpreted that, and what you—what each person has taken that to mean. So, it's quite interesting to see how the word itself had been interpreted initially. And then something else that came, I think, was just how tough we can be on ourselves; I don't know if that's a particularly female thing or not. But that seemed to be coming out as well, that the thing about expectations of self that did seem to be coming back a little bit in a few people's sharings. Then the kind of the specific aspects of expectations so that the fact that they can be gender specific or culture specific or even religious specific. That was also really interesting, and obviously, a lot of people, you know, thought quite a lot about that, and how they had that it had an impact on them. I also got a sense of everybody, that kind of sense that different people—being on a different path, everybody being on their own path, if you like and, and for that

reason, expectations, maybe being quite limiting. Because if there's a specific set of expectations on you, and that doesn't really correspond to maybe how you want your life to go or how you see it going that that can be quite restricting. So that kind of limiting nature of expectations. And then finally, another thing I thought was really interesting was how we maybe react against expectations and go into deliberately different direction or how sometimes we don't, and how sometimes looking back, it can be quite interesting to think about why we didn't react against some particular times. And there can be obviously lots of reasons for that but reacting against expectations or not. Passing on there to Helen.

Helen 1:18:40

Thanks, Joy. Yeah, I think we've kind of identified a lot of commonalities. I think that idea that different—that expectations happen at different moments in people's lives, I think's really interesting. How that shifts or how it can come into really sharp focus at different points. There were various things that people were talking about, but their own experience that reminded me of things in my life or in my mum's life and different things. And I suppose it makes me think, how can we redefine our own expectations? And how can we then share that with our community to try and—Yeah, it seemed like to shape the place that we live like there was a lot of talk of people being hard on themselves and other people being hard on themselves. Whilst there is also a lot of generosity, I think. For me, I think trying to rethink the expectations of society would be a positive thing to try and imagine. I'll pass to Sarah.

Sarah 1:20:01

I just found it so interesting listening to what everybody was saying. Like I found the discussion around lockdown giving us an opportunity to reevaluate expectations, I found that really interesting in terms of what Helen was saying, and I'm so sorry, I haven't written down the other person's name that I was thinking of. But I think just, it's, yeah, just having that time to reassess stuff. And I found what Joanne was saying, really moving just in terms of how generational expectations can be, can be passed down. I felt really emotional listening to that, actually. And I yeah, I just found it all really interesting. So, thank you.

Helen 1:21:02

Thanks, everyone. Time is speeding along now, its twenty past four. So, F was going to lead us through a collaging activity, which kind of might be a nice way to maybe allow some of those things that we've heard to settle with us and kind of space to process a few things. So, F I'll pass over to you if you want to be—talk us through what we're going to get up to the next an hour or so.

F 1:21:41

Okay. Are you able to just share the Padlet screen with the examples on it? Maybe? Is that okay?

Helen 1:21:48

Just let me see.

F 1:22:00

I don't know if it's easy or not? No.

Helen 1:22:07

No, no, it shouldn't be. Yeah.

F 1:22:10

Sorry I'm forgetting, you've got a lot of stuff open. Excellent. So, I just made a couple of quick examples during the week. To let you kind of have an idea or just help break the ice, maybe get your brain thinking. But I've found some really easy instructions. So, we're just going to follow those. I'll give you some tips as we go along. But this was about expectations around like food. So, I suppose it's kind of linked to body image really. But that was just a really kind of simple one. There's not a lot on it. It's just really made up from the stuff that I managed to find in the house. And then if you can show that other one, please Helen. In this one I was really thinking about gender. And I was—I luckily had a double-sided film poster in the house that I ripped out for a different collage. So, I just made a couple of copies of that and cut them out. And obviously, I've kind of spent a wee bit more time on this, but I was really thinking about like, what is it that society kind of expects women to be like, and what is it the expect men to be like? And although this is a wee bit of an extreme example, because it's from like film posters, for me, I just wanted to kind of reverse what was like what traditionally would have been expected of women in society. So, I really liked that she had the gun in her hand already. And that kind of made the basis for how I've worked everything else out. But, if you've managed to gather your materials together, and like, I know I think we've got about 30 minutes to do this. So, I was just going to maybe set a timer for 15 minutes and let you know once we're kind of halfway through because there'll be bits when I'm explaining something to you and then the rest of it will just be you guys doing your thing. Ripping and cutting and sticking. So, if I just set a timer. Okay, so yeah, if you've managed to gather your materials together, I don't know if you want to stop sharing your screen Helen. I don't know if people want that kept there or not? But yeah, I would kind of I kind of started by looking at the source materials that I had bits of paper, whatever it was, I had managed to gather together, and I started just picking out some images or text, parts of images that I liked. And I cut some of those strips that you saw in the second example. So, could even like cut your own shapes. Remember, you don't need to use a craft knife or scissors, you might just want to rip things. So really what you're trying to gather as the things that you like that you could maybe stick down and use as the background on top of your background sheet of paper, whatever it is, you're going to stack everything onto.

Helen 1:25:38

And you're happy for people just to ask you questions, anything as they go?

F 1:25:42

For sure. Yeah, I was just gonna say that. If I'm going too fast, please let me know. I'll hopefully not be going too slow, because I've got the timer set. But yeah, please feel free to ask or anything you need a wee hand or a suggestion on like fire away.

Joanne 1:26:00

Helen?

Helen 1:26:03

Yeah.

Joanne 1:26:04

I need to go and get Skye now.

Helen 1:26:06

Oh, yes, of course. Yep. So, you won't be able to make it next time, because you'll be back at work?

Joanne 1:26:12

Yeah.

Helen 1:26:14

But we'll maybe have a chat about if we can shift the time around a bit and see if we can make it work, because it's been really great having you come along.

Joanne 1:26:24

It's been good to be here. So yeah. Really enjoyed myself.

Helen 1:26:29

Okay, brill. Well, we'll hopefully see you again soon. Joanne.

Joanne 1:26:33

Yes.

Lesley 1:26:34

Bye Joanne, nice meeting you.

Anonymous 1:26:40

Bye.

F 1:26:47

Just to kind of let you know that usually when I do collages, gathering all the bits that you want to use, that kind of takes the longest I've found. So please don't feel you need to be racing through this, selecting everything out. I think really, the purpose is just that we're all kind of in a space together in doing an activity together.

[redacted]

F 1:27:27

I suppose that's kind of up to Helen, but you don't need to show it to anyone else if you don't want to. It could be something that's really personal that you just keep for yourself. I only made those examples, really just to kind of show what kind of things you could consider or make. But yeah, if you don't want to let anyone else see it, you don't need to let anyone else see it. Or if you like, Helen's made that column on the Padlet. You could take a photograph and upload a photograph of yours if you really wanted to share. I think that's like the Padlet's there for everybody.

[redacted]

Helen 1:28:12

People can chat as we're going along. Yes, that's strange thing, isn't it? If we were all in a room together, we'd be—

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:28:22

I thought about putting my poem up on the Padlet yesterday, but I also didn't want people to be able to read along with me and know when I was making a mistake, but I wondered about putting it on.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:28:36

It was.

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:28:45

Thank you. Should I pop it up later Helen, or do you want me to leave it off?

Helen 1:28:54

No, pop it on Anonymous. That'd be that'd be great.

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:28:59

Thank you.

Helen 1:29:00

If you've got any problems posting it, it should be relatively straightforward but just send me a message.

F 1:29:13

So another wee tip that I've found that can be helpful sometimes, I don't really know what I want to include on my collage or it feels like I've got a lot of stuff there. But if you just kind of randomly flip through and see what are the things that jump out at you straight away. That can be quite helpful sometimes. And definitely don't be afraid to experiment that would be one of my other tips. Collage can create really happy accidents.

Anonymous 1:29:48

I like the video that was up, something about Andy Warhol or whatever.

F 1:29:55

Yeah, did you like that Anonymous? It's really good, isn't it? So, I found that after I had already done a few different collages, but I thought that that video was a really good one to watch. But as well just to say that the Andy Warhol Museum does put up quite a lot of instructional videos like that, showing you how to do lots of different things. So that's a great wee resource. If you're managing to find things that you know, you'll be putting on your kind of top layer, once you get your background down definitely make sure to keep those in a wee pile, so you know where they are.

[redacted]

F 1:31:08

There's no right or wrong way. That's the beauty [redacted]. Just you find stuff that you like that you want to rip out that will help you make your collage about expectations. As long as you're enjoying yourself. If you think that you've started to get a wee pile of possible background papers and whatever together then try laying them out in different formations or patterns, placing them in different areas of the paper—your background paper and see what you can come up with. If you've managed to have a play around and with any of your background pieces, and you're happy with where you want to stick them, then you could go ahead and stick them. Or sometimes it's helpful just to wait until a wee bit later on in your collage. Because sometimes, depending on what you find for your top layer, you might want to change a few bits of the background. I've done both ways. It just depends, I suppose on how you want to work that day. But yeah, have a play. And if you feel comfy with where your bits of paper are looking on your backing sheet then you could go ahead and stick them down if you wanted to.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:34:19

I'm sewing, yes. I'm sewing bits of my collage on.

F 1:34:24

Awesome.

[redacted]

F 1:34:35

Beautiful Lesley.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:35:02

You used to have these cards that you would—with shoelaces, you know, and it was like, simple—like it was the start of cross stitch. I loved doing those, loved doing it. Anyway, this is what this reminds me of. They were all—you know the holes were all premade in them.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:35:27

Yes, it was—Yeah, that start of that, exactly.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:35:31

Yeah.

Helen 1:35:33

Those are still on the go, I'm sure you can still get them.

Lesley 1:35:38

Yeah, they are. I don't know if you do it at school, probably working with a needle is considered too high risk now for children. I don't know.

F 1:35:57

So, we're coming up for about 15 minutes in. And just—you're just kind of repeating the same process again, to get your top layer of the stuff you want to stick down on all these background pieces. And then once you've gathered a pile of those, play about with them, see how you want them to look. And once you feel happy, then stick everything down. Again, if anybody's got any questions, please ask. But I'm taking the quietness to mean you're all quite happy making something.

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:37:05

Last week you had said, people, it'd be good if people had the double sided tape or glue or whatever.

F 1:37:12

Yes, Anonymous I did.

Anonymous 1:37:14

I just wondered, see if anyone is having to rely on just sellotape. I wonder if they knew how to turn it back on itself so that it acts a bit like double sided tape?

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:37:28

Yes, ah ha, that's great.

Helen 1:37:29

I guess you just put it in a little kind of—

F 1:37:34

Yep.

Helen 1:37:34

That's really good, isn't it a bit of sellotape demonstration. You just kind of turn it around into like little loop. And then, it won't sit totally flat on the page because it'll have that little bit of a bounce to it, but—

F 1:37:51

I sometimes use—

Helen 1:37:53

—like double sided a bit.

F 1:37:54

Yeah, sometimes after I've made a collage, I'll flatten it with some books, even if I've used glue, because when you're layering the papers up, sometimes they don't always lie flat as well. So that can be a wee good one. As long as you've not used hundreds of glue and then your book's all stick to it. I nearly done that before. That was a good tip Anonymous, thanks for that.

[redacted]

F 1:38:38

As long as you stay with us Lesley. I did wonder why you were opening in your window bless you. So I'll set another timer and then I'll let you all know when we've got about five minutes before the end. Okay. So, you're only just 15 minutes in just now.

Lesley 1:40:29

I've also just dropped my sewing bag on the floor. Everything is at my feet. A mess.

F 1:40:39

Do you have slippers on thought to protect your feet from any needles?

Lesley 1:40:44

Ah well no.

F 1:40:50

Shout if you need plasters.

Helen 1:40:51

I know it's hard to find a spot isn't it that—you can be—with your computer to be on and then space to do anything.

Anonymous 1:40:51

Cause I used to use the sewing needles and stuff from a very early age I used to want to like do sewing in bed and stuff rather than reading and stuff. My mum terrified me by the idea that if you—if a sewing needle gets into your bloodstream, it just goes like directly to your heart. So—

Lesley 1:41:24

That's like if you swallow the pip of an apple it will grow in your stomach.

[redacted]

F 1:41:38

Yes. Oh, that looks, that looks great.

[redacted]

F 1:41:48

Yeah. Oh, that's lovely [redacted]. I love it.

[redacted]

F 1:41:55

Yeah, but that's what expectations you hold for yourself, perhaps is it?

[redacted]

F 1:42:01

You like to do your Sudoku and relax? Yeah, that sounds braw. Looks great.

[redacted]

F 1:42:13

That's okay. If you had any pencils or pens lying about you wanted to write or draw or add anything and then you can do that.

[redacted]

F 1:42:25

That's okay. If you feel like you're finished, that's okay. Looks great, I like it.

Lesley 1:42:31

I've kept my blue envelope for this very reason. I'm going to put a wee bit of that in.

F 1:42:40

Very awesome Lesley.

Lesley 1:42:43

It's such a lovely shade of blue.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:42:46

It's my favourite, favourite colour.

Dorothy 1:42:50
That's a good idea.

F 1:42:55
Yeah, definitely if there's anything like that you've got lying about or you know, you want to make a collage and include personal stuff like that in it. It's a really really awesome thing to do.

Helen 1:43:13
I'm trying to find some words to include in mind, but it's all from a kind of seed catalogue.

F 1:43:25
Maybe there's things about nurturing in there though.

Helen 1:43:29
Look at this.

F 1:43:32
Oh, wow.

[redacted]

F 1:43:39
Of the patriarchy?

Helen 1:43:40
The curse of clubroot, but—

F 1:43:52
Sometimes, like you could just maybe be finding random words out of lots of different articles and put them together in your own sentences or whatever as well. I know that there's like a style of poetry where you kind of do that just cut up words.

Anonymous 1:44:10
There's hidden poetry, which might be it?

F 1:44:13
What's that Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:44:15
Where like he goes through an article that you've already got or a piece of writing you've already got, and you use just certain words to make your own poetry. So, you can black things out or you can—or you could cut it out and stuff. But there's also something called Concrete poetry. I'm not entirely sure what that is.

F 1:44:39

I'll look that up. Thanks for that. I had seen hidden poetry before, but I didn't realise that that was what it was called. So that's awesome.

[redacted]

F 1:45:11

I could believe that of him, yeah. It's an easy way to write a song though isn't it. It must cut down on time. Efficient.

Lesley 1:45:22

Well, I don't know how many times you've got to—

F 1:45:25

Well, that's true.

Lesley 1:45:26

Throw them down and you know I don't know how much they do by random at all.

Helen 1:45:33

It's all in the craft of putting it back together again I suppose into something that not just nonsensical.

F 1:46:39

If you can't find any words that you want to use you could always write them in. If there's any like stickers or embellishments or glitter or drawing that you want to add go for it. You can make your collage as simple or as complex as you would like. And you've got about seven minutes left just know. That's it just gone into the last five minutes.

Anonymous 1:48:56

I began to wonder if my collage is going to fulfil the theme.

F 1:49:49

I'm sure it'll be fine. I suppose it's not really even about fulfilling the theme. Collage is quite a freeing activity so sometimes it can just turn into meaning something else to you. It's all okay, like I said before there's no right or wrong with this at all. Just coming up for the last couple of minutes but I just wanted to say that if anybody would like to keep working on their collage once the session is finished don't feel like you have to rush to finish it just now or work on it later once you get a chance again. So just take your time if you want to. Ready or you're kind of—almost able to kind of step back and admire your work so far. That's us just in the last 10 seconds.

Lesley 1:54:06

I've used all the bits, or I've used Helen the bits and bobs that you sent us. Thank you very much. They were very useful.

F 1:54:16

So awesome. Hope that you all managed to get something together that you're happy enough with or that is at least giving you a basis to sit with this a bit longer when you get another chance. Or even make another one. Yeah.

Helen 1:54:34

Other links to other artists who use collage, because I guess there's quite a lot of kind of interesting female, feminist artists that use collage. I suppose it's quite a kind of—there was chat about kind of concrete poetry and putting together things from the media and I suppose like there's a few kind of—

F 1:54:57

Oh year, I forgot about Linder I should have posted something to the Padlet. Yeah, collage is actually something that's been used a lot, I think in art history, or just in societies history. It's, I think gets used as a form of protest a lot as well. But I hope that you all managed okay or felt okay during that. And that you maybe enjoyed a part of it. And if there's anything that you found tricky, then please let us know. But I'll pass back to Helen, because I know that we're close to time.

Helen 1:55:36

Were people wanting to share anything that they've done? Pauline's holding here up, that looks lovely. And Anonymous. Oh, these would be great if people were happy to take pictures of them and put them on the Padlet. It posts everything anonymously if people are feeling self-conscious, or you can attribute—

[redacted]

Dorothy 1:56:07

Sorry, mine is also on my phone because I've made a wee Haiku poem and I haven't, haven't stuck it on. I've not done the edit yet. Oh, see, it keeps turning around. I'm rubbish at the edit on the picture. But it's a wee haiku poem, and I think it stands out more because I've put lots of coloured pictures on. If I put my letters on it, you won't see them so—

F 1:56:35

That looks lovely. Dorothy.

Dorothy 1:56:37

I really enjoyed doing it to be honest.

F 1:56:40

Oh, that's so good to hear. I'm glad really glad.

Dorothy 1:56:45

I must admit I searched through a couple of—I cut out my stuff last night and yeah, it took me ages but I enjoyed it. You know.

F 1:56:57

It does take ages that part doesn't it? I wasn't kidding on. So yeah, don't be disheartened if you go to try again and you feel like you're just cutting stuff out for a while. That is actually how it starts. And it is a bit labour intensive, so ripping can be quite good that way but I'm really glad to hear you enjoyed it. Lovely work Dorothy.

Dorothy 1:57:18

Thank you.

Anonymous 1:57:18

Cutting in itself can be quite sort of meditative or calming? Or whatever.

[redacted]

Helen 1:57:33

Oh right, therapeutic?

[redacted]

F 1:57:40

Yeah, really therapeutic. I think that's why I make art Anonymous.

Helen 1:57:46

I know it's nice to kind of do some tasks with your hands that kind of take you into different space.

Dorothy 1:57:53

It is.

Helen 1:57:56

We haven't set a theme for next time, do—I don't know whether we just kind of—people could post suggestions on the on the web page or send me suggestions or if anybody has a real kind of strong feeling about anything?

Lesley 1:58:29

What about focusing in on some of the themes that came out of this session when we had the summing up?

Helen 1:58:38

Yep. So, there was a lot of kind of people talking about confidence, and gender. I suppose in the kind of typical consciousness-raising packet things they kind of suggest that maybe you—people talk about childhood experiences as a way to kind of understand where people's experiences formed. I don't know if I want to kind of go in that looking back at kind of specific experiences in people's lives or—

Joy 1:59:37

What about talking about experiences of school and education would that—is that something that maybe we all have in common? I don't know. Everybody was—has some kind of—

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:59:55

I can't be positive about school. It's not possible for me to be positive about school.

[redacted]

Helen 2:00:05

You don't need to be positive. I suppose it could be reflecting on just on the experience and looking back at it, how it might have formed certain things in people's lives. Shall we go with that then? School and education.

[redacted]

Helen 2:00:40

Yeah. Okay, well that says coming up to five o'clock. So, thanks so much F for leading us through that was really nice like—it doesn't feel like I've been doing enough creative things. So, it was nice to be cutting and sticking and making funny little combinations of things.

F 2:01:10

Awesome. Yeah. Can I see yours, Helen? Oh, I love your paper. Oh, oh, yeah, that's so good.

Helen 2:01:21

I've stolen somebody else's drawing of a crying face.

F 2:01:26

I was gonna ask if you had drawn that yourself (laughter). It's awesome. No, no, that's what I mean. Like, you can really just find whatever you want to put on it or draw stuff or make—that like stick, stitch everything. Yeah, it's a really fun format to work in. So, I'm glad that you've enjoyed it. And I hope everyone else did, too. Thanks, everybody, for taking part.

[redacted]

Helen 2:01:58

So F if you've done it—

F 2:02:04

Yep. So, what I did was I had to take a photo on my phone so that I had the photo in my phone already. And then I went online and went into my email, the one that Helen had sent, and it's got the link to the Padlet. If you click on that, it'll take you to the Padlet.

[redacted]

F 2:02:23

And then if you go into the bit that says, "creative activities", there's a column that says "creative activities", and then there'll be like, a wee plus sign underneath the bit that says "creative activities". So, I think if you click on that, and then there should be like a wee arrow pointing up the way. That's the upload. So, if you hit that, then it will ask you where do you want to upload your picture from?

[redacted]

F 2:02:54

And you just select it from where it is inside your phone [redacted].

[redacted]

F 2:02:59

And then I think it will—you will press Send or Okay, or whatever, and it should upload it.

[redacted]

F 2:03:05

Okay. I can write out and send it to Helen for you if you need?

[redacted]

F 2:03:31

No.

[redacted]

F 2:03:35

Yeah, a big secret. I'll maybe tell you one day [redacted].

[redacted]

Anonymous 2:03:49

So, see, is it just posted as soon as it's sitting there or do you have to like send or something? Because I think I put my poem up. I don't know if it's actually—

Helen 2:04:00

Which column did you put it in Anonymous?

Anonymous 2:04:03

Sessions and conversations, I think?

Helen 2:04:06

Oh, yeah, it's there, it's there.

Anonymous 2:04:07

All right.

Helen 2:04:08

I can see it.

Anonymous 2:04:10

Good. Thank you.

Helen 2:04:11

Okay, great.

F 2:04:14

Oh, yeah. Awesome.

[redacted]

Anonymous 2:04:26

Bye.

Helen 2:04:27

See you Anonymous.

Lesley 2:04:30

Okay, I need to go bye, everyone. See you in two weeks.

F 2:04:43

Okay, thanks for that Helen. Yeah, I'm gonna leave. Oh, wait is it just the three of us?

Helen 2:04:50

Thanks so much.

Sarah 2:04:54

That was really good.

F 2:04:56

I'll speak to you soon. Nice to see you again, Sarah.

Sarah 2:04:59

Yeah, nice to see you as well.

F 2:05:01

Okay, I'll speak to you soon take care both of you, bye.

Sarah 2:05:05

Bye Helen, thank you for today.

Helen 2:05:08
See you.

APPENDIX 10.4: SESSION FOUR

Tuesday 23 March 2021 • 2:06:17

SPEAKERS

[redacted], Anonymous, Pauline, Joanne, Helen, Sarah, Dorothy, Lesley

Lesley 03:35

Hello, Helen.

Helen 03:36

Hi. How are you doing?

Lesley 03:38

Fine, thank you. How are you?

Helen 03:40

Yes. All right. Tell us a little bit wild and windy here. Hi Pauline.

Pauline 03:46

I everyone.

Lesley 03:47

Hello everyone.

Helen 03:52

People in. I've had a couple of messages from people who, last minute can't make it. Joy's internet's just gone down. She's not sure why.

Lesley 04:04

Oh dear.

Joanne 04:06

Hi.

Helen 04:07

Hiya, nice to see you. So, if you've got the day off today, Joanne? Or—

Joanne 04:15

Yeah, the way it's working, I'm on one week. One week on, one week off, so the way it's worked out I've managed to have my week off this week.

Helen 04:23

Ah, okay. Okay, that's good. So, will you—

Joanne 04:28

So, this may or may not be my last time here.

Helen 04:33

If we could get the two things to sync up like working the other week—

Joanne 04:38

It's just weird how it's all worked out up. How's it all worked out.

Helen 04:45

Oh, let me turn my emails off.

Sarah 04:49

Hi.

Helen 04:50

Hiya.

Lesley 04:51

Hi.

Helen 04:54

Yes. All right. Thanks. How are you?

Sarah 04:56

Yeah, good. Thank you. Thanks very much for sending the materials.

Helen 05:00

Oh no worries.

Joanne 05:01

Oh yeah, I've got mine today actually.

Helen 05:04

Oh, that's good. Yeah, it's quite hard to buy things at the moment and—There aren't many things that you can actually go and buy in face to face and then send out in time, so I was made it to WHSmiths in town.

Sarah 05:26

Thank you so much for making the effort. It's really kind.

Helen 05:29

Oh no worries. It's nice to send something out to you all.

Lesley 05:34

Have we all got the same colour Helen or did you just randomly pick two colours for every—

Helen 05:42

Yeah, I just bought a pack—a selection pack and then trying to give people a light and a dark one. So, they weren't—

Lesley 05:50

The two—You gave me, powder blue and sunshine yellow. And those are the two colours I love working with (laughter).

Dorothy 06:00

I've got blue and red.

Helen 06:04

I know I was trying to like, 'oh, don't think too much. Oh, maybe Lesley will like yellow' (laughter). So I guess yeah, we're waiting on a few more people. There's a couple of people—Joy's having trouble with her internet. She just texted to say, and F has got a migraine today, so she's not going to be able to join us. It's not really great for being on Zoom.

Lesley 06:33

Well give her our best wishes. And I hope it doesn't last too long.

Helen 06:37

Yeah, yeah. All right.

Pauline 06:39

A very unpleasant things.

Helen 06:41

Definitely. I've only had them a few times, but not nice at all. So, who are we waiting on? Dorothy—Oh Dorothy and Anonymous are usually in a meeting until three, so I'll just give them a bit of time. I guess we could just go out go around and do like a little informal check in while we're waiting for people to turn up. I don't know that the quiet space on Zoom is hard to know if it's just a nice space to relax. Hi Anonymous.

Anonymous 07:25

Wait, Joanne were we expect—I'm glad to see Joanne. Were you expecting not to make it this week?

Joanne 07:33

Yeah, the way it's worked out, I've managed to get myself a week off this week.

Anonymous 07:37

Nice one.

Joanne 07:38

Yeah. This may or might not be my last time here yet.

Anonymous 07:46

I'm getting worried from the 26th of April, I may have trouble getting here as well.

Helen 07:51

Right. Is that when the library's reopening again?

Anonymous 07:54

Well, no, I think it might be after that. But that's when I can get back to work because my husband's stopped shielding. So, because its—it's bad because although—

[redacted]

Helen 08:09

Hi.

[redacted]

Helen 08:11

Yes, good. Thanks, nice to see you.

[redacted]

Helen 08:22

I know everyone's pleased to see you Joanne, aren't they (laughter).

Joanne 08:28

So, I've managed to win myself a week off.

[redacted]

Joanne 08:34

No, it's just needs washed, that's why—

[redacted]

Helen 08:41

Yeah, my home haircut's only really suitable for Zoom (laughter). It's in reality, it's a bit wonky.

[redacted]

Helen 09:04

Uh, huh. Is that you, Dorothy? In the disguise of Donna. Donna is one of the other women's library—

Dorothy 09:17

I do apologise. I'll need to come out and go back and again, I've not come off of Donna's account. I'm sorry, I'm late. I've just finished Conversation Cafe I'll see you in a minute.

Helen 09:26
Okay. No worries.

Dorothy 09:27
Oh right. Okay, two minutes.

Lesley 09:32
Sorry, Helen, how many more sessions after this are there?

Helen 09:36
So we'd kind of like blocked in one more.

Lesley 09:40
That's what I thought.

Helen 09:41
First five, but then I'm keen for us to continue but that all kind of offers a little moment for reflection and kind of—

Lesley 09:50
Right.

Helen 09:51
Make a plan for going forward. So, I think next time we'll just kind of do a bit of a kind of reflective time together and see what people are feeling like, Yeah, because Anonymous was in the middle of telling us, that come, you know, like as restrictions are changing people's commitments and things—that they are needing to do, maybe shifting.

Anonymous 10:15
Because, although only like maybe I do two or three hours of work at the library every day. Daftly I live— Well, if I had a car, and if I drove, it would take half an hour or something to get the library, but I use the bus so it could take up to an hour to get there and back. So that's why I'm worried about whether I would be home in time to take part in this.

[redacted]

Anonymous 10:48
Perhaps early May, I'm not sure. I think probably they're going to talk about that tomorrow morning.

[redacted]

Helen 10:58
I know where did all that—it's been high winds suddenly in Glasgow—

[redacted]

Helen 11:09

Okie dokie. So, I think [redacted] might be joining us, hopefully. F has got a migraine, so she's not going to join us. Joy's Internet has gone down. And M unfortunately, is not able to continue coming due to her kind of ongoing health problems, it's just not working out meeting at this time. So—

Lesley 11:32

Aw.

Helen 11:33

Which is a shame, but she wishes us all well. Hopefully, our paths will cross again.

[redacted]

Helen 11:41

And so, we were—I will post a little plan in the chat. What we're doing today. Next, yeah—And thanks to everyone who's been posting things on the Padlet page. That's been—seems like quite a kind of source of conversation and sharing things. There's some really nice things up there. I'll just post a link in the chat as well. Oh, if I put that—did what I post come up?

Lesley 12:30

No.

Helen 12:31

Right. Okay. I've posted it to everyone in the waiting room, which (laughter)—it's so complicated—well it's not that complicated, but it's easy to get tripped up a little bit, isn't it in Zoom?

Lesley 12:47

I think you do incredibly well, Helen (laughs).

Helen 12:53

Thanks. Right. Has that appeared now?

Dorothy 12:57

Yeah.

Helen 12:58

Okay, and then—the Padlet link. Yes, so people have been posting on the Padlet some of the collages and things and as well, like some really nice comments about just a bit of discussion around the way I've kind of working methods are evolving. And it seems there was a kind of consensus that just taking it in turns when we go around in the kind of sharing circle worked well. And that sticking to not posting in the chat while we were doing that kind of gave everyone the kind of space and due attention that felt good to everyone. The summing up, we're going to try a new method this week, somebody suggested a kind of word cloud software, which I haven't tried yet. So, you're going to be the experimental

group. Hopefully, that'll work quite nicely, but we will we're in the laps of the technology to see if it actually comes together. What else are we doing? So yeah, just to remind you all the group agreements on the Padlet. So that's always there if you want to check in with that. I've also posted some more events on the Padlet page as well. There's a few things at the Women's Library this week, specifically that I thought people in the group might be interested in. There's like a creative writing group and an in conversation and an exhibition tour, that all sounded interesting to me. So, the details of those are up there. And I also posted some links to a few collage artists that people might like to check out. And yeah, you're always welcome to post comments and things. It's nice to hear what people can think of stuff and a bit of reflection. So that's there as well. I sent you out materials and it sounds like everybody got those. Is that right? Yep, great. Anonymous did yours arrive? I'm not sure if she's there. Anyway, we can have a check in, we're not going to do the creative activity until after the tea break. So, it'll be a chance to collect some materials together if those haven't arrived in the post. Right, so—time races on, doesn't it? Like Should we do a quick How's everyone doing? I suppose we're less numbers this week. So, we should get around our little circles a little bit quicker. So, we can just do a kind of informal like, start with one person and pass along? Like, how are people doing. Yeah, yeah, because in fact, I hadn't realised today's the anniversary, isn't it, of the start of lockdown, [unintelligible]. Actually, had more of an effect on me than I thought it would, kind of felt quite emotional in a way. So much has changed and so much to be reflected on and trying to think of taking the positive things from this experience and weaving those into our lives going forward. But I guess we're still in the thick of it aren't we. So, it's hard to look forward; be too insightful. But Pauline, how are you doing?

Pauline 16:45

Thanks, Helen. Yeah, I suppose in some ways, I've had an event for a couple of weeks, I got my vaccine, which was great. Got the first dose on Thursday last week. We had a sad family then yesterday, in that my son and son in law's dog had to be put to sleep. And that was really quite a sad thing for all of us, because all of us in the family have got dogs. So, he had quite a traumatic few days, the poor dog in the vet hospital. So, that was really quite an upset, because he was an ex racing greyhound. So, he was a really big dog. And the boys had had him for six years. So that was really sad. But tempered with that my daughter, who doesn't live in Glasgow, she had to come down for dental treatments, or she and my granddaughter came down. In fact, I've only waved them off at half past two this afternoon. So, I've had a few busy days with them, which has been lovely. But again, that was tempered with, the fact that technically they really shouldn't have been in my house. My daughter came down a couple of days sooner than the appointment. She's over 100 miles away so she couldn't have come up and down in the one day with the wee the one but even the things that give you pleasure sometimes our tempered thoughts of that really isn't the right thing to do. So, for me, I've had a mixed a couple of weeks since we met, but it's been busy, and it feels not like a fortnight since we met. It's going so quickly. So, shall I just pass on to Lesley because you're next in line on this screen to me lately.

Lesley 18:45

I suppose my week's been—it's been a wee bit like, Pauline, it's been a very reflective time for me. We sadly had a funeral of a very old family friend. He had a very good life. Anyway, it was it was the end of it was the end of an era. And then I did a vigil to mark 10 years of a

civil war in Syria. And I just can't believe that that has been going on for so long. I have contact with some of the Syrians who live in my hometown who came here under the government refugee scheme and they just can't believe it's 10 years that this has been going on. And then tonight obviously there'll be a vigil for a candlelight vigil for—a year to mark COVID. So, it's kind of been a it's been a time of reflection and then there was supposed to be a reclaim the night vigil on Saturday here and which had to be cancelled because of very, very negative feedback through Facebook and other social media channels, which was very distressing. So that's been my last 10 days. So, I'll pass to Dorothy

Dorothy 20:20

Thank you, Lesley. Yes. Like, everybody that's mentioned, previously, it has been—I found myself with tears in my eyes today, when I was reading online, on a news website about the anniversary. I didn't think of the 23rd as an anniversary for because, for us, the library closed on March the 18th. So that was kind of our anniversary, if you like, but, yeah—And then, as on the website some of the significant moments in the next few weeks where were, documented, and it just made me cry, you know, about the things that are hopefully going to happen, and yeah, it caught me by surprise. Yeah. I've had a very busy fortnight, workwise. Out of work as well, I've had a lot of extras, a lot of extra Zoom meetings for the volunteering that I do, on online with our Community Church and like you Pauline, you know, there's been times when we've had family events where I've thought, we shouldn't really be doing this, but it's been out of necessity. And it's just mixed blessings, isn't it it's, it's yeah—It's just difficult at times to to sum it all up, but yeah. Mostly good. pass on to Joanne.

Joanne 22:35

I know you're going to like last few weeks have been okay. Except from last week, I kept taking panic attack due to being back at work, but nothing other to really report apart from that. It's been a long year. That's what I can say. [redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 24:15

Sarah had to deal with something urgently had to come up with it maybe to do with work, so she's had to say bye. So, we're, we're just a small number this week. [redacted] I think it's gonna rain tomorrow. So, you might be saved from your painting.

[redacted]

Helen 25:01

Okay, well, thanks everyone for that little check in sounds like there's quite a few things going on for people like—I feel—Yeah, yeah, I think, in fact I don't know where Anonymous' gone. She hasn't texted me.

Dorothy 25:20

Anonymous sent me a message. Sorry, her internet's down, sorry.

Helen 25:25

Oh, right.

Dorothy 25:27

I saw the message coming up when I was talking. And she thinks her phone lines down too. So—

Helen 25:36

What a funny—Yeah, I feel like we had snow the first time. And then the second time was it maybe really nice weather or something? And now it's kind of windy, wonder when that's affecting people's—

Dorothy 25:49

I know she lives high up, doesn't she and that might be affecting her internet. So, I'll text her back. Excuse me.

Helen 25:59

Okay. Well, I guess we'll do a little smaller circle. This week, we were going to talk about education and school. I just wanted to maybe say that I know, somebody had posted on the Padlet, a wee collage, scrapbook thing that they've done, kind of, saying that school hadn't been a great time for them. And I know I think that's shared with a few people so that—like a certain anxiety about revisiting something that was maybe not the best experience for people, but we can have a go and see what people think. And we're all here listening with kind of kindness and a lack of judgement—not a lack of judgement but with no judgement. So, I'm going to put everyone's name in the chat in a kind of random order that I used a random order generating thing online, I didn't have my little bits of paper in a bowl this week I found something more high tech. I'll just take a few names out because obviously—oops—Not everybody is here. Okay that's it edited. So, Joanne if you're happy to go first.

Joanne 27:42

I'm Joanne [unintelligible] I had a good school, slash bad kinda experience at school. In primary one to primary three, I loved it, loved going to school. Then from—see in primary four my gran passed away and I was really close to my gran.

[redacted]

Joanne 28:14

So ever since then, I just don't like school, don't want to—I got bullied quite a lot from a young age and that bad I actually got followed home one time while getting bullied and didn't go to school for a few weeks because of it. But when that happened school actually finally done something about it. When I went to high school, I couldn't do most of the classes and it wasn't I wasn't until third year that they realised they had—I wasn't—I was misbehaving, but they finally figured out why is because they found out—when I was in third year had—I got diagnosed with dyslexia. So that was a struggle. But once they found out that I had that school kind of got a wee bit better. So, lessons were easier. Not harder. I could understand it a wee bit better and then obviously leaving school, I kinda couldn't keep up with the work that was pretty much got taught so yeah. Dorothy.

Dorothy 29:47

Thanks, Joanne. Sorry, I'll put my other earphone in. So, I was fine, until I got to secondary school and I don't have any issues with learning except I didn't work hard enough, and I was quite rebellious and made a mess of a few exams and then left school at 17 did a HNC at college and got a relatively well-paid job in a computer department. But it was a really boring shift job. And I always had this burning desire to, to go to university. So, it took me until I was—I'd had three children and eventually I went back to college and did my English and maths. I thought I was going to be a teacher. And then did some social science and then did a post grad in education so I felt it took me a long time to get there and after my rebelliousness as a teenager. I think—wasn't a happy time being a teenager but just very immature and it took me probably to the age of 40 before I grew up (laughs) got the in the end but—yeah I think I was—just admired people who knew exactly what they wanted to be and do and it took me so long and even then, when I was in that process of being at university I still hadn't chosen things as wisely as I should have done but I think my choice of career eventually was the right one to support people and instead of going A to Z, I went AAAAAA to Z if you like, so that's me. Pass on to [redacted]

[redacted]

Helen 34:41

Oh, pass it on to Pauline.

[redacted]

Pauline 34:43

That's okay, thanks [redacted]. And so, I—in terms of primary school, I don't remember anything that made me feel too upset about it other than one fight I had with a particularly naughty boy (laughs). But I actually went to a girl's secondary school because I was considered to be quite bright. So, I had to sit an exam to go to Glasgow High School for girls.

[redacted]

Pauline 35:16

And it was quite a big thing, because I lived in the east end of Glasgow in a scheme. So very working-class parents, my dad worked really hard, but we didn't have a lot of extra money. And I remember at the time feeling quite conflicted about being offered a place at the school because I knew that it would mean that my mum and dad had certain financial obligations, even though it was a fee-paying school, they weren't paying the fees, it was an assisted places scheme, and through the then Conservative government. But in terms even of uniform, I had a massive kit of uniform that extended to hat, which I never used to wear standing at the bus stop going to school in the morning, it came out my bag when I got off the second bus that I had to get. So, because I had to get two buses there and back. And because pennies were always been counted, I used to have to get off the bus or stop before my house, because it was cheaper to that bus stop. So, I would get there and then walk down the road home. And it came with quite a bit of pressure, I would say because I was really conscious that my mum and dad were actually really thrilled and delighted and quite

proud that I was going there. But actually, I thought, you know, at times, I wasn't good enough to be there. So, I did feel the pressure of achieving. But the other thing is, unlike Dorothy, I knew what I wanted to do from quite a young age, and I had always wanted to be a nurse. So, when I left school in 1974, you needed some O-levels, you don't need Highers to become a nurse. So, I was probably one of the first people from that school, Glasgow High School for Girls, who left without having any highers. Because I was very determined that I wanted to take up a nursing place. And I went for the interview for nursing, and I was given a conditional place based on me getting the O-level results that I needed, and Joanne, O-levels, of course, are way way before your time. You know from, what people come out of school with now. But I remember having an interview with the headmistress of the school who was trying to talk me out of leaving. And she said, 'will you promise me that you will at least go on and do some highers?' And I did say to her 'well I will try. And the truth is that I never did go in and do any highers. But what I didn't know at the time was that I was entering that occupation stroke profession, where continuous professional development was very much part of what was expected of you. So, I went to university, I went to do teacher training, I ended up teaching at a university. So, I think the expectations of me coming out of that school probably were met. But it was a bit of a strange experience because I had to then make a lot of new friends when I went to this all-girls school. And then that did cause a little bit of change of dyn—dynamics amongst the friends that I had. Because it was a bit different to most people going to be usual, comprehensive up the road. But really, I think I was quite fortunate to be able to do that. Although it probably wasn't the easiest thing for me. But I was really grateful to my mum and dad for giving me that opportunity. Because I always remember going with my mum to get the school uniform. And it was a really expensive lot of stuff that she had to buy. So, school for me was never something that I really love, it was almost a means to an end. Because I saw that as something that I needed to do before I could go into what would be the rest of my life, which was being a nurse. And that then put me on a journey, which I could never have imagined would have been so diverse. And which would have brought me into contact with so many people who totally inspired me. And I don't just mean colleagues, but I mean the families that I worked with, and the patients that I looked after so I find—I feel that I'm very fortunate, now as a retired person. But I can look back and think I've been really, really fortunate in my career, to have had great opportunities, but also to have had so much out of it. So, I suppose that's what I would want to say about my school and my education that went on, and on, and on. So now over to Lesley.

Lesley 40:33

Thanks Pauline. Primary School was lovely, happy, I can almost name everybody who was in my primary school class. For seven years you were together, and you just went through so many things. And then going into secondary school was a complete, culture shock. You were just in this mass of people rushing about and you didn't know people, and it was very disorientating, and I kept losing my timetable and turning up for classes late in the wrong place. And it wasn't really till about maybe fourth year, I kind of found my feet, and I guess probably find my confidence. And it started to calm down for me. But the high school I was at had very high expectations. It had previously been traditionally it had been a private school, which had then gone on to become a high school. And then the teaching staff at that time just couldn't leave behind their past, or what, what the history of the school has been. And unless you were going to university, or we're going to do teacher training, they really

didn't know how to direct you or what—where you should go. And I was very good at languages, but I wasn't good enough to go to university to study it. So, I took a—I decided to take an option of doing secretarial studies with languages. And this was just an anathema to them. So, in my sixth year I just did my own thing really and then left and never really thought about secondary school again. Although I met my two best friends, I'm still very, very close to, at secondary school. But other than that, there's no other link. And when I went to college—when I went to the open day to do the secretarial studies, the head of the—I guess the business studies unit said, 'no, no, no, you shouldn't be doing secretarial you should be doing—You should be there think business studies'. So, I let him persuade me to do that. And I did a year and absolutely hated it. Couldn't stand it. And so again, by my own right—by my own resources, I found a new course that started at Glasgow tech in communication studies and applied for that and got in. And I absolutely found my niche. And I had two fantastic years doing my HND there. And then the rest of my career has been in public relations and communications. And the course that I did at Glasgow tech has, every day I have to say of my—I mean I say this a lot of people, every day of my working life I was using the knowledge and skills that I learned on that course and I just I stayed in that area and was very happy and did various jobs up and down—you know, work with different organisations up and down the country. So—and I liked—during my professional career, I liked to mentor others who are thinking about a career in communications or public relations and to talk them through what I did and give them confidence to do it and guidance to keep going. So, that's me. Helen I'll pass on to you.

Helen 45:06

I don't know if that was—oh it is Anonymous. Just let me let Anonymous in. I think that was maybe her trying to join us a moment ago. Hi, Anonymous.

Anonymous 45:24

Hi, sorry, I've had a bit of an issue. We thought that I thought the internet was going to be down for ages. And then I resorted to my phone, which is not my favourite. And then I was able to get back in.

Helen 45:38

Oh, that's good. That's good. Yeah.

Anonymous 45:41

Sorry everyone.

Helen 45:41

No, no worries, Dorothy let us know because you'd messaged her. We were just doing our kind of round a circle talking about school and education. And we'd nearly got to the end of our list. There was just me to go and then Anonymous do you want to go after me? Does that feel okay?

Anonymous 46:00

Yeah, that's fine. Thank you.

Helen 46:02

Okay. I had a very good school experience. Kind of looking back on it—I mean, I like in a kind of reflective way like, I think it does show the kind of my personal level of privilege and I came from a very middle-class family, I went to a good private school, and it was an all-girls school, so I didn't have to kind of compete on terms of gender and things. I have got a sister who's two years older than me, and I saw her struggling a lot more than me. And she was kind of marked as being disruptive or depending on the kind of nature of teachers disinterested, stupid. And I think she has undiagnosed dyslexia, she's very creative person, but I just kind of see how badly the model fits for a lot of people. Like, personally, like, I had a good experience, because I kind of thrived in that environment. I was, you know, I was bright enough, I wasn't kind of outstanding, but I kind of got on well enough. And then because of my family background, I was supported to go on to college and to university, which, you know, like—I just kind of see the inequalities in our society, like had I—had I been a different person, like, would all those things be open to me, you know, I've done a degree, I've done an undergraduate degree, I've done a master's degree and now I'm doing a PhD. That's not to say that I've not worked hard to get to those places, but I think it's, it's upsetting really, to kind of think that there are so many people who can do certain things, but don't necessarily have that opportunity, especially as well, you know, like a fine art degree, I mean, goodness, like, there's not that much employability, it's notoriously precarious environment to be in, like, how many working-class kids are coming through those kind of channels these days. So, these things whilst I haven't personally experienced, they put the fire in my belly to try and like to use my training to—I suppose give something back, you know, do something positive, like discursive try and kind of rail against the system in my own kind of slightly polite, slightly middle-class kind of way. But that's my reflection. So, I pass to you Anonymous.

Anonymous 49:02

Hi, because I don't know what else anyone else to say they feel a bit weird. Anyway, I'm—

Helen 49:09

Just I'm sorry, I didn't want to but in but just to say I know that other people in the group had not who've necessarily spoken but message me saying there was certain anxiety, it brought up a lot of kind of difficult experiences for people. So just to recognise as real kind of breadth of experience that people have had in school and education.

Anonymous 49:31

So thankfully, actually, there was two reasons for me to write about school recently. One was more creative than another. Someone asked me to tell them by email about my experiences at school, kind of from a dyslexia point of view as well. So, I'll tell you about that. Frankly, I don't remember much about primary school anymore, primary was just hard. Nothing was any harder than anything else. It was a nightmare. My big sister, well my youngest sister was five years older than me. So, she was still in primary when I was in primary. And then there was an incident where apparently, a teacher took my apple from me, from packed lunch. As far as we know, I wasn't like trying to eat in class or anything. But at the lunchtime I think it was, I ran to Christine, my big sister. And then apparently, we—the teachers got together and figured out there was a problem. They got me told not to tell my mum and mum dad, about it. But Christine wasn't told. She went to home and told mum. Anyway, I was also called dosey Anonymous so, by my classmates and all that,

probably because it was so clear from very early in primary school, I wasn't learning the same way or as quickly as everyone else. The unfortunate thing is that this, I think, through Christine as well, was apparently started by the blooming well bus driver. Apparently, it was because looking so sleepy in the morning, he was the one who first started called me dosey Anonymous, and then the other kids got ideas. Also, I'm very—was so so much more in primary school, uncoordinated, so I was rubbish at games and stuff. Right, especially in the playgrounds and stuff. So, I was picked last for games. Things got better in high school because things weren't just about alphabetical order. Doing things in the right order, reading spelling, it was more some stuff that I could—my intelligence could shine through more on and thinking about it I think perhaps the bullies didn't know whether to call me in a swot or a retard. And at some points, but had more problems—Well, I don't know, I remember more instances of bullying by teachers. Like in first year, between primary seven and first year, I had one of those plate braces, which meant I had to go to the dentist a lot of times. And because it was like every fortnight or something, and the dentist was in Renfrew, where my high school was, and my mum was without a car, in Erskine, she told me to make appointments in the break before PE and then I would be the only person who would bring my kit anyway, and then look to take part because I was supposed to, and the teacher lost it one day with me about why it was always late and everything and I ended up in tears. And you've heard about the time the art teacher made me cry in third year. And unfortunately, and third year I don't know if it was before or after the art incident. There was a terrible past retirement age maths supply teacher and he used to let the the—in the people in the class get away with murder, or practically hanging from or swinging from the rafters. But he'd obviously been in trouble one day and came in and laid down the law and nobody was allowed to do anything. No even asked questions where help to—if they couldn't do things. So I got a green sheet and of course—well that's a you know, lines and they made people wait till the end of the lesson. And then while I was waiting in line while he was filling out whatever line he thought was appropriate for each person—the class, banged their desks, shouted for me to cry. Stomped their feet. He did absolutely nothing. I tried for I don't know how long it felt like an eternity not to cry but ended up in tears. And he still didn't realise what the problem was. He would have to not only be blind and deaf he would have had to have no feeling not to have heard the blooming class. Anyway, I will shut up now.

Helen 54:27

Thanks, everyone. That's a real kind of range of experiences that people have had over their lives. As I say, I think we're going to try doing a different methods for summing up but I think maybe what we'll do as well is just take a bit of time and we'll do the creative activity first and just allow some of those things to sink in a little or just have a moment or two to reflect on them. So, we're going to do this kind of mark making that mentioned which somebody emailed me and said, 'Oh, how exciting. I have no idea what mark making is' (laughs). I forget that these are maybe art school terminologies for just kind of like doodling and making shapes and patterns and things. So, has— Anonymous, did you get the pack that I sent you in the post?

Anonymous 55:28

Yes, thanks.

Helen 55:29

You did? Okay, great. So, everybody has received something. So yeah—if we have a break now until four o'clock, and then we're going to come back and do kind of half an hour together, in the same way that its kind of collaging like a bit of time to just do an activity and chat a bit. And then we're going to use this word cloud software to sum up. So, if we just think of like, between three and five, kind of words, that kind of come to mind from all the kind of discussions about education and school, and then we'll feed those in and see how it looks all together. If the technology works.

Anonymous 56:13

Helen?

Helen 56:13

Yes.

Anonymous 56:14

Do we need to do anything with the tea bags for the mark making?

Helen 56:17

No, that was I should have said I didn't have time to write little notes with them that was just to make yourself a wee cuppa and enjoy together. So maybe we can use the next few minutes and we're just gonna break till they seven minutes till four people can make themselves a cup of tea if they would like and then we'll—I'll kind of talk you through what we're going to do together. Okay. You need to go a little bit early Joanne to get Skye? No, no?

Joanne 1:03:04

No, not today. No.

Dorothy 1:03:08

I've had my headphones on I do apologise if you're talking to me sorry.

Helen 1:03:14

That's alright yet I was just asking Joanne if she had to go early at all, but she said not

Dorothy 1:03:26

I seem to swing from using headphones to not using headphones.

Helen 1:03:31

I've got some wireless ones—when I'm just like listening to things have those on and then I forget that they're on and I start a meeting but I don't like to have them on because then I hear my voice reverberating in my ears but then I'm like 'why can I not hear anyone?' and I'd left them on the dining room table last night and the kids were having their tea and they could hear my meeting coming out of them (laughter).

Joanne 1:03:54

No

Helen 1:03:59

They thought it was very funny.

Dorothy 1:04:03

Oh dear.

Joanne 1:04:04

My mum's getting Skye today so—

Helen 1:04:07

Oh, that's good.

Joanne 1:04:08

Have to give her a should at half past four if she's fell asleep. she's been awful a Nana's girl last week.

Dorothy 1:04:20

Has she.

Joanne 1:04:21

Last week it was she wanted me because I was back work but now somehow its—I want Nana.

Dorothy 1:04:27

Well that's sometimes a good thing when you're not in demand.

Helen 1:04:36

Oh what's that Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:04:36

Should I sharpen this pencil that you sent?

Helen 1:04:41

I know. I wanted to say—I was saying to people I had trouble getting hold of materials just because this— not you know the normal art shops that I would go to are closed so I got these from the from the print workshop in the art school which is I actually went into on Monday. I sharpened the wrong end of it earlier, there's one end that doesn't have any lead in it. And I was sharpening for ages. I don't know if you can really see, and just nothing was coming out of it. So, if you sharpen it, sharpen the end that you can see the lead in.

Anonymous 1:05:23

This end rather than this end?

Helen 1:05:24

Yeah, yeah, yeah, there's nothing in for a good few centimetres at that end. Again, I was sharpening it in the kid's bedroom. And they thought it was very, very funny that was sharpening something that wasn't working. So yeah, we'll see how suitable that is. I just

wanted to send you something that was a bit of rougher than a pencil. But this is actually quite a specific printmaking pen, for lithographs, so apparently, you can draw around all kinds of material with it, which I don't know could be interesting, you can draw on metal and glass and things. So, we're just going to do some kind of relaxing, mark making drawing together with the idea—This feels like quite a big plan for a via Zoom, that we're going to make a one-page zine together, or kind of like little booklet, next time, and that we're going to collect together material from everyone. And I will print that, or get that printed, in the two weeks between now and when we meet next. So just to explain, it's going to be an A3 thing. So, I'm going to get riso printed, which is a kind of mechanised kind of printing method, which in fact, the little book that I sent you, that is riso printed, so it's kind of—it separates colours out into different layers, and then you print one colour at a time. So, it just didn't really straightforward, you kind of cut this, and then let me try and—that was seamless, wasn't it, it makes us like a little booklet. That's what we're going to kind of work on collecting some content together.

Anonymous 1:07:25

That see the wee book, and a lot of the writing is very hard to read, actually makes my head sore.

Helen 1:07:33

Definitely, I got carried away with the fluorescent orange ink, which if I were to print it again, I wouldn't print a lot of the text in it, Anonymous' right, indiscernible to read I know some of the women I've worked with on this project are older women and they're just like—it was almost invisible to them. So fluorescent orange, well, it works nice on the kind of cover and kind of using in different kind of ways. Actually, the green or the blue is much, much more legible. So that is a good—definitely a good point Anonymous. So, with the little zine that we're going to make, I'm going to print it in two colours. So, we can do like a little poll later on to see what colours people fancy printing it in. But we might want to bear in mind things like legibility. This is a little zine my daughter made just to give you an idea of how you might fill—she just did this in a little online workshop. Just doing some nice wee drawings in it. I'm so bad at orientating towards the camera. So, you see just from— she's done them all on one side of the piece of paper and then when you fold it down it makes a little book. So, in preparation for that, we can combine together lots of different materials in this riso printing process. So, I thought we could do some like mark-making drawing things together that you might or might not want to include in it. I've sent you some paint. I just last week, I just spent a similar amount of time, half an hour or so. Just doing some little—looking round my room and kind of painting things that I saw—that's the top of my radiator. You know, has anybody got those little covers on their radiator. Then I'm did a few studies from my curtains like kind of repeating pattern and that was some of the ribs down the curtains. So, the thing with printing is that you can kind of do scribbling blobby things and incorporate them with other stuff. And they actually look quite nice. So, we don't need to worry too much about—some more lines that I did. Things looking like specific things, just have a bit of kind of fun exploring some marks—that is, I was looking at a nice begonia plant that we have in the dining room doesn't really look like that very much. But I kind of got into the dots and the kind of prickles of it. And then I did another one that was just some lines from that. So that was just in paint. And in terms of— Anonymous I know you popped in the chat like about the colours. So, the riso process will need to collect things together— I'll

need to digitise everything, to make them into digital files, and then I have to turn them into black and white, so it doesn't matter what colour things are. They—I just sent you two colours so that you had a kind of light and a darker one. And it was the kind of luck of the draw of what came out of this mix pack of paints that I bought in Smiths, as to what you got.

Anonymous 1:11:32

So, but when you said that you need to decide on two colours, would black be one of the colours?

Helen 1:11:39

Oh, right. The—so we're going to get it printed a little place in Govanhill called Tender Hands Press, and she's got eight colours that she can print with. She's a really lovely artist and illustrator called Saffa Khan, who runs it. And we could do the little poll, now if people do have the colours—she's told me what colours she had.

Anonymous 1:12:12

So, will there be any writing in this zine or just pictures?

Helen 1:12:16

So that's the thing, we can combine lots of different types of materials. So, you could—we can do some drawing and mark-making today. And that might be some of the things that get included. We can do bits of writing. And maybe if this kind of word cloud of our summing up today works quite nicely, we could have like different bits of text in it, or people might want to include bits of kind of reflective writing. I sent you these just to kind of give you an idea of the way different kinds of materials can come together like—So there's pages where there's text, opposite images. Or you've kind of seen the kind of series of prints that are made from the consciousness-raising rules where put the text over the image, just lots of different kinds of techniques. But if you all kind of send things to me, and we can put things up on the Padlet page, you can email me things, you can WhatsApp, me things, you can put bits of paper in those self-addressed—stamped envelopes that I sent you all as well and send them to me in the post. And then I'll kind of spend a bit of time trying to—like lay everything out on the sheet together, and then we'll print them. But I mean, it's you know, it's a modest size thing, it's going to be A3. So, it's got eight pages in total. So, it's not a huge amount of content. But if we collect together more material than we need, then that can maybe be used for whatever our next project might be. But I just thought it might be quite nice to have a little experiment with this.

Joanne 1:14:11

Can you drawing anything?

Helen 1:14:13

Yes, you can draw anything. So, I did my little drawings of things around in my house because I suppose I was thinking like I spent a lot of time in my house in the last year. But I also did some little kind of charcoal things, I was thinking about just doing some little marks thinking about kind of grassy moorland and places that have not been for a while. I've been trimming off some of the dead bits of my lavender plant just did a little study from those. But you could do texts now. You could be reflecting on all the kinds of conversations we've

had. We can incorporate text into the zine, either in like typed kind of format, or handwritten is quite nice as well alongside typed up things. So, I feel like this is by far the most complicated thing we've done to date (laughs). Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:15:26

This should be a fairly straightforward question. Are we restricted to using the paint brushes you sent us? Or can I use my fine brush?

Helen 1:15:34

You can use anything you've got, I just wanted to send people stuff in case they didn't have stuff at home. I wish I'd had time to sharpen the pencils for you all, but it was a bit of a speedy—to get them in the post on Friday so they arrived to you before we met today.

[redacted]

Helen 1:15:56

[unintelligible] so that they were kind of easy to use, but you've got your wee sketchbooks as well. Or if you've got other bits of paper.

[redacted]

Helen 1:16:10

If we just do the kind of the different parts will then bring them together into the bigger thing. And yeah, I can send you a how to of how to do this cutting and folding. Although it's quite straightforward until you've got it kind of. But we'll do that next time we meet. So today we're just kind of making stuff for our zine as well as kind of thinking about the conversations and the things that we heard earlier. And then we'll do our summing up in a little bit, and in fact, yeah, I mean, goodness, time is speeding along. I'm chatting too much. So, I think we probably need to finish doing this about 20 four 35 in time to do the other things. And so, 20 minutes or so. And then—

[redacted]

Helen 1:17:10

So yeah. Again, ask like—yes to Dorothy, I'm here—.

Dorothy 1:17:18

I'm a bit nervous using paint beside my laptop.

Helen 1:17:21

That's a good point.

Dorothy 1:17:24

So, I haven't sharpened my pencil yet. I need to go and get my pencil sharpener because I took it down the stairs. So, if we can just sketch just now and then paint later. Is that okay?

Helen 1:17:39

Yeah, absolutely. So, I think I'm going to need to have everything collected together to send to get it off to print by next Monday. So, like we can start working on things now. And send them on to me later on or start working and then put them in the post. Or—

Dorothy 1:18:01

Okay, that's fine.

Joanne 1:18:03

Do we need to use the paint?

Helen 1:18:05

No, you don't need to use the paint if you don't want to—whatever you feel kind of comfortable using. Yeah, because yeah, I was finding it quite difficult—Yeah, I'm not I'm not a painter and making the marks it wasn't necessarily going exactly how I wanted it to.

[redacted]

Pauline 1:19:08

I haven't put anything on yet, but I'm going—I'm going to try this sponge and a paint.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:19:16

I've taken my keyboard [redacted] and just have the keys.

[redacted]

Joanne 1:19:26

I've just drawn to there.

Anonymous 1:19:28

Oh, nice.

Joanne 1:19:30

Nice. That looks good.

Helen 1:19:38

You could just look around your room [redacted].

[redacted]

Helen 1:19:42

Look what you see. Think about that fence that you've been given a lot of attention in the last—

[redacted]

Pauline 1:22:33

What I'm finding is I'm probably not very good at using the sponge—I'm quite heavy handed. So, my first attempt at a circle went very wide, so, trial and error.

Helen 1:22:51

Yeah, often what you find is like some of those kind of unevenness, you know, the kind of brush strokes and the texture kind of comes out quite nicely, you know?

Pauline 1:23:02

Yeah.

Helen 1:23:03

Sometimes in printmaking, you might print something like that in quite a light tone and then have it mixed with something of a darker tone and it does something very different. So—

Pauline 1:23:13

Yeah.

Helen 1:23:18

Have you found inspiration [redacted]?

[redacted]

Helen 1:23:33

Right? Okay.

[redacted]

Helen 1:23:43

Move on to another bit of paper that's why I think I'm still—(laughter)

Joanne 1:23:48

See when your drawing don't worry about it too much. There's not going to be a mistake, that what I've been told anyway.

[redacted]

Helen 1:24:10

Yeah. That would be good.

[redacted]

Helen 1:24:28

Nobody has to know what it was supposed to be. You know?

[redacted]

Helen 1:24:37

Well, it doesn't need to be it can just be a kind of—an expression, can't it, a shape or a kind of feeling even—sometimes doing drawings and closing your eyes and just kind of thinking about the shape is quite an interesting process.

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:25:20

Helen, my sister Christine, she does, well she did, lino prints. I don't know how much time she has to do them now. And your description of the different colours sounds like what she was doing. She's—I've got some of them up here as well. I'm looking up. So, you're not saying lino printing for this are you?

Helen 1:25:42

No, no, no. It's called ris, oh printing, which is kind of most similar to screen printing, where you kind of have a kind of screen printing mesh, and you kind of pull ink across but a riso printer—It just looks like a big photocopier, really. But it does the printing, as I suppose most hand printing techniques do, does each colour one at a time. So, you have to kind of break it down into the different parts.

Lesley 1:26:14

Do you have to put it with riso printing—Do you hand turn to put it through? Or does it when you're saying it's like photocopying? Does it go through automatically?

Helen 1:26:26

Yeah, just so you're able to print—it kind of has that—It does look a lot like screen printing to me, which is a kind of slower process because it's hand done. Whereas you can make booklets and print 100 copies. Somebody's still having to do a certain amount of labour taking them out of the machine and things but it's much quicker.

Lesley 1:26:51

I can't remember—I remember—I used to work for Oxfam in Glasgow and when we had disaster emergency appeals and we used to have to run off 1000s of letters which went to churches and schools and charities and that—the machine that did that I'm trying to desperately remember what it was called it's it's—something similar to riso printing but it used—it was you had to type out the stencil and you put it on a drum and it used—Oh God not paraffin. What do you call it? Methylated spirits and you just would run them—run it off and run it off and it was highly toxic (laughs) zero printing or zero—I can't remember what it was.

Helen 1:27:46

Oh, right. Okay, kind of an early Xerox type thing. I think like that was the first some of the first photocopies wasn't it? I've got a machine called a gestetner machine.

Lesley 1:27:58

Yes. It's gestetner. That's right. It was a mechanical process.

Helen 1:28:02

Yeah.

Lesley 1:28:04

Yeah. I had to pile off loads of them. Right.

Helen 1:28:05

Is it similar— I know, yeah, I feel—I suppose printing has changed—like commercial printing has changed so much in recent years the cost of it and like the technology involved.

Lesley 1:28:25

Oh, it's incredible

Helen 1:28:27

Yeah, you can print things really cheaply.

Lesley 1:29:43

Actually, I'm going back to the mark making sketch I did Helen right at the beginning when we were listening to that soundscape piece, which was very pleasant of the woman who was walking through the park. Yeah, I feel some marks there, which actually reply—kind of fit in with what I was talking about school and education.

Helen 1:30:09

That's great. Do—if you feel able to do post any pictures on the Padlet page, it's always nice to see these things.

Anonymous 1:30:25

Anybody want—or feel okay about giving me a recap on their—What they said?

Helen 1:30:33

Oh, yes, of course, because you just came in missing most—

Anonymous 1:30:37

I'm so sorry, my technology went wrong.

Lesley 1:30:39

I mean I said the primary school, it was very nice, it was okay. And I could probably recite everybody's name because you spent seven years with them. I virtually remember everybody who was in my class, and then get to secondary school and it was just a completely different world until about fourth year. Confusing and you just had to keep your head down and get through it. And then once I went to college, it was a completely—much calmer path for me and one that was right for me and served me well through the rest of my life. But Secondary School was certainly full of contrast and yeah, that's it in a nutshell. Thanks very much, Lesley.

Dorothy 1:31:47

Anonymous, I can just give you a very brief update. I had a very rebellious teenage period.

Anonymous 1:31:53

I don't believe it Dorothy. Oh, sorry (laughter). Follow the rules. Sorry.

Dorothy 1:31:59

It's okay. Don't worry. I know. Yeah, I was a completely different person as a teenager probably gave my parents a really hard time but eventually after having my children, my burning desire to do something with my education allowed me to go to university to a degree and then do my post grad and discover what I really wanted to do was to help people with learning so it came alright in the end but it took into probably the age of 40, 45 to discover that. So that's really me.

Pauline 1:33:00

Anonymous, just very briefly, I am an uneventful primary school experience and my east end of Glasgow environment and then for secondary school I went to an all-girls school on and assisted places scheme. I left at the end of fourth year having gone there O-levels that I needed to become a nurse and it was unusual in that school for people to leave without achieving any highers. But I think that I came good as I went through my career and continued on my education, almost until I retired actually. So not an unhappy time but certainly some conflicts within their personally I would say.

Joanne 1:33:52

Mine was a bit like yours. For the bullying, apart from I never got bullied by the teachers, just are bullied by the other kids. That's pretty much—I didn't enjoy school at all. Who did?

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:35:15

I was amazed to hear from my dad's how highers obviously got their name. Because he said, he did lowers and highers.

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:35:28

I think we were probably—well, I did standard grades, but they would have been O-grades, I think standard grades became O-grades. Because he—actually, we're Catholic, and he decided he wanted to go to a junior seminary, to be a priest. I didn't even know what these things were for a good long time, we don't have them anymore. But then he decided against it. So, by the time he went back to like a high school, he already had some exams, that lots of other people in his year didn't have so—

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:35:44

He done well. Good.

Helen 1:36:14

I'm just gonna talk you through a few things. So, you can carry on working away for a bit more. And then we'll do the kind of summing up together so—So as I say, you can put things on the Padlet page or email them to me or WhatsApp, if you use that kind of thing, I'll put them in the post. But you might want to write something or look back at any notes you've made over the time we've kind of been doing these reflective sessions. And I think what we're going to do, when I send them out to you, we'll fold them up. And then you could also be another opportunity to work on them some more as well, we can kind of write more things on them collage on them, like kind of, we'll all—I'll send you two or three copies of them in the post, and then you can have one kind of as it comes. And then you can kind of make another one your own in the session together next time. But you might have photographs, or you might, you might want to take photographs to include, they could be things around in your environment, or you might want to photograph photographs, as it were—it's all getting too—they don't need to be like a really high quality, but just maybe, sometimes when you're taking—I mentioned that most people have access to a digital camera of some sort, whether it's on a phone or a kind of device of some kind. But if you just spend a bit of time, if you do want to photograph something like one of these works that you've done, or a photograph, like just spend a bit of time setting it up to try and make the most of the kind of facilities we've got. So, often, lighting is the kind of most key thing if you're photographing something, so you wouldn't really want to photograph something when it was dark in artificial light, because it really strains the processor on your digital camera. So, try and pick a bright, a bright enough day, but you don't want it also to be like really, really starkly light so that it's got high contrast in it. And then you want to kind of put your camera—where's my phone. Up above, and like try and photograph it as square onto the thing that you've got below it. And don't be shy about taking a few pictures of the same thing. It's amazing, if you think you're just holding it in the same spot. If you just take two or three, you'll find that one comes out better than others. And then as I say if you want to do text things you might want to do a bit of creative writing. I know people have done some creative writing while we've been kind of doing the sessions. You might want to do just like just contribute single words. And we can play around with the size and type of font and all these—even things like if things are in capital letters or lowercase kind of affects how they're read and interpreted. And doing things in handwriting gives them a different feel than kind of typed on the computer. So hopefully that gives you a few ideas. As I say, I'm going to turn everything into black and white for the printing process. Yep, Anonymous what's—

Anonymous 1:39:48

I'm confused, sorry. Are we talking about the stuff that we need to send you by next Monday to be made into the wee zine or?

Helen 1:39:59

Yes. So, if you all send me different things, and I'll then kind of collect them together and make them into one—

Anonymous 1:40:07

Because at the beginning, you said something about sending us several copies of what I thought you meant the wee zine.

Helen 1:40:15

So, if you send me the content, I'll then like lay it out. So, the paintings or the drawings, photographs or wee bits of text by next Monday, I'll then lay it out digitally and send it to the printer. And she'll printer us, these risographs, and I will then pop those in the post to you. And hopefully, if we keep on a tight schedule, you'll have them this time in two weeks when we meet again. Does that make sense?

Anonymous 1:40:48

So, the—Do you want things like this and the post for next Monday? Or were you saying about other things that you want?

Helen 1:41:03

Yeah, yeah, things like that would be great. Or other things that you want to—so you could send me one thing, you could send me that in the post, if that's what you'd like to, or you could send me that and some, put some text on the Padlet or email me something's separate.

Dorothy 1:41:25

Can I ask about the orientation of these, does matter whether it's, if there's something that specifically needs to be a landscape.

Helen 1:41:36

If you've got a really kind of specific way that you want it to be, then maybe mark that on it, and I can always like, exclude that from—

Dorothy 1:41:45

Okay.

Helen 1:41:46

Otherwise, I may take creative licence, and—

Dorothy 1:41:49

Yeah, that's fine.

Helen 1:41:52

That's a classic isn't it of like an abstract work? The artist coming in and saying 'oh, you've got it upside down'.

Dorothy 1:41:59

Right. Okay. Thanks. And I'm being very brave in front of my laptop (laughter).

Helen 1:42:14

Okay, I'm gonna show you these colours. So I'm going to try out just for fun really like a little poll on Zoom, I've not really done those before, but that this is not exactly the colours that the printer that is going to print ours has but she's got black, blue. She's not got teal. She's got green, aqua, fluorescent orange, fluorescent pink, not red, yellow. And I think then the other colour, she told me she'd got as melon but I don't know what colour—depends what

kind of a melon it is as to what colour melon is. I might ask her for some more specifics before plumping—or maybe just steer clear of melon for now (laughter). So, it's gonna it's just kind of a fun thing to do that we don't know what this is gonna turn out like together, but hopefully it'll be a nice thing. So Right. I don't know if people have done a poll before on Zoom. Okay, I'm gonna launch that. Can people see that?

[redacted]

Dorothy 1:43:44

Yeah.

Helen 1:43:44

So, it does allow you to—if you want to pick two colours that you might quite like, but obviously through democracy, I can't—We can't keep everyone happy, but—

Anonymous 1:43:57

We can't pick more than one.

Helen 1:43:59

Oh, will it only let you pick one. All right. Okay, well, then just sorry. Oh—set the wrong. Shall I try it again? So, I try and reset the poll up.

Pauline 1:44:15

Yeah, okay. Right.

Helen 1:44:16

I'm just gonna end that one. And let me see. This is beyond my tech capacities, let's see. Okay hopefully you should be able to pick more than one now.

Lesley 1:46:34

Yes you can.

[redacted]

Helen 1:46:43

Yeah, we'll see what we come up with.

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:47:03

Did you say we could collage to send to you or at least—

[redacted]

Anonymous 1:47:11

Oh, sorry I'm talking about the mark making.

Helen 1:47:15

Yeah yeah yeah.

Anonymous 1:47:16

Mine went a bit wrong I think I tried to put a try to go like too much. So, if I did another one but maybe cut things out of that and sort of layered on Would that be alright?

Helen 1:47:32

Yeah yeah that would be fine. So, is there one person who's not put their colour choices in? It says we've got six out of—five out of six people. Everybody who wants to vote voted?

[redacted]

Dorothy 1:47:51

Yeah.

Lesley 1:47:51

Yes

Helen 1:47:52

Okay. Right share results.

[redacted]

Helen 1:48:11

So blue is the strong—blue and black have got the most votes.

Anonymous 1:48:17

I know that people think that—I wear these glasses because—to help with visual stress and stuff. And that's to do with black one white. But if there's not enough contrast between the colour of the paper and the ink, there's just as much trouble so like if you've got a dark green or on a medium green or something is difficult to read. And I think that's maybe what's the issue with your circles books?

Helen 1:48:51

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I can imagine that would have an impact.

Anonymous 1:48:56

So, I think the pastel colours might be—for like, for pictures they might be fine, but it might be very difficult to read.

Helen 1:49:07

Okay, well, we will see what the content that comes in. But we're thinking maybe black and blue. Right, I'm going to stop sharing that. I feel like we've gone high tech, I'm going to try now—we've just got 15 minutes before we finish up, so, if people are kind of happy to leave their mark making for now. I don't know if people want to show what they've been working on or there's no pressure.

Anonymous 1:49:45

Oh, wonderful.

Helen 1:49:46

Oh, that looks nice.

Pauline 1:49:48

Oh, great.

Lesley 1:49:51

That's good.

Anonymous 1:49:58

Nice one

[redacted]

Lesley 1:50:03

Hmm.

Helen 1:50:05

Very nice.

[redacted]

Lesley 1:50:08

My teeth—

[redacted]

Helen 1:50:10

I like it Lesley. Oh, I like that [redacted].

Pauline 1:50:14

Good. Yeah.

Helen 1:50:17

Oh, thanks. Oh, checking. Maybe

Pauline 1:50:24

I'm just—

Helen 1:50:26

Yeah, nice. Dorothy, you had said—

Dorothy 1:50:31

Sorry, I had just—this was—

Helen 1:50:37

Yeah, they're really nice.

Pauline 1:50:38

I like the colour.

Dorothy 1:50:40

I've got one of these wavy mirrors from IKEA on the wall. And then I thought, 'oh, maybe I could do my different stages of education'.

Helen 1:50:50

Okay, yeah.

Dorothy 1:50:53

I'll explain it. I'll type it up. And then I did a bit of a landscape which made me think—not a landscape, a sunset. Which I have to copy from a photograph. And that's when I asked you the question about the, the orientation, but that's fine. It doesn't matter if it's on its side. It will still look nice (laughs).

Anonymous 1:51:13

I've got on to try to do a spiral type thing. I thought I'd better draw it out before I try to paint it.

Helen 1:51:23

Yeah, it's hard sometimes. Sometimes it's good to just kind of go straight in and then other times—

Dorothy 1:51:28

This is a lovely resource to work with. It's lovely.

Helen 1:51:33

Oh, is it? Oh, that's good. I think the print making technician was wondering what I was going to be doing with 12 Chinagraph pencils (laughter).

Lesley 1:51:42

Yes, is very soft

Dorothy 1:51:44

Lovely. Yeah. What I meant by my sunset it's not I'm good at drawing what I meant was it's a sunset that I've missed for a year. And that's what I mean by its good. You know, the, the outline is good because I recognise the outline.

Pauline 1:52:05

Where is the sunset Dorothy?

Dorothy 1:52:08

It's actually overlooking Jura. So, it's the paps of Jura from Kilberry which is just four miles down the road from a Lochgilphead, Ardrishaig. Yeah, yeah, Ardrishaig. So, it's one of my favourite places.

Pauline 1:52:32

Hope you'll see it soon.

Dorothy 1:52:33

Yes, I hope so too.

Helen 1:52:34

We're going to try this summing up in a thing called Slido which I don't know maybe some Women's Library people might have encountered before? Because it was Adele that suggested it to me. So, feeling slightly apprehensive as I haven't used it before at all, but I'm assured it's very straightforward. So, what it asks me to do is share a link with you and that you don't need to log on to anything. What do I need to do? Right just a second, so if I share my screen it'll then come up. Goodness. Okay, let's try—Right, so you can either scan that QR code with a with a phone, or—if so, you could do it on your phone, if—while you're still stay on the Zoom on a another device, or you can go to slido.com and it'll ask you for—to enter the hashtag, which is just women. And then that should bring up a screen where you can just type in a series of words, and then they should appear on the screen. Sounds straightforward. I'm going to try it from my phone as well.

Anonymous 1:55:18

So, do you just type women in, rather than hashtag women?

Helen 1:55:21

Yeah, just type women where it's got that little hashtag symbol.

Anonymous 1:55:37

So, enter—sorry to interpret everybody's as well as your own?

Helen 1:55:41

Yeah.

Lesley 1:55:42

Oh yeah, there's quite—there's about a two-minute delay.

Helen 1:55:46

Right. Okay.

Lesley 1:55:49

Yeah. Okay.

Helen 1:55:53

And so, like maybe add up to five—three to five maybe. Is everyone getting on all right with it?

Lesley 1:56:55

Yeah. It's nice. It's coming. It's displaying we're quickly now. It must have warmed up.

Helen 1:57:02

Yeah.

Pauline 1:57:46

Helen?

Helen 1:57:48

Uh huh.

Pauline 1:57:48

Can I just check? Do we only put our words in? Or did someone say do you add in everyone else's words?

Helen 1:57:59

Yeah, the kind of—like summing up from everything that we've heard from each other.

Pauline 1:58:07

Uh huh. But we've to do that and up to five words. Is that what you mean?

Helen 1:58:11

Yeah, yeah. Although if you've got more to add, then that's okay.

Pauline 1:58:17

Okay. Thank you.

Anonymous 1:58:24

Helen, I had written a piece of sort of a creative writing about school in and the two weeks between the last—sorry, that didn't make sense. It's okay, if I put it on—Oh, what do you call it, Pad—

Helen 1:58:43

Yeah, the Padlet, the webpage thing. Yeah. That would be great Anonymous that be really nice to read that. I know, people enjoyed the piece that you'd written when we did the expectations one.

Anonymous 1:58:55

So, will I put it in the like, creative or whatever, one—column?

Helen 1:59:02

Right. Yes, that's a good point. I'm trying to remember all the different columns. Yes, because I made a new—Yeah, yeah, put it in the creative activities, I think there is one isn't there?

Anonymous 1:59:16

Yeah.

Helen 1:59:17

Put it in that column. And then I've created a new column as well, called 'our print material'. So, if people want to put things up in there, for the zine, which you could put it in both or either Anonymous.

Lesley 1:59:33

That's a really good—I don't know what you call this slido.com. That's really good.

Helen 1:59:42

Yeah, that's nice. So nice that 'thankful' has come up. That must mean—that I think if people type the same word, then it changes, it's kind of size, status, but I guess there's a lot of similar words, but just expressed slightly differently isn't there.

Lesley 2:00:06

It's a very good thing to know about.

[redacted]

Helen 2:00:16

The word thing, or—

[redacted]

Helen 2:00:27

If you want to it yourself. You just sign up for an account from the Slido website. And then like, it has all these—like all American companies do have like, YouTube videos of how to work it. And then I set up a little event for our meeting today. And then it's quite straightforward, just kind of like activate it. And you have to come up with the hashtag.

[redacted]

Helen 2:00:55

It's—it's got little tutorials that are pretty straightforward. I'd tried to try out with somebody at the Library, but I didn't get chance to so this is literally me trying out for the first time. And that is how straightforward to use it is, it's worked pretty seamlessly. So, thank you Slido whatever dot do. Slide—

[redacted]

Dorothy 2:01:21

It's, it's, it's good. Yeah, it looks good.

Helen 2:01:25

Okay, I'm gonna stop sharing the screen and hope that Slido saves that. Because we're already two minutes to five, so I guess just to say, thanks for everyone for sharing all the things that it did in the kind of circle, and that we're meeting again in two week's time. So—I'll put it in the chat—the sixth of April. Joanne, you may be able to—

Joanne 2:01:57

I may or may not. I'll say that this time.

Helen 2:02:01

Sounds like you've got some sway with your employers. But yeah, it would be lovely to see you all then. And so, as I say, that's the kind of last session in this initial block of sessions that we kind of agreed—like signed up to, and then we'll do I think—I don't think was a topic and then we'll just work on our zines together and have a bit of a reflection and think, where do we go from here? It'd be great if people want to carry on meeting, but we may find you want to adjust a few things. So just spend a bit of time—but thanks, everyone, for all your kind of time and generosity of sharing. It's been another very pleasant afternoon shared.

[redacted]

Helen 2:02:49

And if you've got any questions about sending things, just send me a message, email, text, give me a call, anything, I don't mind. I realise our zine making is taking us to another level of technical capacities (laughter).

[redacted]

Helen 2:03:11

This one?

[redacted]

Helen 2:03:14

A zine.

[redacted]

Helen 2:03:20

Z.i.n.e. You'll be down with the kids [redacted], making zines.

[redacted]

Helen 2:03:33

Any questions just get in touch. More info on the Padlet as well. Like—

[redacted]

Helen 2:03:51

Okay, great. And you've got the envelope, so—

[redacted]

Helen 2:03:55

So, I'll need things by Monday. So, if you're gonna send me something in the post, you probably need to post it by the end of—

[redacted]

Helen 2:04:04

Yeah.

Dorothy 2:04:05

All right. Okay.

Helen 2:04:07

Any questions just let me know.

Anonymous 2:04:10

See, at the beginning, you're talking about in the next session, it being the last session and stuff. The Padlet—Would it, could it keep going?

Helen 2:04:24

Yes. Yeah. Definitely. I mean, yeah, I think I hope that we will continue on in some capacity. I'm happy to continue on as we as we are, but I'm just aware that within the changing situation, it's just the kind of moment of reflection and then people may want to commit to carrying on meeting but—

Lesley 2:04:45

Helen, can you post the Slido—

[redacted]

Lesley 2:04:52

On the Padlet? It's just I've started doing something with repetition of the words I felt coming up.

Helen 2:05:02

Yeah.

Lesley 2:05:02

Like to see some of those words, again. Because at the moment, I've only got two (laughs).

Helen 2:05:10

Yeah, I'll take a screenshot of our one. Yeah. I'll do that. I'll do that just now. Well,

Lesley 2:05:18

Because I'd like to incorporate some of the words into what I'm fiddling about with here. That's lovely. Helen. We'll see you. All right, lovely to see you all.

Joanne 2:05:33

—If I can make it.

Helen 2:05:34

_You don't know. Do you want—

Joanne 2:05:37

I'll text you during the week to let you know.

Helen 2:05:39

Yeah.

Joanne 2:05:39

The way it's working out, is it's Easter holidays or something, so I'll be doing full shifts.

Helen 2:05:44

Right, yeah, yeah, yeah, I did wonder. Yeah, it's the first Tuesday of the Easter holidays. Yeah, so let me know but—contribute towards the zine as well, even if you're not able to make it to the session itself. That'd be lovely to—

Joanne 2:05:59

Yeah, I'll get this stuff out to you anyway so—

Helen 2:06:01

Okay, okay. Great.

Joanne 2:06:02

Right. Bye, guys.

Lesley 2:06:06

Bye-bye.

[redacted]

Dorothy 2:06:08

Bye, thanks, Helen.

Pauline 2:06:11

Thank you very much.

SPEAKERS

Dorothy, Helen, Joy, F, Lesley, Pauline, Anonymous

Lesley 00:00

Hey Helen, how are you?

Helen 05:34

Yeah, I'm alright. How are you Lesley? Nice to see you.

Lesley 05:36

Yeah. It's a nice cold day today.

Helen 05:40

It is, isn't it. Yeah, it looks lovely. But it's pretty chilly out there.

Lesley 05:46

When I went out to take the bin out, whoa! Hi, Pauline.

Pauline 05:52

Hi. Nice to see you. Sorry, my dog's heard me (laughter). Must think somebody is coming.

Helen 06:05

Hi Joy.

Joy 06:08

How are you?

Helen 06:10

Yeah, good. Thanks. Oh, your internet is back working.

Joy 06:20

Yes, yes. Sorry about last week it was a bit of a disaster it—It was—it didn't come back to about six o'clock, I think it was in the end. So, it was kind of all afternoon. But there we are.

Helen 06:32

Yeah, Anonymous, her internet went down as well. She kept disappearing and coming back.

Joy 06:37

Oh, really? Oh, right. Yeah, no, it was just one of those things. You can't—there's nothing you can do. So, you just have to—

Helen 06:47

Just go offline for a bit (laughs). How are you F, are you there?

F 06:57

Yeah, it was just like everyone else chat. It's nice to see everybody and you all look and sounds so cheery. I love it. But I'm feeling like crap today. Really, I hadn't been over the door for a couple of weeks. Because I wasn't feeling great. But that was okay. Still been enjoying the sunlight. Having the window open, the fresh air. Like you say, Lesley, the—the cold, the crispness, there's something nice about that. So, I was enjoying that. But I went out yesterday. And I think it's actually my allergies and hay fever that's making me feel a bit rough today. So, if I have to—do cough, I do apologise in advance. But it is nice to be here. I did miss you all last week, or the last session.

Helen 07:43

[unintelligible]—I was talking to somebody the other day and she said her allergies were starting to kind of hay fever type things.

F 07:51

I think because we've all been inside for so long now. And especially the winter there was pretty harsh when—even when you did want to go out, it wasn't your choice. So maybe we're all a bit more sensitive perhaps.

Lesley 08:05

Well, we've had flurries of snow here this morning.

F 08:09

I came home to snow from when I got off the bus. There was snowflakes here yesterday. So, you're catching us up (laughter).

Pauline 08:19

We've had some snow as well and some hail stones. And it's so funny because you look out and the skies blue with clouds. But it was so bright. But none of it lay but it was quite interesting to see it because it was so bright—if you hadn't been out to take the bin in (laughs) you wouldn't know it had been so cold.

Lesley 08:42

Hi Anonymous.

Anonymous 08:46

Hiya.

Pauline 08:47

Hi Anonymous.

F 08:51

Hey, nice to see you Anonymous.

Lesley 08:55

Hi Dorothy.

Dorothy 08:56

Hi. Sorry, I'm a bit late. Nice to see everybody.

Helen 09:04

That's all right. No, worries at all. I think—I don't know if Joanne is working today? She didn't text me.

Dorothy 09:13

She said to me last week that she might not make it. I think if she's got childcare today, then she would be here, but I think possibly she might not make it.

Helen 09:30

Yeah, yeah. We didn't know whether she would be on the holiday club duties. My two are at the holiday club this week.

Dorothy 09:37

Are they, right? Okay, so she might—Yeah, I think she would have been here if she been able to make it. I think she's normally quite prompt.

Helen 09:48

Yes, Yes, she is. Okay, right. Well, then I think that is everyone we're expecting cost.

[redacted] is finishing her dissertation imminently and feeling the pressure of that. So, she's working away on that. And Sarah because of the long weekend, she's having to work today, somebody new and started at her work, so she was having to take some care of them. And [redacted]

unfortunately, has decided that the group is no longer for her. She was very tentative, she stuck with us for a little while. But she's not going to join us anymore. So, I think that's everyone. My brain feels a bit hazy. I don't know if that's a general feeling, maybe we should just go a little around our digital circle and say how people are feeling. We were doing that a little bit a minute ago. Yeah, I just feel a bit—The long weekend was nice, but I feel quite exhausted now. Back to supposedly be getting on with things. It's feels like a bit of a hard shift to get into action. Been enjoying the nice weather, but it is very cold today, the hail is confusing. So, I'm trying not to be too hard on myself this week, I think. I think kindness is the way forwards. My littlest daughter has got really stuck in this thing of saying that she hates herself all the time, she's only five. And it kind of is a reminder of how we need to be kind to ourselves, it's too easy to be hard on ourselves, I think. So I'm going to try and model some kind of self-love to hopefully pass that along (laughs). Would anybody else like to go next, how they're feeling? Go Pauline.

Pauline 12:06

Yeah, it's been a quick couple of weeks, and I've been quite productive in the garden. Dug out a big plant that had overgrown where it was situated. It was a huge, big pampas plant. But my son came over to help. And it was great to just spend some time with him. As he and I were digging out, my husband's got a problem with his knee and he couldn't help. But then at the weekend, I had a bit of a sore throat. And I didn't really feel 100% so, a bit like Helen I thought, oh I'm just gonna have a quiet day. So, Sunday, I found myself—I watched the 1948

version, or Fred Astair and Judy Garland, in—I can't remember the name of it now. A Star is Born. And then I watched the boat races, and I feel as though I had sat for hours. But I felt it was good. And I enjoyed it. And I tried not to say to myself, you should have been busier because I'd been quite busy in the week. So, I think sometimes I know my mood goes up and down. Just depending on what I've done, whether I feel tired or not. And likewise, I'm trying to say, you know, it's okay, if you don't feel on top of the world every day, because, you know, it's not realistic. So, I've enjoyed the weather as well. It's been great I didn't, especially feel that Easter weekend was a special weekend. Because normally, we either might have had family over for food, or we may have been away, and I felt it was just very low key. But I've been grateful for the weather and my barking dog who keeps us company and always gives you a bit of joy when you're able to sit in lap her. And that's me. Anybody else want to go next Dorothy?

Dorothy 14:12

Okay, yeah, I'll go next. Sorry. I've enjoyed the weekend. The past two weeks has been busy. Just busy with work stuff. And when you mentioned about your daughter Helen, saying that it reminded me of a conversation I had with my youngest daughter, Kirsty who's got the toddler and we were doing a birthday video for my sister-in-law. She's going to be 70 tomorrow and her husband thought it was a nice idea to have everybody sent in a video which is a lovely idea. And, you know, you look at yourself in a video, I've shared this already with Anonymous. But I think it's worth sharing again. You look at yourself and a photograph or a picture, or you look at a picture, and you—you're in that picture, and we're drawn to us, aren't we were drawn to what we look like in that picture. And Kirsty said, 'oh look at the state of me, mum in that. I'm so tired looking'. And then just instantly she says, 'I need to stop seeing that in front of Millie, I need to stop. In case Millie picks up on it, you know'. And it's so easy for us to focus on, you know, what our image is an a—In a, whether it's a film or a video or photograph of us, and if only we could see ourselves as others see us. I think that's, that's a nice thing to be able to do. But it's hard, isn't it? Because you know, like you Pauline, I'm always enjoying being on the go and doing things and I find it quite difficult during the day to sit down and just chill, to sit and read a book or watch a film or—and that's the same—it's kind of something similar. You know, it's like we're hard on ourselves. But

Anonymous 16:35

it's, I think it depends on your personality doesn't it? Whether you're able to, to do that. However, I'm getting better at it. I'm getting better at not doing very much (laughs) and not feeling too bad about it. That's me.

Helen 17:03

Okay, cause anyone to go next. I've not pulled any names out of her. So, I have nothing this week. I'm disorganised.

Anonymous 17:11

I'm sorry, I got a phone call there, so I'm not entirely sure of what Dorothy said. But Dorothy has some idea how I'm feeling today. And I'm thankfully I had a session with her and another tutor—volunteer tutor that didn't have any learners in it. It was a sort of sort of a therapy session for Anonymous. But also, Helen, I think it was Friday, I possibly slightly

broke the rules, but also was praising your session. I was showing people from the Library the mark making I was doing the [unintelligible] one. And I was saying how great mark making had made me feel and how if you're just thinking about making marks you're not trying to make—you're not trying to make a picture or make anything recognisable. And then without thinking I said, and it kind of made me think about Helen's wee daughter who was trying—who stopped drawing because she couldn't draw what she meant. What, didn't look like what she—And I then I suddenly thought, oh, I'm not supposed to say things from the session. But that's like the only time I've done—and it doesn't really seem particularly con—confidential. I hope that's okay. I'm also feeling old because I'm now a great aunt, because my nephew's wife had a baby on Monday, I think, anyway but I was quite stressed on Easter Sunday actually because I had to see my mother-in-law as well. But I think also well—being a Catholic I had to eat very little on Friday. And it's not really the eating very little. It's the remembering not to eat. There's plenty in the flat, and all that, but you're not allowed—there's only certain things you're allowed to eat. So, for our main meal, we decided to get a chippy, which is normally okay with my celiac disease because I just get chips but last time, I decided to order cheese and chips. And I think because they use the cheese to make the pizzas as well. There was a lot of cross contamination. So, on Sunday, I just got more and more panicky. I practically had a panic attack and then I was like having stomach pains and stuff and I finally realised that it was probably because there had been gluten or whatever in the cheese and the stuff that I got from outside that I hadn't made here. That had been causing problems. So that was—not the best Easter, I have to say. Anyway, sorry.

Helen 19:53

Thanks, Anonymous. Lesley are you volunteering?

Lesley 19:56

I did. I am yeah. Well, I had a lovely Easter because I was together with my husband and my two sons, because my eldest son, has come up from London to stay with us for six months. So that was just a joy for us. We didn't expect to be together as a family. So that was very nice. And then receiving the little zines was lovely Helen. That was a lovely surprise. Gosh, it was so quick. So that was really nice to see that outcome of what we'd all done. Yeah, that was very nice. Very nice indeed.

Helen 20:54

Joy or F do either of you want to go next? Oh, F's unmuted. So, I'll take that as a sign. Go for it.

F 21:04

No, because I was going to say has everyone else been? Yeah, the zines were awesome to get. That was a really good boost for me as well. And I have managed to catch up with a couple of friends. So that's been good too. But I think a bit like everybody else, and I liked what—Oh, sorry, if I get the name wrong. Was it Pauline earlier that was saying about, sometimes your moods are kind of up and down, and that's okay. I totally live in that world. So, yeah, that is okay. And it's definitely unrealistic to expect that you're going to feel good every day. Or that you even think that you've got the brainpower to cope with whatever's going on that day. So, it's good to—when you are feeling up, but it's also good to honour

yourself when you're feeling those stressful times, too. So, I think actually, that's kind of what I've been doing the last few weeks, I'm really pushing for different things to change in my life, just now. But my physical health isn't allowing me to move fast enough. So, I'm trying to cope with that, because that's really difficult. And I think Dorothy had mentioned about the being kind and how it is good for us. But how perhaps, it can be difficult to cultivate that kind of behaviour in yourself because it maybe doesn't feel natural to us as women, I think. Society I don't think—in my awareness growing up, I feel society hasn't told women it's okay to slow down until maybe very recently, maybe in the last five to 10 years. But even at that it's been a trickle. So, I don't know that's kind of what I've been dealing with the last few weeks. So, it's nice to hear other people's perspective too. And I got amazing present from my beezy down in Salford, she sent me a wee package, and it had some beautiful crystal gemstones in it, because I'm really into my crystals. So, I've just been sitting with that kind of energy the last few days, it's been really, really nice. So, I'm passing it all on to you if you wish to receive it. It's out there. Because they're so beautiful. And it's so funny with crystals, sometimes the right one just comes to you as you need it. And it's kind of been like that she's managed to pick out some that are going to be really helpful for my physical health, which is just so awesome. So yeah, I feel like it's strange times, just now, it's weird to think we've been in lockdown for this long. Perhaps that's why some of us are feeling a bit scattered or like tired, fatigued from all of it, I would say. But yeah, things are on the up though. I'm going for my first dose later this week too. So, the thought of being able to travel again at some point excites me greatly. Just to catch up with people that I know and start doing art stuff again. But yeah, nice to see everybody in here how everybody's doing too.

Joy 24:06

Well, it's nice to be back. I couldn't be here last time because my internet just went. So, that was a bit that was a bit frustrating. But kind of a reminder, I suppose that—well we I suppose we all have become even more dependent than ever on the internet just goes to show how dependent we are, I suppose. But it's just one of those things that you can't do anything about. If it's not there, then it's not there. So nice to be back. Yeah, I think the last few weeks I've kind of been aware of a sort of a sense of—it's been about a year since all this has been going on now a bit more than a year. And there's kind of been an awareness, I think, for me of thinking back to how it was a year ago and all the anxiety around you know the beginning of lockdown and the situation then and it feels as if there's a sort of a looking forward to coming out of all of this, but also maybe a bit of anxiety as well. Sort of yeah, looking forward to seeing people looking forward to being able to go places. But also, the idea that coming out of it is not going to be necessarily easy. And I think that's maybe to do with change and transitions, whenever your kind of transiting from—transitioning from kind of one thing to another, that that can create a bit of anxiety, I think so seems to be I think, yeah, a mixture of looking forward to more freedom, more travel, more seeing people all those things, but mixed up with a bit of anxiety as well about how it's all going to go. Maybe it's not going to be that smooth. Maybe seeing people again, maybe going more places is actually going to be hard after a year. I don't know. So yeah, so it's kind of a mixture of all that, I think, at the moment.

Helen 26:22

Thanks, everyone, it sounds like there's some kind of commonalities between how people are feeling, and I think it is really interesting, isn't it, like, a few things have opened up for me at the art school, so I was able to go and I printed some of the things that I sent to you by the risograph, and then I screen-printed some of them as well. And I just forgot how much time all these things take, like, being out and about just even all the different things—getting there—preparing different things, getting hold of materials, like it makes me think like how we have changed the pace of our lives during the pandemic. And then yeah, as you say, Joy, like trying—that anxiety about switching again, and how we can navigate through all these things. So, I think I mean, for me, it's really nice that we're all coming together every couple of weeks just to have a check in and see how people are doing and talk through some of these things. That's a really kind of useful thing. In terms of what I've planned for today, as kind of a bit open, really, I think I'm less organised or more open than normal. It be really nice to kind of have some reflections on what people have got out of the session so far, and what people think about the little things they've received in the post, and then maybe some thoughts about—I guess this is the end of the kind of initially laid out five sessions that we talked about. And it'd be great if people want to continue meeting and how we could shape sessions going forwards. So, should we begin by talking about the prints, people were sent? Like, I guess I could give my reflection on the kind of trying to think—it was a little ambitious. It felt like quite a bit of a break next schedule to pull things together. And some of the things haven't kind of come out as vibrantly as maybe I'd hoped. But I think that's just the kind of nature of trying to do some things quickly. And it was really lovely receiving things from you—In fact, most of you in the post or sending me things digitally, and then trying to imagine how they might come into one thing. I think some of them have reproduced really beautifully and others have maybe lost a bit of their initial vivacity perhaps. I don't know. Yeah, yeah. It'd be great to hear what people think. Let me put a little bit of a kind of name list in the chat. So, we can—that seems to make things a bit easier. This is a bit of a random order, but people just want to maybe say how they found doing the kind of material to pull these together and they weren't thought worked well and—constructive criticism is also much appreciated. So, I did a little— Dorothy, you were the first popped onto the list to be you happy to speak first?

Dorothy 30:07

Yes, that's fine. Yes, it was lovely to receive all of the zines through the post and the images and to see—I always get a surprise when your large letter appears at the door and I think, oh what's this. So this was again was lovely to receive and to see the actual—it's such a simple design, you know, I love the way this is created. And I've not had an opportunity to share it with Kirsty yet because, you know, she doesn't live with us. But I just think it's—my other daughter because she doesn't live with me either. But they're both very creative young women. And I love to see you know, what we've done in these forms. And I don't know why it's just the colours, are particularly nice. And yes, Helen, you did an amazing job of doing this. A quick turnaround. And yeah, I did enjoy the creative part of it. I did enjoy the process. And what everybody else has done is really interesting. So, thank you. That's me. On to Anonymous? Hi. What Dorothy said there, I just realised that was something I wanted to clarify as well, I showed my husband the zines. I'm assuming that was okay. Okay, that's good. And I was very, very well, self-centred and love the, how the "different intelligence" came out in the different colours, the greens and the blues, I thought that was very nice.

And the zines are very nice too, I love what everyone's—how everyone's work comes together. And makes it more. Thank you, Helen. And I will pass to Joy.

Joy 32:51

Yeah, I really enjoyed the collaging that we did. So that would have been when two, four weeks ago now. And was really surprised to kind of actually find it quite meditative or quite a mindful experience. And I think it sort of reminded me that I just don't really do things like that I don't do collaging or drawing or painting, or I don't really make things with my hands, because it's not something that's kind of—that I find very easy. So, it was nice to sort of have that experience of actually just being in something and spending time looking for images and then sticking them. And it was actually a really lovely, lovely process. And then it was nice to kind of see all the different things that people had done, just coming together and the way that they all did seem to fit together so well, even though they were coming from different individuals, there were your there were images, and there were words, and they just all seem to have come together really well in—you know, in the way you put them together. So, it was it was nice to see that collaborative nature of everything just coming together, and somehow it fitted really well. So, Pauline is next, I think.

Pauline 34:14

Thanks, Joy. I suppose I'm really echoing what other people have said about the pleasure, derived from the letter coming through the post. And then when I opened the envelope, like Joy, I was quite amazed at how the whole thing had come together like a whole when we had all done our individual parts. Equally, I was really impressed with the different approaches that people had taken, for example, the number of words that were present, which wasn't something that I had thought of myself when I was working on my drawings. So, I enjoyed seeing the different approaches that people had taken. But I think for me, the end result seemed to be quite fascinating because I don't have an artistic background, I don't see myself as being particularly arty, and whilst I might doodle, that's really about the extent of it. So, I thought it was lovely, again to see the collaboration and the sum of the parts. And again, Helen, thank you for doing it so quickly, and for bringing in such a tangible piece of work to us from the discussions. So yes, thank you. And now, it would be on to Lesley.

Lesley 35:54

Yeah, the books were just a joy to see. The colours were so much stronger than I had, thought they were going to be. It was lovely. And I've taken two of the pieces that I've created, I'm actually reworking them but in stitch. I'd started a stitch piece as a result of the collage exercise that we'd done. And it's just kind of—I'm using an old vintage tea towel. And so, I'm just kind of, you know, building up pieces round it, on it. So yeah, so two of the pieces that I did, the last time, I'm transforming those into stitched pieces, we'll see how—it may not be literal, it will maybe start as being representative and then might go off in another direction. I'm not quite sure. We'll see where it takes me. But I also wanted to say, and I put it into the Padlet, this book, which she'd sent us right at the beginning Helen, and I mean, I'll be honest, I dismissed it, because I find it difficult at the beginning to read the fluorescent type, but for some reason, last week, was it, I was actually able to read it perfectly well, I don't know, it must have been the difference in the lighting conditions. And really, it's a very, very touching, book Helen, it really resonated with me. And in fact, at one

point, I was almost in tears with it. That's a very moving outcome that you've created there. Yeah, well done. So over to F.

F 38:09

Wow, like I'm actually lost for words right now. I take it for granted, doing creative work, and expressing myself in that way daily. Because that's actually just how I have communicated since I was a very young girl. So, for me, it's really, really interesting to hear the angle that everyone else is coming from, because I think that you've all got different, varying degrees of creativity within you. Even if you don't feel that you have. Challenges and overcoming challenges, like our opportunities where we think creatively and come up with ways to overcome situations, we maybe never thought we could. So even if you feel, and I'm doing air quotes, that that's all you've done creatively, it's still being creative. But I really, really love that people have gotten so much out of the practical experience of making something after having discussions, it's really—Thank you for letting me share the process with you. I'm quite humbled by it, to be honest, but I really love the zines that we've all made together. They're so beautiful, and those colours are just fabulous. Like, I know what you're saying as well Lesley about trying to read the type face before and that colour it just, it was different light definitely affects riso work and makes it look so different at times. So that was a really interesting thing to hear as well. But yeah, I think that everybody should feel great pride in the work that they've made, and Helen definitely for getting it done in a week. I am part of an art collective where we published a book within seven days, we were given 24 hours to submit something. And then somebody very kindly put it all together within a week. But they nearly had a nervous breakdown. And that wasn't even only in a riso scale of colours. So, I say Helen's done an even more amazing job than it may seem. But yeah, I'm really blown away with the work. It's very—it's so touching, it's very profound as well, and I'm sure it will be something I keep coming back to, and learning from repeatedly. So yeah, well done everybody.

Helen 40:31

Oh, wow, that's really lovely to hear that you've really enjoyed receiving them through the post. I just—when I ordered envelopes to start sending things out to you, I accidentally ordered like, I think I've got 150 of those hard back envelopes. So, I was thinking that seemed like a sensible number to buy, but I now see this huge box. So yeah, I actually really enjoy sending you all the little packages like that kind of in this endlessly digital world. Like, I kind of wish I had more time to write you a little notes in them but packaging up kind of 10 or 11 takes longer than anticipated. I guess I maybe didn't say so, F and Joy weren't here last time, we had a little poll for the colours. So that was a kind of democratic process that I think blue and black are the top colours that were selected. So just so you know. So that one's a Risograph. And then the kind of paler one, I actually screen printed those because the Riso person didn't have time to do more than one. So that's the black and the blue. And I was actually really nice just printing something and I just made the ink very transparent, that's how it kind of has gone down to a kind of greyish colour. And with that one, I think I'd kind of envisaged that maybe I kind of built—picked the kind of works that had kind of space in them, and were kind of more like patterns, and I kind of maybe envisaged that maybe you would—could write more things on the top of them or like, annotate them yourselves. And then yeah, I think this one came together really—have didn't have chance to, it was actually quite time consuming even just to fold them all. I think I thought I'd send them to your flat,

and then we'd fold them together. But it was, it's a little bit of a fiddle to do it the first time. And I'm aware how quickly two hours on Zoom goes together. So, I just kind of became productive machine cutting and trimming and folding them all. What was it gonna say about—But yeah, most of those ones were about the education one, I thought they fitted together really nicely. I really like this little zine format that you can like, obviously, I folded them to a certain one at the front. But you can almost just kind of refold it and then something else becomes the beginning, refold it again, they are versatile little ones. And then the other one that was a kind of test that I did. So that was kind of—I think in an ideal world, I thought I would have more time to draw out some of the words from our conversations, because people predominantly sent the kind of mark making things which did incorporate some words, but I thought that I would have more chance to kind of be listening back and kind of drawing things out. But as everyone said, two weeks between sessions seems to absolutely fly by. So, I think it's a really nice thing that we've all kind of done together. But I feel like there's much potential for kind of evolving a way of working overtime if people are keen to carry on meeting and kind of seeing where our conversations might go. It would be great to hear a little bit about how—a lot of people talked about how enjoyable they found the creative activities. Be good to hear what people felt about kind of talking about our own personal experiences, I suppose perhaps in relation to the creative activities or just as a thing in itself. Because I know some of our topics have been more challenging than others and obviously different things are challenging for different people in different ways. And I'm aware that people have been very open and honest. But it'd be great to hear just a little few words from people about how they found that kind of—this consciousness raising idea of going around in the circle and kind of reflecting on our own experience and what people have felt they've gained from that or, or not. Shall I do the little list the other way around this time? I don't know if I can do—I'm not that quick. Let me mix the names up again. If just people—Yeah. What did I write down as little questions? How people found about talking about their personal experiences? Are there any specific things you've found challenging? How have you felt able to navigate some of these challenging feelings in a group situation? I wrote down how people find creative activities, but I think everyone's kind of reflected on that. So yeah—how people found talking about personal experiences, challenging personal experiences, and where other topics that people might specifically like to talk about? Pauline, over to you. Before I say anything about—speaking about personal situations, I think one of the things I did find challenging about us being in a Zoom group, was, for me, it felt a bit harder, in some ways, because I was very conscious of trying to follow the rules of the circle of discussion, and not interrupting and, you know, not giving advice, and all of the things that form part of the process of the consciousness-raising. And so, the—maybe I'm going to be bit off track here, but for me, that's been one of the challenges that we've not been in a room together. And it's not been so easy to help somebody to see that you're listening intently, or you really get what they're saying. Because although we still wouldn't be able to interrupt up, if we were face to face, it might be a bit easier just to, you know, give those cues that you really are actively listening to what people are saying. And so that I suppose for me, that's more one thing about the group process over Zoom. And it's the first time that I've been involved in a group like this over Zoom, so it might be just me, acclimatising to that. In terms of what I was able to say, personally, I think I don't really know what to say a bit that to be honest. It was good to have space to discuss what I discussed. I'm not sure that I feel I got a depth of discussion of from myself. And but it certainly didn't leave me feeling challenged because of the memories that

I had brought to the fore. So, I'm looking I wrote down three words, Helen when you were saying what you wanted us to talk about personal challenge, and I can't remember what you mean about navigating. So, I don't really know whether what I'm saying is what you want to hear. No, that's a really useful like, yeah, to kind of reflection on how the group processes worked is good. I think that's kind of consciousness-raising as these parameters that we've set for ourselves and it's interesting thing, do they actually work? Like, do they give us anything? Or are they stifling conversation in a way? Like, I think they are difficult to use because they're counterintuitive. It'd be great to hear what other people think about them.

Pauline 50:19

Maybe I'll have more to say later. Is that okay for now, if I pass on to you Joy?

Joy 50:28

Thank you, Pauline. Think what I would want to say is that I always find it really enriching to be in a group with other women. It just feels like a really kind of enriching, nurturing process. And so far, in the sessions that we've had, it's always—I've always got the impression that otherwise—I think I totally get what Pauline was just saying about the Zoom, I've always really got the feeling that there was a really was a lot of listening. People were really listening, obviously, it's, you know, you kind of looking at a screen, so it can feel a bit strange sometimes. But there's a kind of a really set a strong sense of deep listening, people really kind of taking on board what other people were saying and being really available to listen to what others were saying, which I found really, really good, really helpful, really supportive. You know obviously, I wasn't here last time, so I wasn't part of that conversation. But I think I would definitely be interested in more conversations and more exchanges of a similar thing, maybe whether it's talking about experiences of growing up or experiences of work, or you know, whatever it might be, I just always find it, those kinds of exchanges with other women, just gives you so much insight into what other people have experienced and where they're coming from and what they've got from it. And, you know, it just helps—I just find all of that really just fascinating and helpful. In terms of challenges, I think, for me, the most challenging thing is the idea of producing, I've probably said this before, so I'm repeating myself, but producing things with my hands, because it's just not what—I think my medium really is words, I'm very used to writing things. That's where maybe I'm a little bit creative, I like putting things down in word or words on paper, and then you know, moving the words around and trying to get it kind of structured the way I like it. And that that would be my kind of creativity. But for me, the idea that I'm going to paint something or draw something, or even do a collage, I mean, it's just fairly kind of mind blowing for me, because I just—that's not, yeah—that's not stuff that I do. And it's not stuff that I feel good at. So, it's good, it's a good challenge, because it's kind of getting me beyond my comfort zone, it's getting into areas doing things that I wouldn't do, unless I was, you know, in this group, and some—you know, Helen was saying, like, we're going to do collage today, or we're going to do whatever it might be today, I would never take it into my head to do that, unless somebody had organised it. So, it's good. That's a good thing. And I think it's good sometimes you push a little bit beyond what you normally do. And that's definitely something that, you know, the creative side of this group is doing for me. So that's wonderful. Thank you very much for that. And next is F.

F 53:45

Thanks, Joy. Yeah, it's been a really good space to be in, I think, especially with what's going on in the outside world. But I struggle to be in the digital space as well. If I had had my camera on, it would have been even worse for me to be quite honest, because I just fidget it so much. And what I noticed was the only time I've had the camera on in a Zoom session, I seem to be fidgeting even more than normal. So, I had to switch it off but like anybody that feels that they're finding it difficult navigating in a digital group setting, I definitely would say you're not alone. As much weirder thing to not be able to see people's body language and all those different things that we would have if we were in the room together. Like it's totally true it is a different type of setting. But I do think I've experienced a lot of positive stuff from it, because maybe it's not even what we've talked about during the session. But maybe later on in the two weeks, between the sessions that things have come to me or I've wanted to write a few lines about anything. So, it's been an interesting experience for sure. I can see the scope for something really nice to continue in whatever way that people would like. And I liked what you were saying Helen and about the consciousness-raising rules feeling maybe difficult, because there—it does feel counterintuitive. But there's something in that as well. So, it would be interesting to actually work out how helpful they are, I think having managed to navigate these challenges in a group setting. I'm still here and you haven't kicked me out yet. So, I'm assuming that I've managed to navigate my challenges. But yeah, I think for me, because I'm at a stage in my life, I've wanted to go back to journaling, and I've wanted to use my art on an even more therapeutic way than I already do. There's been something really synchronistic about the timing of this group for me as well. So, I've been really appreciative of that. And, like Joy was just saying, it's really nice to hear other people's perspectives or experiences on things. And for me, it's nice to be in a group of women as well, because throughout my life, I've not naturally been in amongst groups of women, I've usually been in very male dominated groups of friends, or cultural circles. So, this is a wee bit new to me as well. But, yeah, it's been a really good experience overall, I would say. And there was two things I thought about as topics that if other people were into maybe we could look at some point. But resilience and empowerment came to my mind when I was listening to Pauline and Joy talk. So, but I'll pass over to Anonymous, now.

Anonymous 57:04

Hi. I found these sessions really good. Unlike a lot of people, I find Zoom better. And thank you F for the idea of keeping the camera off, because I actually listen better when I'm doing something with my hands. So, I put my camera off, so you can't see me drawing or colouring or whatever. But I am still listening. And I quite like the rules to know what to do, because I don't always know what to do in social situations. And I like the going round in a circle, so that I know it's my turn to speak. But as you have heard a lot today, I get quite uptight and pernickety about the rules. So, I get worried about breaking them, even if it's very slightly? And I hope I haven't upset anyone. And I hope that I'm not the reason anyone decided to leave the group. Sorry, I don't know if I've covered everything. I don't think I know what else to say.

Lesley 58:28

Like Anonymous and I like the rules because they give me room to breathe. Because you have to think about your responses. It's not necessarily automatic, where it's potentially a free for all and people really aren't listening or are perhaps making judgments very quickly. Whereas when everyone is given their space to express themselves without judgement,

without comment, it's quite mindful, there's a breathing space there and I quite liked that. And I've never been in a women's group before, so this is a new experience for me, which I'm quite enjoying. And I've never used Zoom in this way, it's always been formal meetings. I've used the Zoom format for. Informal it tends to be through WhatsApp. And I certainly like the, you know, the going round in a circle because everybody is getting a voice. It's not he—or she, sorry, who speaks loudest, or most frequently. There's an equality there, which I like. And there's—Zoom gives an equality as well, because it makes some people's participation possible. Which wouldn't have been before if—by distance, or by mobility, or by being able to, you know, with—if I can use you as an example, Anonymous and F, not feeling forced that they have to show themselves all the time, it's just as meaningful that they are—their presence is there in the way in which they choose it to be not how somebody else chooses it. Over to Dorothy now.

Dorothy 1:00:57

I think, I can very much relate to everything that everybody said. And sometimes when you're the last person its good, because it gives you time to think about what you want to say. And then on the other hand, you think, well, everything has been said. But I think, for me, this is, this has been an experience where I have enjoyed and, I know Joanne's not here, but I came to this group to take part in it as well as to support Joanne and I would say that as well, she wouldn't mind me saying that here. It's just a shame that she's not able to be at this session. I know she has enjoyed it, but I'm speaking for me, not her. I think, as others have said before, it's good to have the rules because like Anonymous, I like to have rules, I like to have good boundaries and to know what I can and can't do. And having been on so many Zoom sessions over the past year, as we all have, this has been quite refreshing to know that I'm—it's a different experience. And it's one where it's very comfortable. I've written down a lot of what you've said and picked out some of the words that I can relate to as well. You know, the enriching experience, deep listening. That's been a challenge for me, because my eldest daughter once accused me of not listening properly to her when she was like a—late primary age, she was telling me a story, and being a busy mum with three children. I was in the middle of something and she wanted to tell me this story, and she's just halfway through, she says, mum, you're not listening. And I wasn't. And my listening skills are not always the best, I have to work really hard. You know, I miss a lot of information. So probably, for me, that's been a big challenge, because my mind's, sometimes elsewhere, as it was at that moment when Fiona said to me, quite right, you know, because she was right. I wasn't listening. So, yeah, I think that's me. Thanks.

Helen 1:04:19

Thanks so much, everyone. That's really, really great to hear. Like, I feel like we have finessed our kind of way of working with the rules of the consciousness-raising, particularly like the first three sessions to kind of get a way that—it does that thing of holding the space for people but without—Yeah, with the opportunity for people to know where they are within it. So that's really useful for me to know, like, what specific parts of it haven't worked for you all. For me, like listening to other people's experiences, just been really, really fascinating kind of from such a range of different kind of perspectives and, lives that everyone's led, like I always finding that really, really interesting and inspiring. And then, like, drawing a lot of kind of knowledge and understanding from listening to other people's experiences. So I think we said, we do these five sessions, and then kind of see where we're

at. We're at four o'clock now. So we'll maybe have a little break for a wee cup of tea for 10 minutes or so. I'm trying to get more—F and Joy who weren't here last week, we did a few—we did a poll, we did this slido word cloud thing as well. So we're going to try another poll, which just let me see if—Oh, that's not it.

F 1:05:57

Sorry, I was just gonna say that sounds fancy, and I missed it. I'm gutted (laughter).

Helen 1:06:03

So, I'm just gonna launch a little poll. So, basically, it'd be great if people wanted to continue meeting and like, I just looked at the kind of calendar and I think, you know, this a similar—five more every other week sessions before we kind of hit into the summer period. So, I'm proposing that for those who would like to continue meeting that we do another meeting every other week, until kind of—I've forgotten when it is like kind of middle of June, I suppose, my life is dictated by the schools, so probably just the kind of final week before the school's break. So, I'm just going to pop a poll on that. You can enter in like, if you'd like to continue meeting and if this particular time and session works for you, or if there are other ones that do, and it'll all be done anonymously. So, if—it is totally fine, people are unable to continue meeting. So, if people want to pop their answers in those you can you're welcome to tick as many different slots as work for you. And we'll maybe break till quarter past four, for a time for comfort break in a tea break. Joanne did text me there to say she's sorry that she can't make it. She says she's not getting five minutes to herself with childcare.

Anonymous 1:07:51

See the Wednesday slots, it couldn't be just a tiny bit later could it? The lunchtime one, the one from half twelve.

Helen 1:08:00

What time works for you on Wednesdays Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:08:04

Maybe just one til three. Yeah.

Helen 1:08:09

Yes, I'm sure we can—I have to pick my kids up at three but I'm sure we could make it like five to three or something. Yeah, because I'm aware that people are going back to work and things.

Anonymous 1:08:22

Sorry.

Helen 1:08:38

So if you filled out the poll, and then you're welcome to turn your cameras off and have a little break and we'll meet back at quarter past and—oh, yeah, everybody's done it. End the poll. Great. Okay, right. See you all in a wee while. Thanks.

F 1:08:54

I'm back as well Helen.

Helen 1:19:47

Oh hiya, that's good thanks. My kids have just arrived back we've got like a little hatch between our kitchen and dining room and a little face just appeared at it and they've quickly shut it again (laughter).

F 1:20:04

Just checking you're there. Even if she can't talk to you as long as she knows you're in the house, I bet she feels better. That'll be what it is. When his mum, what is she doing? (laughs)

Helen 1:20:14

I know, I think we underestimate how comforting it is to know. Everybody who's supposed to be there is there?

F 1:20:22

For sure, especially in these kind of weird times as well. She's probably just making sure. Oh, yeah, she's definitely here. Maybe wouldn't be so bothered before. But that must be nice to be checked on, by the way, you don't get that when you've only got teddy bears (laughs).

Helen 1:20:38

Right, well, so, yeah, I was trying to think what would be a good way for us to go forward. So, like, to— Tuesday at three till five seems like the best time for people to meet. So, I think regularity and continue with a pattern seems good. So, I can let other people who are not able to make it today know that that's when we'll continue to meet and everybody's welcome if they would like to carry on joining to meet. And it's kind of hard to decide like, I feel like two hours—it is quite a long time on Zoom, but also to do too much of a kind of— don't want to over face us. Because I was aware like the Women's Library's opening soon, and when I can ever originally invited you all to be part of the group, we talked about looking at things within the archive and collection at the Women's Library kind of thinking about this duality between like personal experience, and then kind of other kind of other women's experiences and kind of campaigning material and different things like that. So, I'd wondered whether we could look at some of that material. But it's also really great to hear back from you all that both the kind of personal reflection has been something that you've enjoyed as well as the creative activities. So, my mind swithering—like how much can we— try to do three things I think in each session is probably beyond capacities, but maybe just have to see how things evolve. If we could just spend a little bit of time today, I would be really interested to kind of try and think about that shift between like personal life and kind of societal life or political life, like whether we could do a little circle where we kind of talk about any issues within society that people have a personal kind of interest or investment in so I suppose for me, like becoming a parent awoken—woke lots of my kind of understanding about the way society is—the inequities within society towards women like around childcare and working life and domestic duties and all these kinds of things that kind of can ripple out from that. So that was a bit of a kind of lightbulb moment for me. But I'm aware that there'll be lots of different things in different people's lives that you kind of feel personally and politically passionate about. Do people feel comfortable having a little round

in a circle? Talking about those types of things? Does that feel like—I'm getting little nod from Joy?

F 1:24:15

Yeah.

Helen 1:24:19

Shall I do another little list of names in the orders with my digital mixing up of them? A different order. Slightly different, not very well mixed, sorry. Joy, would you be happy to go first?

Joy 1:25:00

Yep. Yeah, you sort of, in a way summed up there already Helen on, I suppose what I'm really interested, I mean, I'm really interested in—everything, which is pretty much, I suppose, I think the whole of society, but everything that has impacted on women's lives and on why it is that men's and women's lives are still now so different. I mean, obviously, there has been, there have been vast changes and vast you know, shifts in the way that things happen in terms of being parents or getting access to education, or you know, lots of things have changed. But all the ways in which we have—all the things that we've experienced as girls, and then as young women, and then as older women, which have now which have kind of fashioned us if you like fashioned our lives, and have an impact on how we become who we become, we feel like I think all of that is interesting, and whether that's the influences that you had when you were a child, what the family dynamic was, things like school, which obviously you were talking about last time. Access to work, problems with—when becoming a parent or not becoming a parent and the whole childcare situation, which has changed vastly, you know, over the decades, as well, and experiences of that. All of that I think would be for me would seem would seem relevant. And the area of work as well, where there seems to have been quite a vast shift as well, I mean, just going just you know thinking, going back to my mother or my grandmother and thinking what their experiences of work would have been. Having children and then giving up work, and then maybe going back to work and now just seeing so many women who were supported by their mothers, they've continued with that—they've been able to continue with their careers, because their mothers are doing a lot of work. Sometimes it's the grandfathers as well, of course, but it often seems to be the grandmothers doing the childcare. So, there's that kind of sense of one generation of women supporting another, I suppose. I have a friend who whose her grandchildren are a bit older, I think. But when they were younger, she did an awful lot of childcare for her daughter and son-in-law. And she used to would say, you know, 'I'm doing this so that my daughter can have a good career' because her own career had been a bit kind of, you know, all over the place, because she didn't have much support in terms of childcare. So, she kind of sees that are giving something I suppose to the next generation. So yeah, all of those things, all of those things that touch, that's probably a bit kind of rambling, but all those things that touch on women's lives. And, you know, impact on the choices that they make, I think would be for me would be interesting to talk about and hear what other people have experienced. Pauline, over to you.

Pauline 1:28:03

Thanks, Joy. Likewise, that I think the first thing that came to my mind really was the issue of expectations of women in the workplace. And it's not necessarily relative to whether or not they have children. It's more about the expectation of the advancement of women's careers in the workplace. And I suppose that's partly founded on my own experiences of being a parent, being a mother, you know, and having to interrupt my career, you know, although I've always worked, but I had to take different positions because I wanted to go from full-time to part-time. So very, very much what Joyce and Helen have said already about the impact of parenting on how people perceive you in the workplace, and also what the opportunities are not withstanding that things have improved really dramatically over the years. But again, it's the expectation of people. So, I also think, parenting, motherhood, but also very much the impact of women in the workplace and just the expectations of the different genders, no matter whether you're a parent or not. And on to F now.

F 1:29:40

Thanks, Pauline. So, I actually chose not to have any children. But I'm the oldest of four siblings, and I did not have particularly good role models as parents unfortunately. But however, that kind of molded me, at age 15, to just know that I did not want to have children. And it is not because I do not love children, because I love children. They're brilliant. They're some of the easiest people for me to be with. So, I find them very refreshing and invigorating. But I could appreciate the difficulties that my parents were facing, trying to raise us four. Because we didn't have a lot of money at all, but we lived somewhere nice. So, I got a good education. But it just gave me a very, very deep and profound perspective on parenthood from such a young age. Because also, there's 11 years between me and my youngest sibling. And so, myself and my sister, who are the two oldest, we were kind of expected to help bring up the wee baby at points. So, I did a bit of parenting as a young teenager. And, yeah, I had a different understanding of it all. And just always knew that, I was not in a mentally stable enough place to actually look after a child. So, I did not sacrifice having children for a career in this situation it was actually to preserve my own mental health. But there's just something I appreciate the hard work that parents do so much. I have babysat for many, many friends over the years, provided childcare so that they can go and work while they've been in the process of leaving partners and things like that. So I can still appreciate a lot of the struggles that you would be talking about in those circumstances. But my viewpoint is probably a little bit different. But I just think that there's something in for me, like I was born in seventy—the mid the mid '70s, so, I know that there was women's revolutions going on, then. I come from a background that's very male dominated, male orientated culturally, it was, but now I'm older I see her misogynistic society in general has been while I've been growing up, and I'm really upset that as women as a gender, that we're not really as far forward as we could be. And that isn't because we've not been trying it's because the rest of—the other gender in our society has not been listening to us, because they have been the ones in charge. You know, I'm at the intersection of a lot of different places, not just being a woman. So, it's, I think I've got a really different perspective on things. But I just know how much in society we have been held back, excuse my swearing, but it's fucking disgraceful. And it isn't, because we've not been trying. And I think that we are not even allowed to recognise that because then the patriarchy would be absolutely fucked. They would have to give up their stance on their falsehoods that they've created about women. So, I may not have shared the same journey as any of you as far as a career or having kids has gone. But I really do understand that as women, we've been held

back a lot, by stuff that's not been our fault, or anything to do with us. So, I'm sorry, I've kind of rambled and went off the deep end a wee bit there. But I feel very passionately about this stuff. I was denied getting to do a lot of things as a child growing up, because I was constantly told girls don't do that. And in my culture, it was very much girls don't do that. But it was never anything bad. Stickle bricks, Lego, and wanting a pair of combat trousers, you know, nothing really harmful in any of that. But yeah, I think it would be interesting to hear everybody's, like, perspectives on these types of issues, too. I think that there's something really deep in that. I'll stop talking now and pass over to Lesley.

Lesley 1:33:54

Yeah. I think I'm probably interested in hearing women's voices. Because what F said is correct and what other people have said that women's voices aren't always heard, or their voices are distorted. And I think it's important that people who are not being heard or seen have a way in which that they're, they can be seen or their voice can be articulated. I was very fortunate that I had a very good role models in my parents. My mother was a working mother, from when I was— from when my sister and I were both young. And that's—and I was never told that as a girl or as a woman, I couldn't—certainly within the family—that I couldn't do this, that I couldn't do that, it was always 'okay, if you want to do that, right? We'll do it. We'll help you as much as we can, or else you go and do it yourself'. And it's only once you actually come out—for me anyway, once I kind of came out of that bubble, use you, I realise what you're really having to push against and I'm still having to push against. So over to Dorothy.

Dorothy 1:35:56

Thank you, Lesley. Listening to everybody, I have—I know I'm a passionate person. I'm passionate about my family. But I feel that as a young woman growing up in a family where I was very much loved. It was as if I hadn't listened properly to so many good words of advice. And I did my own thing. And I was—I kind of followed the crowd. And I didn't make many decisions for myself. And it's taken me probably quite some time until I can't—I don't want to talk for too long. I can't really give too many examples, but I did what I thought other people thought I should do rather than what I wanted to do a lot of the time. And therefore, it wasn't until I became a mother, I probably felt that I had more of a—I made more choices myself because I was—my husband went to sea a lot, and I raised my children quite a bit on my own. Like Lesley said, I am very much interested in women's voices, and the ones that I think—being an ALN tutor, for the past 20 years now, I have been very much interested in supporting women, and it has been mostly women, to do things and for them to have a voice you know and being that's my real passion and on top of the fact that I'm a woman of faith as well, that's also bigger than the passion side of things. So those two combined very much seeing women moving forward with their skills and, and having that special ingredient, you know, every now and again with somebody who sees that we can really move forward with their skills. So, hope that makes sense. Thank you.

Anonymous 1:38:51

When you asked Helen first of all about what we wanted to explore my answer was hidden disabilities or even just disabilities. Like I feel perhaps in my parents' generation people were just supposed to pretend they never had any difficulties that they didn't talk about their problems that they just put on a brave face and they managed and then if they weren't

like me and my parents and my family in that, they maybe resented people who had problems and admitted to it and somehow admitting problems is weak and stuff. I just think if more of people's issues were out in the open, we could all help each other a bit more. But also now as listening to everyone talking about parenting stuff, and things—it's a very complicated thing for me. I don't know if I could say like F, I chose not to be a mother. In fact, I'm not entirely sure how much of my life has ever been my choice. But—it's just not simple with me. And I'm just so glad that there was never any force involved and I just—I don't know how comfortable or how much I would be able to say or know how to articulate and parenting and activities that lead to parenting situations. Thank you.

Helen 1:40:43

Thanks everyone. There's a lot of things in there, I think, to unpack a guess about ourselves and about the society that we live in, and I suppose it is really interesting to think about how those two things intersect. So perhaps for next session, we could—I was looking back at the list of topics on the consciousness-raising, which hadn't really been looking at when we'd been kind of setting our topics and it does start with 'background experiences', and—Maybe a quite '70s thing, 'childhood training for your role as a woman'. But asking those questions, were you treated differently from boys? What toys did you have? What games did you play? What activities were you encouraged? Discouraged? What did you think it was going to be like to be a woman? I think we've covered some of those things today kind of talking about people's childhood experiences. But I think probably, we could do a session on that. And that would kind of bring up a variety of memories and experiences and kind of reflections as well. Both from our own—I suppose we're kind of a mix of—our own experiences of children, ourselves. And then people—our parents and grandparents and kind of like, I think thinking of that kind of cyclical kind of generational shift. I know was it Lesley or Pauline, who was kind of talking about the changes from their mother's experiences, to their grandmother's experiences, maybe actually it was Joy. I think that would be really interesting if people are up for that as a topic. And always, it's a thing that people can talk about things from their own experience, but you're not under any obligation to talk about anything. If people find things particularly uncomfortable or triggering, then you are at liberty to share with the group what you feel comfortable, and what you feel is going to add to your understanding of your own experience and not find too difficult, because I can appreciate that's not always easy, reliving things that people found difficult in the past. And then alongside that I'll maybe try and have a look in the Women's Library archives and things to see if we can have a little kind of think about some kind of types of campaigning things, rather than doing our creative activities. But I think I'm gonna just take a bit of time to digest as well, all the things that people have talked about today, which has been really useful to kind of see what's worked well and what people have particularly enjoyed from the sessions and my slightly slow brain will, hopefully process that all before. Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:44:34

Will you put up on the Padlet in at some point during the two weeks what the topic is? I know that you've said that I just haven't quite managed to understand that. Sorry.

Helen 1:44:45

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I will put that up on the Padlet. And I'll send it around to people as an email. So yeah, if we want to meet on Tuesday, the 20th of April. I'll put that in the chat.

Lesley 1:45:05

Helen, I'm just wondering when you're choosing the item, or when you're looking for something from the Women's Library, I guess, of course, what I'm trying to say is I'm slightly uncomfortable going down the childhood experience route. And whether it could be something maybe slightly wider. I'm thinking about if, if there was something from the Women's Library, which was related to—would be that would start a talking point, I guess, about childhood experiences, rather than having people to kind of maybe come forward. I don't know, I'm just putting that out there. It's a bit rambling.

Anonymous 1:46:13

Could speak about experiences that we feel that created us—formative experiences rather than saying a particular childhood experience, or whatever.

Helen 1:46:31

Yeah, what do people think formative experiences and kind of more broader?

Joy 1:46:42

So, you mean by that, that we wouldn't be necessarily talking about ourselves? And we're taking it away from the, from that kind of individual personal thing, which the consciousness-raising normally focuses on? Is that is that what you mean? Or did I misunderstood maybe Helen, what you meant there?

Helen 1:47:02

No. Yeah, I'm not sure really, whether we can kind of carry on our personal discussions alongside something more outward looking, whether the space in the sessions to kind of do that in like reflective on our own experience part and then look at things that exist within like either historical, creative, archival materials.

Joy 1:47:46

Would it work? I mean, I don't know if it would or not, would it work to have a bit of both. So, the people who are more wishing to do the more personal approach can do that, and anybody who wants to be more general or more broad can also be brought—I mean, it would give people the option, I suppose to do whatever they felt comfortable with. If they wanted something that was a bit more broad then that would be I don't know if that would work, though. That might not be what your kind of wanting to do.

Helen 1:48:17

I guess I'm keen for the group to evolve within a dynamic of the group and—

Anonymous 1:48:30

Often at Story Cafe when people talk about how they feel about passages that I've just been reading; they refer them back to their own personal experience. So, could it be something like maybe at the beginning of the session, we talk about a thing from the archive? Perhaps we could do the creative bit and then we could feedback on either if the item touched us in some way, or if it made us think about our own personal experiences.

Helen 1:49:09

Yeah, that sounds like a good idea. I guess perhaps we won't kind of fix our topic very definitively just now. And I'll give me a bit of time to kind of think about what people have said today and then also do a bit of research into what we might be able to look at because the Library's archive doesn't open until kind of early in May. So perhaps we'll continue on just doing kind of reflective sessions together and then move towards looking at some archival objects within the next couple of sessions. If that sounds alright. So is there anything anybody else anybody wanted to say or any thoughts about—Pauline.

Pauline 1:50:24

Yeah, I just wanted really to say one or two things about the group that I, when I've been thinking about it, I jotted a few things down, which I've not said when I did my bit all the circle earlier on and, and it was really a big thank you Helen to you for both being true to the methodology. But also affording us all as group members to be able to give your feedback and concerns and ideas. And I think the fact that you've had feedback about the way in which the group should move forward, you know, it is testament to how comfortable you've made us feel and I'm saying that from a personal perspective, and I suppose that in itself is made me feel very comfortable in the group, because I have felt that I've been listened to. I have valued the fact that I've been able to listen to others. I'm now sitting with my house cardigan on. So that shows you how comfortable I am. Because when I went to make my tea, my kitchen was so cold. And but also, I think the fact is that you've included all of those elements of technology. So, I haven't used the voting before, and I've not used this Slido, and so all of that effort that you've put in has been very clear. And so, for me, although I was saying that, you know, I'm—I don't really do arty things, I'm not very good at it. But I really, really appreciated the fact that it's given me more insight into the variety of things that I could be doing and how therapeutic it might be. And I just wanted to thank everyone in the group for the sharing and the listening and, you know, being part of the group. I am not going to carry on with the group. And it is mainly because ironically, I am going to be supporting my daughter with some childcare. And so, I'm not going to carry on with the group. But I have very, very much enjoyed and valued the time that have that have been with you. And I would plan to come and visit the Women's Library once it opens up. So, it might well be that if I come along and make see some of you in the flesh, but I think really yeah, I really just wanted to say a heartfelt thanks to everyone for this experience, which has really been quite profound. So, thank you, everyone.

Helen 1:53:28

Oh, that's really appreciated Pauline. Thank you for sharing that that's really generous. And [redacted], sent me a little note in the post, she returned the materials that I had sent her, and she said whilst the group wasn't really for her, she'd really appreciated everybody's contributions and kind of sharing. And yeah, just thanks to everybody for kind of coming with open hearts and minds. It's been really, really lovely sharing this couple of hours, the past few weeks together. And I think most of us are going to carry on meeting from the poll results, but hopefully we'll like create different opportunities to kind of maybe come together once things are lifted, and perhaps we could have a little kind of in real life get together whilst continuing on Zoom get together as well. So that's great to hear that you're supporting your daughter Pauline. So is there anything else anybody would like to share before I feel like we haven't fully concluded but I feel like that I don't want to kind of—I'm

just gonna take a bit of time to think about our next session, but I think that childhood experiences would be a good kind of starting point to, to take our next conversations and I'll think about whether we do some kind of archival things alongside that. And I will keep you all updated by email as to the plans. So, thanks everyone for your time and commitment. It's 10 to five, so happy to stick around and chat more informally or let people go and get on with the rest of their afternoons.

F 1:55:55

And just gonna say it's still sunny here. So, I'm sending you sunshine. sent in sunshine to you all. And I hope that you have a good rest of your week. And I'll see some of you soon and hopefully we could all meet in real life at the Glasgow Women's Library. Be nice to be back there. I've not been for ages. Yeah, take care. I'm gonna hang up now, okay.

Helen 1:56:19

Okay, thanks F. Bye.

Dorothy 1:56:35

Thanks very much, Helen. And all the best Pauline. We'll miss you.

Lesley 1:56:43

Thanks Helen, see you in two weeks bye.

Helen 1:56:46

Bye.

Lesley 1:56:46

Bye Pauline, all the best. Maybe when we meet up in real time, we'll—you'll come along just to say hello (laughs).

Helen 1:56:56

That'd be lovely.

Lesley 1:56:58

Okay, see you all in two weeks, bye-bye.

Helen 1:57:00

Take care.

SPEAKERS

Helen, F, Joy, Lesley, Anonymous

Helen 02:37

Hi Joy.

Joy 02:39

How are you?

Helen 02:40

Yeah, all right, thanks. How are you?

Joy 02:43

Yeah, not too bad. Not too bad actually I managed to go to the hairdresser's this week, which is quite useful.

Helen 02:48

Excellent. Me too.

Joy 02:51

Looking a bit neater. It was getting a bit long. Very long (laughter).

Helen 02:56

Yeah, no, it's good. It feels good.

Joy 03:00

Yeah, I know, it's quite interesting to have quite such long hair. Don't think it's been so well—I'm not sure it's ever been that long for me. So, it's quite interesting, a different experience.

Helen 03:12

Does it grow quite quickly? Had it grown quite a—

Joy 03:16

Well, it got quite—my hair tends to get quite thick. So, you know it was sort of—quite thick and kind of long, much longer than I remember. I actually had it, I think a couple of weeks ago, I actually had it in a ponytail, which I've not done—oh, I can't remember when I last did that (laughter). Someone was saying to me that she she's had quite short hair for quite a long time and having it longer, she was actually quite enjoying kind of the breeze in her hair and things. So, she's she was saying that she'd forgotten how that felt, which was quite interesting. She's got so used to it just being short and—

Helen 03:48

Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, my mind's been shot for a long time. But remember, like, I mean, as a child, I had it very long at one point. And I remember like, kind of tickling it down your back. That was a really nice feeling but there's no chance that's getting anywhere near there.

Joy 04:07

You're not going to go back to that you don't think?

Helen 04:09

I don't think I've got the patience (laughs).

Joy 04:17

Short hair somehow feels maybe just more manageable, more practical. All of those kinds of things, I suppose. Yeah.

Helen 04:24

Yeah. Yeah, it does. Hi, Lesley.

Lesley 04:29

Hello Helen. Hello Joy.

Joy 04:31

Hi Lesley.

Lesley 04:32

How are you? Yes, good.

Joy 04:35

We're just talking about hair.

Lesley 04:37

Oh, the 6th of May. I'm getting—I've got an appointment.

Helen 04:44

Yes, Joy and I both had our hair cut since we saw you last.

Joy 04:49

Big event.

Lesley 04:51

Hmmm. Yeah. Big event (laughter).

Joy 04:56

Yes, it must be quite interesting being a hairdresser or barber at the moment, I mean, seeing all these people coming in with potentially quite wild hair and stuff that they've done to it. That's not turned out very well and all of that.

Lesley 05:09

Yeah.

Helen 05:10

My hairdresser was—comes to the house and he was messaging everyone saying yes, yes, I'll start booking you all cut all your mullets off (laughter). He was kind enough to not to comment too closely on the way I'd kind of hacked at mine (laughter). Hi F, are you alright?

F 05:40

Hey, am I right?

Lesley 05:44

Hi

F 05:45

I've got the computer in a different place, just now so I'm not sure if I'm quieter or louder.

Helen 05:51

I can hear you perfectly well, I would say that sounds good.

F 05:55

No worries. You might hear a dog barking and I've had to open the window a little bit to get but fresh here. But I am here, yes (laughter).

Helen 06:05

We are a smaller group today. I think we're only waiting on Anonymous. Dorothy just messaged half an hour or so ago saying she was really sorry; she can't make it. She's just back at work this week, and kind of faced with the overwhelming workload of being back having been off. So— She'll hopefully join next time. And, who else? So, Sarah hopes that she can carry on coming, but she has just been promoted at work. So, she's got additional workload as well. And she's gonna kind of wait till that settles down and then see if she can join back in. And Joanne is back working more hours at work. So, she is not able to come anymore, which is a shame.

F 06:29

Aw bless.

Lesley 07:04

Shame, yeah.

Helen 07:05

But yeah, it does really feel like we're kind of on the cusp of changing things—of things changing and that's obviously had a kind of effect on people's lives and what they feel able to do. And there's another woman who is an intern at the Women's Library called Fatima, who I met a few weeks ago at an event. Who's interested in joining and I wondered what people think—thought about somebody new coming into the sessions.

Lesley 07:45

I don't mind I've got no problem with that.

F 07:49

No, me either. I really love her name is well, beautiful.

Helen 07:58

Yeah, I'm not sure where she is from, she is maybe Middle Eastern. I'm not sure. I'm going to speak to her next week. Ahead of if you're all okay with that coming to the next session.

Lesley 08:12

Yeah.

Helen 08:13

I think that might be interesting to have someone new.

F 08:18

I was gonna say as well. Is not there a way that Joanne could take part and like doing some journal exercises or stuff even though she, like can't join us online at the time? Because is it Joanne, I'm thinking of that? You're just saying is back at work?

Helen 08:34

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I wondered whether there was a way to kind of like, share what we've been doing. The kind of topics we've been talking about and invite people who've been part of a group to take part in those in their own time kind of thing. That's, that is a good idea.

Lesley 08:55

Do you feel people use the Padlet Helen? Is that a way for them to interact?

F 09:03

True.

Helen 09:04

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I could keep—there's kind of flurries of activity on there. There's kind of a few comments appear, and then it kind of dies down a bit. And then I suppose it depends if there's new stuff going up there for people to comment on, perhaps I need to have a bit of a kind of reorganise and put some fresh things up there. But yeah, that could be a good way. Both of those could be good things to kind of keep people hooked in. Yeah, because I kind of got the feeling that Pauline was a bit sad that she wasn't able to carry on, but it was just—

F 09:38

For sure.

Helen 09:38

—circumstance that meant—there's just literally not that kind of time to be here.

Lesley 09:45

It means that people can interact, you know, when it suits them. When like for Pauline, when she's feeling strong enough to be able to be online.

Helen 09:57

Yeah.

Lesley 09:58

She can, you know, she can do some interaction there. And the same with Joanna when she's not got the kids not got work (laughter).

F 10:09

Hi, Anonymous.

Lesley 10:11

I think it would be good to keep the people who have—we have been with kind of—on—engaged. Yeah. Probably would be a shame to lose that thread.

Helen 10:27

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I agree. I'll see if I can keep hooking them in. How are you Anonymous?

Anonymous 10:41

Okay, yeah. I'm fine.

Lesley 10:47

Hi Anonymous.

Anonymous 10:49

Hiya.

Helen 10:52

Shall we do a usual little like, once around our intimate group saying how people are doing this week? Do I need to do—I won't put the names in the chat. I will just like if one person finishes, they can say I pass to somebody else. Would anybody like to start and also happy to start if nobody fancies it? Okey dokey. Yes, I feel good this week, it does feel like a change is afoot with the change in restrictions. And being—the travel restriction being lifted like meant that last day of the school holidays on Friday went to the beach with the kids, which was nice. And then we went up to Loch Fine on Saturday. So, it felt like—just a kind of breath of fresh air and kind of change of scene. And it was it was really nice to be out of the city. I also feel that kind of pace of things is shifting. And I think, you know, talking about the configuration of the group, like, I think that's had an effect on who's able to come and I think maybe have a slight anxiety about things ramping back up in pace, again. I have not been sleeping particularly well, the last few nights, maybe that's the kind of realisation that I have almost in this end of the second year of my PhD, and I'm not quite sure how far along I'm getting but I suppose it's just shows how change is such a big thing for us, like all the time, like trying to try to deal with it as a challenge, but just keep processing it a little chunks. My youngest daughter has stopped saying quite so frequently she hates herself,

which actually makes a big difference like so that was like a couple of days over the holidays where it felt like everybody in the house was like feeling down and low and like it was hard to lift everybody's mood up. Yesterday she did this little drawing—I suggested she drew these little emojis and said if you're not feeling good, why don't you—so I think she drew the kind of straight faced one first. And then she drew one with a little bit of a happy and then the sad one and it seemed to kind of help her to say we kind of feel all those emotions at the same time. And like just recognising that that was possible. And even though she was wanting to voice that she felt bad about herself like that was actually just in the mix. So, I felt like that was an a nice thing for her to be able to do and helps me vicariously imagining these things to process my own emotions. Okay, I will pass to Lesley.

Lesley 14:17

I guess I'm kind of okay, about coming out of lockdown. I'm not anxious about it. I suppose because I'm retired, it's not as—it's not quite as fundamental for me, the changes. I don't feel a huge impact with—I've still been able to go out every day and I've quite enjoyed that. Peace and quiet. I'm going to (laughs) maybe not take so kindly to it, perhaps being as busy again. I kinda like being out in my own space in the outside and the openness. But yesterday, I felt absolutely exhausted. I don't know why I just—I don't know whether it was—I don't suffer from pollen or whatever, but I just wondered if there was something was affecting me yesterday anyway. I've bounced back today. I've got more energy (laughs). That's me, I'll pass to Anonymous.

Anonymous 15:32

I've caught him, Lesley's exhaustion I think, but I know why because I was cleaning the Library yesterday. So thankfully, it was the second day I was in, so I didn't have to Hoover everywhere like I had to do last week. And I, well, I used the flat mop, because I hadn't got the non-toilet mop bucket. And yeah, and thankfully, yesterday Wendy was in because not Sunday, last week, but Sunday last week, it was very hard to sleep because, frankly, every time I tried to sleep, I was thinking about the layout of the Library. The fact that was going to be in on my own, and all sorts of so if this is the last week, you'd be lucky to be getting this much sense out of me. But I'm thinking what else what I could possibly say but in Helen talking about the wee emojis and stuff, I've always found drawing and colouring and stuff very relaxing. But this woman, well, I'm not sure if it's a woman on the cover. But the woman who start—who runs this with her partner was on in Story Cafe, one of the digital ones, a wee while ago. So, I got that from Etsy, but also got—there's these wee—Well, I thought they were going to come with quotes in them. But they didn't have any quotes in them. There for you to put your own quotes in. Because it's all about you finding your own way to cope. But I love this kind of dotted paper. So, I have had—Well, this is one with an actual quote that I've written, and I've been having a great time with—like exploring patterns and stuff. So that's been my coping. Mind you it's supposed to be quotes. It's supposed to be written and I've just make shapes, but hey. And that's what I've been. Sorry, I needed to pass to someone didn't I? F. I'll pass to F.

F 17:43

Thanks, Anonymous. I'm not really sure how I feel about coming out of lockdown it's been a bit weird being in places and they are busier again. But I don't even think that's what bothers me. I've seen a lot of rudeness coming back into people up here. Unfortunately,

where I live, so that's been about rubbish. But it's been really nice to be outdoors in the green spaces again and see the changes that have happened to the landscape that I would usually get to see much more regularly. But I have been giving thought as to like, how will I continue my arts practice, and will I still keep doing all the voluntary stuff that I was doing before because I used to travel a lot just up and down like the UK and I'm realising how much value that being in a digital space can actually hold for you. So, I don't know it's been a strange week I felt a lot of tiredness too so maybe it's a collective thing. But for sure it is well aggravated by more pollen just I have to take tissues everywhere with me just now but it's all good. It's worth it if you're getting to see the flowers and the animals for me anyway. But yeah, coming out a lockdown is a weird one. I think it's good to be getting back to more familiar places and routines. I can totally relate to that. But I've really enjoyed being outdoors a lot with peace and quiet that's what I've been seeking out. So yeah, it's been weird, and I'll pass to Joy. Thank you. Yeah, I think I can relate to quite you know quite a lot of what everybody's been saying there. I don't think I'm feeling particularly anxious about the coming out of lockdown. But I think there's a certain—kind of in the back of my mind, I'm thinking it is obviously a period of change and transition. So, I suppose I'm thinking to myself, what are the things that maybe I don't want to go back to? So, I think, because a lot of people are talking about all when we get back to normal, it will be good. So, I'm kind of thinking now, maybe there were things I was doing before that I want—to don't, I don't want to do any more. Or maybe I want to do less of them, or maybe want to do more of them. So, it's kind of maybe enjoying the greater freedoms and being able to go outside Glasgow, I mean, all of that is really great. I'm really enjoying that. But at the same time thinking, I don't want to just flick a switch and think now it's going back to how it was before. But I think there might be things from this whole period that I actually quite appreciate, and I enjoy, and I maybe want to keep them. So, it's about yeah, it's about change and transition, but also about, what else have you discovered? What else are you now doing that you maybe don't want to let go of? And there might be other things that I do want to let go of. So, it's—yes, it's about weighing all of that up. And I think the other thing I'm thinking is, I was just thinking back to a year ago, in sort of March 2020, I remember there being an awful lot of uncertainty. And for me, anyway, anxiety, and this all seemed very—well obviously for everybody—big and new and uncertain. And yet somehow, we got into a new way of living in a new routine. So, I'm kind of thinking that come out coming out of it is maybe going to be similar in the sense that initially, it feels a bit anxiety inducing and maybe a bit uncertain. But through that process of transition, we'll get back to another way. And it will—as I think various people said it's all changed. So, it's just about going through that process of change, to get to somewhere, hopefully, that you want to be. So that's what's happening for me, I think at the moment. Thank you.

Helen 21:56

Thanks, everyone. F Have you got your hand up there? Do you what to—

F 22:05

Yeah, please. I just forgot to say that I also loved the drawings of the wee emojis to express your feelings, and love that Anonymous had turned her diary into patterns and pictures, because the diary I've got for this year, it has wee emojis in everyday printed in it every day. And you can circle which one you feel like, so I just remembered that there. Thank you.

Helen 22:34

Anonymous, did you want to add something?

Anonymous 22:37

Yeah, I'm not giving up my face coverings very easily. I think I might be using them a lot. Especially for pollen, and also the Sterimar, the hay fever spray and allergy spray is working for me quite well. So, you might want to try it.

F 23:00

Sterimar sorry, did you see Anonymous?

Anonymous 23:03

Yeah. I think I found out about it in France because my sister used—I think got prescribed it for like, pollen and [unintelligible] and that, but it's advertised on the telly now as well. But you get all sorts of different ones, you get just one for cleaning your nose, and you get it for like allergies and hay fever and stuff. I got mine from Holland and Barrett it but I think you can get it on Amazon and other places.

Helen 23:37

Okay, well, thanks everyone for sharing how you are feeling. It is interesting, that we're all kind of—I suppose there is such a collective thing going on with the pandemic, isn't it? It's unsurprising that there are kind of shared things across the spectrum. I think there probably does exist to some extent all the time. So, our topic this week. So basically, this week, we're going to do a bit of consciousness-raising circle looking at childhood experiences. And then—which picks up on something that F was saying earlier, we're going to try some journaling and writing as a kind of way of reflecting on what we've talked about. So that's our kind of two activities this week. So, let me just post the link. I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna post the link to the Padlet in the chat, because that always has the group agreement there. We've not visited that in a while, but just to kind of—that's there if anybody ever needs to look at that. And if anybody ever wants to chat some more about that, we can do that one session, but feel like we're working relative well within that. The last—not the last session, but the one before we use this software, I think F and Joy weren't here, we use this software Slido for doing our summing up, which was quite interesting, which is a kind of, I think it was like a word cloud generating thing on it that we used. So, we did the kind of circle where we talked about things. And then we did our creative activity where we did the mark making. And then we came back and did the word cloud thing after that. So, I think we'll maybe follow that pattern because it was quite, it was quite nice to have a kind of break between talking about our topic and then doing the summing up. So, it's really quite a straightforward software, and I'll post the link and things in it. But basically, it's kind of like, just—I think we did it like five—maximum of five words each last time. So, if you kind of keep that in mind that are summing up, we're not gonna do like, around in a circle, but we'll just type things into that and see how that goes. Okay, so childhood. I copied and pasted the info from the New York Radical Feminists, which I thought was quite good to kind of have those little prompts of 'childhood training for your role as a woman', which sounds quite kind of '70s feminist, but hey, but I thought, yeah—so and then it was like, 'were you treated differently from boys? What toys did you have? What games did you play? What activities were encouraged or discouraged? And what did you think it was going to be like—

What did you think it was going to be like being a woman?' So those are just kind of prompts that people could respond to or not in kind of thinking about their childhood experiences. Joy, it also made a nice suggestion that people might want to bring along objects that connected to their childhood in some way as another kind of prompt. I don't know if anybody did decide to bring along anything. Joy's got something. Anonymous' got something. Oh, exciting. Okay, okay, cool. Well, I will post a list of names in the chat for our order, randomly generated or thereabouts. And we'll see how we go. Where is the chat? So Joy your first off, if that's okay with you?

Joy 27:54

Yeah, that's fine. Okay. Yeah, so thinking about this, I was kind of thinking back a little bit to my grandmother, my maternal grandmother. And remember, my mum, she was she was the youngest of five, she had four brothers. And then she was the youngest. And she always used to say that she I think she'd slightly resented, or when she was growing up, kind of being considered to be the only girl and that there were things that she had to do because she was the girl and I think there was a quite a strong sense of her being kind of, you know, expected to do you know, cooking or washing up or, or whatever it might have been, because she was a girl. And I don't know if it's because of that, but I think she was not, as a mother, I don't think she was somebody who—well, I think she possibly was deliberately going against that, in a sense with her own daughters in that we did do things around the house, to, you know, help out with chores and stuff like that, but there wasn't that sense of you're a girl, so you've got to do this. So, whether or not that was kind of subconscious or unconscious, or completely conscious on her part, I'm not sure. But I don't think there was in that sense, you know, an expectation of the girls have to do certain things, because they're girls. There was probably a slight difference with my brother who was the eldest, but I think that was more to do with the fact that he was away at school and there was a kind of a different relationship. I think, I don't think that was really, well my perception is, it's not so much a gender thing was more sort of his position in the family, I think that made a difference as to you know, how he joined in on things. In terms of games and toys and things, I think thinking about that I think we did we certainly did have dolls. I remember my younger sister and I were very keen on dressing up. We had big, you know, dressing up thing, and we used to like to put on, you know, all kinds of fancy clothes and stuff. And we used to play in the garden with that was quite a lot of that that went on, which was a little bit of a kind of playing at being grown going up, I suppose to a certain extent as sort of a fantasy side of it. But there was also quite a lot of encouragement of a lot of activity, like bikes, going out on our bikes, and being very independent kind of going—where we lived, when we were mainly growing up was relatively rural at the time. So, it was a lot of kind of going out on your bikes and kind of being quite independent and discovering places around and about with my sisters and friends. So, there was a lot of activity and kind of active things were really encouraged as well. And I couldn't really remember kind of instances of, you know, being told you shouldn't do that, because you're a girl, or you ought to do that, because you're a girl. It was more, I think it was quite open. Even though I think both my parents probably did grow up with fairly strongly gendered roles. I mean, as I say, my mum, I think she did have that. And I think to some extent, my dad as well. I think they did probably try to avoid imposing too much on us. Although, you know, it's obviously always there. As I say, we we did have things like dolls and stuff like that, definitely, remember that. Yeah, and I think the thing about what did I think it would be like to be a woman, this was quite

interesting to think about this, the things that came up for me with, when I came to this was I think what I got from my mum as sort of observing her life and observing what was going on with her and a little bit, the relationship with her mother, which was not a very close one, I don't think, was the importance of choice. I think I often got the sense that a lot of women didn't get choices in their lives, for whatever reason, because they'd been expected to get married or because they'd had children, without necessarily having chosen to have them. I mean, lots—So what I picked up was that women didn't always get choices about things, and I wanted to have choices, or that might have been a first thing. Kind of a little bit linked to that, another thing was, I think I got the sense of, I would like quite a lot of independence as well. And again, I think was the kind of a sense of women not always being as independent as they might want to be. I suppose already between my grandmother's generation and my mother's generation, and then mine, and they were already sort of changes there. But that kind of sense that women weren't always or hadn't always been as independent as they wanted to be. And that might be an issue, and that would be something that was important to me. And I think—this hadn't kind of occurred to me before. But I think those two things choice and independence, I think, linked in my mind to money. Not that money—money wasn't kind of a—and I think money is quite a fascinating topic as well, actually. It's something that really occurred to me in this way before, but I think money was kind of in the background quite a lot with my parents not that there was a lack of money. But I think my mum was quite often—she was very keen on having her own money. Which is partly why she worked, I think I mean, it's partly because she had to, partly she liked to have her own money. She didn't want to constantly be saying, 'Can I have money for x? Or can I have money for y?' And I think I also picked up that sense of if you've got your own money, you're more independent, and you've got more choices, and you can do things. If you're kind of dependent on somebody, a man, a husband, whoever it might be. It limits you. So, I think I was kind of picking up something about that as well which hadn't necessarily—maybe probably wasn't obvious to me at the time, but I can kind of see it a bit now. And then fin—You know, finally on what I thought it was going to be like to be a woman I think thinking back to my mum. What stays with me quite a lot is its hard work. I just feel I just have an image of her just working a lot. I mean, she worked outside the home, she worked in the home. And I just think I kind of—it makes me a bit sad now think about it, that she actually, yeah, I don't know, just at weekends, she just seemed to be, she was doing the washing and she was doing shopping and she was doing the ironing. And it just seemed to be kind of like endless. So, I think it was a sense of there's a lot of hard work, you want to make sure you've got some choice, you want to make sure you've got some independence and money being kind of not the key, but part of the answer to some of that if you like. And then just briefly because I don't want to talk for too long, I'm just going to say something briefly about this, this wonderful hat, which hopefully you can see. It's a bit faded now but anyway. Yeah, this was just this is a hat that belonged to my eldest sister, it's actually still got her name in. For some reason it was bought for her, probably my mum bought it for her. And she didn't like it, she wasn't really into hats, didn't really wear them. And I think she hardly ever wore this. And then for some reason, it kind of came to me. Because with my sisters, we had this thing where, you know, clothes used to get handed down. So, you know, things would go down from my older sister to me to my younger sister, and you can kind of see them in the photos. Each of us getting, you know, the dress that somehow managed to survive, I don't know how many years. Anyway, this came to me. And for whatever reason, I totally took to it. I just used to wear it all the time, I was probably about eight, nine,

something like that. And they're—were kind of pictures of me, for example, in the summer wearing this hat, which is kind of bizarre. I mean, you wouldn't normally be wearing, you know, a summer dress and a woolly hat. But I just really liked it, there was something about it that I just totally took to. And what I was thinking—when I kind of was looking at the hat again and thinking about it, I thought why, what kind of comes back to me about it, I think the first thing that comes back to me is I'm sort of quite pleased with myself that at the time, I just did what I wanted to do. I didn't—I mean, I didn't bother about people thinking it was weird, or, you know, it's August, why she is wearing a—or whatever. I just wasn't bothered, I just thought I want to wear it. I like it. I think it's a great hat, whatever. And I just kind of—So looking back, I'm thinking, you know, good on you. You did what you wanted to do. And why not? You know, so that I'm kind of quiet, yeah, quite pleased myself in that way. And then the other thing that I quite pleased with thinking back was kind of an admiration of my parents, because at no point did, they say to me, don't be ridiculous, why are you wearing that? Or, you know, you shouldn't be wearing it, it's a boiling hot day, or whatever. They I think they just very sensibly thought to herself, she'll stop wearing it when she's, you know, had enough of it. And, you know, obviously, I'm not wearing it anymore, so obviously (laughs), otherwise, perhaps I could, but, you know, they just thought to themselves, it's obviously a bit of a thing. It's obviously important for her just now. And they took it really seriously. And you know, the hat got washed regularly, because, you know, it needed it. And it was just looked after. And it was, you know, it had an important role at a certain time, but they just let it run its course. And it did. And you know, it was it became a bit of a kind of a bit of a legend in the family really the hat. So yeah, that was that was me, me and the hat. Passing on now. Thank you very much everybody for listening and passing on to F.

F 37:54

Thanks, Joy. So, childhood is a mad one for me, it's an interesting one, I think, especially in terms of like gender and gender roles and what was expected of me, because I'm from a mixed heritage background. So, my dad's side it was, that's the not white side. And culturally, they very much have very clear roles as to who does what in a house, and what is expected of women and what is not expected of women. And I think I've kind of said a few times in the group as we've chatted, I kinda I had to fight really hard, just to be myself, and just to be accepted as a woman. In the way that I was like and really nothing that bad. Just very, very different from what my dad was expecting. So, I think he was a bit disappointed because I'm the oldest you know, but it seems he was probably already disappointed because I was a girl. So, it's a kind of interesting dynamic to come from. But like, I kind of grew up being a bit of a tomboy, like I say, I'm the oldest so I was felt closer to my dad, than my mum really growing up and my sister, there's only two years between her and I she was like a very girly girl. And I was not like that I used to play a lot of football. And I really enjoyed when my two wee brothers eventually came along over time because I got to play with some really cool toys that they had, that I was not allowed to get. So, like, there is definite upsides for me to having siblings, I found that really, really cool. But I was definitely treated different from my brothers overlooked and excluded a lot because of our gender. It's quite, I don't know, it's an interesting way to be. It's like an extreme form of how it's kind of been in Western society anyway, but it's very—I found it to be—it's obviously a lot less hidden, it's very in your face. And if you question things, you're just told to "shut up" and "no" a lot and "stop being difficult". So, I don't know there's, for me something in it. And not

to be like dramatic, but there's an element of, you know, the way when you read about like Victorian history and the way that women were treated back then, and maybe even times before that, because my history is pretty bad. But you know, before women had any kind of rights at all in society, and so much was expected of us on a daily basis, and our life basically, for me, that side of my upbringing is definitely got a connection, like the way that the things that were expected of me, it was all really, really strict and quite similar in a lot of ways. So that was an interesting thing to go back to and think about. And I'm still here, despite it all, so it hasn't really mattered that way. But it just takes a lot longer for you to be able to feel like your own person, I think when you can't express yourself fully when you're younger. So, it's nice to hear that your parents didn't ever ridicule you for wearing, anything Joy, like that warms my heart so much. I had to fight for everything and was just not allowed to do or wear a lot of stuff. So yeah, it's been an interesting one to think about. But the other thing that kind of threw me back to when I was thinking about, like an item from my childhood, I couldn't find it, but I did keep one Barbie doll. So, me and my sister were given a lot of female gender specific toys throughout our childhood. But I got into Barbie dolls. And not because I liked to actually playhouse with the dolls. I just really, really loved to make clothes, and put them in different outfits and stuff like that and do their hair. Despite me being a tomboy. I actually really enjoyed that side of childhood, like dressing up my dolls and making their hair nice. And kind of extends to the way I am myself usually as a person too. So yeah, a Barbie for me was more about the clothes I could put on it, and what hairstyles I could put in. And I drove my mum absolutely mad, she said, because I would always be like making outfits for her—for this collection of dolls. But like out of bits of fabric and stuff. She was like 'I've bought all these expensive clothes, why do you keep using scraps of fabric', I remember the conversation quite vividly. That was quite funny as well. But then also made me think about in childhood, I was really, really into doing magic tricks and sleight of hand and was maybe starting to learn how to do card tricks. I've kinda of just always had a fascination with stuff like that from a young age. So, the only other toy I would say I still have from childhood is this one magic trick, that it's a plastic puzzle. And it's the only one I've kept out of the three different magic sets that I had. So that was quite nice to think about that it sits on a shelf in my living room. But yeah, that that was really good em. And I think—what did I think it was going to be like, being a woman? I just wrote a couple of notes here quickly (laughs). I was quite a cynical child, so please forgive me, everybody. But I remember thinking that being a woman didn't seem like the kind of ideal that I was interested in. And I felt very much that I wanted freedom and independence from a young age, but particularly around what I could and couldn't do, because I did keep getting told 'no, you can't do that. Because you' said I would say 'Why?' 'Because you're a girl. No, you can't have your hair like that'. 'Why?' 'Because you're a girl. No, you can't dress like that'. 'Why?' 'Because you're a girl'. So, you know, it ruled my life a lot. I've been able to appreciate the humour in it all doing this exercise and thinking about these things. I'm trying to think if there was anything else, I had—yeah, so like even in my own household, my dad obviously expected my mum to do a lot. And she's from a Scottish background, so I think this was a wee bit of a culture shock to her perhaps, although, in her own household it was probably still quite like that anyway, because like I say, I do think in Western society, there's still been a lot expected of women just because they are women. So, I did see a lot of like, imbalance at home as well. You know, and it just kind of strived—pushed me in to not want to live like that. As I've said before about other things but yeah, childhood was an interesting time for me. I read a lot when I was outside, I would sit outside a lot and read

books, or I would be outside playing football with some of the other kids from the street when I grew up. I played football for years with them, I had a lot of energy to expend, so it was helpful with that. And I think tennis was the other one that I played regularly. I really enjoyed and spent a lot of time outdoors whenever I could. So yeah, thanks for listening, because I feel like I've talked for ages too. And on to Anonymous.

Anonymous 45:37

Hi, I maybe have a slightly privileged but also not, view on this. I'm the youngest of five, two brothers, two sisters. Five years between me and the first youngest one. And then five years between them—between all four of them. So, I actually feel like I've got like, three mums and two dads at least. And that's because one of the brothers, semi not in touch, but that might be changing. Anyway, never mind. My two sisters were definitely expected to do far more housework than the boys, I think. But also because of that, and we weren't exactly full of money, so everything got passed down to me, so much, that mum talks about clothes that were actually made for me or bought for me, were my favourites because I had loads of clothes, but they were all passed down. And I seemed to have liked, the ones that were mine more. But also, that meant that I played with Lego, Meccano, dolls. I've got My Little Ponies as actually presents. And I actually had a My Little Pony palace with princesses and all sorts. But there was a fort that my papa had made. I can't remember if there was a dollhouse, but there were certainly dolls chairs and cradles and things. So that was all very lovely. What with—there are stories of—well mum tells stories of taking me at the age of two to the doctors in frustration, more or less telling the doctors that they had to make me sleep or her sleep, one of us had to sleep. So, I think it was at that point that all brothers and sisters were put in one bedroom to leave me alone to be quiet so that I would sleep and then the child that would do nothing for herself threw herself out of the cot. So that didn't last long. But also, when I got diagnosed or identified as being dyslexic, it was all, 'oh she doesn't have enough quiet to do her work'. When it's quiet it's just so much—well as bad for me as noise, because the lack of background noise just lets my breathing noise happen more. Anyway, so it was actually quite embarrassing one time in home economics when the teacher started asking what chores we did at home and I barely had my hand up for anything other than maybe making my bed because well I do also remember at home mum and Chris—mum and my two sisters if we were both home at the same time, complaining that I would never just do a job I was always in asking how to do such and such or how to do the next thing and I was trying to make them feel guilty. But later mum realised and said to me—because I have the same sort of problem as her it's just much easier to do for—to do something that have to try to tell somebody what needs done. And also, if it was a choice between the three of us and it was actually probably the middle sister she would have chosen because they already knew how to do the thing, she would have to teach me whereas there was just an easier one to choose to do it. Rather than me doing it, anyway, but the one thing I did enjoy and the object I brought—because I don't have any toys from my childhood. Because probably there would have been an argument over what was whose (laughs). But as a teenager as a Guide, I made this doll from a kit. This dress is not the dress that was made with it. And it also had a veil that kept her hair proper and you can tell it was me that did it as a 13-year-old or something because the face is not the best. But this was for a toy maker badge when Guides was actually about home making and stuff. But mum then used this kit to make dolls for my sisters, and my sister-in-law, I think my oldest sister and my sister-in-law got theirs with their wedding dress fabric as the dress. My other sister

wasn't married yet, so she got sort of a different dress. And then when she got married her—she got her wedding dress. So, this is the material my wedding dress was made out of, obviously, I've washed her since. So, this is what brought and I also brought something else which doesn't have so much of a story to it. This my sister brought me back, I think from America, and I think it was after she went and volunteered with Camp America. It had a wee nog on the bottom here, and I think it was from Quakers. And I've just always kept this as well. I just really love the simplicity and I don't know. Beautiful, but starkness of it, so is its over to Helen?

Helen 51:09

Thanks, everyone. That's really fascinating. What did I—I wrote down a few notes of things to talk about, I've got one sister, and as I mentioned, when we were talking about school, I went to an all-girls school. So that kind of gender—like boys being treated differently to girls didn't really come into my childhood a massive amount. Because I don't think I really hung out with that many boys to be honest (laughs). So maybe a slightly distorted view of what the wider world was like. But it did make me think that my childhood was very much shaped by the gender roles in my family. We were quite like, we were quite a small family, there's just the four of us. And then we lived like in a different place—than my parents were kind of from like an hour—they were from Hull, we lived in Bradford. So, it was like an hour and a half away. So, all their families lived over there. So, we were quite a contained family, we didn't kind of see that much of other relatives and things. So, didn't have that kind of like input into my life from a wider family massively so. But my parents had a quite gendered relationship in that my—I never knew my mum to work, she did work before I was born. And then she didn't work when I was a child for kind of a number of reasons, like my parents were middle-class, and so it wasn't necessary for her to work, like to earn money. And I think that my dad didn't want her to go back to work. So that was a kind of narrative that was placed on her. And I think, she's not very confident, even though she's very bright and articulate. I think that kind of like, position within the family, like did play a big impact—play a big role in her kind of like her later life. And I do remember as a child, her kind of going to college and kind of trying to get into different courses and things and trying to make these efforts to get back into a kind of wider sphere. And she—yeah, she applied to college and got knocked back once and that was it. Like that was her like, not able to kind of try again because I think because she didn't have necessarily the peer support from friends and things and my dad didn't necessarily, I fully support her. So that kind of closed that off for her. And she did, also—she was also, from when I was quite a young child, she was a ill. She she's got MS, multiple sclerosis. So, like, then that kind of dynamic played out like that, well, could she work anyway? Because she was like, struggling with this kind of muscle degenerative illness. But that made me—it was really interesting hearing Joy say how hard work she observed her mum's life being. I think, like that gave me a bit of a distorted view of what like, being a woman was in a way like, I'm not saying that my mum hasn't had a very hard life, but she wasn't doing that juggle of parenting and working and all those different things. And so, when I started a family, I think it kind of—I mean, I think it does blow everyone's mind, but like I was just like, how is there enough hours in the day to fit all this in? (laughs) So that's been kind of like, yeah, interesting. In terms of toys and things, I think, yeah, me and my sister had quite a range of things. Because we were two sisters together, like, we were neither encouraged to do things nor discourage it felt like yeah, we were encouraged to do active things. And we were allowed to pursue what we wanted to do. Probably, I feel

like those kind of expectations and genderisations, I feel it more acutely in relation to my kids. But whether that's just kind of honing in on it in a really kind of specific way, or whether we have gone into another shift where like, society is pushing these kind of ideas of girls and boys toys and girls and boys clothes. Yeah. Another thing that kind of in thinking about childhood, within my, within our family dynamics now, like my partner, and I, and the kids, like, my partner talks about his family and his experiences as a child all the time, and it feels like it's really strong part of the kind of the narrative. And it's not part—it's not something that my family do, or that I feel I do and whether that's a kind of lack of confidence. I think perhaps—yeah, like that lack of confidence in your own experience and like, the validity and the interests of those kind of stories, whether that comes through generationally, like my kids know, all about like, the McLardy family history, my partner's family history, and like my daughter's called Sadie after great grandma Sadie and they know about great grandma Sadie and things. And it just made me kind of question like, why I don't address—why I don't push my own family history as strongly. And I don't have the answer to that question, it just kind of brought that up as a thing for me. Yeah, I think that was all you got to get to the end of what you said, you feel I've been rambling away. So I now pass to Lesley.

Lesley 57:44

I never felt gendered. I never felt as if I had to be like a girl at all with my upbringing. I have one sister who is six years older than me. And she was very different from me in look's and her approach. And my—I mean, I had dolls and I played with dolls. And I had, I have a very vivid memory of when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, I was sitting in the lounge with my father and I was playing with a doll putting her to bed, when the breaking news came on, that he'd been killed. There was always that association. But I had—my mother went back to work when I was aged five, so I had that role model of working mother from very early on. And she didn't do housework when she went back to work, she employed—we employed, my parents—a housekeeper who came in five days a week. Can you imagine that the joy! (laughs) And—so there was no expectation on me to do anything round the house, which was great (laughs). And —my childhood was very much, I didn't think of myself as a tomboy, but I suppose looking back people would say I was because I didn't like wearing a dress. I didn't mind skirts and shirts, but I didn't like dresses. And my life was very much outdoors. We had a big garden. So, I was expected to help in the garden. I would climb trees to prune them. I would help plant potatoes; I would have to pick the apples in autumn. And later once I could be trusted with machinery, I would be cutting the grass as well. And my group of friends were mixed. It wasn't all girls, I was in a mixed primary school, but we still had a boy's playground and a girl's playground. So, you had the seasons for games, like in summer, it was skipping. And then in autumn, it was hopscotch. And then I can't remember when the season was, but there was a season—there was a fad for having elastic bands joined together. And I can't remember what it's called, Joy's nodding, anyway, and you would do this elaborate footwork with it. So that was very much girls. But then as soon as school went out, you just all got jumbled up again. And one of my best friends was a boy who lived four doors up. So, I got to play with Mecano, I didn't have Mecano, I had Lego. But I got to play with his Mecano and his Airfix kits which we would do—to make up together. And then I was a very keen swimmer. So, Kenneth, and I, every Saturday, from about age eight, I think, when I learned to swim, we would take the bus up to the nearest swimming pool, which was like, on the bus, probably, I don't know, 40 minutes away. And so, it was, I

didn't feel as if I was doing things that were that were gender specific, at all, it was just all mixed up. And we would just play outside all the time. In the summer holidays, we'd leave at nine o'clock, and come back at five o'clock, we were on our bikes, just, you know, a group of us doing things outdoors. I, what did I think it would be like to be a woman? I don't think I even thought about that till I was something like 15 or 16. And then started looking at like Honey magazine, which was the magazine then. And I thought, well, that's the kind of woman I want to be, independent, and have a job, I didn't think about a career at all, but a job and to be free to do whatever, to travel to go where I wanted to go, not to be restricted, certainly not to be dependent on a man, as Joy says, to have your own income. And I also made my own clothes, my mother was a very good dressmaker. And I from an early age, learnt how to sew and to dressmake. And because I wasn't seeing clothing that I liked, identified with, I would make my own so I could be more independent. And that was whether, you know, I dressed in a more—not in an unnecessarily feminine style, shall we say? To do that, because you couldn't at that time you could—you had very much women's clothing shops or men's clothing shops. And if you went into a man, it was, that was considered really pretty weird. Yeah, what else can I think of? I think that's kind of it. I would say that probably, I have very strong—my parents were both very independent of themselves and of others in the community around them and always encouraged us to be independent of thought and to stand up for ourselves and for what we believed in. I think that's it.

Helen 1:04:46

Okay, thanks everybody that was really interesting to hear such a range of experiences. We'll have a little break and then we're going to do some kind of writing activities and then we'll do our summing up and kind of share a few thoughts that way. So, if we have a break till 10 past, my clock says it's to two minutes past four just now. If people want to have a comfort break, make a cup of tea, and we'll come back at 10 past. Are you both back? Maybe not quite—

F 1:13:39

Yeah, I'm here.

Helen 1:13:40

Oh, right. Okay, great. Anonymous are you there? Maybe not quite yet.

Joy 1:13:55

Just going to say to Lesley we used to call the elastic—We used to call that French skipping.

Lesley 1:14:02

Yes!

Joy 1:14:03

Was that?

Lesley 1:14:03

Yeah. French skipping. Yeah. It was amazing the patterns that you made. It was hugely complicated.

Joy 1:14:17

Yeah.

Lesley 1:14:20

Pardon?

Anonymous 1:14:21

We just called the elastics.

Lesley 1:14:22

Elastics.

Anonymous 1:14:24

I'm not sure we—I ever played that. But I do remember getting shown how to make them because I used to make like long strings of them.

Lesley 1:14:31

That's right.

Anonymous 1:14:32

But I was never very good with friends, so I never played them.

Joy 1:14:36

I just had another memory that came to me when you were talking to Lesley about some—about the playground in primary schools. And it's just had this very kind of clear vision of gangs of boys at play time, kind of going around the playground, kind of gathering recruits and their sort of mantra was 'who wants to play war?'

Lesley 1:15:00

Oh yes!

Joy 1:15:02

No girls—

Lesley 1:15:03

Yes, that right 'who wants to play a war?' Because of all those commando magazines and things.

Joy 1:15:11

Yes, probably.

Anonymous 1:15:12

I sort of meant to say in response to your hat story Joy, I remember a sort of victory moment when I was dating, Anthony, my husband. And I didn't know what was happening, whether we were going up to Glasgow, or whether I was getting taken to Glasgow to be left off for a date or what. But I had a beanie hat, I think it was the time of beanie hats. Like, you

know, the ones that you just pulled on? Probably it made me look like a man because well, they did. And also, very often I get on buses, and the bus driver will say to me, 'alright mate', and I'll say something like, 'thank you'. And he'll go 'oh sorry'. Anyway, mums, like, 'surely don't like that hat Anonymous?' And I think that because I wasn't too sure whether my opinion meant anything, I was like, 'no, but Anthony likes it', so of course, then it was, don't you ever dress to please a man (laughter). But I liked the hat. Of course, dad chimes in with mum, you know that I should wear the hat? And eventually went 'I like the hat, so does Anthony'. 'Well, yes, but you're not to dress to please a man'. And I'm like, but if I—what's the difference of a dress the please my mum or a dress to please Anthony? I don't know. I remember dad going to answer me because he's driving, and mum's hand just going over him and resting on his knee or squeezing his knee. And he shut up. I thought, wow (laughter).

Helen 1:16:50

F did you have your hand up?

F 1:16:54

Yeah, it was just about the French skipping the elastics. When I was at school, we call them Chinese ropes or Chinese elastics. So, it's interesting to hear the change, but also very interesting names. But yeah. Also hats making you look like a guy, story of my fucking life. Excuse my French. So, I can totally relate to you there Anonymous, you're not alone. Bus drivers often say son to me a lot as well.

Anonymous 1:17:27

I don't mind. I don't have a problem with it is, like, definitely mum who has had more concern over how I look. And what way I look than I do.

F 1:17:40

Yeah.

Anonymous 1:17:40

She's the one that talks about, you know, not tying belts too tight. So, they don't look like a tatty and stuff like that. I don't really care.

F 1:17:48

Yeah, I can relate to that, too.

Anonymous 1:17:51

I just put clothes on to cover up, not for any other reason.

Helen 1:17:59

Right. Well, we're gonna do a little bit of kind of journaling, or writing. Just to kind of expand our creative repertoire. I'm sure many of you already do these types of things. And I'm not claiming to have invented this way of working. But yeah, I just thought it could be a nice thing for us to connect with. And also, because Lesley had commented about enjoying some of the writing that you'd read in the little book that I sent out to you all. And they all kind of came from a kind of journaling or diary writing approach, which I have only kind of adopted

relatively recently in adulthood as a way of kind of recording things that are so easily forgotten. And I think it is really—it's hard to connect with some of—or I find it hard to connect with kind of some of the emotional memory for—of things once they're in into the into the past and into the distance. So, I think journaling for me is quite nice in that way. I did—Well, I'll maybe just read one of these little bits out for you which relates to the theme. You may have all read it. But okay, I'll do it anyways. So, 'We have a rule in our house that you don't go out of the house in fancy dress unless it's a special occasion. It's a rule that I made up by enforce on you both. I think I made it up in an attempt to protect myself from the embarrassment of being seen in public with you dressed in your overly commercialised, overly gendered costumes. The fact that you own an array of these outfits feels like a parenting fail in my eyes. We're at your cousin's house and you're almost three. Your little sister is six months old. You and your older cousin are both dressed as princesses when it's time for us to go out for the afternoon to a nearby farm. I feel to mean to enforce the dress up rule on you when your cousin and you are getting on so well united by your matching outfits. Plans change in your cousin is no longer allowed to come because she's behaving badly. And we are to go alone. You're sad that your cousin's not coming so I say that it's fine for you to go out in costume. Once we arrive you want to play—you want to go to the play park as your keen climber. As you enter the play park the floating blue dress sweeps along the ground, you head to the climbing frame and are making good progress of it. But your outfit is inhibiting you as it gets caught under your feet. I point out that this is the one of the reasons it's not a good idea to come out and fancy dress and whilst you consider it beautiful practically can stop you doing from the things that you enjoy. I'm worried that it might affect future decisions about the type of play you choose to engage in. Unfazed by my comments, you simply decide to take the dress off and continue climbing in your pants and cardigan alone. You are after all not yet three, and pants and cardigan are deemed as acceptable as an extravagant dress that proceeded in. It's come as you like day at your oldest sister's school and kids are dressing either as fruits or vegetables or flowers. Your oldest sister is going with a floral theme, clothes with flower prints on them and flowers from the garden in her hair. I tried to persuade you to get dressed, but you don't want to wear normal clothes to nursery when dressing up is an option. You head for the dress up box and select a voluminous synthetic pink Peppa Pig fairy dress. It is an abomination to my tastes. But it is a statement, and you are happy. I point out that other children at nursery will not be dressed up, wanting you to know that as the only one dressed up you will need to field the inevitable questions as to why. You are undeterred. Our walking route to school and nursery is a thoroughfare of other children on their way to schools and nurseries. We encounter many other school children in costume. But it is the pink pig dress that is commanding the attention in our family. Wow, what a dress, you're enjoying the positive feedback and are happy to absorb it. The next morning, you want to wear the dress again to the dance class that you're going to with your friend from across the street. After the dance class, you want to wear it to the shop to buy milk and bananas. The outfit is so exuberant, that it opens itself up to comments from strangers. An older woman on the way back from the shop tells you that you look pretty. And you repeat this back to me. She told me I looked pretty. The feedback loop is complete. When I finally persuade you to take the dress off that night at bedtime, I consider hiding it where it won't be found again, perhaps I made up the rule not only to protect myself.' So, I guess I've been kind of using the journaling as a kind of way to write out memories that I would easily forget. But then also—I think that was maybe a kind of commonality in people some of the things that people were talking about that

maybe not necessarily our own family experience might not necessarily reflect wider societal kind of forces that are impacting. And I think I'm aware with my kids, like how much gender stereotypes within kind of nursery and school like really do play, like have a really powerful effect on them. So, does anybody—Oh, yes, go Anonymous.

Anonymous 1:24:02

Sorry, that's not connected. This wasn't connected to your piece of writing you just read out there. I just want to see sorry for my bolshie-ness earlier, I wanted to write it in the chat but then realise I had no idea how to spell bolshie. I'm sorry.

Helen 1:24:20

That's all right, Anonymous. I don't think I know how to write bolshie either (laughs). I didn't feel that you were being bolshie at all. In fact, I don't know—But thank you for—Yeah. It's interesting, like kind of thinking about journaling and speaking things because like although I set this group up to kind of talk about our feelings, and experiences, I actually feel a bit out of control sometimes when I'm talking and like actually writing things down and like that kind of process of honing them a bit allows me to get a bit more to grips with like how I actually feel rather than kind of getting caught up in the moment of the emotions that I'm experiencing. Does anybody use diaries or journals and things? No, no one?

F 1:25:20

I used to when I was a kid, actually, I wrote a diary for years, I had to hide it, obviously. I then got out of the habit as an adult and did other creative stuff. But I've started to look at journaling, like as something to use when I work with other groups in my own creative practice, but also as a way for myself to cope with whatever's going on in my head. Because what I did start doing was like, random brain dump pieces of writing over the years, even though it wasn't a journal anymore. But one of the research groups I'm in just know, they've encouraged us to do journaling. So, at some point, after I've had the session with them, I try within the first five days to do a wee journal session, and just like I said, brain dump, just do about writing and get things out. But I like what you're saying about, like, feeling out of control when you're talking. And when you have to write things down, it makes you a bit, like be able to slow down and actually process the feeling. I can very much relate to that. And I think that you're right, that writing does help that. But yeah, I have been a fan of journaling and then fell away. But now I've gone back to in a different way, not just writing because I am creative. So, I started like putting patterns in, or doing bits or collage. Or maybe I just write one word, and then make lots of pretty patterns and different colour pens around it. Just stuff like that kind of use it, you can almost use journal pages like talismans or, you know, something to kind of boost you that way. Just a powerful image that you could look at and feel a certain way from it. So, there's a lot of scope in them, I think for sure.

Helen 1:27:12

Yeah, I know I think I've started a few different types of way—Like I started with the kind of classic like diary style writing. And as you say, F like that slows you down, and you kind of put things down in a certain way. But—and I kind of like that feeling of writing on the page. And that allows me to engage in a certain way. But I also do sometimes type them which felt a bit kind of more formal. And it's, I guess, like a document—a Word document I compute it

has all those kind of formalities in it, it felt a bit kind of clinical, but actually, I'm actually a much faster typer than I am a writer because of the digital age we live in. So that's the kind of way of getting thoughts down speedily. And I'm also started journaling using a voice recording app, which one of my supervisors on my PhD had recommended. And to me just felt like really—like when I first started trying to do it, I just—my dad had Dictaphones was a kid and would record like really dry things for his poor secretary to type up and it just kind of like, made me feel really silly. And you know, like talking into my phone, I felt like some kind of spy or detective and I think that thing as well of recording my own thoughts in that way felt slightly unnatural, but the software that I use is called Otter and it transcribes it for you. I have actually found it's a really—you kind of capture a different kind of thought, then you might do writing things down. So, there's my kind of three journaling methods at the moment. But I thought we could maybe—what time are we on now? It's 25 past four, because maybe spend kind of like 10 minutes or so just kind of like creating that kind of reflective space. What do people want to do? We could do like one longer writing where we may be just like absorb some of the things that we've heard from what other people have talked about, or two shorter ones where we kind of like do two different activities. Does anybody have a preference? One 10 minute writing activity or two five minutes?

Joy 1:29:52

I think one 10 minute would be my preference, but I don't mind.

Helen 1:29:56

Yeah, that sounds—

Joy 1:29:58

Happy to do whatever.

Helen 1:30:00

Okay, right, well shall we do—just allowing ourselves some time to kind of think about what we've heard from others today or engaging with other memories from our childhood? And it's not something that you need to share with anybody. Like I was reading a few funny blogs online earlier like about—because it's I don't know whether it's a bit of a kind of thing to do at the moment. But yeah, it was like, keep your journal personal so that you're able to connect with some things that you might feel uncomfortable speaking about. So, I suppose imagining that it's only you that's going to read it. But it also, a thing that it said that I thought was quite interesting was about not being too self-indulgent in your—I don't think it used those exact words—what did it say? It suggested taking a structured and solution orientated approach to recording your thoughts. Otherwise, you could be doing more harm than good. 'I've made the mistake of using journaling as a vehicle for blame and self justification. So be careful of using journaling solely for purposes of ranting and raving without true self-analysis'. Which I thought was quite interesting does kind of relate to the kind of idea of consciousness-raising in that kind of like, being reflective, but in a more analytical kind of way. So, do people have things—writing things close to hand? Will we take a couple of minutes to go and find a notebook or some kind of writing, implement, and—

F 1:31:54

Yeah, I've got mine.

Helen 1:31:56

Okay, brill. Okay, so if we just go for 10 minutes, I was gonna put a little timer up, but I don't think that's really necessary. I'll let you know when we can have like five minutes before the end. Okay, all right, I will mute myself and stop rambling away. Just to say that it's five minutes, so we've got another five. Just one minute more. Okey doke. So, if people want to finish up what they've been doing. How did people find that? Did that feel?

Joy 1:43:19

Quite good to have had the opportunity to share kind of orally, everybody kind of speaking about it and then to actually write things down that, like you were saying is it's a different experience, you can kind of write a word and then cross it out or, you know, and I like the actual having the pen on the paper. I think that's, that's a kind of a nice feeling. It's very, very different from typing things, I think. The actual kind of physical, crossing something out and finding a different word, etc., is something sort of actually physically quite satisfying about that.

F 1:43:54

Yeah, I'm the same. I really like writing. I like to have nice pens and pencils, so my writing looks nice. But I've always been like that since I was quite young. But, yeah, the act of having the pen in your hand and writing on the paper, for me is more enjoyable than typing. I like typing, but I still can't take fast enough to get the words out. So, I think I might use the Otter app that Helen had mentioned before, because I'm interested in being able to get my thoughts out quickly enough.

Helen 1:44:46

Yeah, it kind of makes a recording and then you can listen back to it if—because it does transcribe some of it in a very peculiar way. I think it's meant to get to know your voice after a while but some of the things that transcribes are peculiar, but just with a bit of editing, you can make this make it makes sense.

F 1:45:07

Oh, thanks. I'm going to try it for sure that will help when I'm writing other things that I find difficult to write, like applications and funding things, and like formal documents. I think it will be very helpful with that. But yeah, I think it's good to look at different ways to journal.

Helen 1:45:28

Okay, well, will we do the summing up? Will we try this Slido thing again? If I can remember how we did it was pretty straightforward. Wasn't it? Let me see. Make that active. So, as I say, last time, we kind of did between—up to kind of five words or can have short sent—or, you know, phrases to go in. That's the link. And then you have to put the hashtag in. And the hashtag is 'cr women' so consciousness-raising women. Oops, I've not put that in the chat. There it is. And then for those who have not used it before, they should just start appearing on that—Has everybody managed to get onto this Slido screen?

F 1:46:40

Is that supposed to see slider.com in the chat?

Helen 1:46:44

Ah, yes.

F 1:46:46

Yeah. Okay, just checking.

Helen 1:46:48

That's not very helpful if I don't actually put a link that works. Does that let you click on it? No, that doesn't either.

Joy 1:46:58

Should we just be able to click on that and open it then Helen? Or—Ah—

Helen 1:47:04

Does that work? What did I do last time? Or you can do it from another device as well that's the—you can scan that QR code as well.

Anonymous 1:47:15

Oh, when—

Lesley 1:47:17

Does that work?

Helen 1:47:17

What was that Anonymous? Sorry.

Anonymous 1:47:23

So do we just put a word in, in the enter word and press enter? And then put another word in?

Helen 1:47:30

Yeah, that's how it goes. Let me see.

F 1:48:21

I can see that screen, but I don't know how to add any words into.

Helen 1:48:30

Are people doing it—You know, because I can't get—I don't—I'm doing it from my phone. Have you got another device that you can do it? Yeah, because I can't see on the actual screen where you enter it in.

Lesley 1:48:49

No.

F 1:48:49

Yeah. No, because I'm using my laptop.

Helen 1:48:52

Uh huh.

Lesley 1:48:53

I'm the same. I saw it last time. It was quite obvious where you inputted the words.

Helen 1:49:04

Is anybody who's successfully putting things on there on the same screen that they're on the Zoom on? Got any tips for the people?

Anonymous 1:49:15

Okay, no, I am I had to—I just went into a different screen but also in the first time I saw it said 'enter words' so I entered it and I had to say, send of something. But then when it came up again, it had the 'enter word' and enter another word and every time you typed into the thingy it would add it again. So I could do about four words at the same time.

Helen 1:49:41

Right. Do other people want to put things in the chat and I'll put them in?

F 1:49:47

Okay.

Lesley 1:49:49

Okay.

Helen 1:49:49

Via my phone (laughter). Too much tech from my brain. But it's quite a nice kind of way of seeing things come together but I guess only if it works. Now I can't find the chat— I think— has everyone added what they would like to? Hard work, generational changes, strictness or freedom. French skipping, nature, freedom, magic, cos you're girly, me, hats, sisters, Lego, dolls, limitations speaking up, independence, tomboy or girly, expectations, position in the family, dependence / independence. That seems like a good selection. So, what do people— how do people find talking about childhood I thought that was quite interesting and reflective.

Lesley 1:54:40

Yeah.

Helen 1:54:43

Any ideas for a topic next time? Should we—I was looking at some of the ones in the New York Radical Feminist and that kind of moves on from that kind of—it says, 'puberty or adolescent social life'. I wonder if we should just progressively move on to kind of a teenage experience to see if that shifts. If we can kind of like map a bit of a kind of way that people's experiences have changed over time? Will people be up for that?

Joy 1:55:26

Yeah, it was—just to say it was really interesting to see what were the threads that were coming through that we were kind of experiencing, then the differences in terms of, you know, the sorts of messages that we were each getting when we were children, what our mothers—the kind of role model that mothers were. That was that was really interesting to see the similarities and the differences. I'd be okay, for the topic you were just suggesting there Helen. And I don't know about everybody else but that's okay for me.

Lesley 1:55:59

Fine for me adolescence. I think it's quite—I quite enjoy following the radical feminist agenda (laughs). Just interesting to revisit that again. Yeah, I'm fine with that.

Helen 1:56:20

Yeah, they've got a few more suggestions for us, like puberty and adolescent social life, as they break it into, I've got kind of prompts again. So, I guess puberty is kind of talking more about kind of bodily changes, whereas the adolescent social life is more kind of experiences with other people. 'How did you spend most of your time? How did your parents feel about how you spent your time? What sorts of relationships did you have with girls? Did you have a best friend? How did you feel about girls your own age? What did you talk about with other girls? What were your activities? Where there older women that you admired and wanted to be like? What sorts of relationships did you have with boys? Did you date? What pressures from your peer group—where the pressures from your peer group to date? What was your parents' attitude towards dating? How did you get your dates? What kind of boys did you date? What kind of boys did you want today? How are your relationships with girls affected by your relationships with boys? Which was more important? Were your adolescent sexually—What were your adolescent sexual experiences? Did you neck, pet, make out go all the way etc.? Were you concerned about your reputation?' So, I guess we could use those as prompts and people can pick up on as many or as few of them—I can kind of—that document is on the Padlet. And I can also email it out in the kind of link thing with the date for next time. Also, to say that I had—started to kind of think about things in the Women's Library archive. And while we were just on a break, I saw that Nicola, the archivist had emailed me to say that could get in next Tuesday to have a little rummage around for things. So I could look at that in relation to what we were—our topic. Because when I was looking today, like for the childhood topic and found, they've got a book—they've got a kind of pamphlet from I think it's like the '50s may be called 'Girls Questions Answered'. So, I was going to try and have a look at that for our childhood one today just to kind of see how attitudes have shifted over that period. And they've also got quite an—in the Scottish Women's Aid archive, they've got some press cuttings relating to different topics, I was going to unearth some kind of like—a newspaper articles from the '80s and '90s relating to childhood, just as an interest to see if we could see that kind of attitudinal, like change, over time. But I will have a look if there's anything interesting that might relate to our adolescent life, but I mean, maybe both those things, I could just have a look at those and see. Maybe look at some of the zines as well, like that might be nice to look at having, having kind of done zine-ing together like to look at some other visual ways of collecting together lots of material. So, is there any other questions or things that people would like to share before we leave?

Anonymous 1:59:55

See in the end the writing exercise, I ended up writing to my Tiny Tears doll that got all sorts done to it and got given away and then stuff that was it was very strange and very nice. But also, please, please don't laugh at me at my teenage experiences because they are totally not normal. And I got laughed at, enough, at the time.

Helen 2:00:37

Well, that's—Yeah, nobody's gonna be laughing at anybody's experiences definitely Anonymous, please don't feel anxious about that. I guess. Personally, I've just found it really fascinating to hear different people's reflections on their own experiences at different points in their lives. And yeah, as we've all seen, like that kind of 'normal' is not necessarily the only way to do things and not necessarily the best way either.

F 2:01:08

I second that Helen and just to say if it makes you feel a bit better, Anonymous, I don't really think many of my teenage experiences were terribly normal either. So, like, you really aren't alone, please, like don't be anxious, I wouldn't be anxious if you're not anxious. Okay.

Helen 2:01:31

That's okay.

Anonymous 2:01:31

Okay, it's just I never had a boyfriend ever. So (laughs)—

F 2:01:36

Totally the same honestly. Like, like I say, it's cool. We'll all be in the group together, and nobody's gonna judge or laugh. It's not that kind of spaces, is it really,

Helen 2:01:45

Absolutely. And if you feel uncomfortable about you know that there was quite a breadth of things that you could touch on and just everybody talk about what they feel comfortable talking about, don't feel obliged to kind of delve into something that makes you feel anxious or uncomfortable. So—and yeah, if people want to kind of use the journaling in between, I think, I might, like do some journaling and try and kind of distil my thoughts a little bit before we kind of come together to kind of feel a bit more in control. Yeah, I guess. Yeah, we're one minute to five. So have a lovely couple of weeks everyone and thanks for your time this afternoon and sharing and it was really I really, really enjoyed hearing everybody's different experiences.

Joy 2:02:42

Thank you very much.

Lesley 2:02:43

Thanks, everyone. Bye, everybody.

F 2:02:47

Thanks, everyone. Take care.

Lesley 2:02:49

Bye

SPEAKERS

Anonymous, Fatima, Lesley, Joy, Helen, F

Helen 02:00

Hi.

Lesley 02:03

Hello Helen.

Helen 02:04

Hey Lesley.

Lesley 02:05

Sorry, I haven't got my earphones in (laughs). Here we go.

Helen 02:11

Oh you've got little subtle ones, Lesley.

Lesley 02:13

I have. Ooo, I love your new glasses.

Helen 02:16

Oh thanks.

Lesley 02:18

Is this something recent or did you wear—or what? They're superb.

Helen 02:24

Oh thanks. No there not that recent. I just I switch between contact lenses and glasses.

Lesley 02:32

I couldn't think of the word there. They're lovely.

Helen 02:34

Yeah. In fact, I think Lesley, you're the only person who's commented on them.

Lesley 02:41

No! (laughs)

Helen 02:43

Which—Yeah. I maybe got them about six months ago and was like, going around. Nobody noticed (laughs). So, who's joining us today? Dorothy has said that she's sadly got too many learners to carry on meeting with us. So, she's got too much work on.

Lesley 02:44
Oh that's a shame.

Helen 02:44
Yeah, I know, it is. She was sad. She was about to reveal all about her hedonistic adolescent days to us all as well (laughter).

Lesley 03:26
Well.

Helen 03:27
And Fatima is joining us for the first time today.

Lesley 03:31
Hi, Fatima.

Fatima 03:33
Hi, everyone. Nice to meet you.

Helen 03:38
We usually just do a little kind of like, check in with everyone see how everyone's doing. So maybe just waiting on F, I think that's it. Hey, Anonymous. I haven't had a—oh, she said, oh, I've got a message from her. She said she's running late, be there in a few minutes. So, we can maybe just start by doing our little kind of round circle of checking in how everyone's doing, how everyone's couple of weeks have been. Would anybody like to go first?

Anonymous 03:52
Hiya.

Lesley 04:21
I'll start.

Helen 04:23
Thanks.

Lesley 04:25
I got my second vaccination on Friday. So, woohoo (laughs). Very pleased with that. So that's all working. And I started singing lesson because I don't have a good voice. And it's kind of something that I've always wanted to do to be able to sing, not to sing better but just to sing in tune anyway. So that's coming along a treat so I am delighted. And next week, I'm way to see a friend on Arran who I haven't seen for a long, you know—since lockdown. So, I'm looking forward to that.

Helen 05:12
Great, thanks, Lesley. I'm very jealous of your singing lessons. I got told as a child by my mother that I had a very bad singing voice.

Lesley 05:22

Exactly.

Helen 05:23

It really knocked like confidence.

Lesley 05:27

Yeah, yeah, that's exactly what happened—not my mother, but at school, I was always told, you know, when you're not really—you're not in tune. There's never any encouragement to help you. You know, to realise that so I've lived with that for a long time. But as is the trend now, people who are musical said, no, no, no, no, that is not correct. Everybody can sing.

Helen 05:53

Wow.

Lesley 05:54

There are very, very few people who cannot achieve it. So, a friend gave me a singing lesson for Christmas. And it's just kind of—I took it up in March—at the end of March.

Anonymous 06:09

My mum and my sisters and I used to all sing. It was fantastic. And but then once everyone started moving away and that and I tried to sing with my oldest sister, she more or less gave me into trouble for not keeping to the tune, so I felt really quite bad after that. My other sister told me it was because she wasn't confident enough in her own singing—

Lesley 06:34

Uh huh.

Anonymous 06:35

To manage to ignore me (laughs).

F 06:41

Can I just chime in there? Like, I think singing is kinda like art isn't it you can train yourself to be able to do it. So, everybody can sing. And I love what you're saying Anonymous about you all getting together and singing. My mum had an aunt who played the piano, so every time we visited her house, she would play numbers out of musicals, and the words would be there with the piano music. So, we would sing, yeah. It's something that's really really good for you, I think like really uplifting almost. And energising.

Lesley 07:13

Yeah.

Anonymous 07:14

Yeah, we used to sing on like, long car journeys and stuff. And then I do remember one time, either going to France or coming back from France and like, a really late night or early morning ferry and like standing at the very back of the ferry, singing our hearts out for some

reason (laughs). Who knows? But also, the extended family used to get together at Grandma's and sing in like the second of January and Boxing Day.

F 07:49

I've heard of that being a tradition, Anonymous. Yeah, for sure. And see that standing at the back of the ferry, and for you can't remember why? Who needs a reason, it's brilliant to sing and express happiness and joy, I think. So, any opportunity you can take to do it. I say go for it. If you're feeling brave, just start singing, especially if you're crowd who is going to actually see you?

Lesley 08:11

Exactly.

Helen 08:19

I really harbour a lot of anxiety around my singing voice. Like I did start singing when I had my kids. Because I just thought you can't have children and not sing. But before that I'd not sung in front of anybody as an adult. And even when we'd sing in like group things, I'm always like, muttering under my breath. Not really singing out loud. But maybe that's what I need to do face my fears full on Lesley and—

Lesley 08:47

Well, that's what I did, and oh, my God. I mean, I had the voucher for three months and I thought ooo, this women's going to laugh at me or she's going to say yes, you cannot sing. But of course, she's a teacher and she would never do that. And she's just been very nurturing I have to say and has brought me on.

F 09:11

So lovely to hear. Sorry.

Lesley 09:13

I am a conscientious student, of course and I do my vocal exercises virtually every day, because obviously I've got the muscles here have never been used for you know, 65 years. So, you've got to build that up. So, yeah.

F 09:34

I commend you Lesley. I really do, well done for jumping in and facing your fears (laughter).

Lesley 09:39

I know.

F 09:40

So cool. Amazing.

Lesley 09:42

I just love it though. I get such—as you were saying F, I get such pleasure from it.

F 09:49

It's a beautiful pastime even if all you're doing is like humming along with the sound of the birds singing or something like that. You know, you don't always have to have words. So yeah. This has been a lovely conversation to join in. This is what you're talking about. Lovely to hear from you all.

Anonymous 10:07

Yeah, actually we my family goes to church a lot so when we go to France, because my older sisters in France, like we would be like in a language that was not our own, if you know I mean, so often mum would say that singing was just making a happy noise. It doesn't matter if you had the words. Happy noise was enough.

F 10:30

I can totally relate to that, Anonymous.

Helen 10:37

I'm trying to think what I've been doing since I saw you all. I have been—yeah, time just seems to be speeding up doesn't it time's been—it doesn't seem long since we were all here two weeks ago. I have been down to the Women's Library and had a speedy look through some things in their archive that hopefully we can talk about later on. But yeah, generally good. Been out of the city a little bit. And that's been nice to have a change of scene. And that's about it really, for me, I think I will pass on somebody else who wants to go—

Fatima 11:18

So, I've not met anyone yet. This is the first time for me. So, I can't say what I've been up to since for two weeks. But I'm gonna say in general. So, I've tuned in to planting this year since the—To be honest, since the lockdown has started and the pandemic. So, whenever I have a chance away from my uni work, I am obsessed now with just little plants everywhere. I was just starting from seeds so now like for example I tried not to sit behind the computer so long, so I have always an excuse to go down to stretch my legs, go out to see how is the seedlings doing. They're growing every day. So just makes me so happy. That's my new hobby. I guess. That's it just uni work, doing [text redacted] at Glasgow uni. And yeah, just been busy with that.

F 12:29

I'll go if it's okay. I've just been to put my postal vote through the door at the city chambers. Not long back from that. I'm not really trusting the postal service at the moment because I think it's so swamped from all the COVID stuff going on last year. And I don't really think they've caught up since Christmas. So, I don't want to take any chances. And you can put it through the letterbox at John Street as well. So, I did that. And I had an amazing burger while I was in the city centre as well. So that's the first time I've ordered food from somewhere in the city since we've dropped down to level two [referring to the different restriction levels of the COVID pandemic]. So that has been quite nice. And they've been doing lots of other random things. Bits of journaling. Lots of sleeping this week, I think I've been quite affected by the full moon. So, I've just been taking it a bit easy. And I am currently being a stereotypical woman today, hormonal women, hot water bottle, lots of chocolate and a hot chocolate as well while I sit and chat to you all. So yeah, but long live the light I'm loving it so good this time of year.

Anonymous 13:37

When you say the city, do you mean Glasgow?

F 13:40

Yes, yes, I was in the city centre today. Yeah.

Anonymous 13:44

Okay, I just thought that maybe I'd got the impression that you were maybe up north but obviously not sorry about that.

F 13:51

Ah, no, you're grand. I stay right on the very very very border of almost where the city stops be in Glasgow. So, I'm quite far out from this centre itself. So yeah, for me, it kind of does feel like I live a way up north sometimes it's like a proper expedition when I go out but like Helen was saying it's good to get the change of scenery, I think. Yeah, I'll pass on to anyone else that wants to go next.

Helen 14:28

Joy or Anonymous, do you want to have anything from your recent times you want to share? Are you happy—

Joy 14:38

Yeah, for me, I think it's been some more of the same. So just doing the same things. Teaching online, catching up with people online as well. But also new things like being able to go a bit further away. So, gone down to the sea for the first time in quite a few months, which is nice. There's something kind of, I don't know, that seems to be something that's quite—draws somehow, that draws a lot of people to the sea. There's something quite primaeval about it almost I think that kind of attraction to the vast expanse. So that was that was nice. And then other than that, I don't think anything particular just very much. Yeah, continuing with usual activities, nothing extraordinary. I've been finding it quite just recently, I think the last few weeks, I've been finding it quite uplifting. How much we're—we've been hearing from scientists in recent months, and just how important they've become because it seems to me that, I don't know if a while back, I got quite discouraged with all this kind of talk about, we don't need experts, and who cares if people know things or whatever. But it's just somehow, it's been really important, like this whole period that people actually know about epidemics. And people actually know how to make vaccines, for example. We actually do need these people, and we kind of listen to them. And we were kind of respecting them and looking to them a lot more than I think maybe we did at one point. Yeah, a few, just a few years back, I can kind of remember feeling a little bit like there was total disrespect of anybody who actually knew anything, it just seemed a bit depressing to me. But yeah, the last few weeks, I've been quite heartened by that. That these people are on television. And so, they should be and we're listening to them. So that's kind of lifted me up a bit.

Helen 16:42

Thanks, Joy. Anonymous, have you got anything outside of singing on the ferry?

Anonymous 16:49

Sorry, I just had realised that Joy hadn't said anything really yet. And I felt bad for all the stuff I'd said. I've had quite a good two weeks, but I did worry about the session quite a bit. And I've more or less got a sort of a speech written for myself (laughs). But—and I was getting—because I was not comfortable going back thinking about adolescence, I realised that was really quite worried about the rest of the topics that are probably coming up and how awkward they'll be? And but thank you so much for the singing conversation when we started, because it just reminded me of the good times when I was wee or when I was young. So, thank you.

Helen 17:41

Thanks, Anonymous. Yeah, I think our topic adolescence—I kind of sent through those points from the New York Radical Feminists, and I feel like it's, it was a bit of a huge topic that we've set ourselves. So, I guess, as we said, before, people just pick out what parts they want to talk about, and there's no obligation to delve into—yeah, some of them are challenging memories or things that you don't feel comfortable talking about. What was I going to say? So, we'll do the session around adolescence for about 40 minutes probably usually takes for us to get through it all. And then we're going to look at, I don't know, if people got a chance to look at any of the archive stuff that I posted on the Padlet? We can have a little bit of a chat about that. That would be good. And then yeah, the summing up last time using the Slido thing, the tech of it didn't work that well did it when we were using the software because it wasn't working for everyone. But I don't know what other people felt? I felt that we needed a bit of chat as well, it sounds a little bit cold or something when we finished that it kind of finished a little bit abruptly. So, whether we share some of the words via the software and then have the opportunity to chat a bit more if people want to. Yeah, I think I'm aware that like the whole consciousness-raising has this very specific process and we're maybe getting a wee bit stiff with it, or I've made us all a bit stiff with it. I don't know, Lesley, were you going to say something?

Lesley 19:27

I was just going to say maybe once you've—we've put the words up on the slide—

Helen 19:36

Slido.

Lesley 19:37

Slido, thank you. We can then perhaps—it maybe you could conclude with having a discussion about the word cluster up there. Just a general—

Helen 19:49

Yeah, I think that could be a good idea.

Lesley 19:51

Yeah, uh huh.

F 19:52

Yeah, like that that might be nicer. Then there's a way to reconnect with what we've all just said out loud isn't it.

Lesley 19:59

Uh huh.

F 20:00

Or put up. So yeah—

Helen 20:03

Yeah, maybe felt a little bit—just typing them in and then not revoicing them felt a little bit disconnected but we'll give it a go see how we get along?

Anonymous 20:14

Are we ever going to do any non-word based create creative activities again? Or is that—was that just last time? Just the first sessions?

Helen 20:27

No, that would be good to do that because it seemed like everybody enjoyed it and that it was kind of quite a kind of fruitful way of reflecting on things. Today, we're just gonna look at the archive material. But I will definitely bear that in mind Anonymous. I was trying to think—because we've got these like, sessions up until the start of the summer planned out. But I was trying to think how we could—whether we should—whether I should suggest that we all make something together or make a kind of series of things. I was just maybe going to see how the next couple of sessions unfolded. And then maybe we could talk about that next time. In fact, spend a bit of time like, would people like to make something, like the zines or some other kind of creative thing? And how might we approach that? Would it be all of us together? Or like working on separate components and try and bring it together? But that would be—Did you enjoy doing their creative activities Anonymous?

Anonymous 21:37

Yes, I think I perhaps enjoyed that most from the last time. I think, because I was the one who sort of—Well, I suggested that creative writing might be as—good as to help us work out how to respond. But I think that perhaps the actual non-word activity like the collages or the mark making or whatever was more helpful may be for me, but that's just me.

F 22:09

I agree with that as well, Anonymous, actually, because I wanted to say I had tried to do a creative writing under the headings for adolescence as well. I'm probably not going to find it too difficult—too easy to talk about, but I wanted to try and tackle it. But what happened instead was I made like a piece of work in the blank sketchbook that you sent me as well. And I just use like felt pens, but it's kinda turned out like a Riso print. [Anonymous holds something up]. Oh, that's lovely, Anonymous. So yeah, I couldn't actually write anything for this beforehand. But found myself making a piece of art, but it had words in it. And— But yeah, I like that idea, Anonymous, for sure.

Anonymous 22:51

I had to resort, a tree to do—Because actually, I think that it was in high school that I started saying I wanted to be a tree, but also happened to have she have a tree of life colouring book. And then it was through one of them eventually managed to start writing that I will actually wrote into one of the Celtic knots because it was so knotted in my mind, and I better shut up.

F 23:18

They're beautiful. Now, I'll shut up.

Helen 23:23

Okay, well, will we move on to doing our little circle? Do people want me to read out all the prompts that we sent through about adolescence? I mean, I do think maybe it was a bit vast. 'How did you spend most of your time? How did your parents feel about how you spent your time? What sort of relationships did you have with girls? Did you have a best friend? How did you feel about girls your own age? What did you talk about with other girls? What were your activities? Where there older woman that you admired and wanted to be like?' I mean, I feel like all of these, we could have done a session on almost each of them. 'What sorts of relationships did you have with boys? Did you date? Was the pressure from your peer group to date? What were your parent's attitudes towards dating? How did you get your dates? What kind of people did you date? What kind of people did you want to date? How were your relationships with girls affected by any romantic relationships with boys or other girls? Which was more important? What were your adolescent sexual experiences? Did you neck, pet, make-out, go all the way etc? Were you concerned about your reputation?' So, I don't think we can even begin to cover all of those in our session today. So, people will have had to think about what parts they'd like to talk about, and we can see, we'll see where that gets us to. So, I met with Fatima yesterday, and I've talked to her a bit about how we've been doing our consciousness-raising circles. So, I've entered everybody's name into a random order generating thing. So, I'll put those in the chat. And if we follow that, and just once each person has spoken, then we say, 'that's me, and I pass to' and name the next person on the list. And, yes, the usual, no interruptions, and we were not using the chat while we were talking as well. So, let me find the list of names. Can everyone see that? Anonymous are you alright to go first?

Anonymous 26:00

I'm very glad I was prepared then (laughter).

Helen 26:06

Okay, over to you Anonymous.

Anonymous 26:08

I'm likely just to read so—Also because I'm dyslexic, it might get a bit funny, so sorry, just bear with me. So, I've got a heading 'social life', I didn't really have much of a social life outside then my family and well, Guides, sort of. I was socially awkward and bullied at school. So, I had no desire to spend any more time with my classmates. I've put leisure time, but it was that—how did you spend your time in—the other one about how your parents felt about it. So, my parents wanted me to study, or at least read all the time or most of the time, but I wanted to watch TV. However, my parents did encourage like, exercise like

walking and cycling. And they took me to cultural activities and visits and stuff. So, we often went to country parks, museums, churches, castles, and then also for like, birthdays, back to school and stuff there were treat trips to the cinema as well. I got really worried because at school I knew I had had a best friend, but I began to wonder how much she'd actually meant to me because I couldn't remember her name for ages. But I have remembered it, Anne Marie. And there's, like I only had a very small circle of friends there's maybe one or two other friends I had the school. And at Guides, Fiona was my best friend. And she happened to be in a wheelchair. And so, we were kind of outsiders in a way because I was from Erskine when the Guides were in Bishopton and stuff. So, often felt like an outsider for many reasons. And recently, I've realised until about age 15, 16 that my cousin Ann might have actually been very close to being a best friend. But in those were the times when you don't have your own phone and stuff. So, we haven't really gotten used to contacting each other outside of our mums and stuff before there was a big family fight and there was no contact. Anyway, other than watching TV, even as a teenager, I loved to knit and sew and do crafts. So that takes me on to the older women that I admired. Even though me and my mum don't have the best relationship. She's probably the older woman that I admired given all the sewing of like wedding dresses and baking of wedding cakes and that sort of stuff that I admired. Relationships with boys, they bullied me, so I didn't trust them. So, there were none. Did you date? No, not until I went to uni and maybe around 20 odd. How did you feel about girls your own age? Well, nothing much well, other than being annoyed by them because they bullied me. Also, one, well, there was a few times that I went to Ardentinnny, that was a Renfrewshire sort of outwards bounds place centre where you would maybe go for a week. I don't know why I went to it, but you're supposed to choose to share your bedroom with friends, I didn't have any friends with me. So, I ended up in with three girls who were friends. And the first night I fell asleep first and then they said that I snored and then I was too terrified to fall asleep because they said were gonna kill me if I snored again so that was not good. And anyway, on that note, I will pass to Lesley.

Helen 29:48

Lesley, sorry to interrupt, I meant to say before everyone started it might be useful if everybody kind of—if they felt comfortable, if you just like said like when and where you—like I would say, like I was an adolescent in the '90s in the north of England, just to give that bit of context of when we're talking about. Sorry to interrupt.

Lesley 30:17

Okay, so I was an adolescent in the late '60s and early the '70s. And I spent a lot of my time in my bedroom, listening to music, reading teenage magazines like Jackie or Honey, and trying out makeup, you know, eyeshadow eyeliner. I had two best friends, one who I had known from primary school from P1. And then a new friend, when I went to high school who I met, who I became close with. And by coincidence, they were both farmers daughters. So, there was also a wider circle of girls, maybe another four or five, that we would also meet up at weekends but usually in each other's houses. And again, that would just be to listen to music, we would have record players then and talk about TV shows, like the Monkeys was very popular then, which we all loved. And when I was 14, I was allowed to go to a concert, but it was the Corrie, which was highly traditional folk band, who why, I don't know, because it was bizarre because we didn't listen to traditional Scottish folk music. But I guess, I don't know, my parents must have thought—our parents must have

thought that was a kind of a safe social outing for you to do as a group of girls. We would go round town, once we were maybe 14 or 15, on a Saturday to record shops to listen to music, to make-up counters, have a coffee. I would sleep over—but only at my two best friends' homes. But between the ages of 14 and 16 this was a big transition period for me in terms of friendship. I—in third year at school, I was kind of moving to a new group of friends away from the two best friends. And this regrouping I'd say was firmly established by the time I got to fifth year in school. Boys were never a part of any of the groups. They just weren't on our horizon. I think we thought they were below us. They were too childish, too immature. And we were very much into girl-power. And there was—in the kind of the wider circle, there was only one girl who had a boyfriend for want of a better word. And she was very happy to talk to us about her experience of kissing. She was sexually active and lots more, it was acutely embarrassing to listen to. But on the other hand, you know, you are at that age, you're curious, but on the other hand, you were thinking—oooh! what's going on here. Women I admired were—very influenced by America. And I was also quite heavily influenced by the Black Power movement. So, Angela Davis, who was an activist in that was quite a role model for me. As was Marsha Hunt who was in Hair, and Julie Driscoll who was a singer, who were quite strong female role models. I personally didn't date until my last year at school the month that I was leaving, which was June 1973. And that was at the school leavers disco. My parents they seem very happy with how I spent my time as a teenager, as quite frankly, they had their hands full with my older sister (laughs) who was extremely rebellious and was into boys. I think they were very glad that I wasn't. And yeah, that was me. So, I'll pass on to Fatima.

Fatima 35:23

Thank you very much Lesley. So, I will speak, maybe not in order as you both did before me that I'm not sorry—Not sure how to say the name, Anonymous. Anonymous? Yeah. Anyway, and Lesley, so I'm just gonna speak spontaneously. Sorry for not taking notes before or anything. So, I am from [text redacted]. And I was living in [text redacted] around my adolescence period, which was in, I would say, 19—When would that be? Yeah, I mean, I'm 1985. I was, let's say, I was, yeah—I can't remember the year, honestly, I should have taken notes anyway. So, my parents moved to [text redacted] when I was in grade seven for a career reasons because it's, you know, we could get a better job there financially and everything. So, I would spend the term year time at [text redacted] and go for holidays to [text redacted]. And the culture is very different, so although, kind of, you know, it's [text redacted]. However, how strict it is, varies between [text redacted] is a bit less strict. So, I basically spent my adolescence, a bit away from boys, I would say I wouldn't socialise with boys in any way. The only way I would speak to boys is through my family. And that's cousins and relatives. And even that is restrictive so I'm not meant to be very friendly, I should have a bit of you know, distance and it should be very formal. Which—I wasn't really too much, rebellious, as Lesley was saying, what she says I wasn't at all—I was just totally conforming to everything to the culture, the society, which was a bit judgmental, I would say now I realise how judgmental it was. So, we were always very considerate and very scared, I would use the word scared about losing our reputation. Because if you for example, socialise with boys, or you come back a bit late after the sunset, neighbours would be looking out for you and you would be known as you know, not the best girl around. What else—I'm just looking at points. So, I spent most of the time watching TV, when I have free time away from my studying. We would socialise with a big family, I had a very big family,

and we would socialise with them. And with very few friends. I had few, like a group of best friends and schools, in my school. And one of them is my best friend until now. So, my I would say my relationship with girls is very, very strong, because that's the only option there is no, no (laughs) other options. Sexual life was obviously prohibited. I can't even talk about it or consider it or anything. It's just something after marriage, so my first sexual experience was when I got married when I was 26, with my ex-husband now. What else? Social life. I think—Yeah. Just trying to remember. Yeah, that's it, I think. So, kind of restrictive, right life—I, to be honest, I feel sometimes very angry when I think about my adolescence times, because I feel like I've could have so much more potential socialising and, you know, being more curious about the world and having, you know, unlimited access to many things, but I was very restricted. So, I tried to make the best of what I had now. With not anything to do with you know, I don't know, like boys or anything. It's just, you know, for example, I wasn't allowed to go for—you know, big trips or school trips away from my parents' house or anything. So yeah, that's me. Sorry if I wasn't prepared. I would pass on who's next? Let me see, Helen?

Helen 40:25

Thanks, Fatima. Yeah, it feels like such a large kind of time, isn't it your adolescence it kind of—I feel like I kind of did different things at different times. When I was a younger kind of teen I would spend time with my friends, I went to an all-girls school, so all my friends were girls, but we would go to each other's houses, I played a lot of sports. I did that quite a lot on the weekends, really enjoyed that, in fact, particularly team sports. We went to the cinema and parties. It was interesting, Lesley saying about magazines I'd kind of forgotten about kind of magazines. Yeah, I this was like the '90s. I was born in 1980. So, like, it was the kind of time of like, all these slightly salacious girls' magazines had kind of gone from being the kind of like Girls Annuals and kind of more wholesome nature to kind of More magazine and these like ones with a lot of makeup and sexual connotations. And I suppose then when I was in my middle teens, so I was kind of 14 and 15, like my group of girlfriends from school, we used to go to parties with a group of boys from another school. And then I think, like, that kind of interaction between the two sexes, like that seems to dominate a lot of our thinking and a lot of our chat and a lot of our kind of time spent thinking about that. And then as I became an older teen—I had an older—I've got an older sister, she's two years older, we used to go out together. And I think from being about kind of 15 onwards, like that was what my social life was, I stopped playing sport, we would just go out nightclubbing and kind of music and like clothes, and boys, really, that was the kind of thing that occupied my imagination. But whilst me and my friends spent a lot of time talking about boys, I think we—my girlfriends were very much the bedrock of like—they were the constant—like, Fatima, I'm still friends with my best friend from school, she was much more adventurous than I was. And I would just kind of keep her from ending up asleep in a bush outside a nightclub or something like that. I was always quite—I kind of—I was quite a social child, and a little bit shy, and I suppose that kind of reserve remained with me. Whilst I kind of went out into these very social situations, like, I was always held back to a certain—I held myself back. It wasn't the kind of—I'm surprised, my parents just—well, I would kind of say that they're quite conservative, in a way, they just let me and my sister go out from being kind of mid-teens onwards, and we would, you know, we had to be back by two in the morning, which, I mean, as the mother of two small children that horrifies me the idea of, like how you kind of let go, to let your child do these things. And I didn't really talk to my

parents about what we were getting up to, whereas they were quite like—they let us do what we wanted to do. There wasn't really a discussion around it. So, there was a kind of slight awkwardness of all this seems slightly forbidden. But if we just didn't mention it, it wasn't really happening. Yeah, me and my sister were terrible, we used to smoke outside the house and feel that my parents didn't notice that even though it absolutely stank of cigarette smoke. But my parents diligently kind of didn't mention it to us. And I think, you know, like '90s, UK culture, there was a lot of this kind of ladette culture, and I think I kind of took that on to a certain extent or assumed that I had and thought that was quite liberating. But looking back on it, I think it was just a way of like mainstream kind of consumer culture saying to women, oh you can do what men do just the same. Just be like men, rather than really kind of understanding what would be more beneficial, to kind of my own development as a girl into a woman. So, I don't think—I think I just kind of went along with the flow a lot of the time. And yeah, I really enjoyed music and kind of going out dancing, but I kind of didn't really question, well yeah, what I really wanted to do, maybe as much as I might have done. And I pass to F.

F 45:28

Thanks, Helen. So, I didn't write anything down because I tried, and my brain wouldn't let me (laughs). But I might just read some of the words that I put into my piece of work. That I thought, this isn't a very cheery piece of work, but it looks so pretty. I was thinking about—my adolescence was a bit strange as well. My dad is Asian, and I grew up in a house where a lot of roles were imposed upon me because I'm a woman. And that my dad didn't pay a lot of attention to me, because I'm a girl so, it already was a bit strange. And then, because I spent my time doing so many—like in sports, I like to play football, I grew up—I got into dance music really early, so I was already listening to music that probably no one I was speaking to at school was listening to. And then by the time I kind of started secondary school, I was listening to hip hop. And again, didn't have any female friends that were into anything like that. I had a best friend at secondary school, probably because we kind of had nobody else to talk to on the first day of first year. And so, we kinda chummed up. But she was a twin, and her sister, her twin sister, really, really didn't like me. And I can't really think why that would be. But I was at school in the—I finished just around the mid '90s. So, I kind of was growing up and in the late '80s and early '90s, for my adolescence, but by the age of 16, I had started going clubbing to under 18s that like my parents knew nothing about. But my friends, the twins, my friend's mum and dad, they knew so they were taking us there and back. So, we had like little bits of freedom, but not really. I had to steal mine, which was quite mental. And then it came to a head, my sister, my sister grassed on me and told my parents a couple of things I'd been up to. And they told me just to kind of come clean and tell them everything. So of course, I didn't, because I would have got into more trouble. So, fuck that, excuse my French. I was like, nah, I'll just say that I did this, and this is well, and I'll keep the rest of myself. So that was okay. But I got grounded for a substantial part of my late teens while I was still living at home and missed my last school dance and things like that as a result of it. But it was worth it. Because by that time music had really taken over my life. And well I was applying myself in school, I still didn't know I had ADHD or anything like that, at that point. I just felt a bit different from everyone else. But because I was playing so much football, and I was really into hip hop, I didn't always hang out with just girls, I hung about with boys an awful lot. And even though my dad wanted to ignore me because I was a girl, me and my sister were girls, I really wanted to always hang about with

my dad. So, I've got quite tomboyish pursuits. You know, I appreciate cars and things like that as well. So, I actually hung about with a group of guys later on, towards third and fourth year I would say that is and like had to beg my dad to let me keep hanging out with them, because we were just friends there was nothing funny going on. And to be honest, I wasn't really interested in boys, but my dad was making a bigger deal out of it than I was even interested. And the few girls that that I did hang about with they weren't really interested in boys either. So, it wasn't a big deal for us. It was some of those magazines, More magazine, that was a name I had forgotten for a while there. Eventually I started reading that because I started to hang about with a different crowd of girls towards the end of my schooling, because I stayed on to sixth year and that had like 'Position of the Week' in it. And none of us—I don't think had even slept with anyone at that point. You know, we're 16 and 17. But the girl that always bought, the More magazine, I think she ended up sleeping with somebody before we finished school, but it was really towards the end. And her and I would go out in her car she would drive—we would go for drives. Go to car parks, she would sit and chat to the guys that she knew from the village where she grew up. So, like, I was around, boys in that sense, but it was certainly never—I was the one woman—that it was never for me. I was just the hunners, the backup for whoever my pal was to kind of do whatever that was they were doing with boys, you know, but I did actually hang about in crowds that had a kind of mix of boys and girls towards the end of my adolescence. And then I had moved away, so I didn't even hang about with the people that had been at school with. So, yeah, all of that was quite weird, but music and makeup wasn't so much a big thing I wasn't—my dad put the kibosh on a lot of stuff. I think that, I don't know, it was a really weird one. There's aspects I'd enjoyed about adolescence, but in relation to like, relationships and stuff like that, I don't think so. It was quite difficult a lot of the time. And I just felt like I was observing things as an outsider a lot. Like things didn't make sense to me a lot. But now I've found out that's because I've got ADHD, and I don't see the same—I don't see the world the same way as everyone else necessarily. But a couple of the words that I put down were 'swirling, confusing, strange, small', and what else, 'disconnected'. And this piece has got something about, it made me think about nature and nurture, actually the topic. So, I kind of found it interesting that way. And I didn't really have any older women that I kind of looked up to not real people anyway. Wonder Woman was my actual female role model, I would say growing up, because she had dark hair, and I've got dark hair. So, I really appreciated that. Because I think up to that point, most female superheroes had had blonde hair. And I didn't feel connected to that at all. So yeah, Wonder Woman was my kind of thing. But through the hip hop, I kind of got a bit of exposure to some Nation of Islam and like Black Panther stuff, and things like that. So, I was kind of on a different path during my adolescence, to understand my race, and where I fitted in the world because of that. So, I think boys were not important to me. I just wanted to play football and listen to my music. And go raving once in a while. And that was probably a—make art, yeah, that would have been it, yeah, I'll pass on to, is it Joy after me?

Joy 52:50

Thank you. Yeah, so thinking about how I spent my time, I think it was mainly school, and sport, those are the two things from about the age of 12. I was a member of an athletics Club, which was kind of in a bigger town, near where we lived. This was in the—Yes, we're talking the '70s, I suppose, really, in the southwest of England. And that was kind of really probably the most—what most of my time was spent doing. I was—it was—I was thinking

about friends, seeing friends out school and realising, that wasn't something that we did very much. I think, because of the geography. There were lots—that in my secondary school I went to, there were lots of kids who came in by bus from surrounding villages, which meant that once people had gone home, because there was no—there wasn't a very good bus service, it was actually quite hard to meet up. So, you tended to see people kind of at school. And then at the weekends, the people I'd be seeing would tend to be the people that I was maybe doing sport with, or training or everything would be a different group of people. So, it was—there were kind of different—there was kind of the people I knew from school and then the people I knew from, from athletics, who were kind of a different set. Think my parents quite okay with how I spent my time and a bit like I think Lesley was saying earlier, I think I was fairly in a sense I was quite kind of, in some ways quite conformist in that I wasn't sort of wanting to rush out and you know, go to nightclubs or anything like that was actually quite happy with, you know, going to training, going to school, doing my homework. It kind of sounds a bit boring now, but I was actually quite happy with it. I can remember there being for example, discos at school, and I just I never went to them at all. And the whole idea of them was just—I thought I—Why would I want to do that? And I can remember other girls or girls I was quite friendly with kind of saying, 'oh, there's this disco on Friday' or whenever it was. And I was just—I can't imagine enjoying that that is just not gonna happen. All the way through, I just I never went to anything like that. And it didn't bother me, I mean, I wasn't sort of thinking, 'oh, I, you know, perhaps I want to go' anything like that. I just thought I just, I'm not going to enjoy it. So why bother? You know, why go. So, I just never did. I think my friends, definitely very much like a couple of people have said very much girls rather than boys. I was in a mixed school all the way through. But it was just very much more—I was very much more interested in girls. I had a close friend again, somebody that I'm still in touch with now in primary who moved away after about two years of secondary, I think because she—her parents moved, and she had to go to different school. So, I kind of then—had other people that became subsequently best friends. But again, a bit like Lesley was saying, I think there was there was kind of a sense of boys being a bit silly, a bit immature, a bit childish, and there was kind of a sense of the girls being a little bit more—yeah, more mature or somehow superior. I can remember, for example, very first year in secondary, I think we had a split of there was about 20 girls in the class, and maybe about nine or 10 boys or something like that she was like two thirds girls. And the girls were very dominant in the class, it always seemed like the kind of the top students, you know, the best students were the girls. And the boys always seemed to be the ones who were, you know, not doing very well or not doing their homework or that kind of sense. And there was a little bit I think amongst the girls of—Yeah, we're kind of cleverer than them. And that (laughs) wasn't necessarily true. But was that a bit of a sense of why would you be interested in them, because they're not that, you know, they're not that great. And then when some of the girls did sort of start to maybe, you know, go out with boys, whatever it tended, it was very often boys who were older, they were in another school or in another year. I think the boys in the same year tended to be a little bit looked down on, which is maybe a bit mean for them. But there was that kind of sense that they were a bit too young for the girls. I think I was—yeah, there was, for me, I think it was that sense of being quite competitive with the boys, feeling better than them. As good as them or maybe better than them and being quite argumentative as well. And I think that made me to some extent a little bit uncomfortable with what I perceived to be the expectations. So there seemed to be the expectation that you'd be interested in clothes that you dress in a certain way that you

would use makeup, which I didn't, and still don't. And that you would kind of make the effort to be interested in boys and what they were doing and what they were saying. And I couldn't really be bothered with all of that. So, I think I was quite sort of—'Oh for goodness sake', you know. So, I didn't really—I didn't have boyfriends. And again, a bit like other things, you know, I wasn't really bothered. I just kind of thought, life is elsewhere. So, I wasn't kind of going around thinking, 'oh gosh, I wish I could have a, you know, a boyfriend'. It was a little bit, you know, I've got plenty of other things to be doing. So, I'm not bothered about this. Women, yeah, looking up together, what came to me on that was I remembered a couple of—because I was doing a lot of athletics at the time, I was kind of training and you know, there were races and stuff like that, very often the women that became important work kind of athletes. So, there were women, like for example, Mary Peters, who was the athlete from Northern Ireland. And I remember getting very interested in Lilian Board, who was a woman who had won a silver medal in the 1968 Olympics. And then at the time of the 1972 Olympics, she was very ill with cancer and I kinda remember reading stuff about her and, you know, reading a book about her and all this kind of—being, you know, kind of quite looking up to these women who had done fantastic things in sport, they were kind of really quite kind of important figures for me. So, yeah, in general, I think I would say—I think I was academically quite mature, I kind of read quite a lot. And I was interested in debating and, you know, talking and arguments and all that, but not socially, definitely—I didn't go out and do loads of things socially, so I don't think it was the social confidence there. But just one final thing I was thinking was it that kind of—I think it was that kind of interesting combination between being quiet—being a sensitive, fairly quiet person. But on the other way, in another way, sometimes being quite confident. So, doing things, like quite happily, you know, doing public speaking, singing a solo in church, you know, that kind of thing. And I remembered as well, when I was in this athletic club, we used to sometimes go away, and we would have, you know, races in other parts of the country. And we might spend the night somewhere. And occasionally the club would—one of the clubs that we were working—we were competing with, would put us up for the night. So, you'd get to go to somebody's house, and you know, you'd spend the night at their house, you know, before the race or whatever. And it was really interesting, I was kind of thinking back that there was some really confident girls in the group at the time, who were maybe when I was maybe 12, 13, they were sort of 15,16. They were always very loud. And they always have something to say. And they always had, you know, lots of opinions about things. And they were very much into the hair and the clothes and the makeup and all the rest of it. But when it came to going to stay in somebody's house, they would always say, I can't possibly go on my own, I've got to be with a friend, you know, two of us will go. And the two of us will stay with this person—because they were complete strangers, we didn't know them, of course, they're just putting us up for the night. And it would be people like me at 12, you know, going on my own to this perfect stranger's house. And it didn't bother me. And it just again, it seemed like a really interesting paradox. On the one hand, they were really outwardly confident. And yet—and I would think, gosh, she's so confident she's so loud, she's always got something to say for herself. And yet going to somebody's house and staying the night was a total no, no—that was—that would have, you know, blown a gasket if they'd had to do that. And yet there were much quieter people—more reserved, girls, you know, bit like me, who would quite happily just sort of go and stay in somebody's house and not thinking anything of it. So, it was kind of an interesting thing to think about. Yeah, other than that—I think there's nothing. That's it, I think there was just one other thing—one

other memory which came to me, which was it was somebody who was in the—I was in the school hockey team, and one of the members of the school hockey team got pregnant at about—she must have been 16. Like, must have been her last year of school. And I don't remember it being a major scandal. I mean, everybody kind of felt quite, in a sense, quite sorry for her that this was going to have, you know, quite a big impact on her life. But she did come back to school. I remember her coming back to school and doing some exams, but I just that kind of memory just came back to me of this person that I've got to know quite well through the hockey and discovering that she was pregnant was sort of—it kind of was like a window onto a different world in a sense, I think. Anyway, that's it. Thank you.

Helen 1:00:00

Okay, thanks, everyone. That was a cross section of things. Shall we have a little break for just for five minutes, and then we'll come back and chat and look at some of these archive things and reflect on what we've heard. Okay, so if we come back at five past. Okay, thanks.

Helen 1:05:00

Oh, hi Anonymous, thanks for letting us know you're back.

F 1:08:43

I'm here as well. I'm having trouble with my audio. I'm trying to fix it, but everybody sounds like robots today unfortunately.

Helen 1:08:51

Oh no, I wonder what that is something—

F 1:08:54

I'm not sure if it's the time of day. I noticed that the other day I was on around this time, you know, because everybody's using this stuff now. And I've been really lucky and not struggled with any problems with the audio up till now. So, I'll see what I can start out for next time. But if I am unsure what you're saying or I go down a different tangent because I thought you [unintelligible] just shout me back again.

Helen 1:09:19

Yeah, it's quite disorienting isn't it when suddenly—Myrtle was watching something, my youngest daughter, the other day and the sound had done that robot thing and she just was having a total giggle about it she couldn't listen to what they're actually saying, because it was like—

F 1:09:35

Totally can relate to that. That's what I'm struggling with today. So please forgive me.

Helen 1:09:46

Shall I share my screen and we can look at a few of the things from the Women's Library. So yeah, I went, and I was kind of like searching through kind of adolescence as a topic to see what I could find. And obviously, the Library's got a big zine collection—That's not actually a zine. So, I went and looked in some of those and a selection of those ones up on the Padlet page. But they've got hundreds and hundreds—And obviously, if we were at the Library, we

could all have a bit of a leaf through things and find things that maybe are of particular interest. I don't know if there's a particular ones that people found interesting, just have a bit of a kind of open chat about—

Anonymous 1:10:49

I looked at that really early one the 'Girls Questions Answered', or whatever. And it just made me worse, so I just I stepped away.

Helen 1:11:00

What was it about it Anonymous that? Did you find it quite triggering?

Anonymous 1:11:06

Yeah. I thought that mum talked to me quite a bit about this sort of thing. But—was definitely only a thing that could only be talked about with dad or any of the brothers weren't anywhere near and also, she has a thing about, you know, talking about what happens in the bedroom can only be done to the GP or the priest. So, it just felt a bit wrong—and the big family fight was about this—well, not teenage girl stuff, but this sort of thing. So yeah, I guess probably it was a bit triggering.

Helen 1:11:47

What does anybody else think about the 'Girls Questions Answered'?

Lesley 1:11:51

Well, this brought back incredible memories for me, because my father was a volunteer with the Marriage Guidance Council. And he had these, these were just lying all over the house. And I've completely forgotten about this. Because sex education was not a topic in my family at all. And so, to—whether deliberately or not to come across it in the house was just amazing for me. And I have to say that I found it very informative. When I read it again, now obviously some of it is very judgmental. But I just found it extremely informative. And but I completely forgotten about that. Because I think the 60—I remember it being a bright blue. I don't know whether different Marriage Guidance organisations had different versions of it, I'm not sure. And the one—the other ones you spoke—on the back, it's got an ad for saying, you might also be interested in 16. That one as well. But that was really kind of quite a blast in the past to see that again. '16 for all young adults', yeah.

Helen 1:13:14

Yeah, when I started reading it, I was like, 'oh, it is quite informative, but then, as you say Lesley—

Lesley 1:13:21

Uh huh.

Helen 1:13:21

It does become the kind of moral voice becomes clearer on certain things, doesn't it? Kind of—

Lesley 1:13:29

Yeah, I mean, it just wouldn't be written—It was very much of its time. It wouldn't be written that way now. But I thought, for me at the time, it was very informative.

F 1:13:45

I just read the question about after petting, 'how long does a boy lose his self-respect for you?' Wow! (laughter). I have never seen that publication before. Wow is all I can say. That's like—there was good questions in it as well, I see that there is information in there. But wow, the other stuff is quite, quite extra, but it must have been—I don't know what the word is, I'm looking for Lesley, but it must have been quite cool in one sense that you had that kind of thing lying about at home. So that perhaps, if you wanted to ask something you wouldn't feel too afraid to do so. Like it's almost an invitation to talk about it if you know what I mean.

Lesley 1:14:38

Yeah, I never used that as an invitation. But—

F 1:14:43

Oh, interesting.

Lesley 1:14:44

Yeah, I guess it could have been. I think, because, I have to say (laughs)—between that pamphlet, and the friend who I referred to earlier who was sexually active. Woah, I had too much information (laughs).

F 1:15:00

Oh, bless you Lesley.

Lesley 1:15:02

So, I knew what I did want to do and what I did not want to do very clearly (laughs).

F 1:15:10

That is equally as helpful. I think.

Lesley 1:15:13

I'll just digress. When I was, must have been 18. I'm gonna say 18 or 19. Anyway, I had this one date with this guy in Glasgow and I was living in a bedsit. And he was still living at home. Anyway, we went to the cinema, and that was fine. It was a very chaste date, that was fine, XYZ. Anyway, next day, I went into college. And so, this guy had spread the most dreadful rumour about what had actually happened on the day. So suddenly, I started getting these guys asking me out, which was very unusual, okay, I was not miss, you know—first person to ask out for a date. I thought this was strange. Anyway, then discovered, of course, what was happening. So, I thought, you know what, I'm going to get you back here. So, I just completely humiliated him in front of his friends in the bar in the college. And that was an end to that. Girl-power there.

F 1:16:20

Good for you, Lesley.

Helen 1:16:22

Yeah, guess what I was thinking about relationships with boys and boyfriends. And I did have a few boyfriends. But I don't think I ever really trusted any of them. I think there was always that kind of idea that they might either dump you or say things about you or reveal things about you. And it all seemed very precarious and kind of nerve wracking. So, I think—yeah—

Anonymous 1:16:54

Okay, I was probably a school, about the same time as F, I think—well, I graduated from uni in 2000. So probably left high school and in '96. But I remember a fourth or fifth year or something, people started calling me Dorian rather than Anonymous. And given that, like, the other option was like, you know, why have you never had a girl—a boyfriend Anonymous? Are you gay or something? And we were at a Catholic High School, so you know, that was—one of a fairly bad insult so I'm sorry if I've upset anyone. That was what other people said. To then started getting called Dorian from Birds of a Feather [character from '90s sitcom, seen as sexually active]. I thought okay, fine. Fine by me.

F 1:17:49

She was cool I liked her.

Lesley 1:17:54

Which one was Dorian in Birds of a Feather? I forgotten the—

Anonymous 1:17:59

the old [unintelligible] one who wanted any man that was around. The neighbour.

Lesley 1:18:06

The neighbour, oh the neighbour? Yes.

F 1:18:10

She was funny. She was really funny.

Helen 1:18:16

What about some of the zines. I actually—I took pictures of quite a few and then some of them I didn't have chance to read till I got home and some of the content was so sexual, I was too embarrassed to put them up (laughs). So, this was kind of like a cross section. The ones that I did put up. I put the Chica one up because that one was made in Glasgow.

F 1:18:47

I saw that. I quite like Chica. I call other women Chica as a term of endearment these days. So, I quite late there's a fanzine there called Chica. Nice.

Helen 1:18:58

Did you read it?

F 1:19:00

I didn't have a chance yet. No. Because I'll just have a look.

Helen 1:19:05

Yeah. Did anybody else have a chance to read that one?

Lesley 1:19:09

No, I didn't. What does Chica come from F? Is that a Spanish term?

F 1:19:17

Yeah. The very first time I went abroad, I went to Barcelona and I think I maybe picked it up either before I went actually or since coming back, but I quite like Chica. It's—there's something nice about it. It's nearly like saying sister I think. I feel that kind of vibe from it. So yeah, I liked it. I liked the way it sounded as well.

Helen 1:19:48

Yeah, some of the content in it—Like, it didn't say in the archive exactly when it was from, but it's taken this quite kind of like—Like this kind of, ladette, kind of attitude, of like girls going out and doing whatever they want. But I found it quite derogatory towards women as well like that, you know, there was a—

F 1:20:16

It's almost like, self misogynistic kind of thing. I've read stuff like that before I know what you're getting at. It's like, in order to be a powerful for women, you almost need to hate other women kind of idea.

Helen 1:20:35

Yeah, yeah. I would agree with that. Definitely. I think its a bit of its time.

F 1:20:42

Because, yeah, that dates it for sure.

Lesley 1:20:48

Quite a different culture—a difficult culture for young girls, I think to be in—I think you still see some of that in second—in lower secondary school.

F 1:21:02

Yeah, I would agree with that Lesley. I live across from a high school. And I see that all the time.

Lesley 1:21:08

Uh huh.

F 1:21:08

Still alive and kicking.

Lesley 1:21:11

Yeah, I think when you're making that transition from primary and you've just gone into secondary, and it's very, very bewildering. And you can get that culture. Yeah, it's not healthy.

Helen 1:21:27

Yeah, I think I felt like I should be aspiring to be older than I was. And in hindsight, I don't know why I did that. But I think a lot of the messaging from magazines and like popular culture was, like, you know, we've moved past the liberated woman and now you can just do whatever you want. But without questioning and we'll put our strong agenda to sell you products and a certain way of lifestyle.

Lesley 1:21:58

Well, it's imposing I think a male lifestyle. Not a lifestyle. A male behaviour. Or the dominant male behaviour rather than, you know, you'll make it as a woman, being a woman. Not a woman having to be—taking on a male cultural identities, or male—can't think of the word I'm looking for, but anyway, yeah.

Joy 1:22:41

In some of the scenes, it seemed like because there was obviously quite a desire to really react against the, if you like, the feminine, what is perceived as being feminine, the whole thing about, you know, makeup and looking nice and being polite, and whatever, they seem to be a kind of deliberate going completely the other way, which sometimes seemed quite over, almost a bit too much. Kind of just throwing everything out. And just saying, right, we're not gonna do any of that at all. And we're just going to be completely, you know, crude and rude and whatever. She can kind of—you kind of see where it's coming from, but at the same time, it seemed like it was just a really extreme reaction to we're not going to be ladylike and we're not going to be you know, nice little girls. So yeah, some of them do—

F 1:23:33

Yeah, it's like one extreme to the other at that time.

Joy 1:23:36

Yes.

Helen 1:23:40

Yeah, what other ones were there? There was Billy's Mitten when there was an article about the girl cutting her hair? Did anyone—

F 1:23:52

It says spying as well on the cover.

Lesley 1:23:56

What does it say?

F 1:23:59

Spying

Lesley 1:24:00

Spying, oh, gosh.

F 1:24:04

(laughs) So intriguing.

Helen 1:24:12

So, this one almost was kind of like diaristic in its—It was like kind of stream of consciousness writing of quite a young—it seemed like a young girl. I think she's American. This one because we have quite a few Americans zines, and in that very kind of DIY, make it in your bedroom. Cut out some collage things.

F 1:24:45

It's almost like a reappropriation of typical girly images from that time from magazines or something. I don't know. I can see that in it.

Helen 1:25:08

I guess there was a really—I suppose this was in the—I think is that it was from '96 when there were a lot of zine culture magazines coming out. People literally making them in their bedroom and distributing them. But yeah, I was reading and I was like, 'oh, why is she writing this? This seems quite self-indulgent'. And then she says something like, 'I guess you're wondering why I'm writing this'. What exactly did she say? This is important enough to write in a zine. Alright, yeah. Anyway, 'this story might not be a big deal for you punk rockers who cut your hair yourselves with your eyes closed, but for me, but it is for me.' I just thought there was something quite nice in that kind of like that these obviously, were an outlet for some young girls at the time, like just kind of finding that place that they could say like, this is what I want to do and asserting their own identity and not kind of being fed the magazines at the time and saying, okay, that's me, this is me that she's, you know, she's created her own story and gone to that trouble and kind of overcome the embarrassment of publishing a kind of almost diaristic small zine.

F 1:27:05

It says something about riot girls at the very bottom of that page. Which is also interesting, because we are talking about like these gender stereotypes.

Helen 1:27:19

Were you into Riot Grrl at all F, when you were—

F 1:27:24

No, I don't know what it was until I became much much older. To be honest, I was immersed in a world of electronic dance music from about the age of eight. So, I don't know, I didn't even know there were things called Rokerabillies, or—I knew about Punks, and I knew about the New Romantics as well, around the same time. But although I was into electronic dance music, I really didn't understand a lot of other music and the '80s. I liked things like soul and that, but my parents didn't play a lot of it. So, but yeah, Riot Grrl—a lot of people who know me know, would probably expect that to have been something I was into though growing up. So, it's quite interesting to me.

Lesley 1:28:12

What is Riot Grrl? I don't know at all.

F 1:28:17

I'm not sure that I'm going to be able to explain it very well. But I'm, from what I understand, it's just like, it's almost like girls who are into the rockabilly scene maybe, but almost they're like punks as well. But it's like, dependent type of women, I would have thought, that's the real essence of a riot girl.

Helen 1:28:40

I think those who are really like the kind of zine culture came out of it, but I think girls who were really into it kind of were reading feminist texts and kind of,

F 1:28:54

Yeah, that's what I was going to say—

Helen 1:28:55

Sort of developing their own kind of idea of what feminism was in the '90s—

F 1:29:02

Yeah.

Helen 1:29:04

—and kind of forming bands and doing things the way they want it to do things.

F 1:29:09

For sure. I think for my generation, they were probably like, genuine feminists, they would have kind of come from my making of age group-ish. But yeah, I was on a different route from that, but still agreed with a lot of the principles obviously, I suppose I am a feminist deep down. I'm laughing about that too.

Helen 1:29:43

Did people in their adolescence, engage with feminism as a kind of idea or a movement or theories?

Fatima 1:29:56

I don't really think I've heard about feminism when I was my adolescence to be honest.

Helen 1:30:04

No, me neither. It sounded like Lesley, maybe you did. You were saying Angela Davis was the kind of woman that you looked up to?

Lesley 1:30:11

Yes, but I wouldn't have called her—I wouldn't have called her a feminist. Germaine Greer was very prominent, but I couldn't stand her because she was so strident. And she was really anti-men. And I just didn't like the way in which she presented the arguments, and I

didn't like Spare Rib magazine. It was—I find it so divisive. And Angela Davis had a much more—had a much more specific remit. That was different from feminism. It was—I was much, much more interested in equality. And the injustice for black people in America, whether you're a man or a woman. Yes, I mean, I was very much into the, you know—your ability as a woman to do things and not to be stopped by your gender. But the, for me, the feminist movement at that time, was not one that I could identify with. I didn't see myself fitting into it at all.

F 1:31:46

I can totally relate to all of that as well Lesley. Yeah.

Lesley 1:31:53

Uh huh.

F 1:31:53

Especially about Germaine Greer, actually, I think that's why I was so confused about feminism for a long time. Because I thought, from what I was being presented on, media it meant you had to hate men. And I didn't really hate men. A lot of men—You know, like, I say, I kind of lived between both male groups and female groups. So, Germaine Greer was somebody who that confused me a lot, but I liked that she was at least vocal on some level.

Lesley 1:32:22

Uh huh. That was one of the big issues, I think, with the feminist movement. You had Gloria Steinem, the American activist who very much came from the camp, that men are not the enemy, we have to work with them and educate them. And she was dealing with a really big feminist backlash in America, which then obviously came over to the UK, you know, we have to hate men. And that there was a real power struggle that went on— the two polarised views.

Joy 1:32:59

I don't really remember, kind of coming into contact with anything that would have called itself or would have been recognisable as feminism when I was a teenager. I think, for me, it came later. And what I experienced, I think, was not so much about hating men, but meeting women who simply felt that they needed their own spaces. So, they simply needed to be able to come together and talk amongst themselves. I mean, like we're doing here (laughs). So, it was more about that. It wasn't about that they hated men. I mean some of them will have been heterosexual. And some of them were lesbian and some of them maybe weren't sure, but there was just that sense of, we can talk about things differently if men are not here. And it was true. I mean, it was definitely true. And at the same time, there were, you know, there were black women saying we need to meet, you know, just with black women, because it's different if it's just us. And you know, and obviously, it has to be understood by white women. And the think, you know, lesbians were saying something similar. So there seems to be quite a lot of, in a sense, it was kind of people separating off into little groups, you can kind of see why there was something fundamental that they needed to do together. And it couldn't happen in a, you know—if just anybody was in the group.

Helen 1:34:22

Yeah, I've been reading a little bit about like, kind of dominant social groups and like that idea that if, well, white males are the kind of most dominant group in British society and therefore, like, in a mixed group, that a conversation about certain things just can't happen. And then yeah, exactly, as Joy said that, kind of breaks down into like, women of colour might want to meet separately to talk about issues that specifically relate to them or lesbian women. But I think it was portrayed in the media wasn't it that this was kind of factional and a way of—it became able for the mainstream media to be anti-feminist because it was like, 'well, if they wanted to break away and have these meetings that exclude certain people', i.e. men, 'then we must try and oppose them'.

F 1:35:24

For the first time in their lives as well, maybe we just remind ourselves here. The first time in their lives that we ever were asking to exclude men from conversation. So yeah, but that is what I remember, from like my late teens kind of growing up and seen on the media, it was this vilification, it was like, you're being presented with the option to be a strong, independent woman. But if you did it, then you were very much frowned upon. As far as the media was concerned. I mean I grew up at the same time, as the Spice Girls were out there. And I was into sports, and I did dress a bit like that, so I used to get called Sporty Spice all the time. But it was not a fucking compliment, let me tell you, that was people like insulting me and trying to put me down. And the only reason they were doing that is because I was a woman who always stood up for myself. So, it's quite an interesting discussion that we've ended up having. So many facets to it.

Anonymous 1:36:29

When I was an adolescent, I think I remember having a sort of skewed idea that I'd better not look happy, because then the bullies would make sure that I wasn't. So, it wasn't the boy bullies or the girl really, it was just 'the bullies'. So, I'm not sure I knew much about feminism at all. And it turns out that Christine, the middle sister, was—had contact with the Women's Library to find out anything about female artists when she was at art school, but I had gotten—for years I had it confused, I thought it was my oldest sister, that was a feminist but turns out was my middle sister. So, I was well confused about that for ages. But I'm—although I watch a lot of TV, I think I maybe watched really rubbish TV, and not really the news. I think I was just blobbed out in front of the telly because school had been so hard—that just it was—I wasn't ready for sleep, because that was always the thing. If you're so tired, go to bed. But I'm sorry, I don't know where I'm going. I'll stop.

Helen 1:37:54

Shall we have a go at doing some summing up because I'm aware times ticking on. So, Fatima to let you know we've been using this software called Slido, which allows you to put words into it, and then it generates them in a like little word clouds that kind of brings things together. So, we were—in our summing up, we've been trying to kind of like draw together kind of threads of things that people have been talking about. But I think as with every session, there's been such a diverse kind of selection of experiences—So maybe we'll have a go at doing it and see what see what it brings up for us. And then we can chat a little bit more. So, what I did last time was I put the link in the chat, didn't I. Where is it? Let's see. So, if you go to the website, which is that and then our code is just 'women', it'll say enter

code, and there's like a hashtag and it says enter code. And then that should bring up the screen. I can find where I've got it on my computer. How's it working for people this time?

Fatima 1:39:35

Yeah, I managed.

F 1:39:38

I can see a bit we can type words this time.

Helen 1:39:41

All right. Well, that's good. I don't know what happened last time. We could spend like, five minutes on— I hadn't thought what on earth I'm going to enter in. You can also do it on your phone. I'm going to scan the QR code.

Fatima 1:40:01

Can I ask please, Helen, so I just write words individually and send them one by one?

Helen 1:40:07

Yeah, all little short phrases.

Fatima 1:40:10

I get you. Thank you.

F 1:41:03

Sorry, I tranced out when you were talking about what we're going to do here. I do apologise. So, we're just doing the same thing as before. Where we're thinking of words that reflect—are a reflection of what we've listened to today. Yeah, is that right?

Helen 1:41:16

Yeah, that's right.

F 1:41:19

Thank you. I'm just keeping myself right.

Helen 1:41:53

Yeah, and if you see a word on there that you relate to, you can type that in as well. And then I think it'll—If more than one person types the same word, it becomes larger.

F 1:42:23

This is the magic I couldn't take part in the last time. I'm just having my mind blown at the same time here.

Anonymous 1:43:27

Just seeing 'free' there I remember—it brought back a very distinct conversation, memory with my mum, more or less about one of my sisters going on about freedom and wanting freedom, and how there was no such thing as freedom. Society, like, took away your freedom, anyway, more or less, it wasn't something to try for (laughs).

F 1:44:02

That was making me laugh Anonymous.

Helen 1:44:56

Has everyone finished putting things in?

Lesley 1:45:01

I've just got one more to put in.

Helen 1:45:03

Okay dokeys. It does work better, doesn't it when we can—Because we couldn't kind of see it properly last time. I feel like I think I'm seeing things and thinking, 'oh, yeah, that was a strong thing for me' and then repeating it, and that gives it a different size of texts.

F 1:45:34

Yeah, I've really enjoyed using that. This is really cool.

Helen 1:46:02

So, does anybody want to say anything about the things that are coming up here? Just as they come to them, don't need to use our circle—

Anonymous 1:46:17

Actually, I'm sorry, I unmuted myself there because I was going to ask if it would be possible to maybe not follow the feminist thing next time and maybe do something about at some quite topical at the moment about, well connected to freedom, like the poor community, police, women who got killed and the other lady who is just walking back from a friend's and got killed in London was or something? And the whole idea of like freedom. Just freedom, but also if it's actually achievable?

Lesley 1:47:10

Yeah, it's a bit like the Reclaim the Night campaign, which is to make the streets safe for women at night, that they shouldn't be—they should be able—we should be able to go about our business feeling safe.

Helen 1:47:29

Yeah, that's been a campaign for quite a time now hasn't it.

Lesley 1:47:32

Uh huh.

Helen 1:47:35

Yeah, I'd wondered if people would be interested in doing a kind of topical session next time that the people brought something, like a kind of issue like the Reclaim the Night marches that you feel quite personally passionate about. And that we kind of share those as a group to kind of see what people's kind of specific interest in women's issues are, whether that would be of interest?

Anonymous 1:48:11

Does it have to be solely women or something that women—Like because, I know I just talked about the—thank you, Lesley for telling me it was Reclaim the Night—But I'm more likely to want to talk about the, Let's not Return to Normal campaign, like the normal wasn't good. Rather—Is that okay? Because like women and men are affected by that.

Helen 1:48:41

Yeah, that'd be great. And perhaps if you kind of think about whether there are any aspects of that, that you think are gendered in any way, it doesn't mean they have to be, but try and think about it through that, like, gendered way of looking at things that would be interesting. What other people think of that as a topic?

Lesley 1:49:17

Yeah, I think that's a good suggestion.

Joy 1:49:21

So, what would the topic be Helen that the topic would be—Each person brings a topic or—

Helen 1:49:28

Yeah, so each person brings a kind of topical topic (laughs) that you—I suppose that kind of like going back to this original idea of the personal and the political something within—an issue within society that you feel quite personally passionate about, whether it's Reclaim the Night or the like Not Going Back to Normal campaigns, those kinds of things. And how you relate to it or what your specific interest is.

Lesley 1:50:03

Would we have enough time to do that with if we all got six different topics? I'm wondering if we're the best you're sticking with Anonymous' suggestion? And then within that you just you interpret it, rather than if we all came with six different—

Helen 1:50:25

Yeah, we could do that so kind of safety on the streets kind of topic, or personal safety or—

Lesley 1:50:39

I think it's a bit—

Helen 1:50:41

Or violence against women?

Lesley 1:50:43

I thought it was broader than that what you were talking about Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:50:46

In my—well, I started is quite specific about the two instances where women weren't safe, but I was kind of thinking about it—like, if anyone is truly free, like because I don't know, if I was thinking of freedom, I think at the same time,

Helen 1:51:20

Freedom as a topic?

F 1:51:25

I quite like that actually.

Lesley 1:51:28

Umm.

F 1:51:28

I'm not too keen on looking specifically, at violence against women just now that it's just because of personal issues that I've got. But I mean, if other people wanted to do that, I could always try and write about it from another perspective. But I like the idea of freedom, and what does that mean, when you're a woman maybe? Or how does it relate to you when you are a woman? In this male dominated world still.

Helen 1:51:59

Yeah, that sounds good. What does that mean? Yeah. So, people could think about it, contemporarily and within society more broadly. And then I suppose you could also think back to different points in your life where it's been pivotal.

F 1:52:21

Yeah, that makes sense.

Anonymous 1:52:33

Thank you, everyone, I'm sorry, if I've taken us off the wrong—where we were in that and just the not being able to brave the session, I'm worried about coming up. So, thank you.

Helen 1:52:47

I think it's good if we kind of discuss what our topics gonna be and try and find something that's of interest to everyone. I was going to show you some posters from a kind of '70s female collective of print makers, the See Red Women's Workshop, I don't know if anybody knows their posters? And but they were a kind of, I think they were London based, they made screen prints together, that kind of covered a range of kind of women's issues, they did Reclaim the Night ones and things like that, a whole range of things. So, we could have a look at those together as well. There is a couple in the Women's Library archive. And maybe I'll have a think about a creative thing that we could do as well. But two hours goes so quickly, it's hard to squeeze anything more than like, discussion in and then a bit of time to reflect.

Anonymous 1:54:08

Is there any reason that the topics have to stay to one session?

Helen 1:54:15

No, they don't need to, they could go across more than one session. So, we've kind of committed ourselves together to the kind of 10 sessions. So, this is number seven, so we've

got eight, nine and 10. So three more. And then it'll be summer, and we can kind of see where everyone's at.

Anonymous 1:54:38

Because the free—well, if we are—yes, sorry—oh—if we're doing freedom next week, if we kind of stick to the sort of personal experience with a creative activity, if we then wanted to look at archive material, could we do that the next session. But that's just my suggestion. Sorry.

Fatima 1:55:13

Can I ask maybe can we maybe specify a tiny bit? Or even if you want to keep it broad, that's fine, just so I would know what to prepare, for example, if we're talking about freedom in which way? So were you—somebody mentioned something about, we're living in a male dominant society, for example, so how—I'm just trying to get the direction of what I should be preparing. So how could freedom—Maybe someone could help me to show—

F 1:55:54

Oh, yeah, no, I was just saying like—What does—maybe either how are you affected by freedom being a woman living in a male dominated society? Or what does freedom mean to you being a woman within a male dominated society? Or just really, what does freedom mean to you being a woman in general? That's what I was saying, Fatima, yeah.

Fatima 1:56:19

Thank you very much, yeah. I think I might get lost a tiny bit with time to prepare. But yeah, I think it's also a good thing, just to keep it broad. It's up to everyone else. Also, I can prepare whatever you suggest. That's fine.

Anonymous 1:56:44

I think the main thing that I've always thought about the sharing part is that you speak to your personal experience.

Fatima 1:56:55

Uh huh.

Anonymous 1:56:56

And so that they're actually experienced rather than any deep thoughts you've been having. That might help.

Fatima 1:57:07

Yeah, that's a good one. Thank you.

Helen 1:57:16

Did anybody want to comment any more on our kind of summing up? I think it worked a bit better doing the Slido this time. If there's anything anybody wanted to add?

F 1:57:38

It was definitely interesting to see all the different zines there, I was having a look at them whilst we were chatting. Yeah, there's really a wealth of stuff in that archive isn't there? Because they're so varied. I could imagine that you were sifting through a fair few of them for a bit Helen.

Helen 1:57:57

They do literally have hundreds. And obviously, if we were there, it would be that very kind of tactile experience of seeing things and touching things and engaging with them in a different way. But maybe we can go out into the real world one of these days.

F 1:58:16

Woo hoo.

Anonymous 1:58:17

My comment on the summing is I'm so glad that I've grown up past adolescence, hope I'll never have to go back there. And the other thing is, what with COVID, we probably would be able to pass the archive material around. So, it would be different.

Helen 1:58:35

That is very true.

F 1:58:39

There's probably so much there, though, that we could all have a wee couple to look at each, though, if there's that many, you know. But yeah, I hear you on that. That will still be a different experience going out. But it would be nice just even—because I didn't realise there's an archive there as well at the Women's Library. I know they're a library and I knew they must have something like that but didn't realise like it's a proper proper archive. Really cool.

Helen 1:59:07

Yeah, when they moved to the building that they're in now, then they had a specially built archive. So, it's like flood proof and fireproof and you know—

F 1:59:20

That's amazing.

Helen 1:59:21

Moved from the kind of just the cardboard boxes to something that is really preserving all that material, that women have donated over the years, because it is all kind of donated by women. And I know that the Library they talk about women kind of over the years turning up with carrier bags full of real kind of mix of things. And I suppose it is a really important way to collect some of those histories that otherwise don't get remembered and don't get kind of written into the story, the bigger picture.

F 2:00:00

For sure, a really, really special thing.

Helen 2:00:06

Okie dokie we're at two minutes to five. So, we will say bye to everyone and thanks everyone for contributing. That was really interesting to hear the different experiences as usual.

Lesley 2:00:26

Okay, thanks Helen. See you in two weeks everyone. Bye-bye

F 2:00:31

Take care everybody.

SPEAKERS

Lesley, Anonymous, Fatima, F, Joy, Helen

Helen 02:25

Hi, how you doing?

F 02:29

I'm okay. I've actually had a really stressful couple of weeks.

Helen 02:33

Oh, have you.

F 02:33

But I'm here.

Helen 02:34

Oh, well done,

F 02:35

—and I'm glad. I ended up having to go to A&E last Thursday, so—

Helen 02:41

Oh no. What—

F 02:42

Yeah, I was just in a lot of pain and it's different pain. If I go to a doctor, they were probably just gonna send me for an X-ray anyway, and I had to go there for an appointment with Kevin so because he's been getting the fluid drained from his lungs, though. Oh my god, honestly. It's been an experience the last few weeks. But yes—

Helen 03:03

And did that sort out what was causing the pain?

F 03:08

Nah. They checked for infection, so everything's okay, which is good, but they were just like, take paracetamol with the painkillers that you're already prescribed, we're not giving you anything stronger. I was like, right, okay. I think—a lot of male doctors have decided somewhere down the line that I'm not honest about what goes on in my own body. And I'm getting treated that way now, by the NHS, which is extremely frustrating. I've never been in this much pain in my life before. So, I need to kind of precursor today, because maybe I'm not going to be great at participating or answering but we'll see.

Helen 03:46

Well, just—

F 03:47

I am really glad to be here.

Helen 03:48

—take part in what you can F. Yeah.

F 03:51

Nice to see some friendly names and faces that will be good to hear everybody's thoughts and discussion as well. I'm actually really looking forward to this. But I just have to say like on a positive note, the overwhelm of emotion that I experienced from watching what happened in Kenmure Street [a community protest in the Southside of Glasgow about the deportation of two men by the Home Office]. Wowzers. I didn't even know about it until the next day, when someone else told me and I have honestly been waiting all my life in this country for things like that to happen. So, it's really—it's positive and heartwarming to see at long last. People are figuring out—because none of it was violent or anything like that, you know. And everybody was wearing masks and it seemed quite respectful to be honest. So yeah, despite whatever difficulties I felt like I face the last few weeks I'm seeing society make these massive leaps forward. It's amazing. Totally amazing, time to be alive. So, nice to see you all.

Helen 04:51

Did everyone see that in the news? In Kenmure Street? Yeah. Yeah, that was pretty much outside where my old flat was where we moved from. I didn't actually make it down, but—

F 05:06

Yeah I was gonna say—

Helen 05:08

Yeah, I was feeling—I was like glued to it all day when it was happening. It was quite—yeah, it was quite an amazing show of solidarity. Do we want to have a little check in with how people are doing? I'm expecting that Lesley and Anonymous will join us. I've not heard otherwise from them. But we could maybe just start by checking in with everyone. I was thinking that as things got a bit easier in the world that we might not need to check in as much but actually feel the opposite I feel like things are getting a bit—Yeah, I feel like it's been quite an intense couple of weeks. Like, whilst the kind of show solidarity on Kenmure Street was amazing, I found it quite a lot as well like that this was happening—oh there's Lesley coming in. And the conflict and Israel and Palestine seems quite—is very intense that's been affecting me as well. Hey Lesley.

Lesley 06:15

Hi everyone.

Helen 06:18

Nice to see you. We're just doing a little check in with everyone. There are Southside people in—yeah the levels [levels of COVID infection] in the Southside are like really crazily high

like, we were meant to be having my partner's parents were gonna come visit us at the weekend. But that can't happen now because no one's allowed in or out. And my kids have been sent back from school because all their school is almost off. And my oldest daughter is fine, but she has tested positive for COVID. So that was quite surprising. But then she's just seemed totally asymptomatic. And if she hadn't come into contact with someone at school, we would never have tested her.

F 07:07

Wow.

Helen 07:07

So, it's kind of all a bit mind blowing.

Lesley 07:12

Gosh.

Helen 07:13

But we're all doing fine.

Fatima 07:16

Overwhelming stuff.

Helen 07:19

Yeah, a little bit a little bit. Hey, Anonymous. I was just saying Anonymous that my daughter—my both my kids are off school, and my oldest daughter has tested positive for COVID. But she is completely asymptomatic and seems totally fine. But yeah, just as we all—well, I was like, thinking, wow, we've made it through the pandemic. Suddenly, things have changed quite dramatically in Glasgow. Like, it's amazing. I think this is the first time I've seen—been able to kind of see, 'oh, that family's isolating' and then its just moving around. And yeah, it's quite dramatic. I will pass over to somebody else who would like to share there (laughs) couple of weeks, but I just thought I'd get that off my chest.

Fatima 08:12

Yeah, no, I'm I can relate to what you're saying Helen. I've been overwhelmed by so many things. On the personal level and in terms of [unintelligible] level, the Palestinian and Israelis conflict basically has been affecting me. I've been having kind of dreams about it all night. To be honest, it feels like—I try sometimes to isolate myself a tiny bit because I get very, very drawn into it, and observe it so much. So—but I just can't avoid it. I just can't avoid it. So yeah, that's been recently happening. But can I ask you, what did you say about the rivers? The river level has been?

Helen 09:07

Oh, just no, not—the just the levels of infection.

Fatima 09:10

Infect—Sorry, sorry, I thought you meant that. And the Southside did you say it's the levels? Okay, sorry (laughter). Something to laugh about? Maybe. So yeah, no, and my course has

been extended because of COVID before. So now all my assignments are coming to you know, I'm coming to the end of the year and I have like three assignments in one go. And I'm trying to juggle everything together. So, it's been a little bit overwhelming, but summer is coming. Hopefully things will be getting a tiny bit better. And I'll pass— does someone wants to say something about the how they have been. Thank you.

Lesley 10:07

I'll say then. Well, I was away last week, on holiday, I went to Arran and Inveraray, and it was lovely. I really enjoyed being on that side of the country. Felt very free, they were talking about freedom today. The only downside was I lost my sunglasses. And other than that, really not much else to say.

Joy 10:50

Like Lesley, I've been enjoying having a little bit more freedom I mean not at the moment, but up to now, it's been quite nice being a little bit freer in what we've been able to do. A couple of weeks ago, of course, we will also have—yeah, was it two weeks ago, now I've lost track, I think two weeks ago, we were voting, which kind of—I think it's one of those things that quite often now, we can take a little bit for granted, or people kind of say, they're not going to vote because it's, you know, I don't know, it doesn't matter, or they're all—you know, it's not going to change anything or things like that. But it kind of always does feel quite important for me. I mean, just because just thinking about the women who—and, you know, decades and risked their lives, and some of them even died so that we could actually vote. And also thinking about, you know, places obviously, in the world where people aren't free to vote, it just seems a little bit—Yeah, somehow a bit complacent almost to kind of say, 'oh, well, let's not bother to vote', given all the effort that went into it. So that sort of felt like quite an important thing to be able to do to actually be able to go and vote whether you like the result or not, or, you know, whatever, whether you agree, it just seemed like an important thing to be doing. And I was also haven't been into town very much. But I did go into town again I think a couple of weeks ago, and I was—I went into give blood which again, always feels like one of those— sort of feels like you're part of a collective effort. Somehow, everybody's giving their, you know, their pint that's going to be given to somebody else. And when I was in town, I was sort of noticing just, it was the busiest I think I've seen it because it's been so quiet, obviously, I mean that the shops have been closed, and there just hasn't been anybody around. But it was just somehow quite a shock to see it so busy. And in the last year, there's been quite a lot of talk about, you know, what, will be different when we open up again, and will people have changed in their habits? And will we run our society differently. But it was—it felt almost as if people had snapped back very quickly into, you know, going to particular shops, and you know, queuing up to go into Primark, or, you know, whatever it might have been, it was quite somehow, I was quite taken aback by it, I think because I've not seen it, that busy. And I haven't really maybe been into the city centre, so very much. It just felt like almost a flashback to I don't know, year and a bit ago, it felt like nothing had happened. Nothing had changed. And that was a bit—that was a bit strange. Yeah. And then yeah, just one thing to—yeah, I've been thinking a little bit about connection and how we connect. And there's been quite a lot of talk about the importance of connecting and how much people have lost—have missed connecting with others in the last year and a bit. And I was reading something about an article about the whole idea of connecting and talking to people. And it was saying that a lot of younger

people aren't—I think it was talking about the 18 to 25 generation, maybe something like that. The under twenty five's perhaps find it quite anxiety inducing to actually talk to somebody on the phone. I don't know if that's an invented thing, or it had actually statistics for, you know, I don't know, 80% of people or something which sounded immense to me. Yeah, so that surprised me, I was kind of thinking, how can that be? It sort of seemed a bit counterintuitive that people would not want to—because we hear us—yeah, we hear a lot about connecting and people wanting connections with others and contact and all the rest of it. So, I was kind of taken aback by that. I don't know if that's a real thing, whether anybody else has experienced that or any insight into that, but I was surprised.

Anonymous 14:40

It kind of depends how much you feel you'll be able to express yourself, how much you'll be judged. If you'll be forced to answer questions. I think that's maybe where young people's problems might be and if there's an increase—I don't know. Never mind. Sorry, I have realised that when I'm nervous I do too much talking. I wish I would take up the opportunity to not talk.

Lesley 15:20

No talking's good. There's never too much talking.

Fatima 15:28

I agree we're here to talk.

Anonymous 15:33

Because I did worry after last time, I'd done too much talking and try to take control when it's Helen's session.

Lesley 15:40

No, we'll tell you when you're going to take control Anonymous. If you're taking control. Don't worry, you're not.

Helen 15:45

Yeah, not at all Anonymous, it was nice to take us in a different path than we might not have gone. It was good. Have you been all right this week Anonymous? These last two weeks.

Anonymous 16:04

I've been doing a lot of crafting both—well, Ingrid's in exhibition that she's—Ingrid Pollard. She's putting up at the Library. She asked for some staff and volunteer input. So, I did something for her. And also, I was doing some creative—well I am still doing some creative responses for Open the Door [annual literary festival at Glasgow Women's Library], which starts on Thursday, I think. And I've also just our [unintelligible] just put a—don't know what it is. Might even be a concrete poem up on the Padlet about today's session. Or what I've been doing to try and order my thoughts.

Helen 16:55

Right. F do you want to—I know you were chatting a bit, but that was maybe before people arrived, I don't know if there's anything you'd like to share.

F 17:06

It's been really interesting that freedom was our topic this week. Particularly with all these things that everybody's mentioned before. So, Israel and Palestine conflict, Afghanistan hasn't actually stopped either. And there's many other places where stuff like that is going on, but we are just not being told about it in our media. So those—like I was writing notes about the questions that you gave us, and I was really thinking about, 'wow'. Like I'm saying it as a—it's an amazing time to be alive, it is, but it's a very, very bittersweet time to be alive as well. I think, right now, I can really feel the contrast of emotions, because as Joy rightly reminded me, it was only two weeks ago, we were voting, to be honest, seems like a fucking lifetime ago now, excuse my French, like, honestly, it feels like it was an out of body experience that didn't—I didn't do that. I did but like it does not—I don't feel attached to that experience already. And we're only a couple of weeks away from it. And yet, it is something that affects every aspect of your daily life living in Scotland, because it does seem at least on the surface, like Scottish MPs in general, want what's best for the people of Scotland on a daily basis. So, I think like the last few weeks in particular, despite whatever personal issues I have even had on the go, there has been such a—an even bigger agenda and plan and whatever things unfolding. So, for me, like I was thinking about what happened in Kenmure Street, and I've been thinking about all these wars that are going on. And even I'm looking at what people are saying about like, we're discussing the pandemic and things opening back up again. And like I was on a total high when I saw that I was going to be able to hug people again. And then the next day, I couldn't stop crying because I live in Glasgow and like Helen said, no one's allowed in or out. So that put the kibosh on that. There's someone I know who lost their pet of 12 or 13 years, just like the same day as his birthday at the start of April, a very good friend of mine, I can't even go and visit him and give him a hug. Just now, do you know what I mean? Because he's a keyworker, he needs to be careful as well. So, these types of things, you know, you almost had those freedoms, quote, unquote, dangled in your face, and felt so close and the relief even to think that we were going to move to whatever our new normal is where, yes, our lives' are so modified in some way, until we know that this is globally under control. But it's, you know, then taken away from you the very next day. It's—I don't know, it's been really weird. I think the last few weeks, it's felt like there's been a lot of strange energy about. But with regards to a couple of things that were—people were saying, just to finish off, sorry—as a— Anonymous I always feel like I talk too much as well. And I'm always worried about that in every interaction I have with anybody, whether it's digital or in the real world, so I hope that that at least gives you some comfort to know that you aren't facing that alone. But Joy, it was it was talking about young people feeling like they can't speak on the phone for anxiety, I can relate to that. I've had that my whole entire life. But I think for younger people it's much more about the type of world they've grown up. And because technology is all that's existed in their lifetime. They've never known a world without these digital comforts, that people of certain older generations wouldn't have grown up with, like I didn't. I embrace technology when it came because I was quite young, but I was still around eight or nine before they got—before there was like a computer in the house, you know. So, I think that it's about different ways of connecting. And for me, that's what lockdown has helped me understand that actually, I was relying on in-person communication a lot before. And it stresses me out as—even more than what phone calls do. So, I think like, maybe coming out of things, we could be looking at diversifying, how do we communicate with each other on a daily basis?

How do we interact with each other in our communities? And what are the freedoms that interacting in different ways can allow different sections in communities as well? I don't know. I feel I've rambled a little bit. But yeah, I'll stop. Thanks.

Helen 21:58

Thanks. I think that's the nature of this technology, isn't it? Suddenly, the kind of Zoom window seems to kind of—I feel like sometimes I'm talking about something and then suddenly, I feel like I'm in the digital abyss, and I've lost my train of thought or I've gone on, but you weren't rambling at all, F that was nice to hear from you. Um—

Joy 22:23

Can I just say, Helen, both Anonymous and F, we're saying there about worrying about speaking too much. But perhaps we could also say that some people worry that they don't speak enough so that there are kind of it's the that's the other side of the coin, isn't it? I mean, there are people who are very quiet and who are maybe kind of worrying that they're not speaking enough. So, it's kind of interesting that we've all got our own worries, I suppose about too much or not enough, I suppose is what it comes down to.

Helen 22:55

Yeah, yeah. What is just right? I suppose is down to individual experience. Well—I don't think there really is I suppose that's the nature of this type of group isn't it. It's to try and give people space to speak. And, yeah, sometimes we've got more to say and other times not as much. Anonymous.

Anonymous 23:18

And this is sort of related to what I put in the chat. And also, I found myself thinking about it both last time, and within my notes about stuff for this time. As a teenager, I learned far more than I wanted to about my family, my wider family and stuff. And sectarianism, because that's what it is, no matter what the Justice Secre—man says. It's different when it's just a concept that you see in like an Orange March or something, even though that's pretty intimidating. But like, when you find out that your mum and dad married across the West of Scotland rule I did—line. And all the bigotry comes out. And then the very grandparents that are Church of Scotland members who were the ones who wanted to hug you whenever you came into their house and so on, were the—Catholic ones were more standoffish. Turns out that they actually hate you because you're Catholic. It's brings it home a bit. Sorry, I got bit excited there. Sorry about that.

Helen 24:34

Shall we move on to our topic? Because I feel like it's a huge one, isn't it like and could go in lots of different diverse ways. And I think lots of what people have already been talking about kind of touches on many things that could relate to that. Yeah, and just to reiterate, I guess like—You can tackle as much or as little of the topic as you want, you know, it doesn't—you don't have to be giving a world—quality—like, doesn't have to be changing the world, what you say, it's your experience. And that's what we're interested in hearing from each other and sharing and being respectful of. I did a little list of names, I can put in the chat, and then I'll put all the kind of prompts that I shared around—I'll put those in first. In fact, I don't know if they were useful. The New York Radical Feminists didn't have a list for

me to copy, but I kind of listened back to our discussions last time and drew some out from there. And so a little list of order, and if you just pass along to the next person after your turn, that would be great. Okay, Lesley your first up if that's okay with you?

Lesley 26:05

Yeah. That's okay. I had—I didn't think about it until today so I had time at lunchtime to put down some thoughts. So, freedom means to me, it means being outside and feeling the elements like wind, sun, rain, and remoteness. Not remoteness, either on my own or with other people means freedom to me too. As a woman, the right to vote is freedom for me, as Joy referred to. Being treated equally, and being comport—compared on merit, not gender, equal access to sports, jobs, just any opportunities in general. I don't believe that men have more freedom than me. And I'm talking about here in the UK. And I do see different levels of freedom. And probably because where I am on the age spectrum—that people have, don't have the freedom to access either because of physical abilities or technology. Again, I don't think it's just that this applies to women, either I think its men and women. Your freedom certainly changes or my freedom certainly changed when I became a mother. Because your role is about protecting and nurturing others, not yourself. If there are any obstacles, to my freedom, it's me, it's my mindset. That puts up the barriers that I'm too unfit, too scared or too shy or whatever. I'm certainly—I'm not aware of any lack of freedom ever having held me back, I don't feel the need to—I don't feel the need to change the amount of freedom in my life because I feel I am free. And I don't live in a repressive country, we are a democracy; women are not regarded by the state as second class. Although society can treat women that way. There are no doubt—it's quite clear there are cultural stereotypes here in the UK, but I can't it's not because of our laws or because of our regime. You know, politically we are free to express our views. Although you do get—you can sometimes get shouted or trolled or put down or vilified. So that was my thoughts on freedom. So, I'm going now going to now pass to F.

F 29:26

Thanks, Lesley. I made some—well, I wrote some stuff. So, I'll just read it out, I think that might be easier. Because it is a really big discussion, we could probably talk about lots of different aspects, but I was kind of thinking in more general terms that I think for me, freedom means having choices in life. It means having autonomy over my body and my health, and it means being able to express myself and my innermost thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas. But specifically, as a woman, 100% the voting, like that's—I do think about that a lot, even throughout my lifetime. And it isn't something I was really, too aware of as a young woman growing up. But I fully appreciate everything that all of those women and the men who supported them, at points too, that they did for the woman's cause to get women to vote in this country. That's like, still an amazing thing for me. So, I think that's a really big thing, that I was kind of thinking in a more general way about that as well. I think it's being given the space to be able to make your own choices and decisions around your body, your lifestyle, your career, your free time and your pursuits. It would mean that society no longer being dominated by men and male thinking, or ways of operating. I think it would mean that compassion would take over the systems and social constraints that we are forced to live our daily lives by. Because Lesley is right and sorry—yeah Lesley, in this country, men and women do have a lot of freedom. But I do still think that are differences within that perhaps, for each gender. So, do men in my life have more freedom than me?

On a practical level, no and as far as the state goes, you're totally right, Lesley, they don't. But I still think that that's actually a yes to that question. Because it's never questioned if a man goes into a bar or a nightclub on their own. Or if a man goes for a walk late at night on their own, or if a man chooses not to be married, or not to have children, or to go into a certain type of career. I think that as a woman, these are things that I'm constantly scrutinised for, by men as well as other women. So perhaps there's more of societal differences between the freedoms that men and women have. And do I see different levels of freedom, either less or more for different generations of women and girls in my life? I think for sure, because I've come from a mixed heritage, that the younger girls and women, in my family and life, we've all had much more freedom than any of our parents or grandparents. But even as far as like, the Scottish side of my family goes as well, because generationally, things were improving throughout '60s and '70s, '80s and onwards for women. Well, supposedly, I think that that's afforded us more societal freedoms as women to follow the careers, follow the life that we want to have. Let me see, I also did grow up in a really strict home within a male-centric culture. So real freedom wasn't anything that I experienced until I left home when I was 19. And the moments in my life where I think that my freedom has changed—so moving out of home was a really big one, because I was in charge of my own life from that moment onwards, like no one ever—at home could have a say and what I did ever again, kind of thing. The other time, where I maybe feel as if my freedom has changed, is for me personally, whenever I've been in relationships, even if I'm happy, I still always feel like being in a relationship has impacted upon my freedom, my personal freedoms, because there's a lot more compromise, and conceding of your personal goals and agendas, I think when you're in a relationship, or perhaps I've just picked rotten people to be with. But that's the kind of understanding I have, built from my own experience. So, I've kind of felt like I can't fully be myself if I've been in a relationship. And freedom kind of feels compromised in a sense when I'm in those types of situations. And obstacles to freedom in my life, I think societal structures for me have been a big one, racially and unequal structures as well, patriarchal structures, as well as other people's opinions and views on what I should or shouldn't be doing. I definitely think as you get older, you don't really care about that as much, you understand that you have to make yourself happy first and foremost. And the lack of freedom, I think, held me back really when I was young, because I would have done very different things with my life, but my parents wouldn't allow it. I kind of decided I would go into full time education for a long time. So, it's been—like it was a really interesting topic to think about. The last kind of bit I wrote was about if I felt, it's possible to change the amount of freedom in my life. I think really only in a few occasions that I've felt able to change the amount of freedom in my life. But again, like I was saying, perhaps as we get older, the need to be able to change that amount of freedom that we have, maybe diminishes, maybe it's not as important or maybe we feel that we are free enough. Or I've written that perhaps as adults that is less need to garner a sense of freedom, as we are afforded a lot of freedom, simply by being quote, unquote, grown up, I think there can be a sense of fear about having more freedom within your life, as well, as even when you're aware of living and restrictive or oppressive conditions, you kind of get used to it so you forget how restrictive it is, and how it is impacting upon your freedom. And then I just wrote these last two statements which are, 'to me, true freedom is having full and complete sovereignty over your own mind, body, soul, and life'. And the last thing I wrote was 'freedom, like love should know no boundaries, conflicts, or constraints, or denial'. Thank you, and I'll pass to Helen.

Helen 36:10

Thanks F. I made some notes but, I'm feeling a bit like my mind's all over the place at the moment. And I think it's—it was an interesting topic to think about, like, I suppose one of the biggest infringements or biggest controls on our freedom that I've experienced is the pandemic and like the way that that has controlled our lives over the last year or so. Which is kind of interesting. I think this last week or so, when I felt that we've been coming out, the lockdown and the kind of stronger measures and feeling my way back towards doing things, we had plans to see family, and then suddenly, that changed. And now we're back self-isolating, we've got this threat of the virus being in our house. It just makes me realise, like how debilitating that is on your thought processes and how it affects your clarity to think straight. And it's kind of crazy that it has this—all these things in the news have been happening at the same time. I—when I was a student doing my Masters, I went on an exchange to Israel, to Tel Aviv. So that was one of the links that our school had. And I was kind of in my mid 20s. And it was—I was single, like, in many ways, it was a really free experience for me, like I didn't know anybody there, I could be—I didn't have to conform to how people expected me to behave like in a kind of personal freedom, side of things I could kind of do as I wanted, be the person, try out different things, meet people and do all kinds of things. Which is just totally bizarre given the kind of political place that I was in Israel. And I tried to go to visit the Palestinian Territories while I was there. And I kind of received a huge amount of restriction from people's mindset about how that wasn't possible and how dangerous that was. And subsequently, I went to Ramallah in the West Bank. And then I ended up spending quite a lot of time doing quite a few residences and spending quite a considerable amount of time in the Palestinian Territories. And it was bizarre to kind of think that I'd had this very free experience, you know, just a few miles away from where a kind of political regime is oppressing people, so massively. And for me to see that physically, the way the government was able to control the land, was it just brought the whole—my whole understanding of the conflict entered literally into those three dimensions. I couldn't understand how two sets of people could live in one city and how—that roads could be used so effectively to keep people unseen from one another. So, it was a big kind of awakening for me and then yeah, so the kind of flaring up of things in the media—well, not in the media, on the ground and Israel and Palestine has had an effect on me emotionally, and my youngest daughter, she kind of tapped into, she was listening to the radio the other day, and she started to cry because she'd heard, them saying about children being killed and the schools being bombed and things and just had a really strong effect. So, I suppose that all makes me appreciate the freedoms that we have in British society. Like, I suppose when I was thinking about this topic, I was thinking about my own personal freedoms, and how those are different from different generations, but it does—yeah, that kind of democratic state that we live in does have a huge effect on like, our freedoms widely. Thinking about, like, different points in my life, like I can relate to what F was saying about being in relationships and how that really gives different levels of freedom, like, I have felt, I suppose—yeah, I suppose it made me think, you know, like, what is freedom? Like, I suppose my freedom changed a lot when I had kids, or my perception of freedom like that my time is not my own, so much. My caring responsibilities are increased. But does that mean my freedom is less or? I don't? Yeah, it got me on all kinds of existential thoughts. Like, we kind of—I think it made me realise that in our society, we're kind of conditioned to think that free time and leisure time is like, the kind of upmost thing that we're after gaining

in our lives, but I suppose it made me question whether that really was my kind of ultimate goal. And now I feel like I'm rambling a little bit. Generationally, I definitely feel like I have a lot more freedoms than my mum, for example, I feel like she wasn't given the confidence to pursue things that I've been able to pursue within my life, and whether that's opportunity for education, and how that has allowed kind of thinking and people I mixed with to expand, which I feel has given me lots of freedoms to think different ways and be exposed to different ideas that might change my own way of thinking. And I think I've run out of steam now.

Anonymous 42:45

Okay, I know I picked this topic, but I really picked a hard one. So, this is what I put on the Padlet, which may show how confused I was. And I was confused between the sort of rights and responsibilities type argument. Also, I have like several pages of mind maps and stuff. So do forgive me if I repeat things. If you go on the Padlet, you'll see the sort of the general concept of freedom, really. So, I think I'll just skip straight to sort of what I feel different about being female, and what freedoms I have, or females have. And I think it's about power. And I think also—I think that, well, being a Catholic and not been allowed to take the pill. And also, the pill does not treat our bodies well. So I just think that my body can be used against me, if I was say raped, like, anybody can be raped, and anyone will have like, may have stress or post, whatever that PTSD is, like, that can happen to anyone, but like, a woman would probably be forced to either choose to have an abortion, choose to have a baby, and then have to have the bravery to choose whether to look after the baby or give it away and all that sort of horribleness. So, I think there is a difference. So, I think that men have power because of that. Because, well, they can choose where to stick it, whereas we only receive it. So that's not good, I think. And that's biology. So, there's thoughts on that. And I'm feeling embarrassed, now sorry. So also, in my life, and it might just be the difference between mum's and stuff, or my own warped perception. But I think that men get sympathy from their mum's when there's—when they have failure. Whereas I certainly get judgement. It's my fault when I fail, it feels like from my parents. Men are breadwinners, so when they come home from work, they can rest, whereas women are supposed to just be able to do everything. And other women are the worst for expecting people to, women, to be able to just do everything. And also, when women are the victims, it does feel more like, well, you should have had more sense. So, had more, but that's probably it. Well, sorry, on that page on that question—the question about specific moments when there was problems with freedom, I suppose, unsurprisingly, when I was a teenager is probably the worst time. But it wasn't helped by the huge family fight that I mentioned before. And my big brother, who did misuse his freedom, and totally didn't use his voice very well, and he broke my parent's hearts and made them think they weren't good parents. And also, then didn't trust the rest of us. And especially not me, because I was the only one left at home. But also, my siblings, they were all close enough in age, there was like five years between the oldest and the youngest of them. So, there was my brothers and there was my sisters and they could all help each other to go to the pubs into the nightclubs and the ceilidh's, whereas I was just too wee. And also, then they would—they moved out and they got married, and so on. And I would be delighted when they would come home. But no, they weren't going to stay at home, they went to see all their friends and everything. So, okay, I'm now sounding the like, "spoiled brat" they used to call me. Anyway, obstacles to my freedom. Or maybe I should go with a when I felt I had the most change in my freedom.

Definitely when I got married, and I didn't—I was too scared of freedom. I didn't know how to make decisions. I wasn't practiced at it. So, I just didn't, I didn't thrive. My parents got concerned and tried to persuade me to look into whether I was depressed or not. And given, these were the same parents who would have been disgusted if I had been depressed at home because everyone would blame them, I was not overly happy that they just wanted to blame Anthony for the fact I was now depressed. So, obstacles to freedom, definitely myself and my lack of confidence and bravery. But there's a double-edged sword, in my faith, in my religion. Not allowed to take the pill, and I need to have high value of human life, which I do. But I wasn't allowed to explore or have sex or intimacy before marriage, but afterwards, definitely was supposed to. And that was supposed to perform "marital duties" if we're going with my parent's generations language, which is supposed to make us fruitful, and produce millions of children and stuff. But also, I do derive an awful lot of strength and peace and love from my religion, from my faith, so I wouldn't stop my faith. But also wrote kind of guilt connected to it and then I had walked away from like making notes and stuff. And I suddenly asked the question of—it—of this whole thing, sorry, not making sense today I've written, 'is this all my Christian faith, or my Catholic religion that has been and is run by men', like for the entire history. I think I'm nearly finished. So, the obstacles to me having any more control over the freedom of my life is I would have to be in control of my anxiety and depression as well. So that's difficult, but I am most free at home. Which is very lucky for me, I'm so glad to have a safe place at home. Now, one thing I've got an answer to 'do you see different levels of freedom in generations of like, through the generations the family?'. Thing is that this could be explained by many different things. But I think I'm going to tell you about it quickly anyway. My nephew has been identified as dyslexic, as well as me, and I do remember my mum telling me, he cannae explain his difficulties in a way that you never could. I remember being practically having steam coming out my ears. It took me a long time, but I think I figured out that I don't think I had the freedom to tell my difficulties. I think that my parents made me feel like I was a disappointment. But they did, they fought so hard, really incredibly hard to have me diagnosed as dyslexic. So, they were totally in my corner, outside. But there was a time when, well, "I can't" was always a bad word, or always a bad phrase. But dyslexia itself became like a bad word. And I got told stop making excuses and try. Now, this could be explained by parent versus grandparent's situation. Mum and dad have been using their experience and learning to help my sister Christine, to figure it out. Perhaps even my nephew's teacher seemed much more aware and was able to help him more. Or even, I'm fairly sure he doesn't have autism as well. So probably can express difficulties and emotions a lot better. And so, I'm not sure if that answers that question or not, sorry. I've been quite emotional and not making a lot of sense and stuff. So, I'll pass to Joy.

Joy 52:26

Thank you, Anonymous. I started by—what came to my mind, first of all, was thinking about how much freedom as is about a spectrum. And that we're all kind of somewhere on the spectrum. So, I was just kind of thinking that, you know, going from just thinking in terms of women, I suppose women who can't vote, can't leave the house, can't travel, can't study, etc., wherever, to you know maybe towards the other end of the spectrum where they might have all of those other rights. So, it's just kind of thinking about you know where I am on the spectrum and where all of us might be on that spectrum. And also thinking about how—where you are on the spectrum is very much kind of affected, I suppose by your

family, by your character, by your education, by how you're brought up. And so that the extent to which you feel that your kind of you know towards one end of the freedom spectrum, or maybe towards the other end. And another thing that I'm I—sort of came to my mind I'm quite aware of, and this whole thing about freedom is that I think that I and other people as well—human beings in general, I think we quite often like to say that we've done something of our own free will. We like to kind of feel that we've made free choices about things. But maybe not always recognise just how influenced we are in our choices, that our choices aren't as free as we'd like them to be. So, we kind of say, you know, I freely chose to, I don't know, get married, have children, live in that place, do that job, wherever. And we kind of have this sense that we were free in our choice. And I just, I think to myself, actually, sometimes we're not as free as we like to think we are. It's kind of is quite comforting to think that was my free choice to do that. But I'm aware myself that occasionally, you know, I've done things, I think I'll actually that was influenced by X or Y or Z. So that's, yeah—I think that might be just a thing about being human. Maybe. Growing up, I think I had the feeling that I was quite free. I don't look—I don't have the sense of, you know, really struggling against restrictions and stuff like that. I think that was partly came from the fact that as I think I said maybe a couple of sessions ago, I wasn't kind of constantly demanding to do stuff like going out and, you know, having more—I wasn't looking for more in a sense I wasn't kind of being very demanding and that way, but also, I think, because my parents were quite—I don't think I've particularly liberal parents, but they were, they were really good at giving a kind of sensible structure, a sensible framework, this is how much freedom you can have. And somehow within that, there was quite a lot that you could do. So, there wasn't that kind of constant sense of, you know, coming up against the boundaries fairly quickly and straining against them and wanting more, you kind of felt you could go quite far before you hit any of the boundaries. So that was that kind of, for me, looking back, I think that worked quite well. Other people might have had different experiences, obviously, that was kind of my experience. And the sorts of things I used to do, which I think, did give me quite a strong sense of freedom was, I did a lot of sports, I was involved in an athletics club for a number of years, I used to go away from quite young age, I think, again, I might have mentioned last time, but about the age of 12, used to go away to other places to other clubs, and we'd have you know, matches and stuff, and you might stay overnight, things like that. So, from quite a young age was quite, although I wasn't on my own there, I was with a group, there was that sense of having that freedom to go somewhere else and see other places and experience other people's living—ways of living and other families, which was—which is quite important. Probably quite a key time of kind of increasing freedom for me was when I went to university, and again, I was thinking about this, that I went quite far away from where my parents lived to go to university. And that wasn't really about kind of wanting to get away, it was more that it was just what everybody else was doing, you kind of went, you went far away, because it was kind of the opportunity when you're 18, you went away somewhere else. I was thinking about the fact that my parents didn't really, I think there were other people that I was at university with who had got a lot more parental pressure, in terms of where they went to university, what they studied at university. And I don't remember getting that at all. And I was thinking about why that might have been. And I think it might have been to some extent, because my parents didn't go to university, nobody in my family had been to university. So, there was this kind of sense of, well, if you go to university, that's a really, really good. So, you know, where you go, and what you study, in a sense was, it's kind of up to you, you kind of, you know, more

than I—we do kind of thing, even though I didn't know anything, of course. And that did give me a certain freedom in a sense. So, there was none of this kind of where you got to go to such and such university to study law or medicine or, you know, whatever, there was just a complete kind of, well, what your doing then, where your going, it was totally my project, which was looking back was actually fairly amazing, really. And I think throughout my life, education has been a source of freedom, work has been a source of freedom, travel has also been a source of freedom. So, I've done quite a lot of you know, travelling on my own, travelling now with my partner. Previously, I would have travelled a lot more on my own probably. And I think there, there was a sense of—I think there is a sense of things being different for men and women. So, it wasn't like it couldn't travel. But it was just I think, for women its often in the back of your mind, stuff can happen to you, that's not going to happen to a man. And there were occasional—I mean, nothing really bad ever happened to me. But thinking back, I think to myself, now actually, things could have happened. You know, I could have had bad experiences, which you know, I didn't have it was generally good experiences. But thinking back now, I think to myself, actually, some of the places I stayed, some of the people I met, some of the trains that I travelled on, there could have been, and there were occasional things, nothing that, nothing ever serious. But definitely, again, things that happened to me because I was a young female, and I wasn't a young male, it wouldn't have been the same for man. So, it's definitely a gender thing there. One other thing that I think has been important has been money. Not in the sense of, you know, having loads of money to buy lots of stuff. But more than in the sense that I think money gives you choice, and it gives you freedom. So, if you're stuck in a scenario, for example, and you haven't got any money, it's much, much harder to get out of it. If you've got money, you can decide, I'm leaving, I'm going to get the bus, I'm going to get the train, I'm going to find a flat, I'm going to whatever. So, I just think money is quite important in that way. Just as a way it gives you the option to do it, gives you options. It gives you choices. It gives you freedom, I think. And then just finishing on my mother. Yeah, previous generations. My mum, my grandmother. Yeah, like lots of people have said definitely more—lots of different ways in which I am much freer. I think my grandmother and my mother in her—again, although both kind of different, but I see both of them as kind of women who probably a bit more than me just because of the generational thing did things that I'm not sure they necessarily would have done if they had more freedom, if that makes sense. So, both of them, for example, got married and had children, I'm not entirely sure that that's absolutely what they wanted. And that's just speculation on my part. But I have a sense if they had more freedom, if they'd had more choices in their lives, maybe they'd have done something else. Maybe they'd had gone in different directions, but it was just much harder, I think, for them to have that level of freedom. My grandmother was very much a—you know, a very devout Catholic who, for her, you know, going to mass and the priest and all of that was really important. And if you'd ever said to her, did she feel free? I'm sure she would have said, yes. I mean, she wouldn't have sensed that there was anything wrong with her life, it was completely—that was how it was, that was that was life. So again, I suppose it comes back to that thing about, you know, everybody's at a different point on the spectrum and where we are on that, you know, the level of freedom we've got, maybe we're happy with it, even if we don't—other people might think we haven't got very much freedom, but maybe we're just happy with what we've got. Yeah, and again, my mum, I think she's, she's somebody who, if she'd been in different circumstances, if she'd come from a different kind of family—I think she, well she could have studied, for example, she could have gone to university, she never was able

to do that. Perhaps didn't, in a sense, fully realise the potential that she had. And again, that comes down to maybe the freedom of your family background, amount of money that was available, the expectations from her family. So yeah, I think for me, summing up, I'd say there has definitely been—I haven't felt held back as a woman, but I've definitely at different times in my life, noticed there are things that have been different for me as a female than they would be for male, and the generation—in terms of the generations. Again, it's definitely been quite a, I think, just in since my grandmother's generation, I can see such massive changes really, from where she was to, to where I am. Thank you and pass on to Fatima now.

Fatima 1:02:11

Thank you, thank you Joy. Can I just start by saying, I've been really drawn by everybody's, ability to express themselves, honestly. I feel sometimes, I feel a little bit worried when I speak about myself, I don't know why. I feel like—I can speak a bit more—I would speak better, and express things better if I was speaking general things, but when it comes to myself, not sure why that is. So honestly, I could relate to everybody's what they've said. One thing I would say freedom means to me, is freedom of choice. Basically, and I've I feel like I've not really had that much of a freedom in my life, for different reasons. I've lived in so many different cultures, I would say. And I'm not sure if that was some—I mean, it would have both aspects, sometimes it can be good, sometimes it can be difficult and challenging. Just having to adapt to different situations through my life has made sometimes things difficult to change. So, I've lived in [text redacted], lived in [text redacted], and then now I'm living in Scotland. Oh, forgot lived in [text redacted] also. So, it's just that you know, some time to adapt to one country and you know, adapt to a certain culture and then change again, but I will definitely say that my experience of freedom has been at the highest in Scotland, definitely without doubt. So, starting from when I was young, when I was living with my family, of course, it was—my freedom was very restricted. My choices were very restricted, even for example with what I had to study. So, for example, dad has decided that, I should take the—when you go to school, basically you have to choose between the scientific path or the human science path. And he decided that I need to go to the scientific one, just because he's done it before. He's a self-built, I should admit he's a self-built. He's came from you know, a family that doesn't appreciate, education so much. And he worked so much on himself, has a PhD, had a scholarship traveled to UK had a scholarship, in politics. And now that made him appreciate education, but a bit too much that he thought that, you know, he has to—his children should also live to the same kind of path he took. So, he decided that I should learn logic, I should learn mathematics. And I should study accountancy, basically. And I remember when I was accepted in accountancy, I cried that night, I was accepted. I was, I didn't want to go, I didn't want to go to that kind of path. Moving on, I—as I do best, when I'm in a situation, I just go with the flow. I had good grades, I graduated, I worked for a company. Everything was fine. And then I met my fiancé. And then I had to leave my work in the company and travel to [text redacted] because my fiancé, by the time had a fantastic work opportunity in [text redacted] to work in [text redacted], he was [text redacted]. And I had to give up my work in the company where I felt like I'm starting to gain some freedom, I'm working and experiencing things. I had to leave my work, which has been just for two years. And I said, okay, I'm going to go with you. Because, you know, it's a good opportunity, we don't want to miss on your opportunity. So, I travelled to [text redacted], and I feel like my life in [text redacted] was like, in a coma, basically. No

choice no freedom on any kind in [text redacted], I had to—I couldn't work in anything to do with accountancy. I had to stay at home. My husband had a very demanding job, so there was no chance for me to do any kind of work at all, I had to stay at home. Which I feel sometimes guilty to say that, because I had my child, and I had to look after them, which was a pleasure. But also, of course, it's not fair for me to do that thing on my own. So yeah, freedom was very restricted. And I think I didn't realise how much restricted I am, I was, until I separated from my husband when I came to Scotland. Because of course, I took—my child basically resides with me. So, I'm the main carer if you—I don't know. Sorry, I'm not sure what the term for it, but they live with me. And that was automatically because I'm, you know, I'm—I've been—the main carer through their life, you know, I'm, they are, my responsibility. They have never been their dad's responsibility. So, when I had to be on my own, and care for my child on my own, that was like, very natural, you know, they are with me all the time anyway. But I realised that yeah, that makes sense. You know, I'm the main responsible here. I've—I feel a bit more free afterwards, when I decided to quit accountancy (laughs), and start a new path, which is in [text redacted]. And that's like, I'm in the second year now. That gives me a bit of a sense of control. And I think I feel I've not reached that until I went to, I would call it an identity crisis. I went through when I got divorced with my husband, because I was all you know, all my personality, all my identity was based on, I'm his wife, and I'm my dad's daughter. And now I'm on my own. So, I was so lost at the start, what—can you know, I had the freedom but I didn't know how to use it. What can I do with my life? What can I work? How can I how am I going to be the mum I want to be, the person I want to be also until I decided to go with [text redacted]. And even though I went to [text redacted], and I was like, you know, coming from such a restrictive background with you know, lots of conflict in the area and everything, and I came to Scotland and I was like meant to think about social issues, things to do with inequalities and poverty and everything. And I was like, I would tell my lecturers, I never tell you my life, I feel like, there's not much for me to think about, I feel like this country has it all. I can't dig too much into problems. It's great. But then recently, I was reading a quote from Paolo Freire, and it says, "revolution is an ongoing process, people should strive to change all the time". And when I just when I read it, I realised like, okay, you know, although the human rights and everything seems very, very good compared to [text redacted], let's say [text redacted] and everything, but it should be an ongoing process, even though it's high, but it could always be improved. Sorry, by the way to divert from the subject, but yeah, so that's related anyway. So, I'm happy with the freedom I have at the moment, but a bit concerned that I'm getting married again now in summer and then thinking, again, of having the responsibility of having another child because I want to give a child for my new husband, it's not fair for him to never have children. So, I—there's no way I won't give him a child, but I'm very intimidated by the restricted, you know, the restrictions I would have, again, because I experienced caring for my child on all my life on my own, all their life, sorry, on my own. And now I feel really scared, although my fiancé, at the moment is very supportive, he's very understanding and he's a feminist basically. But I still I'm very, very scared of taking the you know, the journey all over again. So, yeah, that's me. Thank you very much for listening.

Helen 1:12:24

Thanks so much everyone. It was so fascinating to hear everybody's different kind of perspective on that and just it is an unusual format that we're taking doing the kind of everybody take it in turns to speak and sometimes it can make you feel quite vulnerable

when it's your turn. But I just—everybody's contribution kind of was fascinating and brought something to me personally, and I'm sure that's shared by the group. We have just five minutes comfort break and come back at quarter past and we'll look at some bright and colourful prints and have a bit of a chat about creative things. That'd be lovely. So, just five minutes till quarter past and see you all back in a mo.

F 1:13:17

Thanks Helen.

Helen 1:13:18

Thanks. I don't know if other people are there. Maybe let me know when people are back. I can see Fatima is here.

F 1:17:50

I'm back

Helen 1:17:53

Oh, that's good.

Fatima 1:17:56

Not sure if everybody's seen the rain. Have you heard it or seen it?

Helen 1:18:00

It was raining in Pollokshields, yeah. Oh no, it stopped now.

Fatima 1:18:06

Yes, yeah, just two minutes ago when we were on the call there was like, oh my goodness what a shower I saw through the window.

Helen 1:18:17

The Glasgow weather is quite something.

F 1:18:20

Was gonna say it's actually bright sunshine over at this side of the East end (laughs). It's always raining here so I'm sharing it with you all (laughter).

Fatima 1:18:37

I was going to say [redacted text] which is weather in [redacted text]. Dramatic [redacted text] (laughter).

Helen 1:18:42

I wonder if I should just start sharing my screen to see some of these posters prints together. Joy is back did people get a chance to look at any of the artworks that I sent links to?

F 1:19:24

I only looked at the Sister Corita stuff, I didn't get further than that.

Helen 1:19:30

Had you seen her stuff before F?

F 1:19:33

So, I've watched her documentaries about art before for many many years, and actually didn't realise she had an artistic practice too. So that was a really nice surprise but yeah, had a look at some of our stuff. They're really lovely. Love the screen prints.

Helen 1:19:49

I've not seen any of her videos—

Anonymous 1:19:51

Sorry to interrupt F and Helen. Thanks so much for including that I thought though the only nun that was famous to do with art was Sister Wendy, I didn't know about this sister.

Helen 1:20:07

Yeah, she's really kind of—yeah, maybe we could look at her prints first. Let's see. Click on there. Yeah, so I guess she kind of ran an art programme at the Immaculate Heart College in the late '50s onwards, I think. And I think it was notorious for, like this amazing kind of collective spirit and people going there to work with her. So, these—I'll move on some of her kind of—were the kind of social message on them became a lot more kind of prevalent. I think this from kind of mid '60s onwards. But I wondered whether, yeah, I wondered what people thought we can just have a bit of an open chat about if there were artworks that people liked, or things that people thought worked really well.

F 1:21:19

Just quickly, I wanted to say what I really enjoyed about her work was the use of colour and everything. And I tried to use a lot of colour in my own practice am quite a colourful person, I suppose. So, I thought that the simplicity in just using those bright colours almost in the work itself I thought was really effective. I really like it.

Lesley 1:21:41

I really like Sister Corita's work, I saw an exhibition of hers up in Dundee, maybe about three years ago, I don't know whether you'll remember Helen? And anyway, it's very powerful. And of course, she completely—being a nun completely turning, you know, upside down your perception of thoughts what a nun should get involved and I suppose you know what—what she does. And when you see her working in her habit, well it's quite a sight. But yeah, I think she's a great woman. And I saw some of her environmental installation when I was in Boston in Massachusetts, which are very strong. So yeah, it's very direct her work.

Anonymous 1:22:38

I really just read about her life. I didn't find my way to these images. But I thought—I remember being touched by the fact that it looked like that when she decided that she didn't I don't know what to do or not anymore, or calling was elsewhere. The whole order seemed to change from an order of nuns to a lay people that—just a community of lay people—

Lesley 1:23:08

She never gave up being a nun though Anonymous.

Anonymous 1:23:11

Well, it said on the—said on the website like it was a lot later on then—but she moved out and everything. So, unless it's in the language, sorry to argue with you.

Helen 1:23:28

I think she did leave the order in her later years. I forgotten what year it was that she left. But I think it's kind of regarded that her most productive and her kind of—the prints that she's most famous for are from when she was in this kind of college environment and absorbing lots of things from students around her and kind of working together. So, F you said do you like the colours? Were there any other things that people thought worked well or didn't like so much about them?

Anonymous 1:24:23

This is very, very interesting to me. Because these round white blobs, dots look like well, I would call hosts what you're given in communion.

Helen 1:24:42

Yeah, I think she was taking a lot of kind of imagery and quite a lot of the text and things are from religious sources. A lot of the kind of text uses are quotes from things I think it was actually really useful on this website. They've got the transcribed text because I was—it's really difficult to read her handwriting on the scale, they kind of appear on screen or in books and things. I don't know how much people know about screen printing, there are some really nice little videos on that site. And it sounds like F you've seen a few more, that kind of show her working away and like the white circles that Anonymous mentioned, kind of looks like she's making those out of paper stencils. And she's just getting really kind of stuck in there with a pair of scissors on one of the little short five minute videos. Just kind of working very instinctively and immediately to make up the kind of image from a variety of different sources.

F 1:25:51

Did she use collage at all? Do you know?

Helen 1:25:56

I don't know. I suppose I felt like there's always that kind of element in screen printing because the image is made from the layers coming together that there has to be a kind of process of putting the different components that has a similarity with collage.

F 1:26:14

Yeah, I was just even thinking like, the layout of a lot of her work—But maybe it is the screen printing that's making it look more layered than it's really meant to be your right. I think like screen printing it is all in layers, isn't it? You have to think about your work in layers when you make those types of artworks. But yeah, just I was wondering, I don't know, I feel like I've seen some collage work by her as well, somewhere.

Anonymous 1:26:44

I think it was her that I read that she was inspired by the—I want to say Heinz beans, it's not that the soup cans. And this does look very much like that in a way.

Helen 1:27:05

Yeah, I think she looked a lot at advertising and things, I suppose it was maybe like early '60s, she started making screen prints. And I suppose perhaps advertising in America at that time was really suddenly booming. And mixing that kind of with more social messages, I think really appealed to her.

F 1:27:43

Just the other thing I had thought was I like that there was the use of text or words in there. In amongst her images or abstracts whatever she had. I think what Lesley said was right, her work is really powerful. And I think that part of that comes from the simplicity. Like there is a simplicity in the work. And I'm not saying that as a bad thing at all. Like her work is powerful, because it's so clear, I think.

Helen 1:28:21

Yes, I suppose messages like this one. It's very obvious, isn't it? But then other ones, she's kind of playing with the way the text lays out that sometimes you can't—it kind of switches between things, isn't it? You can't quite read it.

Anonymous 1:28:36

Was that last one screen printed as well?

Helen 1:28:41

I think so. Yeah. Yeah, medium serigraph. That's what some Americans call screen printing.

Anonymous 1:28:47

That's amazing. She'd got that sort of brushstroke effect on the 'love is' bit. Because you would think if you were—because I think I might have experienced a wee bit of screen printing on a bag where you do the sort of—but I suppose. Yeah.

Helen 1:29:07

Yeah, you can combine lots of different types of way of working so you can kind of paint things with a brush and use those. Print things like out on the computer to get the kind of more typographic text. Have shapes, have photographs. Yeah, there's a whole series that she did that had more found images from the media that she perhaps photographs and things and trying to find those further down. Yeah, I suppose there was a period when she was using photographs, more.

F 1:30:01

It's so contemporary look in her work, like, I mean, like really modern, I think, I don't know, just making me think it's much younger than it really is, in a way. I don't know if you can see that, just—

Helen 1:30:15

Yeah, because she was kind of on the cusp—but you know, like late '60s, American culture, there was a lot—there was a massive print boom. But she kind of almost was it at the forefront of it really.

F 1:30:40

I can see that now in her work that you're scrolling through so much of it. Yep.

Helen 1:30:55

And what about the '70s, British, the See Red ones, let me get the website up. And so, they were a collective based in London, a feminist collective specifically, and made these posters together. And they've kind of distributed them around at women's centres and women's conferences and things in the kind of '60s to the '90s. I think. Where's my See Red book? Yeah, to 1990 they were kind of active. I don't know if people—I feel like that's maybe their most famous poster people seen that one before?

Lesley 1:31:51

No, not seen it.

Fatima 1:31:54

No, but I'm interested in that one.

F 1:31:59

Yeah, it's really interesting. I think I have seen it before a long time ago, though.

Fatima 1:32:06

That's the unpaid woman's work at home, isn't it, all of that, you know, the women work that contribute and build their economy, from home building, you know, not nurturing those workers who go out to work outside and there at home, not taking the benefits of their labour, I would say. That's a great one. One that recognised.

Helen 1:32:42

I did actually meet some of the women in this collective a couple of months ago on another strange online meeting, which is so nice that you can kind of get to know people. But they were kind of talking about that it was really important to them, a lot of them were very active politically. And they—was—they were all in consciousness-raising groups, or a lot of them were in consciousness-raising groups kind of discussing things in their personal lives and then—but they were also in—active and other kind of political campaigns and things. So, there was a lot of kind of anti-racist work being done.

Fatima 1:33:50

Can we stop by this one for a second, please?

Helen 1:33:53

Yes, absolutely.

Fatima 1:33:55

Mr Brown? Mrs Brown. Is it for depression and anxiety or something? Seems to be.

Helen 1:34:07

'50 other patients to see this morning'. One of the doctors is saying. 'The companies stands to make millions from'—I can't exactly read 'from your—

F 1:34:24

Think that says 'misery' (laughter) [unintelligible] yours or some? Yeah.

Lesley 1:34:34

None of these topics are dated are they? They could be now. You know, racism, the—taking, you know tranquillizers and yeah, it just—I don't know what's changed?

F 1:34:57

Definitely.

Helen 1:35:00

Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:35:02

That one really hit a—sorry, I really can't speak at the moment. Sorry. I remember when things like depression and that started coming up with mum and dad. And mum more or less told me that nobody cared. And all that would happen if we went to the doctors with me being really upset, and all that would be that they would try and pop us off with pills, and we wouldn't do anything other than that, they would just give us give me pills, and, you know, tell me to get lost. So, if that was about depression, rather than the contraception pill, then it really, it's how mum felt, I think. I don't know if she ever had any issues. But it did sound like it might be personal experience.

Fatima 1:35:50

Can I comment on something, please? And not necessarily what you're saying Anonymous but about this one? This poster? I remember watching a documentary and it's honestly so interesting how, like, in certain periods through the history, let's say, economical crisis, sales of pills and like anxiety pills and depression gets really high. I mean, that's the way they like, I would say, certain governments would, you know, like, trick people, letting them think that it's their own problem. Rather than you know, being it's being like a financial crisis, poverty or the social issues that's coming with it. Just a couple, she's saying 'take a pill for it', you know, that's it. I'm not saying that there's nothing you know that I totally understand. Of course, there's depression, there's an anxiety and that's totally justified. But in certain periods of crisis, also, you know, some companies could earn a lot of money basically from that.

Helen 1:37:27

Sexualized advertising, I'm sure we can all relate to that.

F 1:37:38

Sorry, I'm laughing at that 'it's what your right arms for' that's absolutely hilarious. I love it, but like don't but also, you know, ridiculous.

Helen 1:38:00

Find another one that—I guess they were active when Thatcher was in government. And I suppose there was maybe a kind of idea in Britain that you know, well, we've got a female prime minister like how much more equality can we reach? And I guess a lot of Thatcher's policies didn't favour women at all. Okay, kind of see all the kind of illustrations around the side kind of talking about unemployment and daycare centres closing, nurseries closing, all the kind of cuts that—I guess do—

Anonymous 1:38:53

More or less just expected people to move where the work was as well didn't, she?

F 1:38:57

She did yeah. She's also the one who stopped the free milk for school children. So, I got ain't got no love for Margaret Thatcher because I was at school then. We couldn't afford milk. That was one of the only places I was getting it. So yeah, she was anti women. And a woman who is anti-women. That's really I think, set us back an awful lot as a gen—like as a part of society.

Lesley 1:39:24

She was a poor role model for women. She really was. She didn't do us any favours.

Helen 1:39:44

This one's a kind of like—'my wife doesn't work', the man in the pub with his pal at one o'clock lunchtime, and then all the different scenarios of the woman not stopping all day long.

Fatima 1:40:02

And then in the end of the day, she's the one who's at home, you know. You have the privilege of being at home, that's what you get to hear.

Helen 1:40:15

So, I know we've made some—the little kind of zines together. But I wondered if we wanted to have another go at making some more artworks and whether we could think of—or some works of some kind. How we could we, kind of, combine some of the different things we've been talking, about different kind of visual methods we've been thinking about. Fatima, did you get the little bundle of things I posted out to you? Okay, cool. So, you'll see the kind of little zine that we made previously. Would people be up for seeing if we could make a print or a poster or something? Yeah?

F 1:41:17

Yeah I'm game for a go.

Fatima 1:41:20

Absolutely. I mean, I've always wondered, can anyone really do art? I mean, I'm looking at those pictures. And I'm saying, actually, you know, I think they're manageable. I don't know I'm alienated from art, I must say, I don't know much at all. But they looked, I don't know, I'm sure there must be so much work into them. But yeah—

Helen 1:41:54

I maybe there's like lots of different things that different people could contribute. I think the kind of idea of doing some printmaking, or some kind of printing allows different things to come together in one kind of media that, you know, maybe people were working on written things, or paintings or drawings or different kinds of things, and to try and imagine how we could bring them all together. Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:42:31

So, would it be with the poster to be like a patchwork of people's work?

Helen 1:42:38

I don't know. What do you think? How do you think we could bring it together? I mean, the zines that we made previously kind of slightly democratically kept the autonomy of each individual contribution. But could we try and make things and see how they come together? Or would we rather talk about what we were going to do when kind of assign different parts to each of us or do we just need to give it a go and see, maybe dedicate some of our next session, a big chunk of our next session to kind of working on an idea.

Lesley 1:43:23

You would need the overall control, Helen. I think if we all work—it's kind of—I'm just kind of talking this out. If we all worked independently to whatever the brief is going to be. But I think at the end of the day, it's you looking at it with your eye and with what you've been hearing over the last 10 or 12 weeks. But you are—you are going to look at the commonality and the bringing together. To have a final artistic output.

Helen 1:44:17

Yeah, I think I'm happy to do that kind of role. And I think we could also kind of think of a few kind of parameters to try— —and keep us—even last time where we just we voted Fatima on what colours we were going to print zines before. And it's just amazing, even just that process of unifying via colour, like how that can bring kind of disparate elements together. That we could decide on a few things like that.

Lesley 1:44:27

Uh huh. The zines were fine, but everything was stand alone. It wasn't cohesive, if you like other than the format, whereas if you are looking at it as a whole, you can select the out, you know, you're selecting elements to bring together where to place them. That makes it a whole piece, rather than just six individual pieces that are just kind of stuck down.

Helen 1:45:23

Yeah, no, I think that does sound like a good idea. F?

F 1:45:30

The other thing I was thinking is, because obviously, we are gonna have to explore whatever the theme is for whatever it is we're making, whether it's writing or like making a painting or whatever, but you can do those separately. But then maybe, because I'm just thinking about those posters. Like, maybe we could all then once we've made separate things all look at what we've made together. And can we not all try to come up with a final design? Or am I pushing it too much? Like?

Lesley 1:46:06

Artwork by committee. Oh, no, please.

F 1:46:10

Say that, again, sorry Lesley?

Lesley 1:46:12

Art by committee. No.

F 1:46:15

Art by Timothy?

Lesley 1:46:17

Committee, committee.

F 1:46:18

Oh committee. Oh right. No, that wasn't what I was meaning. No, no, that isn't what meaning. And I think the term I'm looking for here is co-creation, actually, I think that's what it gets called. I don't know, it was just a thought. But if no one else is up for it. Like I can see, it might be intimidating as well, for some people. That's why it's only a suggestion. But it was just really, that's a way for people to still express singularly what they wish to. And then perhaps from that, we can pull it together. But yeah, Helen would ultimately need to have final control or say or whoever, I would imagine anyway, it was just a thought.

Helen 1:47:05

We can take our time a bit more than we did with the last one. So, it's getting quite raucous here. I don't know if I really can hear background noise. But we could take our time a bit more like, you know, we did our zines in terms of making the content, me pulling it together and printing it within that two-week period, whereas we could allow ourselves a bit more, a bit more space to try a few things out. And I make lots of tests in the kind of early days of making works that look pretty awful, really like to combine lots of things together, and just kind of going more is more is more and then realising it's not got that coherency that kind of effective visual work has.

Fatima 1:47:58

Can I say something? I mean? Isn't that the beauty of art? That it doesn't need to be, you know, made in a certain mould or certain frame? It can be anything? Am I right or—I don't know, that's my understanding of art (laughs). It's like, very random for me and I don't know, I mean, I see a bit of an excitement of having an element of excitement of thinking,

you know, it could be anything. Doesn't need to be very cohesive, or I don't know if that's only me.

Helen 1:48:35

Yeah. F you've got your hand up.

F 1:48:38

Yeah, no, I was thinking of like, you know, the banner project from Glasgow Women's Library. Like, we all had our own ideas, and they all got brought together in a final cohesive piece of work. That was a co-creation. That is what it was making me think of, like, specifically kind of working in that way. But like, I see, I can see that that can be a lot for some people. And I totally appreciate that. So, I wouldn't want to force that. But yeah, it was that kind of idea of the pulling together of everyone separate ideas, because Fatima is right art can be anything. I totally agree with that.

Helen 1:49:18

Anonymous, you've got your hand up there.

Anonymous 1:49:23

With F's idea about as each doing our own individual thing, a bit like we did with the zines. Sorry. I asked if it was going to be a sort of collage type poster. A lot of this is all about circles and so on. Could we maybe have our own contribution in a wee—in a circle type thing?

Lesley 1:49:58

Sorry I don't understand Anonymous what you're meaning?

Anonymous 1:50:03

I guess still got the 'enriched bread' in my head. But like, if you had a poster with maybe a central circle, and then six circles round—

Lesley 1:50:16

No sorry, that's too prescriptive.

Helen 1:50:18

I think it might be a good idea to kind of see what we generate, and then allow that kind of to inform where we're going. Because I feel like we've got different styles of expressing ourselves visually and different interests. So, we've done a bit of kind of mark making together and a bit of drawing, we've done a bit of writing and collage. We could do like—we haven't really kind of explored photography together. That could be either images of our own or found images from different kind of sources. I have somebody joining me—do you want to say hello? No. Okay. Come on, everybody knows you're there.

F 1:51:26

Hi.

Helen 1:51:31

Did you just want to say hi Mertie? Okay. So, what do we do? Time goes so quickly in a session that's 10 to five now. Do we want to do our Slido summing up? Or would people rather kind of think a bit more about how we might work the next session on doing something visual together? Do we want to have another discussion next session? Or do we want to hand the whole two-hour slot over to kind of working on things together,

F 1:52:15

I think I need a bit more time to think about this. So, I think the Slido, I wouldn't be able to give you much to that at the moment. I like the idea of using photography, I thought that was good. I'm happy to go along with what everyone else is after.

Fatima 1:52:44

Same for me, I'm happy to go with what other people want

Helen 1:52:53

So do we want to pick up on one of our topics that we've covered together as a topic for making up a kind of visual artwork. So, we've had freedom today, adolescence, childhood experiences, school and education, expectations, coping strategies during COVID and they are our kind of main ones that we've done.

Lesley 1:53:29

I thought freedom today really rolled up a lot of the things that we have been discussing over the weeks. And it kind of takes you back to the basics of Consciously Rising which is about women's freedom.

Helen 1:53:50

That sounds like a good idea. And we can kind of use our creative process as our summing up together rather than doing our Slido which I don't think we've really got time for to squeeze that in as well.

Fatima 1:54:07

Yeah, so, today's topic could be really good. And I mean, just like trying to reflect on the personal life on the wider, you know, world and how to relate that you know, both on the individually and then on a societal aspect I like that one. See if everybody wants it or not.

Helen 1:54:37

It's so noisy here (laughs) it's hard to concentrate. Okay, so, next time, in two weeks' time, we'll dedicate our whole session to working on a kind of creative outcome together. Before we were kind of working on A5 [background noise of children playing]. I'll maybe send—

Lesley 1:55:09

But that's freedom Helen. Your children having the freedom to express themselves.

Helen 1:55:27

So, I'll send you some more things in the post, because it's nice, I like sending you things in the post and I'm sure if you're anything like me you like receiving things in the post, and I'll maybe kind of send a few ideas and prompts for us to kind of think about the different ways

we might kind of consider our contributions into that greater whole. And then we'll see where we go, because that is part of this kind of process that it's, whilst I'm kind of leading us, it's the collective effort. And hopefully, we'll kind of get to a point where we do make something interesting. I'm sure we will, I'm sure we will. I think there's—all of you've got very interesting perspectives and different ways of expressing yourself. So that'll be exciting to see what comes together. So, unless there are any more questions, anything anybody wants to ask? No, no. I guess just to say again, thank you for sharing all your reflections I think it was really interesting session again. And I hope everyone has a good couple of weeks, and I will be in touch.

Lesley 1:56:59

I hope your family gets through this period Helen. I sympathise with you.

Helen 1:57:02

Oh, thanks Lesley. Thanks, Lesley, that's really appreciated. You can hear that it doesn't sound like a household of unwell people.

Lesley 1:57:09

No, it does not. And that is a joy. That is a joy. Okay. See you in two weeks' time. Bye, bye.

Helen 1:57:17

Take care everyone.

F 1:57:18

Bye-bye.

SPEAKERS

Helen, F, Joy, Anonymous, Fatima

Joy 00:00

How are you?

Helen 04:04

Yeah, I'm all right. How are you doing?

Joy 04:07

Yeah, not too bad. Not too bad. Nice to have a bit of sunshine. And warmer days. It's good.

Helen 04:15

Yes, it is. And you said you had to cancel your plans over the weekend.

Joy 04:24

Yeah, it was just what we were going to go to Dunkeld for a few days, just before the weekend and then up until kind of Monday, but then kind of, yeah, the restrictions in Glasgow thought we shouldn't go and then. Yeah, feeling a bit frustrated seeing other people going off places I have to say sort of thinking, 'huh'.

Helen 04:46

I know, I know.

Joy 04:47

Yeah. Especially when they live next door. Your kind of thinking, hmmm, we can't go, how can you? Anyway, it seems to be a bit of a kind of, you know, quite a lot of, I don't know, individual interpretations coming in now. I don't know. I get that feeling. There's a bit more of that, which I suppose is maybe inevitable.

Helen 05:05

Yeah.

Joy 05:06

A bit sort of, you know, I don't know, I've had enough of this. And—

Helen 05:11

I know.

Joy 05:11

Anyway—

Helen 05:13

Obviously, with the weather being so nice, it would have been a lovely weekend away, but—

Joy 05:18

It would. But there we are. Never mind. What about you? Have you been doing anything good?

Helen 05:26

We were supposed to go down south and visit my parents, but we paused that as well, so—

Joy 05:34

That's a shame. Yeah.

Helen 05:35

Yeah. So, rule abiding, but it's just [unintelligible], I think mostly probably to our parents and the kids as well were disappointed.

Joy 05:47

Yeah, it's disappointing. You kind of feel that you're sort of doing the right thing, but at the same time, it's it is disappointing. Yeah.

Helen 05:55

Yeah.

Joy 05:56

So, we have to wait maybe till the summer. Go hopefully then. If things are looking okay. Maybe?

Helen 06:04

I think so. Yeah, they're keen that we can have come as soon as we can. I'm just trying to work out. Configuring and reconfiguring. It's quite exhausting (laughs).

Joy 06:20

It is.

Helen 06:20

Hi F, hi Anonymous.

Anonymous 06:23

Hi

F 06:28

Hey, I'm trying to fix my hair currently, because I just washed it and it's all over the place. So, I'll just listen while I throw some pleats in quickly.

Helen 06:40

No bother. So, Fatima is joining us as well, but she's got to come pick up her child from school, so she won't be here till half past. And Lesley accidentally double booked, and she has gone to see Joan Eardley exhibition in Edinburgh. So, she wants to know what we get up to. And she will try and do activities in her own time and kind of input them in. So yes, we're an intimate group. But shall we do a little round check in with how everyone's doing how everyone's feeling? Does anybody want to go first? I don't mind going, first. I'm out of isolation. Nobody else caught COVID. That was last—can't believe that's only two weeks ago. Nobody else caught COVID. My daughter never showed any symptoms. So, it was all very—the best outcome you could expect—anticipate, except the kind of 10 days of us all being in the house again together. But that could be worse. We're very lucky. We've got a little garden out the back. So, we were out in that some of the time. And I don't know. Yeah, times just speeding up, isn't it? I suppose because my kids are in school, I feel very much in that kind of flow of school term. And I can feel the weeks ticking away. And everyone getting more kind of summer holidays vibes going on. So, trying to be busy, busy, get a few things done before hopefully taking a bit of time off with them and relaxing over the summer. But Joy and I were just talking about rearranged plans. I was supposed to go and visit my parents at the weekend, they were really looking forward to that. But we had to postpone that because there's the Glasgow restrictions. And hopefully I can rearrange that soon. Keep everyone connected a little bit. And I'm happy to pass anybody who would like to go next?

Joy 09:04

I'll come next then maybe? Yeah, I think I've been feeling a bit ambivalent. So, Helen was talking about things speeding up. So, I think being a just a bit ambivalent about that. On the one hand, it's kind of nice to be doing—well, some things we can't still do in Glasgow, but doing some things a little bit more. But on the other hand, feeling a little bit like I don't want it all to get to kind of, you know, mad and crazy and busy. So last week, for example, I met up with a friend that I've not seen for a long time because he was shielding so that that was nice. But it also then reminded me a little bit about all that kind of— scheduling stuff that you get. Like I'm going to do this and then I've got to go there and then I've got to be there and then I'm on the bus and I've got to be back by x o'clock etc. It was really weird. I mean, it was nice to do to kind of go and you know, see him for a couple of hours. But at the same time on the way back, I was kind of sensing a little bit of, 'ooh now I'm going to be late. And I've got this to do and whatever'. And it was kind of strange, because I've not had that for well, such a long time. Because I haven't been doing those sorts of things I suppose. And it's felt like that time has been quite expansive. I've had lots of time to do things. And it's been nice in a way. So, going back a little bit to that—have I got time to do this. And we're going to be late for that. You know, it was yeah, I didn't like that quite so much. So good stuff, but kind of other stuff creeping in that I wasn't quite so happy with or not quite so sure about.

Anonymous 10:43

Okay, F hadn't unmuted, so I'll go next. I was just at Conversation Café [a regular event at GWL] and I think I pretty much took over there. So, there's a possibility I tried to take over here. But also, I've been feeling a bit—not so great today. I actually had to, well—I thought about going back to bed, but I was worried I'd then sleep for the whole afternoon. So, I had to lie down on the couch like it wasn't I want to lie down on the couch, I had to lie down. But also, this morning, I was supposed to have a meeting. And there's only three of us there.

And I go—there's a wee group of us on the WhatsApp and I got—I read the messages on WhatsApp about someone having to register with the doctor and stuff. But I assumed it was someone else. So, then I bothered—Like, I sent her a WhatsApp saying I'm waiting for you on the meeting, if you want to have a meeting with just us two. It turns out she was the one who was going to the doctors and stuff. So, I felt really bad about that. So, I think I've got brain fog as well today. So, I might just have to keep myself on mute.

F 12:06

I kind of feel a bit the same Anonymous in a lot of brain fog today. So, I've had a really intense couple of weeks, stuff I don't want to go into. It's been very stressful. And then last week was the sixth-year anniversary of my wee cat's passing. He was like my first and only ever pet my best buddy. And while I've been struggling with mental health and physical health, he was always there. So yeah, it's been a bit of a weird one. And also, there's still so much heavy stuff going on in the wider world that I don't even think it's sunk into my head that summers here or any of that kind of jazz because I don't have kids either. So, it's been a weird one. But yeah, brain fog. And yesterday, I think I couldn't keep my eyes open at 3pm. If that makes you feel any better Anonymous, I like had to put my head on the sofa. And I don't wake up again to the back of five. And then I had to get up and go into bed. But I've been finding it difficult to sleep with the heat. So, it's been an interesting couple of weeks. And I'm only—got one pleat down, still one to go.

Helen 13:41

Thanks, everyone for letting us know how you're doing I think it's kind of important to kind of set the tone to see what we might get up to because I've planned some things for us to do and I thought we could do some chatting. But if people are not feeling up to it, we can maybe do more of the kind of creative things and less of the chatting, but we'll maybe see how we fare. Did you all get the things that I sent in the post? Good. So those are kind of some materials for doing some more creative activities together. And we talked about maybe trying to make some prints so I can explain why the specifics of all these kind of transparent materials arrived with you. And then I thought, if people do feel up to it, we could do like some I've never used breakout rooms, but we could maybe do some chatting in pairs like reflecting on our topic from last time. I did re-listen to our session and there was just so much in there like it's quite amazing. Like I find it quite hard to take everybody's contributions in while we're in the moment of doing it, because everybody's contributions are very different and very personal. And so, it's quite a lot to take in. And there's a lot to kind of that we could think through and try and draw out different bits that we might think would be interesting to incorporate into creative outcomes together or just use those as kind of jumping off points to take us somewhere else. So, I guess I will start by talking you through the things that I sent you, I'm thinking that Fatima is joining us in 15 minutes, I can always just talk her through them individually I suppose. So, I made some little Riso prints kind of quite quickly from following on from our chats two weeks ago. And those were the three little prints that—in our blue and green colorways. And I had to cut them out with a pair of scissors in WHSmiths, so they're all a little bit wonky. I had to go and collect them from the art school and then take all the materials in and cut them up in WHSmiths whilst, trying to entertain my children who were looking around the aisles debating how to spend their five pounds each. So, it was a bit on the hoof—so I did one with a photograph.

Joy 16:43

I wouldn't have known that Helen and unless you told us so.

Helen 16:48

Look pristine! (laughs) This one—I'm so bad at holding things up. Yeah, anyone feel free to ask any questions as we're going along. This is from a photograph of my mum when she was probably well, I guess that's my sister on a bike behind us. So yeah, probably similar—mid 40s. But I did quite a bit of writing after we talked about freedom. And—so in terms of making this one and just—because—to make the Riso prints, you kind of load the fo—the files in digitally, even if you've made them by hand. So, my dad had sent me a copy of this picture, so I just made it into a black and white file. And then with the text—just—I was practicing actually on one of these little whiteboards that my kids have. And then I scanned that in on my computer, but I could have just done it on a piece of paper. And I did it on this whiteboard because these pens that I sent you they're quite nice, on a shiny-ish surface. So, I was trying to do my best handwriting basically. And then I just—to get the text, I just kind of like deleted the text out of the image, if you see what I mean. So, it appears white, because there is no ink coming through on that bit. So, I guess when you're thinking about printing, it's like thinking about things in layers like so, in a way that image was one layer, and the text was a kind of another layer in itself but kind of subtracted layer. I suppose the other ones are maybe easier to talk about in layers because it did literally make them two layers. So, this one—so bad at holding things straight—I used a piece of acetate. So that's the kind of see through—and one of these nice Posca pens. I think I used the three. They tell you what size they are on the side. Yeah, the 3M so that's a slightly bigger nibbed one. I was just thinking about things bearing down and being a little bit oppressive. I kind of squiggled away mindfully, which was quite a nice process just letting the lines do their own thing because yeah, was practicing a little bit before.

F 19:41

Did you draw that right on to the acetate Helen?

Helen 19:44

Yeah, I did yeah.

F 19:46

That's lovely. Yeah, I could see why you may have found that therapeutic doing that.

Helen 19:53

Yeah, yeah, I don't use that much kind of drawing and things in my own practice a lot of the time, but it is, there is something very enjoyable about it. And then I just set the text out over the top of it. So that was just—I typed that into my computer and then kind of the two came together like that. And then the final little one, I think that was from something somebody said in the—straight, that's straight—'I think it's about power'. I think somebody said that in our last session. So, in a homage to Sister Corita, I was playing around with a kind of like, wavy—trying to manipulate the text on my computer using some kind of distortion thing and that was like waves or something, I think it was called. And then that was combined with just the kind of nice painty swooshy—that was just some acrylic paint on the tracing paper. I just played around with that was quite fun and gestural. So that's the

thing, like, if we're going to try and kind of combine things together, if we make them as separate components then allows to bring kind of multiple things together, and we can kind of have a play around with how things might come together. I mean, we might make a big, ooky, sooky mess, but we might also you know, like it might be that something that Joy makes can combine something that Anonymous makes, or it just gives us possibilities if we create them as kind of separate components. Does that make sense to people the kind of layering process of it?

F 22:05

Does to me to yeah.

Helen 22:08

Okay, cool. Anonymous. Yeah, okay, Brill, right. Because yeah, I've got a few of the little ones—So like that was one that Dorothy had sent from our last thing that we did together which is really beautiful, but then I had to spend a long time trying to separate it out to then make it in the separate layers to do it as a print so that we could reproduce it multiple times using the kind of two colours. So, for example, that could have been done on either the tracing paper you know, do the black and then lay it over the top and do the blue on a separate sheet.

Anonymous 22:55

Are these pens like permanent ones?

Helen 23:01

They are just very good for writing on shiny materials then—they're not no you can't—you can—they do rub off.

F 23:15

Yeah, I was gonna say like if you use them on—something shiny and you make a mistake. If you have like a damp cotton bud or the corner of a dish towel or something you can wipe your mistake away.

Helen 23:28

Yeah, that's a good bit of advice. And I kind of finished doing the centre of it was just a circle start with and I wasn't sure if I wanted it all black or I was going to do it kind of swirly so actually I kind of coloured it in black on the other side so that I could easily just wipe it all away. If I decided I didn't like it. But yes, so you need to be a bit kind of mindful that you're not smudging what you're doing as you're going along but it's relatively resilient. And that china—that kind of pencil that I sent you a while ago that will write on acetate as well it just it's quite subtle. Kind of softer—almost invisible.

Anonymous 24:38

So, could we use the pencil to sort of do a rough one and then use the pens to—like if we weren't sure? Like, see, you know like if you were going to draw something and you started with pencil and then you use pen could—do you think it would work the same way with that pencil that we've got?

Helen 25:01

Yeah, and I guess with things being transparent, you could always draw something in pencil on just a sheet of paper, and then you could lay acetate or any of the other tracing papers over the top of it and just trace it onto the material, if you see what I mean.

F 25:28

I was just thinking that it might be harder to get the paint pen to work over the pencil that you sent because it's a wee bit waxy. But it might be fun to experiment Anonymous and see what does it turn out like?

Helen 25:46

Yeah, you might be better kind of doing—if you feel like you wanted to do something on paper first, and then transfer it onto acetate. There's another one. So, the acetate takes the pens really nicely. And then there's another one that's called True-grain, this kind of one. Not the tracing paper. But it's kind of plasticky as well, but it's got like a toothed surface on it. So, if you wanted to use any painterly effects on that, it will stop it kind of separating the watery effect from it. You know sometimes, like—can you see the pigments starting to separate a little bit from the water. And doing a kind of thing of its own. Let me—so, on the true-grain if you just use—even quite a watery paint quite it holds it quite nicely because it goes into all these little notches and grooves that are in in the kind of material. So, you can get something—whoop—something that's quite fluid and kind of gestural. And with that one, if you don't like what you've done, you can just get a little cloth and wash it away and use the bit of material again. Gone.

F 27:52

That stuff's really cool. I wasn't sure if my eyes would actually pick it up properly when I was looking at it. When the envelope came. I was like that's some fancy tracing paper (laughs).

Helen 28:04

It's like some invisible bits of—

F 28:09

I was like this is serious technology here. What is this? Now I know what it's for thanks for that (laughs).

Helen 28:20

Oh, yeah—

Anonymous 28:20

I've got a wee bit—Sorry. I've got a wee bit of this scrapbook type vellum stuff.

Helen 28:26

Oh right.

Anonymous 28:28

Leftover from something I was doing for Open the Door. Do you think that would work as part of a layer or would that not be a thing?

Helen 28:35

Yeah, I think so. Like—is it kind of plasticky as well?

Anonymous 28:40

Well, it's vellum.

Helen 28:41

I don't even know what vellum is Anonymous.

F 28:44

It's kinda like a fabric is it?

Anonymous 28:49

I think so it's very popular with scrapbookers—Or at least it used to be. But I think it's actually probably not good with vegans. I've heard it described as sort of—

F 29:03

Okay.

Anonymous 29:07

I'm not sure how that's made. I just had it around and used it for something to do with Open the Door.

Helen 29:14

Yes, I'm sure that would work Anonymous. Even if it's questionable with vegans, none of us know.

F 29:21

I was gonna say it's really hard to be an artist and a vegan because a lot of the art materials that you use are very far from vegan. They're mostly a lot of traditional art materials made from animal by products so, but I hear you. It looks really nice though Anonymous I liked that. Really pretty.

Joy 29:43

Are you a vegan F?

F 29:46

Yeah, I am. I've just got to—I think this is year number four now.

Joy 29:51

Right.

F 29:53

But I kind did if for my health, but also animals but mostly my health was driving it but I was virtually vegetarian and vegan at that point anyway but yeah, it's so interesting when you actually start to look at where art materials come from.

Helen 30:11

Yeah, I don't know what's in a Posca pen I suspect only chemicals unfortunately.

F 30:18

Yeah, but they're water based so it's not poisonous at least which is something.

Helen 30:22

Yeah, there's nothing too toxic for you all.

F 30:25

No. Oh, here we go.

Helen 30:28

What's—

F 30:29

Oh.

Helen 30:31

Vellum is prepared animal skin or membrane typically used as a material for writing on.

Joy 30:37

Isn't that what they used to write—you know, they had manuscripts like you the monks used to put—you know, when they were doing their manuscripts in the monasteries and stuff—wasn't vellum at they used to use?

Anonymous 30:47

I think so. Yeah.

F 30:50

Yeah, yeah, I think it was, but I see your explanation there, that's really cool. I wonder if there's plant-based vellums then too?

Helen 30:58

It might be as well contemporarily that things have kind of taken the name but not necessarily got all the traditional components in it. I also sent you just some black card that you could always do some shapes or kind of silhouette-y type things—some cutouts and that was the thinking of that. Is anything else I sent you? I sent you an envelope again with my address on in case you wanted to send anything back to me—I know we've done some collaging I didn't kind of suggest that if people wanted to collect together more collaging material that might have been an idea, but we've probably got enough things to get some creativity going. Yes, suppose like using—there's all the materials there to do mark making and drawing and things but we could also do a bit of writing as well if people wanted to, like explore various different ways of like contributing things. I could maybe share—did people watch that Sister Corita video about her making—it was just like a kind of short video of her

preparing some things on a screen. Could maybe just watch that together for fun. Where is screenshare? There [audio of video of Sister Corita demonstrating screen printing process].

F 37:23

Can I just say that was really interesting to see the screen printing process but from a different point in time. Because when I did it at secondary school, now I'm showing my age here, when I did a secondary school, we use paper stencils probably because that was cheaper as well than painting the glue on the screen, but I didn't realise that that's exactly how it used to be done with glue painted onto the screen. Really good I saved that video to watch later I just hadn't got back to it yet.

Helen 37:55

Hey Fatima, we were just watching a little video of a nun from the '60s doing some screen printing.

Fatima 38:05

It sounds interesting really sorry to interrupt now. I had to rush to my child's school. Sorry for that. Thank you.

Helen 38:13

Oh no worries we were just going through the materials that I'd sent out in the post and had a little check in see how everyone was doing. Yeah, in the video she, I guess, like you're seeing her preparing the screen for making up a print. So, she's working in the kind of if you're doing it directly on the screen, then you need to do it in the negative way. So, she was kind of like blocking out the bits where she didn't want ink to come through but will be just—which sometimes it's quite hard to think your head around—but we'll just be making all our things in positives, which is more straightforward. But I thought like she was kind of—I suppose from the era and the kind of technology she was kind of hand painting some of her text in but that's quite a nice—sometimes our like hand cut out a stencil or some text just—even though I've printed out from the computer to start with I'll then like cut it out with a knife or you could draw a draw it again just to kind of take that really—just to make it a little bit more handmade. So, take it away from being that very, very kind of hard-edged computer feel that things can have when they're completely digital. And we also saw cutting that nice kind of just simple sun shape out of the out of the newsprint. So, if you wanted to use some of your card, we're making some templates, shapes that could work. So, Fatima we were gonna try and do some creative things. I also wondered, do—would people like to talk a bit more about our topic from last time freedom? We could maybe go into smaller groups even like just like, into pairs and kind of revisit some of the things that people found interesting, because there was quite a lot of different stuff that was covered. What do people think? I know, some people are not feeling as chatty as they might other times.

Joy 40:34

I think that sounds like a good idea. Because, like you were saying it's a vast topic, and quite a few things raised last time, so might be quite nice to be able to just exchange with another person a little bit more.

F 40:47

Yeah, I thought that was a good idea as well. Maybe. I'm happy to go with whatever everyone else wants as well.

Helen 40:59

Yeah. Anonymous are you alright, with that going into a little breakout room with one other person? If I can get the breakout rooms to work. Honestly, the first time I'm trying it.

Anonymous 41:12

I guess so.

Helen 41:18

Okay, cool. I did—when I was listening back over it, I kind of like—often when I've worked in this way, before I've listened to recordings, then I've taken out little bits of text that have kind of stuck out in my—to my ear. And I could share that with you, although it's quite long. It's like 1700 words, and of different bits—as just to kind of reminder to people of some of the different things that people were talking about. Let's see—

F 41:57

Have you got like a favourite three or something like that? Because I was going to say, I can't read that much text today. I can tell just now; my eyes are struggling. Just because of the sunshine. But yeah, if there's like three or five, you thought, wow, maybe even just share those with us.

Helen 42:15

Okay, well, I'll maybe draw a few—maybe we'll just put people—we're going to the breakout rooms and just have an open chat. I'm sure people remember quite well, what different things were being talked about. I suppose to just see where the conversation goes from there. But also thinking like, what might you want to bring together into some kind of creative thing? Is it a very kind of personal aspect? Yeah, I suppose we could go in so many different ways. And I think we could do a whole series of different things that we don't necessarily need to be completely definitive, like, there could be—we could do a series of different prints that are somewhat—that were very personal. Some that perhaps try and like, do this pulling out and seeing if there's anything, any current topics that relate to some of the conversations that people were having some of the things that people were talking about. Are there—could we build any facts into them? Or are we wanting more of a kind of like, reflective personal approach? I guess we could have a chat and see what people think. So, shall we do breakout rooms for 10 minutes and see how we're doing and then we can come back together and see what people think. Right. This is—so I've clicked the button. How many breakout rooms do I want? Two. Assign automatically? Okay. I imagine I can go into the room. I think I'm just gonna leave you to it and then you can come back to the rooms. I think that you can call me if you need to (laughs). I'm sure you all be fine for 10 minutes (laughter).

F 44:15

I'm laughing with you.

Helen 44:22

What was that sorry F?

F 44:25

I'm laughing with you, not at you. Because I've not had to do any Breakout Room thing yet. So yeah, well—you're in a safe space. It's okay. If it doesn't work. One of us will let you know.

Helen 44:36

Okay, I'm opening the rooms. I'm pressing the button. [participants go into break out rooms for 10 minutes].

F 44:37

Hey.

Joy 44:37

We're back.

Helen 54:20

So funny in digital space. How was that does anybody want to share what was chat in your different rooms?

Joy 54:31

I really enjoyed it actually was really nice. I really enjoyed just having that one-to-one, you know, exchange and that one-to-one connection it was it was really good. Yeah.

Fatima 54:43

We were saying how like a personal issue could—doesn't really reflect just the personal issue. It's like for example, I was talking about responsibility and how I'm going to be when I—if I choose into to have a baby. How that's going to be my commitment and my responsibility mostly. And I will think how that issue that the individual issue always makes me feel that it's not just me, it's like part of the system. It's part of a bigger problem. So where—I mean, now I feel like I am a bit more aware of that. In the past, when I was younger, I would say I would always blame myself, you know, I should be the mum who could juggle doing this, and that and having the best career and being on my own with my child. And, you know, I've been blamed for it before, but now I understand it's a societal issue. It's not my fault.

Helen 55:50

F did you have your hand up?

F 55:53

Yeah, I wanted to ask what happens when we go into breakout rooms? So, you where there. But like, obviously, you must turn into some kind of like moderator, you could go into each room you wanted? Sorry, I was just curious.

Helen 56:06

I think if I had did have a better grasp of the technology, I would have been able to come in and do that. I just [unintelligible] I went to the bathroom (laughter).

F 56:24

I was just curious, because I'm like, I wonder what happens to the screen, that you're looking at the person who makes the breakout room. Sorry. I'll let Anonymous chat if she would like to about what we were talking about. And then if there's anything else I'll add it in.

Anonymous 56:42

Well, we mostly talked about the artwork you'd sent through. And I was saying that I thought that the mindful one had looked quite Doctor Who when I first looked at it, but then I saw the contour lines when you talked about it. And then we were really appreciating the quotes on here, and how the personal relates, like when you tell what you think is just personal to someone else, they totally understand what you mean, and things. And we were—well, the photo with the bike. When your mum's biking on the bridge, reminded me of my childhood when we would bike over the Erskine bridge because we lived in Erskine. We were talking about the trees and the nature and that. We did talk more about freedom and stuff. But right at the moment, my brain won't tell me what it was. Sorry F.

F 57:53

That's okay. That's the bit I can chime in on. But yeah, we were very much appreciating the artwork and just thinking about what kind of way we could apply that perhaps. But also realised that freedoms such an expansive topic. And like you said earlier Helen and everybody that have such varied and interesting viewpoints. And then, like Fatima was just saying there that these wider structures that exist—because I was talking about the patriarchy, and how, even though in this country, women do have a lot of freedoms, we're still living in a patriarchal structural system. Everything in this country is built on that and has been for centuries now. So that there's this collective, kind of like, freedom can mean so many different things. But yeah, it was a good chat. I enjoyed it

Helen 58:47

I just muted myself, sorry. I should say that I'm feeling a bit out of digital thoughts today.

F 59:06

There's just been a full moon by the way, and an Eclipse at the same time. So, I would say there's a lot of crazy energies around just know. Don't feel too bad. I'm pretty the same. So, you're not alone.

Helen 59:19

I think the hot weather has kind of built up into quite a lot of pressure, hasn't it as well. I opened the window while you're in the breakout rooms. All these very mundane things that we get up to all the time. Well, we just have a little kind of is five to four where we have a little kind of comfort break maybe even for five or 10 minutes. Where people can make a drink or anything and I could maybe— Fatima I could explain some of the materials that was explaining to others before you arrived. So, F and Joy and Anonymous you're welcome to go off for like—maybe til five past or you're welcome to stay around and listen to me repeat

different materials that came through the post and then we can maybe try and do some creative things together so maybe make sure you've got all your materials around and anything else you might need if you're going to do some painting maybe fill a little pot with some water or a cloth or some cotton wool. What else might you need? Just a bit of something to mix paint in, all those different kinds of things that you might need. A pair of scissors.

F 1:00:32

Okay, yeah, see you at five past.

Helen 1:00:35

Yeah, five past.

Fatima 1:00:40

Thank you very much, Helen. I appreciate and sorry, honestly sorry again.

Helen 1:00:44

Oh, no worries at all. Like that's the thing isn't it? Life shifts around.

Fatima 1:00:50

For that.

Helen 1:00:52

So, you received a little package that I sent in the post.

Fatima 1:00:56

Yes, I have it.

Helen 1:00:57

With the materials. So, what was I saying? Because you were not part—you didn't join us when we made our other little kind of zine type things together. I sent you some of those in the post and—

Fatima 1:01:16

I wasn't, so oh yeah.

Helen 1:01:18

So, we did a session where we did some kind of mark making and that was the original piece that Anonymous sent me. Where she just used some of the paints to kind of follow some shapes and then include text in it as well.

Fatima 1:01:39

Different what? Sorry, what does it say?

Helen 1:01:41

It says 'different intelligence'.

Fatima 1:01:44

Okay, yeah.

Helen 1:01:50

But we're going to make—whatever we do together I'm going to try and see if we can combine it in some kind of printmaking process so the little—these ones that I sent you this week, they are all Riso prints which is very similar to screen—I've got too many pieces of paper on my desk. I don't know where the other one went. Oh, it's there.

Fatima 1:02:18

Yep.

Helen 1:02:19

So, I send you all these kind of transparent and semi-transparent materials. So that we can try and think about making things in separate layers so they can be brought together in different ways. So, for example, like this one—I did I use the kind of these pens that are sent you to do a drawing on some of the acetate.

Fatima 1:02:47

Uh huh.

Helen 1:02:50

So, that's one of the kind of see through ones. So, I just did a very kind of instinctive line drawing. I was kind of thinking about different—

Fatima 1:03:02

Sorry Helen, can you hear me?

Helen 1:03:04

Yes, I can hear you. Can you hear me?

Fatima 1:03:06

My screen went—

Helen 1:03:09

Oh, you've popped yourself on mute. I can't hear you at the moment but you're on mute. You've taken yourself off mute. Can you hear me now?

Fatima 1:03:24

Yeah, my screen went all black.

Helen 1:03:28

Oh goodness.

Fatima 1:03:29

What is going on?

Helen 1:03:32

Maybe it's a Scottish screen and it was thinking it's too hot. I can't hear you, you're on mute. Is it behaving normally again or still being strange? Oh, I can't hear you. You're on mute. You're still on mute. You got to close down and come back. See you in a bit.

F 1:06:02

I'm not sure how productive I'm going to be by the way because I'm struggling with a heat and that's inside my own house.

Helen 1:06:08

It's so hot isn't it?

F 1:06:10

Yeah, like it's been heating up for the last couple of hours. I've been looking at the thermostat in my hall and I'm like why am I—I've been taking prickly heat for the last week or two as well. It's a nightmare so yeah, I will see what I can do and if I can't manage once have cooled later on I'll, come back to stuff, okay?

Helen 1:06:19

Oh no. Yeah, no pressure at all. No pressure at all like—

F 1:06:33

Because I want to make something good, I don't want to just make something for the sake of making it as well you know. You know—well, you know me.

Helen 1:06:40

Yeah, we don't need to rush things either. I mean—

F 1:06:42

Yeah, I did think so. But I'm just putting my caveat out there.

Helen 1:06:47

Okay. Well that's good to know how you feeling but yeah, it is just getting hotter and hotter isn't it. Fatima's computer stopped—her screen went black, so she's had to leave and hopefully she'll come back but—

F 1:07:05

Yeah, I found with Zoom because so many people are using it now. Like my sound is never clear on Zoom anymore.

Helen 1:07:11

Oh really.

F 1:07:12

Yes. Just because how many people are using the service at a time so but not that Microsoft Teams is any better may I add. I've been in talks with that and it is hope—it's even worse than Zoom. Zoom's better.

Helen 1:07:28

Yeah, I don't know what the optimum—Yeah, I feel I kind of feel like it would be nice to see everyone face to face.

F 1:07:38

Yeah, I keep making humans serve me at the supermarket if I go in because I'm fed up of not seeing any other people and not actually talking to them in person.

Helen 1:07:48

Yeah, yeah.

F 1:07:49

The time we're living in.

Helen 1:07:51

It's a very strange time. So, I was just saying to F unfortunately, Fatima's computer kind of was— malfunctioning, and she had to leave and was going to try and come back again. I'd only just lifted one piece of paper up to explain to her what it was. Hopefully she'll return but she may—her computer may be feeling like the rest of us too hot.

Joy 1:09:07

Towards the end of the time, when we're in the breakout room, her kind of sound was going a bit funny. Kind of breaking up. So yeah—

Helen 1:09:18

She's maybe going to have to turn the machine off for a little while. Okay, well, shall we just in a quite relaxed way just do different things that people fancy doing with the materials available. And that could be picking up on things you talked about in your breakout room, picking up on things from last session or—yeah, I mean the—the kind of these two took my thought process a little bit further on from conversations that we've had in the last session and kind of tried to articulate myself a little better as—I find it quite hard expressing all my thoughts and feelings succinctly verbally so sometimes writing things down—I suppose that's the whole nature of what we're doing, isn't it that maybe some brush marks might express what you're thinking along with X, Y, and Z. So, will we just start doing some things. And then people can ask any questions, or—I can let people know what we're doing, if we'd like to, but there's no pressure as well.

F 1:10:49

Did you have your, like some of the stuff that you've pulled out that you were talking about before we went into the breakout rooms?

Helen 1:10:57

I didn't manage to—

F 1:11:00

Or even just like, copy the first few lines, maybe, but that might be like a wee prompt or something.

Helen 1:11:06

Okay. Yeah. Why don't I work on popping some of those in the chat as we kind of go along?

F 1:11:12

Thank you. Sorry, if I've made more work for you.

Helen 1:11:15

No, that's alright. It's—oh that's Fatima coming back.

Fatima 1:11:34

Sorry, Helen, my—decided to update. So, I had to turn off and on again, sorry for that.

Helen 1:11:44

That's alright—

F 1:11:51

Technology, eh?

Fatima 1:11:55

Yeah, 24 degrees, I think I'm slowing down also (laughs) just like my computer.

Helen 1:12:01

I know. It is amazing, isn't it? Like—It does affect the way we work.

Fatima 1:12:08

Yeah, to be honest, I'm surprised I feel like I've been used to the Scottish weather. Usually, 24 for me is like springtime or is like, you know, wintertime (laughs). But I'm used to the Scottish weather now.

Helen 1:12:26

Quickly acclimatised. So, I could carry on explaining to you Fatima. I suppose if people wanted to get on with their own contributions, while I'm explaining to Fatima, you could always turn the sound off on us, if you don't want to a repetition of what the materials are, or I think my technological abilities of putting Fatima and I into a separate breakout room are maybe beyond me.

F 1:13:01

Don't stress yourself about that it's too warm. Like you're saying we can mute if we want.

Helen 1:13:06

Okay, thanks F (laughs). Okay, so I was showing you the kind of one that I've done with the pen from that. So that's on this acetate. And those pens, they're not permanent on it, they do kind of scratch off if you kind of rub them so you can correct anything that you want to rub out. But just be mindful that it will wear off if it gets rubbed too much. So, I was saying

that I wasn't sure if I wanted to fill this black central bit or not. So, I did it on the other side. So, I could have easily washed it off if I'd wanted to. And then—this little one I made from messing around with some of the kind of digital type tools. That was something making waves in it. But I combined it with this just this very gestural—that's just in acrylic paint with some water. It was just quite nice to kind of make some marks and combined interesting with text or shapes or even with photographic imagery. And then this little one, I just had a digital copy of this photograph. That's my mum and my sister on a bike. Yeah, because I was thinking quite a lot more about this kind of generational shift and how freedom has changed. My mum's got multiples sclerosis, so to her mobility's very limited now. And just seeing her riding a bike—my dad had sent me this when we were making a book for her 70th birthday earlier—it was last year actually. But it was really kind of—I haven't seen her in that kind of physical capacities for a long time. So, it was really nice. And it kind of made me think about being—the freedom of riding a bike as well like. But yeah, I wrote—I did some writing after we met a couple of weeks ago. And then I just used one of these like little whiteboards, that belongs to the kids to write the text on because those the Posca pens, they write quite nicely on kind of shiny surfaces. And I was kind of practicing to try and get my neat handwriting. And then I just scanned that into my computer, and then deleted the text in a way. So, the white of the text is just the white of the paper. So, the pigments been taken away from the part of the print where the text is. So that was quite nice to use white along with the blue as well. There is also so—so yeah, you can use the pens on the acetate, but I also sent you that pencil that works on there as well. Which gives a different kind of slightly more kind of subtle—so subtle that you can't even see it. An F for Fatima. Obviously spending too much time with my children. And then this one is called true-grain and it's got a kind of tooth on it, you would say, it's like got a bit of a texture on it. It's not the tracing paper. No, maybe not that one. It's kind of plasticky, but it's also got a bit of texture on it. Anyway, that one—yes, that looks like it. Yeah, that one is particularly good for like more painterly effects because so it's little—the little grooves in it allow the paint to stick to it without separating. You know, when you try and paint on something that's very, very shiny, sometimes it just separates and goes into little kind of droplets, whereas—gonna do you another very high-tech demo. A bit of paint. It's so hot my paint's dried up. So even though that was quite wet, it just kind of stays as you paint it. Whereas on the acetate, it might kind of go into little droplets more. And you can if you wanted to—if you didn't like what you've done, you can just get a cloth and clean it off and start again. So, oh—and I sent you some card too. If you wanted to cut out any shapes or do kind of silhouetted things, you could just make shapes with that. So, there are a whole host of different ways you might want to respond, or you might want to do some writing or—

Fatima 1:19:08

Yeah, so I was going to ask, are we doing this then individually?

Helen 1:19:14

So, we're gonna start doing some things today kind of individually and then seeing if things could be brought together somehow or whether—because through this kind of layering process, say for example, if somebody had done I kind of gestural thing like—yeah, well—that I kind of painted that and then combined it with some of the text that I've taken directly from something that somebody said in one of the sessions last time.

Fatima 1:19:47

Okay, yeah, I see what you mean. Thank you very much for your explanation. Sorry for letting you repeat. Really sorry for that.

Helen 1:19:58

No, that's all right. No worries at all. Do you feel alright to—yeah, I guess we could do some activities until about quarter to probably. And anybody can ask any questions. I don't know, they may have muted them, everybody else may have muted me. And just be happily working away. It seems like it. So maybe I should—

F 1:20:29

I'm still be listening. I've been listening. It was too much effort to turn it off. Thanks again for your explanation, because actually is helpful. For me anyway, to hear it more than once, I think. Because the way my brain works it will allow me to think of some possibilities, maybe as you're talking the second or third time, so it's still appreciated. Thank you, Helen.

Helen 1:20:54

No problem Anonymous says she can hear us too.

Anonymous 1:20:58

I'm sorry, Helen, I was thinking of mine as a sort of layers that I did. I didn't really think that it was going to be combined with somebody else's. Does it matter if mine's has several layers?

Helen 1:21:10

No, you can do yours as several layers to be brought together with other layers that you've done. And then when people have got together some things that you can maybe all send them to me in the envelopes that I sent you. And then we could have a look. Like see, yeah, perhaps Anonymous yours could combine into a finished thing. But maybe we'll find that something else could be added. But I also don't want to, you know, if people are making things as well and feel like they have some autonomy in them, like—we can do things a variety of different ways. It's experimental.

Anonymous 1:21:57

Thank you, it doesn't matter if they something does get added, I just suddenly realised that I had thought of at least two layers for mine and I just wondered—

Helen 1:22:06

Go for it. Yeah, because we can do, we can do lots of layers, like I've just been doing—the Risos that I sent you this time, we're just in two layers, because the woman at the Art School who does the Riso printing, she—if it's no more than two layers, you can't do it in a day. Whereas it takes us then a whole other week if we go into above three layers, but I wanted to—know—because I wanted to send them to you in time for today, then I tried to limit myself just to two layers, but we could go wild we could have we can have multiple layers.

F 1:22:45

Yeah, I was gonna say layers and Riso printing become very addictive. Because I've been to a few of the Risotto [another Riso print studio in Glasgow] poster club sessions. And they—in case people don't know, they have like, stencils pre-loaded on each colour machine. And there'll be like up to something like eight different colours. And then they have this variety of colour paper laid out for you. And you get to pick and go absolutely wild. So, I've got some stuff that's just one or two layers. And then I've got other prints that are made there. And they've got like four or five things on it. And it does begin to look very messy, but that messiness can actually have other bits of pretty or beautiful stuff in there or interesting stuff. So yeah, it always makes me think of that. I'm impressed with your restraint, because I can't control myself with Riso prints (laughs).

Helen 1:23:41

Yeah, they wouldn't have gotten to you on time if it hadn't stuck to the to the two colours. So that was—I was like, is it blue and green? Is it blue and red? Is it—it was taking me—I was like trying it in lots of different configurations. I remember you saying Anonymous that there were some of the colours that you could see less well like. Are they the colours more in the red and orange and kind of pink spectrum?

Anonymous 1:24:12

It's more than sort of pastel-y colours. Like if you start putting pastel colours on white or two shades that are very similar. Like black on white is a bit too strong. But if you put like light green, on dark-green or the other way round, that's too similar, if you know what I mean.

Helen 1:24:36

Uh huh. Could you see? Well, the blue and the green from these ones?

Anonymous 1:24:43

Yeah, these ones are great. They're fine.

F 1:24:46

I'm gutted this other pen, although it's got a silver sticker on the top, it's black. I was hoping I could have had like a lighter colour to draw in the dark card with. It's alright, I've got pens like that here that's why I know so much about them. It's all good. I think you're on mute.

Helen 1:25:42

I think of the ones I sent you I thought it was going to be more of a—

F 1:25:45

I was hoping that was a silver but that's just because I'm a magpie and disco-diva. I love things shiny (laughter).

Fatima 1:26:05

Can I ask you please Helen again? How did we use this again, I forgot how to—

Helen 1:26:14

Is this the black or—

Fatima 1:26:16

Yes.

Helen 1:26:17

Just if you wanted to make shapes or kind of silhouette type things you could cut things out of that.

Fatima 1:26:27

Okay. Is there anything to do with this?

Helen 1:26:31

No.

Fatima 1:26:32

No. All right. Thank you. Makes sense.

Helen 1:26:38

So yeah, you might want to add—I just sent some white paper as well, you might—obviously the see-through ones when you're working on them, it's much easier if you put some white underneath it so you can see what you're what you're doing otherwise you just see your table underneath which can be confusing.

Fatima 1:27:01

Lovely. Thank you.

Helen 1:38:05

How people getting on?

Fatima 1:38:09

Just really enjoying reading everything. I love the way you read—you reiterated everything, or I mean, as they are not much changed at all. It's just the way you've presented, really good [commenting on excerpts of the transcript from the previous session that I put in the Zoom chat].

Helen 1:38:24

So, F said could I put three or five, but I couldn't have—I don't know how many I have.

Fatima 1:38:30

A very good way to reflect on everything we've said.

F 1:38:38

Yeah, like them. I enjoyed reading them as well. Really, really powerful from everyone.

Helen 1:38:48

I think there's just something nice in the way that people phrase things when they're talking that it's hard to capture when you—yeah, it just captures it in a different way, if you started writing something, it probably wouldn't have the same tone exactly.

Fatima 1:39:04

I kind of feel it has a stronger impact on me when I read things I said, you know, when I see them written, feels like more powerful. Maybe—they make more sense when I read them also.

Helen 1:39:33

Particularly when you're hear—when you're represented with your own words.

Fatima 1:39:40

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Helen 1:39:42

Yeah.

Fatima 1:39:43

I don't think I've—anyone has done that with me before, you know, re-presenting my words or I've read something I said before. It's a good thing. Thank you.

Helen 1:40:08

I'm just gonna nip to the loo. I missed the break bit.

F 1:42:14

I'm just going to nip to the loo quickly before we come back together okay.

Helen 1:42:17

If we carry on doing things for another five minutes or so and then we can kind of see where we're at and see where we might go. Oh, that's looking great Anonymous. You're a fast—so show us the different—have you got like a shape? Show us the individual parts. Oh right, nice. I couldn't quite see the yellow-y colour. That looks great. Thanks for sharing Anonymous.

F 1:45:55

That's been so relaxing. Thank you. Oh, you're still on mute. Sorry.

Helen 1:46:03

Have you been working on anything F or have you—

F 1:46:07

I did—I have started one thing on the acetate, but I want to come back to that when I feel my hand is a bit steadier. But what I was doing on the acetate was just tracing one of the wee prints you sent us out as the collage material at the very start. There was like—

Helen 1:46:23

Okay.

F 1:46:24

Yeah, there was like, your wee tester prints I think it was. There's one that kind of looks a bit like coral or camouflage. So, I started tracing that out. But I've made one that I'll switch the camera on, and let you see. Maybe, let's see. I'm rough today. Let's see. Oh, it's not going to let me do it easily. Of course. That's annoying. Give me a second. Let's see. See, because I usually don't let it use the camera.

Helen 1:46:59

It's got to know you.

F 1:47:01

Yeah. It says, 'no', it's not going to work easily. This is what happens. So that's why I was laughing when you were saying about the breakout rooms was only because I struggle with this type of technology so much as well. And like people are like—my machine isn't doing what it's supposed to do. That's it there. It's so frustrating, then you need to find the setting. And they Oh, yeah, it's such a faff. Let's see if it works. There you go. I don't know how well you can see it?

Helen 1:47:41

Yeah.

F 1:47:43

These circles are for sister, I thought. Yeah, that was just a wee one. Turn the camera off.

Helen 1:47:53

Thank you for sharing that. So, has anybody else got anything that they would like to share? Or—are people can have? Yeah, I can never do anything in a prescribed amount of time. It always takes me longer or I need to be on my own or I don't know.

Fatima 1:48:26

Yeah, I'm still trying to find an idea. I might read what you sent in and then come up with something from there. Yeah.

Helen 1:48:38

I can send across all the little bits of text; I can send all the texts that I kind of took out of the conversation from last time to everyone I could copy that into an email.

Fatima 1:48:52

That would be great, thank you.

Helen 1:48:53

Yeah, that'd be no problem. So, what do people fancy doing—so next time do we do want to carry on making creative things or a bit of discussion? I was quite enjoying our kind of progression through the kind of topics in the kind of consciousness-raising packet.

F 1:49:23

What is the next topic out of curiosity? Or have you just been picking them randomly out of their list?

Helen 1:49:29

A little bit randomly, not kind of fully going through them really. What does it what would it move on to next? Let's have a look on the little thing.

F 1:49:40

It might be nice to do a wee bit more of the artwork though as well, because I think we've all been at varying degrees of efficiency today. Might be cooler next session.

Fatima 1:49:56

I definitely agree to be honest. I mean it really appreciate everything you said Helen, but maybe if I see you doing something, because I really have zero—You know, what's the word? Experience. I've never tried anything like that before? Never. So, you know, like, hearing how to use it, how to do it, but then I'm looking at it now, I'm—

Helen 1:50:26

Yeah, it can be over facing can't it.

Fatima 1:50:29

Yeah. Never done anything. Since I was in primary school maybe. And with my child we just, you know, splash colours sometimes on a little board or something, but no, not much.

Helen 1:50:46

I know it is interesting, like doing things with kids, because they're just so instinctive a lot of the time aren't, they—how stiff we are, by the time we're adults or a lot of us are.

Fatima 1:50:56

Yeah, I mean—yeah, that's true. Yeah.

Helen 1:51:05

Yeah. Because my kids are like, well, you're an artist, like, come on, you can draw this much better than I can. And then—they spend far more time practicing drawing—their drawings appeal to me much more than mine do.

Fatima 1:51:21

Yeah, absolutely. And they have no restrictions. No, like, they can be as creative. They are creative, I would say. My child is more creative than me, I would think.

Helen 1:51:35

So, I was just looking on the topics on the New York Radical Feminists. So, we went from adult social life didn't wait to freedom. The next one on there is his first adult sexual experience, which I think is maybe a little daunting for—

F 1:51:53

Pass. Like, I want to share things with people but like, serious—like, pass, sorry (laughter). I know that that won't be a problem, either. But I'm just saying it out loud. In case anyone else is thinking it and doesn't want to say it. Okay, but yeah, I wouldn't feel comfortable chatting about that. I don't even chat like that with my own friends. So, it's definitely not anything personal against the group, either. Just to say that too.

Helen 1:52:20

Yeah. Yeah—

Anonymous 1:52:23

Thank you F.

F 1:52:25

That's—you're very welcome. I couldn't get it out fast enough, Anonymous, don't worry (laughs).

Helen 1:52:33

And quite a few of the sessions, we kind of talked a little bit about bodies, I wondered whether that could be a topic that we could cover, because it could kind of incorp—if people wanted to talk about sexual things, but also health things and changing bodies. What other topics we've not talked about work or employment or that kind of side of things.

Joy 1:53:05

Will the next session potentially be the last one because I was just wondering, you know, if it is then whether you wanted that something that would kind of, I don't know, draw things together a little bit more. But if it's going to continue, then obviously that's kind of, I think, leaves it a little bit more open.

Helen 1:53:24

Yes, that's very true Joy. I would like to continue after a break over the summer, but I also appreciate that lives are changing day by day. I don't know if people feel they're able to commit to a Tuesday afternoon come kind of mid-August when we're back?

Joy 1:53:47

I'd like to continue but as you say, it kind of depends a bit on what people are doing and maybe commitments are going to change and stuff like that with work or other things. I think every two weeks is a nice kind of pattern. It's not too often but it's often enough that you can kind of you know keep it going and pick up the thread each time.

Helen 1:54:10

Yeah, I feel like we've got a lot more things that we could cover and more steam that we could—

Fatima 1:54:18

I would really love to come back the only thing is that as you, Joy you're saying that I don't know how restrictions will be and if I have to be for example, in placement or uni and I don't

know the timetables stuff yet, but I would really love. It's just a timing matter you know if we can maybe work it out in a in a suitable time, then I'd love to come.

Helen 1:54:43

Okay, well that's good to know. So should we continue on as though we're going to—that next session is not our last—even if for some people, it does end up being the last one—we'll just, I don't feel like we're at a kind of conclusive points, I think it would be a bit forced to try and say, right, let's finish what we're making and have our kind of final discussion. Why don't we pick another topic and then carry on with some, like, do a bit of a chat and a bit more making in the session and see where we're at?

Anonymous 1:55:26

Helen, I think I have missed something because I think I came in late to session. And then you know, how Dorothy who used to come? I think she said something to me about a meet-up or like, in-person meet up, which I didn't know anything about. But I think that's what I missed the day that I was late.

Helen 1:55:48

No, I think maybe I've not mentioned that really, as well, like, just because restrictions have been so difficult, like it would be really nice to meet up in face-to-face. But that might not be possible for everyone. There is an open invitation to us all at the Women's library to go and see their exhibition, the Ingrid Pollard exhibition, which has been looking at things in their archive. I think, which—I think we, as a group would find really interesting. And they're also launching a billboard by the Guerrilla Girls. I don't know if people know the Guerrilla Girls.

F 1:56:33

Really, where's that gonna go? I'm excited. That's big news.

Helen 1:56:39

Anonymous do you know where it is?

Anonymous 1:56:42

No.

Helen 1:56:42

It's somewhere in the East End, isn't it?

Anonymous 1:56:44

I think so. But the thing—the reason I unmuted myself was in Ingrid's exhibition, there's a picture of people doing the screen printing that we watched. There's a picture of I think, an adult helping a kid to do the—

Helen 1:57:06

Oh that'd be nice. So it kind of links in very closely.

Anonymous 1:57:12

Yeah, well, her exhibition covers multiple things. So, I think there's maybe a handful of—leaflets would call them things—handouts to pick up, rather than just the one. So, there's, there's loads all over the Library.

Helen 1:57:30

Okay, amazing. Yeah, so I thought there may be—so we've got a kind of virtual session, in two weeks on whatever date that is. And then I wondered maybe the week after that, so the week starting the 21st, if people were available, that we could arrange a time to meet at the Women's Library. But only for those people who can come, and we can go and see Ingrid Pollard's exhibition and the Guerrilla Girls. Joy, do you know the Guerrilla Girls?

Joy 1:58:02

Yeah, I don't know where—that—yeah, yeah, I don't know where the billboard is though.

Helen 1:58:07

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Anonymous 1:58:11

One thing I would say, I do see the exhibition, when I'm cleaning, but also in the Women's Library, like the staff are in two different bubbles, so that we can at least have some people able to go in if there's any COVID infections. And I suspect would be that you'd want to go would be maybe a Tuesday or something, which is one of the days I don't work. So, I don't know how that would like—I don't know if I would have to avoid the red bubble people completely, or how that would work. So, if I end up not being able to come with you, it's not that I don't want to see you all. It's because of logistics (laughs).

Helen 1:58:51

That yes—logistics is the—is obviously always difficult but seems even more challenging at the moment. Have people done Doodle polls? I could maybe do a Doodle poll, they're quite easy. You can kind of set different times and dates in it. And people can just—if I send you the link, you can say that you can sign up to the ones that you can come and then we can try and find one that fits the most of us as possible. And we can take it from there.

Fatima 1:59:25

Sounds perfect. Yeah.

Helen 1:59:26

Okay, well, I'll do that before we meet next time and topic—we're four minutes to what we're going to do for a topic?

Joy 1:59:38

You suggested something about the body. I think Helen and I was wondering if, if that could be like a general topic around, you know, just issues to do with health. Any I mean—

Helen 1:59:41

Yeah, bodies and health

Joy 1:59:49

Bodies and health in a very kind of broad way. Maybe?

Helen 1:59:56

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that sounds that sounds good. Is it everybody happy with that? And as always, people can decide what part of that they want to tap into.

Fatima 2:00:08

Yes, that sounds interesting, I was also very interested in their employment and work. But obviously [unintelligible].

Helen 2:00:25

F is that all right with you?

F 2:00:28

Yeah, I'm cool with that. I was kind of thinking the body almost relates to freedom in a way as well, perhaps because we are all women. So yeah, that might be a really interesting topic.

Helen 2:00:38

Yeah, I put a link on the Padlet to a radio programme that was a few weeks ago. I don't know if people know that book, *Our Bodies Ourselves* that came out in their kind of late '60s kind of the Boston Women's Collective put together what was kind of a very seminal book that has been reproduced many times kind of just taking women's bodies back into their own hands and explaining many of the things that at that time, were mysterious, and maybe still are slightly mysterious. But yeah, check that out on the Padlet if you would like to. Okay, so in the spirit of finishing on time, unless—is there anything else people would like to ask or share or say before we say our farewells?

Joy 2:01:38

Are we meant to be sending you anything just now? Helen or no, not yet. It's just kind of work in progress at the moment?

Helen 2:01:45

Yes, yeah. If you want to send me things that is totally fine. But I think we can maybe allow things to—a bit more time to emerge. But the envelopes are there with the stamps on already if you want to—

Joy 2:02:01

Very organised.

Anonymous 2:02:05

So, see how you said—could it—I showed you this already, but I've just gone and added more. So, I take it that that then makes it more than one or two layers but I've—but—

Helen 2:02:23

That is fine, Anonymous. It's like—it's kind of sometimes a little counterintuitive, isn't it to try to be that disciplined of keeping things separate from one another, but we didn't do the

things in the layers before and I managed to either reprint them all in one colour or scan them in and with my hotchpotch Photoshop skills, separate them out a little bit. So, don't worry, I'm sure everything you've done is potentially—

Anonymous 2:02:57

I think I'll be doing it anyway. So, it's good to know, anyway, so.

Helen 2:03:06

Okay, brill.

F 2:03:09

Sorry, I just wanted to say thanks to everyone today. I kind of felt all over the place at the start of the session, but now feel a lot better. So, thank you, everyone.

Joy 2:03:22

Good.

Helen 2:03:26

As ever, it's been nice to share two hours with you all. I hope you have all have a good couple of weeks and I'll see you on the—I can't even—I don't even know what the date is two weeks from today.

Joy 2:03:40

15th.

Helen 2:03:41

15th, okay, thanks Joy.

Joy 2:03:43

See you then.

Helen 2:03:45

Take care everyone. Bye-bye.

Fatima 2:03:48

Bye

Anonymous 2:03:48

Bye

F 2:03:48

Take care.

SPEAKERS

Lesley, Helen, F, Anonymous, Joy

Helen 02:14

Hi, Helen, how are you? I'm good. How you doing Lesley?

Lesley 02:18

Fine, thank you.

Helen 02:20

How was your trip to Joan Eardley?

Lesley 02:23

Oh, it was great. It was superb. In addition to the paintings, they had sketches that she'd done. And those were just fascinating to see. Yeah, there's a lot of sketches. It was just it was lovely. Yeah, it was weird being in—Because it's very controlled the environment now, I don't know if you've been to anything in Glasgow. But you're—you've got to go through a corridor system. So, they're directing you at the artwork that you're seeing until you get to the exhibition that you want to see. And I find that's a bit err because they're not directing me to work that I necessarily want to see. You know, I like the freedom to choose what I'm going to see when I go in there. But anyway, it was worth it for the Eardley. So that was good.

Helen 03:17

That does sound good. But yeah, you kind of likes to wander around a bit.

Lesley 03:22

Exactly. Yeah. Yeah.

Helen 03:26

Hi, Joy.

Lesley 03:27

Hello, Joy.

Helen 03:29

Hi, F I'm liking your new image. It's looking very peaceful.

F 03:38

Yeah, thanks. That's at Loch Lomond somewhere, it's one of my favourite bits to sit at. And I had a go at like, trying to get something that looked like a postcard type of shots so it's not too bad, but I think the sunshine helped. It was lovely that day.

Helen 03:57

Were you up there recently?

F 04:00

And that pictures, probably about five or maybe six years old now. So no, I just like to look at it because it reminds me of being there. Good escape.

Helen 04:11

That sounds good. Anonymous and then yeah, we're expecting Fatima as well. I haven't heard anything from her. Shall we start in our usual way and just have a little check in how people are doing today? Yeah, I don't know. What am I feeling? Feeling that time is running away from me. Feeling—Yeah, and then some things have been nice. We had a sleepover. I didn't have my friends for a sleepover (laughter). But the kids had their friends for a sleepover at the weekend, which was kind of nice to be back to normality of it, and—although obviously, nobody went to sleep on time and ever was grumpy the following day from like, lost time sleeping, but it was nice to be doing something that yeah, that felt like relaxed. And in the normal scheme of things. I've been to see a few exhibitions in GI [Glasgow International Festival of Contemporary Art] managed to persuade the children's come along with me under duress of having to bribe them with buns and things. But that was nice to go and see some artworks in reality. And other than that, yeah, it's just time speeding on. I feel like my calendar is beholden to the school calendar. And we've just got a week and a bit. So, a week and a couple of days left. So that I'll throw me into another world of juggling. But yeah, I'm generally doing good I would say. Anybody else wants to say how they've been if they've seen anything exciting or just anything they've heard or just anything you fancy sharing; it doesn't necessarily need to be roundup of mood.

Joy 06:30

I'm not sure I've got anything special to say things have been fine. One thing that I have done actually, since last time, I've been back to the cinema. And actually GFT [Glasgow Film Theatre], which was quite exciting. Because obviously, it's been closed of such a long time. I think it was last autumn, maybe I was there. And that was good, actually, because, well, it was interesting. I mean, there are kind of aspects of it that I don't—I realised I don't like so much. So, they're having to kind of book online, I quite like just kind of turning up—and or go to film and you just kind of go you get a seat and whatever. So, having to book online having to know ahead I'm going on that day, I'm going to sit in that seat. You know, it's all a bit more kind of strict. Somehow, I kind of missed the spontaneity of it. But on the other hand, the thing that was quite—that I quite liked was I realised I quite liked the fact that the cinema was quite empty. And it's partly a COVID thing because it kind of makes you feel kind of, I suppose more reassured that a lot of people in there and I mean it was really even when they were at full capacity, it was really quite empty. And everybody with a mask on, but I actually quite like the space around me. Somebody else was on the radio saying something like I actually—kind of realising they never quite like that home kind of tonnes of people kind of cheek by jowl in the cinema. And I realised that that's kind of my experience as well. I like the space around me the fact that there was kind of hardly anybody on my row and hardly anybody in front or whatever. It just felt nice. So that was good. I saw some good films. And it was kind of nice to be back seeing things actually on a cinema screen again. That was a good experience.

Helen 08:31

Lesley, do you want to tell us about your trip to Edinburgh or anything else?

Lesley 08:36

Or anything else. Well, it was a good week. This week because I managed to get tickets for the Edinburgh Festival three out of four of the performances. I wanted to go and see I still was able to get tickets. So, I'm just dead chuffed about that. And then the last—I wasn't here the last time because I was at the Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh seeing work by a painter called Joan Eardley and like Joy it was just kind of thrill to be back in space that you haven't been here for so so long although as I said to Helen you were very much herded through it and you weren't free to wander. So I found that a bit—I don't like being controlled like that. But it was worth it once I got to the Joan Eardley. So that was very nice.

Helen 09:48

Going against your wilder spirits Lesley don't like be controlled (laughter).

Lesley 09:53

Exactly.

Helen 09:59

Anonymous how're you doing?

Anonymous 10:05

Okay, I wasn't doing all that great this morning, I was having real trouble getting out of bed and had a one of those sore heads that starts from the moment you get out of bed. But I think it's almost away at the moment. I have accepted the fact that I pretty much need to sit downstairs for—in the bus. I'm thinking about that because the Joy's—what Joy said. For many reasons, including non-mask discipline upstairs, my anxiety getting in the way. But also, my fibromyalgia, which I'm also going to see the rheumatologist, I have to get to the blooming Stonehouse from East Kilbride on public transport. But anyway, the reason I am saying about sitting downstairs in the bus, in order to be able to sit downstairs on the bus, I got myself a hidden disabilities lanyard, plus a wee card. I mostly hide this bit because it's about like my Asperger's and my dyslexia and stuff. But I do have the stairs being an issue because they are but also slightly more controversial, might be the purchase of a walking stick from Cancer Research, so they at least get the money for it. But I have found very useful. Like after cleaning the Library. There's a wee hill, a wee tiny hill to climb after the bus stop. But what do you call that thing? The stick comes in very useful to get back up that and also the like—yesterday, when I went to out the stairs to leave my flat were not the easiest. So, the stick came in very useful then also it tends to be very useful to get up off couch. So it is sort of needed, as well as being a security blanket to stop judgmental people from deciding that I don't need to be downstairs on the bus. But to make it very clear so that I don't have to have any—I sit with it like this between my knees. So, it's very obvious. Because I just don't want anyone to ask me or anything. That was actually an [unintelligible] sorry.

Helen 12:40

That sounds like, it sounds like it's being useful. Yeah, from a number of perspectives. I remember when my mum got a walking stick and has it similar to yours, it's that black with the kind of flower floral pattern on. She used to always say that she was going to hit people with it. That she didn't—that she thought were being rude. I think that was more of a psychological boost rather than what she was actually going to do with it in reality, but I know what you mean about a kind of prop that makes you feel—

Anonymous 13:15

Yeah, I'm not in any hurry to tell my parents about it or the hidden disability card because I think they may have well, thoughts about it. They may think I'm just giving in. But also, I think it might make me look a bit weird—a bit weak. But if it does make me look weak and someone tries to attack me then they're getting hit over the head with the walking stick.

Helen 13:43

F have you got anything you'd like to share? How're you doing today?

F 13:49

I feel all right, but I kind of had a long weekend like just relaxing and enjoying sunshine. So, it still feels a bit like Monday to me today. But as far as like having the walking stick, like it's something I've been contemplating for a while because I suffer with fibromyalgia as well. And mobility and balance are an issue for me, and they never have been before. But I think I might be a liability if I had the stick. Because I think I would be wanting to use it on people who annoyed me. It depends ADHD makes impulse control very difficult. So, like I'm really tongue in cheek while I'm saying this. But I think that's why I don't want to rush to get the stick just in case, I start tripping folk up with it and things like that. Poking them in the back when they go past me. Because I can imagine the type of looks that you've been receiving Anonymous, I get them too. It's difficult. But yeah, this week, I had the last couple of weeks be concentrating on my health actually trying to get out for a bit more physical exercise to build up a bit of muscle strength again. And I've realised like how much—I don't want to see damage, but I do feel that my, my health definitely got worse during lockdown last year. And it had been harder to manage the fibromyalgia because of that. So yeah, I've spent quite a bit of time walking in the last few weeks. And even though the sunshine is not the best for me, just been trying to go out later in the day, like totally covered up still with sun cream on as well. And drinking lots of water not going too far. But just trying to make moving my body feel more normal again. Because I think when we've had so many breaks in the lockdown last year and being forced to stay indoors for so long, I noticed like sensations like walking or even sitting on the bus. They just felt so strange. So, I don't know if anyone else's kind of notice stuff like that as well. Or if it was just me, but yeah, I've been very much in my body the last few weeks, but I feel okay for that as well. Although it's been challenging at times, frustrating and upsetting. So yeah, I'm doing all right. And the sunshine is good. And I'm glad the temperatures come down a little bit because the heat was good, but it was ridiculous inside my house. It was roasting. I could have been in a sauna just sitting in the living room. But yeah, thanks for asking.

Helen 16:21

Okay, thanks, F. Yeah, it has been really sticky hot hasn't it, not so used to it myself. But it's a bit cooler. Now that breezes blowing through. I was just messaging with Fatima there, she's

picking her son up again. So, she hopes to join us later on. But she may not be able to work it out. So, it's kind of apt, there's been some chatter about bodies. That's our topic for this week. So, we can pick up on that. In our kind of discussion circle. I went to an event recently, and somebody said, before she started, we were playing a game, she said, 'imagine sitting—we're all sitting in a circle, I thought it was so nice to kind of try and get around the kind of Zoom screen squares that I am finding a little bit frustrating, now it would be very nice to be in a room with you all. But I guess it's just not quite the way it's going to be at the moment. But I suppose on that note, thanks for everyone who took part in the Doodle poll to try and find a time that we could meet in reality, although there weren't a huge of amount of crossovers on the dates, that people could make it but I think there was four folks that could make it on Friday the 25th of June. So, there was Lesley and then Sarah and Pauline and Dorothy. I know Joy, you're away that week completely. And F you're away and you as well, towards the end of the week.

F 18:12

Well, I was until Bojo [Boris Johnson] decided to extend their lockdown by four weeks. So that's actually been postponed, but I'm not sure if there's something else I need to do on that day. So, I need to get back to you. But yeah, I was wondering what days would actually more likely to be on for our trip?

Helen 18:30

Yeah, Friday the 25th we've got a hit of four people plus me. So that's five. Oh Anonymous, because you were worried about the group's—the colour system, weren't you in the Library?

Anonymous 18:41

Yeah, there was an instance when people from one bubble were going to be in on a day of other bubble. Sorry, if that makes sense. And they said we'll stay away from you guys, and we'll not come into the office and stuff. So, it might be possible in I do have something else on at that time that I like to go to.

Helen 19:05

Uh huh.

Anonymous 19:06

I might be able to—well, it's supposed to be a workshop rather than anything else. So, it's supposed to be miss-able. So, if you'll let me know the details, that would be good. And I was reluctant to go with any of the three til five ones because that would mean getting on the bus when all the office—Well, shop workers and stuff and then it would be even more stressed for space on the bus and it wouldn't be at all good.

Helen 19:32

Yeah, that's totally understandable trying to kind of keep away from the ebbs and flows of people. Yeah, because obviously to get to get to a place it's much more time consuming than clicking are kind of start button on our computers. It's quite a kind of getting back to used to kind of work in it all the timing to get to get places So yeah, I'll send you the details Anonymous but yeah, I think Friday the 25th 10 to 12 seemed like the time that most people

could go. There was yourself Anonymous and Fatima, who'd both said that you're free on Monday, the 21st at 10 till 12. So, we could do two small intimate meetups. But I can maybe communicate with you by email as well.

F 20:28

I was gonna say I could do the 21st for sure. I know that yeah, I just hadn't—because I didn't have which dates, I wasn't free. I didn't want to even give you the ones I was yet sorry. I'm not very organised at the moment.

Helen 20:43

It feels like a challenge. I'm constantly, like, what day, date, week! Yeah.

F 20:50

Glad I'm not alone.

Helen 20:51

Okay, well, let's go for two small meetups then does that if that's good with you, Anonymous and like, Anonymous, Fatima and F can meet on Monday 10 to 12. And then Lesley, Sarah, Pauline, Dorothy and myself on Friday. That sounds fun. Okay, cool. So, we're gonna go see the Ingrid Pollard exhibition that's on in the Library, which I think will be interesting in some of the things that we've been thinking about and some of the materials have been looking at. And then there is a billboard that's out on Gallowgate that we can go and see by the Guerrilla Girls. There's—the Women's Library are doing an event on Saturday, the 26th of June with the Guerrilla Girls in the evening, eight till 9.30. And I put that up on the Padlet. So, if people want to go along to that, it's a kind of performative lecture, I think. And then, at the end, there's time for questions. And the Library have said that if our group wants to pose a question to the Guerrilla Girls, we can be one of the chosen questions that go forward. So perhaps when we go and see the billboard, we can kind of see if it brings to mind any particular questions that we might want to ask them. So that's quite exciting.

F 22:19

That's very exciting. Sorry, I'm trying to contain myself right now. That's awesome.

Helen 22:25

I don't know what we can ask them. But yeah, it's exciting that we get to ask these—Does everybody know the Guerrilla Girls are kind of like an anonymous art collective that have been going since the '80s, who've managed—well, as far—as to my awareness to remain anonymous, but they take on the guise of these kind of famous artists from history. And they wear their gorilla masks. No one really knows who they are. But they're pretty cool. I am a fan. Definitely. It's quite exciting. Although I'm away of my camping holiday on Saturday, the 26th. So, I don't know if I'll actually even be able to make it to the event. But we'll see what campsite Wi Fi is like (laughter). I'm not sure in the far north of Scotland. But it's kind of funny now with all these events that I suppose it is a possibility that you could dial in from Clachtoll campsite. But yeah, I guess I have to just see. I put some other events up on the Padlet page, because it feels like there's quite a lot of interesting things happening in the Women's Library and other places as well. I was going to— Fatima is

leading an event later in the week, I was going to get her to chat to you about that. But she's not here unfortunately. I don't know if any of you have been to the Seeing Things, events that the Women's Library do. But they're really nice way of like visiting cultural exhibitions or events and things. Fatima is hosting one on I think it's on Thursday afternoon, looking at the work of artists, Ruth Ewan, which should be interesting. I could put I've actually not put that specific one up on the Padlet I could do that. Okie dokie is well, time's speeding on as ever. I'm always surprised how quickly two hours passes. But so, if we do, I kind of consciousness-raising circle, and then after that we'll kind of—we were doing some creative things last time and we can kind of pick up on some of those and talk about how we might take them forward and maybe even share some things that somebody—Joy has very kindly sent me a couple of things. So, I entered our names into the random generator, and I can put those in the chat. Would people like me to put the prompts for the body's discussion in the chat? Or have you kind of—feel like you've got those too hand? Okay.

F 25:14

I don't know, I was gonna ask for them. But it might be a lot on the screen. I'm not sure whatever's easiest

Helen 25:21

I'll paste them in. And then I'll put the names underneath it so that the names don't disappear. Yeah, Fatima was due to be first, but it's changed to you now F. So, you might appreciate them being in the chat.

F 25:39

Definitely. Thanks.

Helen 25:42

I know like, yeah, I do use this random generator online. Because sometimes I'm like, 'oh, well, maybe that would be better, if so and so went first and I went last' and to save any biases that I might bring. I put them into a random generator. It's not letting me copy and paste. You can see my tech finesse? Hmm, I'm not—I've not had that before in the chat. Can anybody put anything in the chat? Is it just me that can't paste something in? Oh, yeah, that's working, isn't it? I'll put them see if it'll let me do the names. Maybe it's just too much. Ah right. Yes, too much info in one go. Had to put it in sections F.

F 26:34

Probably the—Yeah, I'm not going to do any of that stuff. Anyway, that first lot. I can't be bothered go that far back (laughter). That's fine. Even that's enough for me I know.

Helen 26:48

There's a lot of questions there and, or as ever. Answer whichever ones you would like, or ignore them entirely, it's up to you what you would like to talk about and share. And when you are finished, pass to the next person on the list. Okay, over to you F.

Anonymous 27:08

Is the list of people there? Sorry.

F 27:13

You just need to scroll up. Sorry, Anonymous.

Helen 27:16

I'll put it again. At the bottom.

F 27:17

Yes.

Helen 27:18

It disappeared after the questions. Okay.

F 27:25

So yeah, I'm not going to go as far back as puberty that was so long ago, quite traumatic. I'd rather not go back to that. And I think as I approached turning 40, I did start to notice differences in my body as a woman. And just these things that you hear of older women always talking about that sound mysterious, and you're like, 'this happens to you and you get older?' Some things like that started happening. But as I was going to the GP, they kept telling me that I was too young to be in menopause or perimenopause. So, I had to get a bunch of tests done. And that's actually when the fibromyalgia was eventually diagnosed. So that's been quite interesting. So whatever relationship I have with my body before, it is very different now. And I've had to—even though I did look after my body reasonably well, up until that point, I've had to really spend a lot of time researching and trying to learn exactly what it is that my body needs. Some of it I can work out just by trial and error or listening to my actual body. But some of it I've had to read about, because doctors don't tell you what you need to know about these complicated, chronic ill health conditions. So that had been quite difficult in places. But I would say I'm at a much better place with all of that now. But it was this last section of questions that did really interest me about healthcare. And whether or not I think I've been treated differently, because I'm a woman, I would say for sure. And it was actually a female GP that diagnosed the fibromyalgia that had me and her care and was making me get the tests done. When I had gone to any of the male GPs and the same surgery, they're really not interested in what you're saying to them as a woman. They very much wouldn't even let me finish a sentence when I was trying to explain what the problem was. So, I'm not really sure how they could—how they could be so sure that they know what was going on with my body. And I feel very much treated as if I was like, some neurotic or something like that, for having levels of self-awareness of my body. It's quite bizarre. I definitely can see a difference between male and female doctors, even in just the way that they speak to you when you're a woman who's trying to access healthcare. It's quite interesting. So no, I don't think that doctors understood my problems fully. And I haven't really had confidence in their treatment either. I'm trying to think—the times I've been to see the gynaecologists, they would always usually the nicest doctors that I've seen throughout my life. And anyone else that I've had to deal with has usually been a much more difficult situation. It's much harder to build rapport with other doctors, I think, probably gynaecologists and sexual health and reproductive health doctors, I would say, their bedside manner has to be very different from the outset. Because it's such an intimate areas of your body that you're discussing, never even mind letting them see it. And I think that if they don't work to build that rapport from the minute, they meet you, then I would

imagine you're not going to find it necessarily easy to try and communicate what your issues are. And so yeah, those have all been kind of interesting experiences. And the other time that I met doctors who were that nice, was actually, my had to go for a colonoscopy last year, because of my IBS. And the doctors, they've also got a really amazing bedside manner. And the nurses, everybody its—I find it really interesting how there can be these differences within healthcare. That just because you're speaking to people from another department, they're actually so much nicer to you. I find GPs to be awfully rude and dismissive, I would say. So however—'have you felt differently about your body at different times in my life?' Yes, very much. So. I kind of regret that I didn't treasure a wee bit more, when I was younger, and appreciate it just a little bit more. I've always been in awe at the things our bodies can do, and how they keep us going all the time. I find it to be such an amazing relationship. So although I've kind of looked after my body at points, I would say it wasn't quite enough, either. Now I feel very appreciative of my body. And that despite the several chronic health conditions I've got, I do still manage to have some standard of life. I wouldn't say it's great, but it's definitely not as bad as it could be. And I am noticing though ageing happening in my body, and trying not to be in denial about it, and just age gracefully, I think. Because as women, I would say in our society, I don't feel that we're allowed to just age gracefully, although it's probably better now than it ever has been. So, I'm not going to dye my hair to cover my grey hairs. I've made the decision; I will just let them grow. And but yeah, I'm very glad that my body at least does work when it does work. And a grateful for the chance to maybe try and just get a bit of strength back in again. I'll pass to Joy

Joy 33:10

Thanks F. Yeah, I just finished reading a book, actually, by Bill Bryson, I don't know if everybody knows it called *The Body*. It's not specifically about women, but it was just F saying there, you know, always being amazed about the stuff that the body can do. And that's definitely a book that kind of made me really kind of think, wow, that's just amazing that we can actually do that. And all kinds of stuff that, you know, I didn't know about bodies. So really interesting. And I've also thought I might read a couple of extracts very short ones from this actually, Helen mentioned this last week, I don't if you can see this, *Our Bodies Ourselves*, which is sort of the classic '70s book, I think this is an addition from the '80s, maybe '84 or something like that. And it's I think it's one of those books that's kind of obviously regularly been updated, because probably stuff from the '80s in the '70s—some it reads a bit strangely now, but it's still you know, a great it's a great book, I think written very much from the point of view of women, rather than kind of experts writing about women, it's kind of women writing about women, which is what I really like about it. So yeah, I think in general, the thing I wanted to say, first of all, was that I think in general, my health has been really good. So, I think my probably my experiences of the healthcare system have been different from what F was talking about there, simply because I've never had that much interaction with doctors. Obviously, some, because there's always some. But I don't feel that there's been an awful lot of interaction with doctors and hospitals and things like that, because I've been lucky to generally be in quite good health. And that's something that I kind of—I think I definitely try to sort of be aware of that and to be grateful for that. Because I'm really aware that that's not everybody's experience. So, I think sometimes when we are in good health, we can slightly take that for granted, you just get used to the fact that you're in good health and you know, stuff works, and you can do what you want to do, etc. So, for me, it's always been quite important to try to acknowledge that, that I've been

lucky in that way. I think one thing that's been quite important for me in terms of physical health has been sport. Sort of all the way through kind of childhood, adolescence and beyond being physically active always has been quite important. But at the same time, if I think back to maybe adolescence, I wouldn't have said that I was particularly confident in sort of in terms of the body, and I think there was always for me, something going on there a little bit with control and perfectionism. So, whilst at one time—on the one hand, I was, I suppose physically active and did quite a lot of stuff with my body, I wouldn't have said it was there was that kind of physical body confidence, if you like that, that really wasn't there, I don't think. And then thinking about periods, yes, there was a short thing I just wanted to read from *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, and then we're going to sort of say a little bit about myself. So, it says here, 'many of us grew up with little or no knowledge about menstruation. So, we were scared or even embarrassed when our periods started, some of us thought we were dying when we saw our first menstrual blood. Some of us were terrified that a teacher or a boy would notice it. On the other hand, some of us felt inadequate. If we didn't menstruate. We must tell both our sons and our daughters about menstruation so that they can be comfortable and open about it in a way that we were not'. And that's, I think that sort of summed up for me quite well, the whole kind of beginning of that experience, I think my own mother's experience of it probably wasn't great. So, I think the way I remember, her kind of presentation of the whole thing was very much this isn't very nice, but there's nothing you can do about it, just get on with it. I mean, I'm being a bit—that's a bit sort of, that's probably sounds a bit harsh. But that's kind of a little bit what it was like, there was no sort of this is perfect, natural, anything like that, it was kind of a very much, it's a bit of a nuisance, but what can you do, kind of thing, which maybe wasn't the way greatest of starts. I remember it always being a bit of an issue at school as well, even though for me, as I say, much my health was generally good. And I it was never, for me connected with anything like, you know, physical pain or anything like that. It was always that sort of, for example, PE, if you had to go and announce to the PE teacher, that you had your period, for example, and there was always this kind of public thing of, you know, it was kind of everybody there knew, and I think that at that age it was always rather difficult to have to sort of public, you go and announce etc., etc. So, it was always a little bit of a—I think I like that extract says there was an element of kind of shame or embarrassment or something around it, which looking back was not very helpful, could have been so much more just kind of normal, natural, integrated, etc., which wasn't the case at all. I think you're about all that. I think one of the things that's really helped me in terms of being more, becoming more accepting of lots of things around the body is practicing yoga. So, practicing and now teaching yoga, because yoga is very much about being with your body, accepting it how it is accepting, what it can do, excepting what it can't do, accepting that that is going to change over time. So, it's a lot to do with acceptance. And I think that has been quite helpful for me in terms of maybe counter-acting a little bit, that kind of that perfectionism, or that desire for control, which was is kind of also there, I think, in my personality. So that has been good, that kind of sense of you just have to accept certain things and you have to let go of certain things. You can't be constantly, you know, in control of everything. And then thinking about kind of how things have evolved and things how things are for me now. Again, there's just a very short extract here from the book. It says 'even though menopause has been a neutral or positive experience for many women, the physical and emotional changes associated with it are often misunderstood, and mystifying. Since lack of knowledge may easily lead to anxiety, it's not surprising that some women have felt that the worst part

about menopause was that they did not know what to expect or had no resources to refer to'. So, I think one of the things that I regret a little bit is that there's an awful lot of kind of talk about the bad aspects of menopause. Obviously, not denying at all that some women have really difficult experiences. But it seems to me sometimes it's far too much emphasis on the negativity and the hard things and the unpleasant things and the difficult things, etc., etc. For me, it's been, again, obviously, relatively straightforward. I mean, not, you know, nothing's ever, you know, complete, plain sailing, but I definitely don't recognise I definitely don't identify with all the kind of— sometimes really, really negative stuff that you hear in the media, or that read in newspapers about women's experiences of menopause. I don't identify with any of that at all, I think to me, so thinking about the beginning of having periods not being very positive at all, I don't think for me, I think the end of periods is I would say—I wouldn't say I experienced any sadness, I wouldn't say I experienced any relief, because I think those are two experienced—those two emotions that women maybe come—some can have kind of sadness or almost kind of a sense of relief. For me, it was more just like, well, this is the next transition, this is the next kind of thing that's going to happen. And let's to see what happens kind of idea. So, over to you, Lesley.

Lesley 41:44

Thanks Joy. My experiences are very similar to Joy, a lot of what she says resonates with me. My mother just didn't discuss periods with me at all. But I knew what was going to happen. I was aware of that. So, I wasn't surprised when my period started. And I just accepted it obviously told my mother and we got on with it. What I didn't—what I wasn't prepared for was the pain. Once a month, the nausea and the feeling utterly awful. But other than that, I just yeah, that was just nature, that's, you know, that was being a woman, you just this was part of your natural development. In terms of bodily changes and comments from—my comments about it, there was no comment from my peer group, either male or female, because we were all we were all going through different changes. So, there wasn't comparison there competition. But what I did get—I started getting was from adult men, I then became a sex object. And I absolutely detested that they felt they had the right to whistle at me leer me shout at me, make gestures at me come into my space, uninvited. And I just, I felt 'get away'. And it wasn't from it wasn't from my peer group, this was from adult men who saw changes. And I just I thought, 'uurr get off'. Where are you coming from? Anyway, so, with regard to menopause, it was very much like Joy, I really don't associate with women who are negative about it. I went to my GP regarding another medical matter and was going through a number of tests. And she said, 'oh, by the way, you're actually halfway through the menopause'. And I had really none of the symptoms which you hear spoken about and certainly through the second half it was—I guess fortunate not to have really gone through much either, maybe it's because I didn't dwell on it. I just adapted, I guess. I've never felt pressure about body image, ever. I've always gone my own way. I've always had my own look and never felt I had to wear makeup, or I had to have the latest fashion clothes or conform in a certain way to do things that was just never might scene. I was never going to do that with my hair anyway, which is completely untameable. In terms of—just to go back to body image, I liked being—I loved being on the beach in places like Italy and Spain, where you saw all shapes and sizes and people were just being themselves from grandmothers to their daughters or grandchildren. And they just didn't care how they looked they were just there to be with families to enjoy being in the open air and to enjoy you know, an afternoon on the beach and that always struck me as you know,

that's how it should be. You don't—you shouldn't always think oh, but I can't wear a bikini because I'm not a perfect shape or I can't wear a bathing suit because you know I'm I just don't think I look good in it compared to other people. I was never into comparisons and I'm still not into that. And in terms of health care, like Joy I haven't touched hospitals and the health care system a huge amount but where I have, I've always found it very supportive, very caring. My GP is a woman that I'm very close to and at I don't see any gender difference in my experience. But where there is a difference—I did see a difference was in the workplace. The—if you were ill or not feeling well there was a—there was not understanding there about what you might be going through, or any concessions made. The only time I would say my body ever felt different was when I was pregnant. But that's because you've got another person inside you and that is the weirdest feeling in the world. Having somebody else moving inside you. So, I think that's really all we've got to say. So over to you Anonymous.

Anonymous 48:15

Okay, hiya. I regarding puberty, I was at school—Well primary school '80s and high school '90s. So, very late '80s, primary seven we got the people coming to chat to the girls about periods and stuff. So then after that felt like almost straight after that people were all very concerned about periods and who had theirs and who hadn't. So, I—by the time got mine, I certainly felt like I was late but Mum seemed to think—well, many years later mum seemed to think there was—not many years—by the time I'd had my period for a few years, mum didn't think had been particularly late. So probably just normal for my family. Also there seems to be a lot of both comparisons of breasts from both boys and girls, but I was teased about everything. So, what did that matter in my head? So also, when people were talking about shaving their legs and stuff, I had nothing to see really and still don't. So, mum more or less said if you don't start shaving, you probably won't need to. But the other things that I did remember about adult's reaction, I must have had really greasy hair or something because there was stuff about my hair and washing it needing it washed and was, I was rinsing out the shampoo and there was one particular time where I think had been sent out my shower to get me out the way and then when I arrived down with wet hair, Dad went mental want me about how—had I washed my hair and stuff. And I just tried to say, but it's just wet (laughs). But I think something else going on at the same time, so who knows. So, when I got my period, I certainly wasn't surprised it was like it was probably quite pleased to see it. And I don't remember it being sore as—or overly sore as a teenager, but I think I probably had plenty of other things hurting and so it was probably not all that noticeable. Because probably every time I tried to read, I felt ill without these glasses. So, having my period was nothing, different I don't think. Body image. I never felt pressure from my peers because they didn't like me, they teased me. So, what did it matter what they thought? And what did it matter what the press thought because see, they changed their mind every two seconds. But my older sister who'd married and gone to France, and she was only home every so often or came home with her son Michael and stuff. Every time she came home, she tried to be the big sister to me that she obviously wasn't able to be when she was away. And she would be counting my calories and everything. And I was like 'for heaven's sake'. So that didn't help the relationship. But I think now, I feel more pressure about body image. Because like, I was a really clumsy child, so sports and PE were, I was no good at them. And now I'm sore. And I do like my chocolate. I try not to eat too much of unhealthy stuff. But I'm not exactly a slim person. So, with the news always on about obesity and COVID and

needing to tackle the obesity pandemic. Especially when I end up at hospital or doctors with pains in my knees and my legs and stuff. I do expect them to talk about my weight, they don't generally do but I'm always worried about that. I have actually had a different experience with doctors than everyone else here because it was a male doctor that was, that diagnosed my fibromyalgia. Anyway, you know what I mean? And a male doctor that I felt would listen to me. I'm just gonna try and say this, I—the thing about smear tests and stuff often comes up. But the thing is, despite the fact I'm married, I haven't had sex. And it doesn't seem to bother my husband, any more than it bothers me. But it was only this male doctor that I was able to finally say that too. Like when female doctors would just assume, I was like everyone else and try to force me and what's your problem with it? And I would try and say but I don't need it. And they would all—they would be like, extremely surprised and judging me and stuff. But like, I think when I finally said to the male doctor, I said that right the right way by saying I don't really have sex and I certainly don't have it with anyone other than my husband. And he asked like, 'well, did you have it before as well?' And I'm like, 'well, no', so he was like, 'well, yeah, you're at very low risk'. So—and the very fact that you know, I don't want to want anyone else to be anywhere near if I can't deal with my husband being near it, it's not like—it's so I'm sorry. It's not something that I've admitted to the mother-in-law for a start so this is where the whole physically and emotionally about periods how you feel, because I feel like mine have got worse and I do remember one horrendous time sitting with the mother-in-law going on about this one being pregnant and that one being pregnant, oh she's on her third kid or whatever, with my period happening thinking 'well, yeah, no gonna happen'. So, sorry, that was kind of off topic there. So, I'm not sure if I've had the same experience about fibromyalgia and that as F, because I'm not sure if it's just the doctors that I've talked to about it and stuff. Or if it's me and not being able to communicate and stuff and not being able to read up easily on symptoms and things, because although it was the male doctor, my GP that sent me to get tests for whether I might have lupus or not, the blood test I got suggested might. So that's why then I had to get all sorts of other tests and ultrasounds and stuff. And then of course, they showed nothing. And the big thing for lupus is whether you get a butterfly rash on your face, and I don't think I've ever had—have had that. And so, when I got confronted by this horrible consultant, man, he would just assumed I was wasting his time, I had no place being in his presence, and what was I doing wasting his time. And unfortunately, I mentioned I've just been diagnosed with celiac as well. So that made him think that it was just that I wasn't following the celiac diet. So, it might be that research isn't done on something like fibromyalgia and lupus because it's mostly women who experience it. But I'm not going to look into that because it will just get me unnecessarily upset. The other thing was I got not colon—colonoscopy but the other way to diagnose the celiac disease and I think I was one of the last of the morning and people were exhausted and stuff and they certainly weren't overly nice about it. And I think be more or less tried to trick me to get the spray—the numbing, local anaesthetic spray down my throat rather than a general anaesthetic. So that was very different. Sorry, that was again, off topic, because the thing is, I feel like if I wanted to talk about my body, it's not specifically female things that I think of like, I'm a person before I'm a female. Anyway, I'll pass to Helen before I go off on another—

Helen 58:12

Thanks Anonymous. Oh yeah, I don't know. Yeah, I guess I was thinking a little bit about this and thinking about like bodily changes, and how I'd kind of dealt with that in puberty and

think there was a lot of privacy in my upbringing around bodies. I never saw my parents naked. Like, it was a kind of like, adult— there wasn't any kind of shame in children's bodies, but adult bodies were not something that were kind of looked at or saw or were kind of comfortable and familiar around. And I think that kind of, I still feel quite embarrassed about my body a lot of the time, I think, with other adults, but then it's kind of interesting with the kids like, we have a much—in with my kids like we have a much more open body relationship. And I don't have a problem with them seeing me naked and it's quite open and in fact, maybe it's a bit too open. Myrtle sometimes—She thinks that women's nipples look like pom poms and she tries to pinch them. Thinks that's very, very funny (laughs). Yeah, they kind of make comments on my body and notice the difference of my body than their bodies. And I kind of hope that that's a kind of positive way of like, getting them ready as the next generation for the changes that will come, and it is interesting to kind of watch children and how they notice different things. Yeah, I mean, I remember as a kind of young pre-pubescent child kind of being really intrigued by women's breasts. My dad brought a book back from a trip he'd been on and it had these African women with their with bare chested. And I remember like, sneakily taking it to school and kind of illicitly like showing other people in my class like, look, here's some breasts. This is what they look like. It was a kind of mysterious thing. What was I thinking? I lost my thread a bit. Yeah, yeah. So, I suppose I'm trying to embrace bodily changes, but generally feeling a bit embarrassed about them. Body hair, kind of thinking—feeling as an adolescent, I needed to shave my legs to kind of subscribe to kind of bodily images of perfection. I think that were around a lot in the media, I think. I think like Anonymous and I probably was school a similar time it kind of rang true about this kind of like, being talked about periods at school. And then a kind of comparison, like, going on—like, who's got their period. And remember, one girl said, 'oh my period started when I was like very young', and this kind of sense of disbelief. But I think that was interesting, kind of looking back, like I feel—Yeah, I feel kind of mean of not believing people, like kind of this idea of kids making things up. But actually, I think because we were kind of experiencing a more of an opening up of these conversations, but not really able to kind of know how to cope with them. I think I did talk a bit at home with my mum about periods and things, but it was kind of off subject and a bit taboo. So, I think as kind of adolescence, we made up our own way of talking about it, there was probably not that great. I do remember having like parties with girlfriends and us all like stripping off and like comparing our bodies which was probably around the time that maybe somebody brought a little bit of alcohol as well. So, it was probably fueled by a couple of sips of Diamond White or something that we thought this was a good idea. Periods. I did know they were gonna happen. And—but yeah, it was its nice hearing people talk about them. I do remember at school, like when we had swimming, like we had to say if we had our periods because obviously you wouldn't be going—Well, you wouldn't be going swimming, or I remember our PE teacher saying to us because it was, I think she'd caught on that it was maybe a bit of a ruse like some of us were having periods more often to avoid going swimming. And we had a talk about 'well, you know, there's these things called tampons and they allow you to go swimming even when you've got your period'. But yeah, just remember that kind of embarrassment I remember kind of vividly being in the swimming pool and seeing one of my friends sat on the side and just getting that glimpse up her skirt and seeing that her pants were kind of blood stained and that she's obviously like wasn't you know—Yeah, I suppose we all get caught short don't we're not having enough menstrual products with us but that shame of like, sharing that with other people and I know, I didn't feel like I could—I

always remember trying to sneak off to the toilet so nobody would know that I was going to—it was because it was on my period not feeling able to just say 'hey, I'm just going I've got my period I'm off to the toilet'. And I could see that being amplified with other kids but not even feeling able to kind of reach out to them and say 'oh do you know what hey I've got a sanitary towel if you want' but I think conversations are changing and opening up and I feel a little—I've not hit the menopause yet, still got my periods. I do feel there a bit of a bane, but I do have quite heavy periods. I find it quite hard work and I've start going running with one of my pals and I'll be like 'oh god, I can't go running today because I've got my period' and I feel a bit more able to chat about that. I—the kind of most contact I've had with the healthcare system has been when I've been pregnant and kind of postpartum. So, I guess that kind of healthcare is all focused around women's health anyway. So, I don't think that gives me a very kind of—able to judge like whether I'm being treated differently because it is so kind of focused on birthing bodies as it were. And that definitely like was the most—the moment in my life that my relationship with my body changed so much like, as Lesley said, like, the experience of having a wriggling person inside you is just something else. And like that, kind of like, wow, how does the body grow and other body it's quite a kind of amazing phenomenon. I tried to kind of not worry too much about kind of giving birth and things and like, have the confidence that my body would know what to do. But yeah, I had a—what's it called? A forceps delivery with my first one, so maybe it wasn't knowing exactly what to do so well. But then I had a really amazing birth with my second daughter, and a water birth in our living room in our old flat. And that was kind of the most empowering moment of my life, I think, like just kind of going through that process. And being really, really physically aware of all the things that were happening. When I gave birth to my first daughter, it was very clinical, like, I got cut and forceps, and she was pulled out. And then there was a child, and it didn't feel like it really given birth to it. But then I was supposed to be bonding with it. Whereas it was a very physical process when I gave birth to my second child. And that was a really emotional and kind of life changing thing for me, which was yeah, very moving. And then following that, I suppose your body doesn't—it's not yours for a long time. So, I was breastfeeding and like, you're sharing your body and I remember going to kind of like gynaecology clinics and things. And that embarrassment and shame that I might have had around my body before was completely gone because it had become this shared thing. But that did recede after a while I do feel like I've gone back to being slightly embarrassed about like, women's problems or problems down there, or, you know, like, things that we don't talk about so much. I'm not sure if there's anything else that I specifically. Yeah, do you feel that body image is a pressure from society. I try to not shave my legs these days, but I actually feel quite embarrassed about it having quite hairy legs. I didn't ever—if don't need—I liked what Anonymous said, if you don't start shaving, then you don't need to shave, like, because once you start doing it, then they grow back thicker. So, I've got a kind of sport my hairy legs amongst my household but when it becomes the summer months, I kind of feel a bit shy about getting them out. I don't mind my hairy armpits. My sister one time said it was like two sleeping mice my armpits, which I thought was slightly hilarious. But I don't feel embarrassed about that. But hairy legs, I do for some reason. And it's definitely a kind of conditioned thing from society that, you know, a female leg should be kind of smooth and curvaceous thing. Not a kind of hairy little patchy thing, but I think I'm trying to—I'm trying my best to change the way my kids feel about their bodies and not feel embarrassed and things and to acknowledge that all bodies are not perfect. And that, yeah, my younger daughter would didn't want to show—My older

daughter didn't want to wear shorts the other day because she's got a bit of eczema on the back of her leg. And I kind of didn't, and I was like, okay, that's fine. And then I kind of came back to the situation and I thought, oh, no, well, maybe we should just chat about that a bit more. Like it's okay that you know, nobody has got a perfect body and was like, we can put some cream on it to try and make it a bit better but don't expect perfection otherwise, you're—I suppose that's when we start comparing ourselves against other people, isn't it when we demand or expect perfection that I don't accept the lack of perfection. I think that's all I've got to say. Yes, that's everything. Thanks. Will we have a little five-minute break. My clock says it's eight minutes past, shall we break to like quarter past maybe I feel like time speeding on but yeah, quarter past and then we can come and chat about some creative things together.

F 1:10:22

Thanks Helen.

Helen 1:10:23

Okay, thanks. Anonymous and F are you back? Do you want to give a little wave or anything if you are?

F 1:17:45

Yeah, I'm here sorry.

Helen 1:17:51

Anonymous' not quite back yet. We started doing some creative things last time. Oh, there's Anonymous. Oh, that's a good-sized cup of tea.

Anonymous 1:18:12

Was just adding the milk when I heard you asking F, so, hurried back.

Helen 1:18:25

Yeah, so we were doing some creative activities, Lesley, I didn't get a chance to kind of let you know what was in your mysterious pack that arrived. Although as a printmaker, I'm sure you recognise some of the things.

Lesley 1:18:41

I did.

Helen 1:18:45

So, this is the last session that we had planned to meet. In general, and I guess like we've chatted a little bit last time about maybe having a break over the summer. And if people wanted or were able to continue to meet—keep meeting that we could pick up again, meeting in August. It'd be good to know if people generally like obviously, everyone's schedules moving around a bit, but if there's a kind of general feeling that people would like to carry on meeting on a—and whether Tuesday afternoons still work. That would be good. And I did wonder whether people were interested in maybe kind of focusing our creative activities and trying to work towards something specific. Like a kind of public output of

some description, whether that sounds interesting, daunting. I don't know what people think.

Anonymous 1:20:00

And I'm beginning to find—like to begin with when we were doing this these sessions, it's quite freeing in a way. But now, the sharing and that is becoming really quite terror inducing is a bit strong, but not all that much strong. Is there anyway—I think it may be time for me just to stop. But I do really enjoy the creative, bit of it. I don't know if there's any way of doing one without the other.

Helen 1:20:38

Know, that's good to know. That's how you're feeling. Like what do other people feel like? I mean, we've had quite a lot of discussions, and we've covered a quite a lot of the topics on the kind of handbook style thing. We could kind of use the conversations we've got to date to see if we could make some creative things together or—Joy is something you wanted to share?

Joy 1:21:08

Yeah, no, I was just gonna say that I really, I do really enjoy the discussion part, and just listening to everybody else. And the things that everybody else brings to the circle. And I like the fact that it's always very open. I mean, nobody has to speak about anything, but they're not comfortable speaking about so—And I think as well, you did say right at the beginning, if anybody didn't want to speak at all, then it didn't have to. So, I mean, I like that kind of flexibility in that openness, there's no obligation on anybody to speak about certain things, and there's actually no obligation to talk at all. So, I think that's a really good kind of basis for it. And I think your suggestion about having maybe a bit in a way, like a focus for the creative activities sounds really good as well, whether that might be a booklet, or I don't know what you had in mind. But that might be quite a nice way to sort of have a focus of somewhere that we might be aiming to get with the creative aspect of the group. And I would be quite open to continuing. I mean, if other people wanted to, and you want to continue facilitating, I would be very open to continuing because it kind of feels like in the sessions that we've had, we've done quite a lot. But it also feels almost as if we're only really starting somehow. So, I think it would be nice to keep that going in some way.

Helen 1:22:39

Lesley, what are you—What are your thoughts about kind of where we got to where we could go to or?

Lesley 1:22:45

I think we've come quite a long way in terms of building up a dynamic with the group. I mean, there's a huge amount of trust that's been built up. But it is very restrictive on Zoom. And I think the conversation would be very different if we were meeting face-to-face. And I think that isn't—I think that's needed. It'll be interesting to see after a meeting, face-to-face, albeit in two different groups after next Friday, what that does to the dynamic. I'm not sure about—I'm not sure about continuing because I'm not kind of quite sure where—I suppose where you're going to keep—where you're going—what you're—where your journey is Helen for this—and kind of what your timescale is for your PhD.

Helen 1:24:08

(laughs) Yeah, nobody knows that!

Lesley 1:24:09

Never ending!

Helen 1:24:14

Pandemic PhD doesn't seem like the ideal conditions, but hey. Yeah, I don't know if F you want to say anything or whether I could kind of answer some other questions.

F 1:24:37

I've been enjoying being here. I think I'm getting quite a lot out of it. I'm happy to try and work towards some kind of public something of work. But that's probably just because I kind of do that type of stuff anyway, naturally. I think it might be nice, and then coming back to as well, because I do kind of agree with Joy. Although there's been a lot of depth in the discussions, I kind of almost feel a wee bit like this is still only the tip of the iceberg kind of thing or near the start. I don't know. And I do also wonder like how it will be once we've had a wee—like an outing, a road trip, what helps us bring back to the group again.

Lesley 1:25:27

Uh huh.

F 1:25:27

But like I'm easy, I've probably got the least commitments out of anybody is well, so it does mean that I've got more flexibility that way. But again, who knows what's going to be like in August, you know, everything changes so quickly at the moment, because of all this stuff, so. I think I would feel sad if it wasn't continuing. But maybe that's just a selfishness. So, I'm happy to go along with whatever.

Helen 1:25:58

Yeah, I think it would be—we kind of open endedly, started working on some freedom based creative things last time. And I agree with what Lesley says, like the Zoom format, like does feel like it's got its limitations that if we were in a room, and we were kind of looking at things together, it would also bring—

Lesley 1:26:25

I think that would be really good Helen. I think, yeah. I think it's quite brave of you. We're, you know, we're all in different locations. It's not as if it were, you know, we're meeting face-to-face and you're—where, it's much easier to be consensual. You know, you're much more stilted in terms of the way in which obviously, we're doing with circle, everybody's taking their turn, because on Zoom, that's what you've got to do whereas if we were in-person, there would be much more interjection. Uh huh.

Helen 1:26:25

—a different dynamic and a different kind of maybe more intuitive way of working together. But I have to say, like Joy, sent me a photo by email, and then some text in the

post. And it was quite exciting. I was like—but with a question like, how do we bring these together? And so, I started kind of just playing around with things. And that inspired me quite a bit. And I kind of like thought, 'oh, well, we could do this or we could do that. I wonder what colours Joy likes, I wonder if invited her to kind of bring an object into play with these, what that would bring to it'. And I felt like there was quite a bit of mileage that we could kind of get to some kind of resolution that's maybe more challenging in the kind of larger group setting. So, whether we kinda adapt the way we're working a little bit and I don't know. But yeah, I still feel there's quite a few things, topics, that'd be great to kind of touch on that we haven't got around to—just looking in the chat, I just noticed that Anonymous had popped something in there. Okay, yeah, I like—the kind of discussion, our kind of circle I do find it quite intense myself. I kind of thought, you know, you'd like read all these things about the researcher and retaining kind of like, distance from the kind of research but I very much felt it was necessary to participate in the discussions. But I find myself getting in all the emotions and different things that kind of both drawing on memory and kind of like, experiences in the present brings up for me and that I do find it quite intense as well Anonymous if that makes you feel any better. And I always have a knot in my stomach before we meet feeling like, 'oh my goodness, what's going to happen? What's going to unfold in this time', but I do really appreciate the kind of openness and the sharing that people have brought to the group and their kind of difference of perspective. I kind of find really, really enriching and I was saying Lesley last week that I've been listening back to previous recordings and like I just find there's so much in there there's so much I've missed even being present in the in the space with everyone and going back and revisiting them and then sharing those with you. I know when were in the session last time, I was putting some of the excerpts of what people have said into the chat and Fatima commented like how she'd never had her words represented back to her and how can have powerful she found that as a kind of—as a reflective way. I suppose when we're dealing with this very personal subject matter then to kind of think like a public event or an exhibition or a booklet or some kind of even performative thing could seem quite intimidating, I suppose the way—when I've done a group in a similar kind of way, we kind of took that personal, like all the voices became a kind of collective that they weren't attributed to one person so that people weren't felt like that kind of exposure, that people might be worried about doing some kind of public exhibition. I was in touch with the Women's Library earlier on to let them know that we're coming for this visit, and also to say, well, could we do something there? And they said, if I put together a little proposal of what we might like to do that they would see if that was possible that we could have some kind of small exhibition or make some kind of publication and have a launch event or some kind of event related to that. I don't know if people feel excited by the prospect of trying to pull things together in that way or pin things down. Anonymous — yeah, you're right, it would be easier to get a sense of consensus wouldn't it.

Lesley 1:32:08

But you'll maybe get that on Friday after you've met people face-to-face.

Helen 1:32:14

Yeah, yeah. Anonymous, you had your hand up?

Anonymous 1:32:17

Yeah. A little bit of insider knowledge here. I'm surprised you didn't hear a sharp and take a breath when you asked about an exhibition because I know that—because all the exhibitions had to get cancelled and everything. There's like, backlog and stuff. So not that I'm saying that we don't do an exhibition and all that, but maybe a small one that could be like just in a corner somewhere rather than taking up the whole, like event space, because I know how stressed people like Katie are about. Sorry, not to like—I don't mean to speak for the Library or anything, I just know there's tension. Oh well not tension. Everyone working very hard to try and make everyone happy.

Helen 1:33:10

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I did get a little bit of a sense that there were lots of things that have been postponed. I don't—is everyone—Lesley, are you familiar with the Women's Library? Do you know the difference kind of parts of it?

Lesley 1:33:23

No, I've never been.

Helen 1:33:25

Oh well, that's exciting in itself.

Lesley 1:33:27

It is, I am looking forward to it. Yeah, I'll need to Google it. Because I'll have it coming by car. I don't know whether it is—I don't want to take the conversation up. I'll Google it.

Helen 1:33:42

I can send details of how to get there and signs when—

Lesley 1:33:45

Yeah, I don't want to get caught in the bus gate. Which is down there. I got a 60 pound fine, last time I was driving through Glasgow because I went in (laughs). Sat Nav took me out the bus gate. What do we call it? Not the High Street before that, you know the at Trongate.

Helen 1:34:02

Right. Okay. Uh huh. Yeah, there is some again, one-way systems around Bridgeton, but it's not too bad, I don't think

Anonymous 1:34:09

The parking is really limited as well, like the car park that you used to have isn't there anymore. Like there was a sort of car park that wasn't an official car park. But now the trade union building's there, too. And the whole street was shut off at one point, but I think that's open now. But in parking is very limited. Sorry.

Lesley 1:34:33

That's okay.

Helen 1:34:36

Yeah, I was thinking—Yeah, I don't know what availability the Women's Library have. But I was thinking of their Community Space upstairs where they have kind of smaller scale exhibitions could be a really nice thing to do. But yes, it's all speculative at the moment.

Anonymous 1:34:56

And I don't really know much about it. I just have heard conversations and stuff, so please do not quote me to someone like Adele.

Lesley 1:35:05

But there's other you know, down at the Briggait, or at the Tramway has got community space as well. I mean, I know there's a lot of pressure on Tramway and whatever. But there are other community spaces that we could also—

Helen 1:35:20

Yeah, definitely. Definitely. So, I think if there's a kind of a feeling of enthusiasm for them, that obviously would be my kind of number one hit to go to the Library because of the kind of link—

Lesley 1:35:21

Yeah, of course—

Helen 1:35:33

—and the relationship there. But we could explore some other things if that didn't seem to work out. But—

Anonymous 1:35:44

Sorry, doing an awful lot of talking. The Library is the place for it, I think that's the best first choice.

Helen 1:35:54

Yeah, no, I agree. I think it's got all the different aspects that we've kind of been covering hasn't, it'd be, it'd be good, but okay, well, I can pursue that with my administrative head on. And maybe it'd be nice to just kind of see how the work unfolds as to whether making a little kind of publication would suit the format of what we're doing, or to kind of work on some larger kind of print works. Yeah, we can see how it evolves as just mind going off in different directions. I don't know if people—we've got 35 minutes left. Oh, yeah, thought we could do some summing up. It's amazing how the time goes, isn't it? We could have a little look at the things that Joy sent me if people would like to and if Joy felt happy about that. Just as a kind of an approach to kind of looking at things together.

Joy 1:37:14

Yeah, I think I'm, I kind of have ideas about things, but I'm not very good at the actual realisation of them, shall we say? The actual creative side, which is why Helen is kind of very kindly having some more creative ideas about how they might actually, well, whether they might actually go together in some way. Because I don't know about all that kind of, you know, putting things together not very good at all that.

Helen 1:37:43

Yeah, I think that's kind of the amazing thing about I guess, being an artist in 2021. There's so many different ways that you can approach things and I think we'll start to draw out if we carry on working like this, like what people can bring and what their strengths are and what people enjoy doing. And then that'll be a range of different things, depending on different people, and maybe we can fuse some of those together. Or maybe that's pushing things too far. And yeah, I think I think we'll get more of a sentence if people start contributing things and then we can kind of see where we're going. And Anonymous?

Anonymous 1:38:30

May I show a few things after we've seen Joy's?

Helen 1:38:33

Oh, yeah, that'd be great. That'd be really good. Okay, right, let me open them up. My computer is telling me that it's struggling a little bit so I'm hoping that being on Zoom and opening up—other programmes will not freeze up and yeah, I don't know. I don't know what happens if the host of a meeting's computer crashes, but hopefully we won't need to find out.

Lesley 1:39:10

We break up into little pieces go off into the ether (laughter).

Anonymous 1:39:16

I think Zoom tends to choose someone else to make host so maybe the next person who joined the meeting. But I don't know (laughs).

Helen 1:39:23

Yeah. Well, we'll give it a go. I'll open something. Right, screenshare, where's that? Okay, so I don't know Joy, do you want to tell us about this picture?

Joy 1:39:48

Yeah, this is, this is a picture of my sister sent me one of my sisters sent me a whole load of photos that she'd scanned. So, this is from the left there, there's my mum. And then there's my maternal grandmother, and then my younger sister, and then that's me sitting in the middle. And then my eldest sister at the end there with the might be able to see the dog, the family dog between her feet. And they're looking like he's kind of not really with us, perhaps is my brother (laughter) kind of very kind of coolly pretending he doesn't know these females probably. And then the person, of course, who took the photo, we don't have any photos of him, it's my dad, he took all the photos. So, you tend—we do have a few photos of him, but they're quite rare. Because he tended to be doing the photography. And I don't know if this would have been one that he printed himself, because he got quite into photography. And he used to actually print his own black and white photos, he had his own, you know, she set up a, you know—all his gear in a bedroom and stuff and used to actually print them. So, this is, yeah, we've been living abroad, and we came back. And this is kind of in the—somewhere in the north of England, I can't quite remember where it was. But somewhere in the north of England, my grandmother lived in the Northeast of England. And we'd obviously been on a visit to her and gone somewhere with her. So, it just kind of

seemed like an interesting photo for the generations of kind of mother, daughter's grandmother, etc. I wondered about clipping it and maybe just having my mum and my grandma, but Helen was thinking that maybe it might work as a, you know, complete photo, as it were.

Helen 1:41:41

Yeah, I did try a few crops on it. I forget that you can all see my screen when I start looking around at different things. That's just the older generations. And then you sent me this text that you'd handwritten out.

Joy 1:42:12

Yeah. How did that come out? Did it look was it legible? Was it not too kind of messy or—

Helen 1:42:18

No, I mean, there is I've scanned it in. Can people read that?

Lesley 1:42:25

I'm not seeing it.

Helen 1:42:27

No. I'm only seeing the photograph. Oh, right. Sorry.

Lesley 1:42:31

You're not clicked on it? I don't think.

Helen 1:42:35

Let me try again.

Lesley 1:42:41

Yeah.

Joy 1:42:42

There we are yeah.

Helen 1:42:46

Do you want to read Joy?

Joy 1:42:48

So, 'for my grandmother, marriage was an expectation. For my mother, marriage was an escape. For me, marriage was unthinkable. For my grandmother studying was unthinkable, for my mother studying would have been an escape. For me studying was an expectation'. I was just the kind of the differences—

Lesley 1:43:11

Good grief.

Joy 1:43:11

—between generations and how it has been such a long [unintelligible] I think between how it was for my grandmother, and then through even to her daughter, and then obviously to her granddaughters. It's changed such a lot. Lots of things have changed. But those are two particular things that really stood out for me as having really changed massively in that time.

Helen 1:43:36

Yeah, I would say that that's something that seems to be coming out of the discussions, isn't it the kind of the generational shifts. And while we're moving forwards and what might it be like for subsequent generations. I just had to play around with them in an application that lets you kind of change the colours and all that kind of thing that I would maybe do when trying to prepare them for the risos to see what different things look like and that was only for kind of a short amount of time before we met this afternoon. Let's see. It's opened. The spinning wheel of struggle. So just kind of thinking, you know, about starting with a picture. And then you could add some of these kind of hand-drawn things that we talked about, adding the text in, kind of shapes. Yeah, Joy's text actually, it just made me think about, let me open another picture. My mum had sent me a picture from her kitchen not that long ago. That one. My daughter had sent her the—this little note to granny. And she'd made this kind of rainbow tissue artwork. And my mum sent an email saying that she'd really enjoyed receiving this and she really liked having this—I think she already had this Matisse artwork up on her notice board. And I just really liked the way that all the things interrelated together and it kind of made me think when Joy sent me the things about kind of notice boards and like bringing together different elements. And I suppose I was kind of looking at these little coloured shapes, thinking about kind of post-it notes or different kinds of things like that, and how we bring together different texts and images and what that brings to a conversation, both in terms of the explicit content, the writing, but how shapes and colours can interact as well to bring something else to a kind of dialogue as well. So I think that's a kind of interesting thing that we could try and do with some of the kind of creative outputs that bringing a kind of depth to some of the discussions that we've been having. So, Anonymous, would you like to show us something? Do you just want to hold things up? Or how could I make it so that you can share your screen—

Anonymous 1:47:19

It's okay—

Helen 1:47:20

oh you've got them in reality—

Anonymous 1:47:22

—things I've got here. So, you'll probably remember that I'd done that and then realised that was not any good for what you were needing in the various layers and had had this just sort of ripples on one of the pieces of acetate or whatever you sent me. I managed to clean that off even though it was quite difficult by the time I got to cleaning it off. So, I'd be able to use it again. But I was just sort of playing with the idea of freedom. I wasn't trying to make anything for you to use yet, but I wonder if this'll—yeah, this is what I was playing—I made this sort of collage thing.

Helen 1:48:03

That's got some—

Anonymous 1:48:06

Sorry?

Helen 1:48:07

That's got some great colours and layers and different things going on.

Anonymous 1:48:11

It's in this poly-pocket because I—from Open the Door I did a sort of concrete poetry thing, but I had obviously the picture round the other way so that—and I used things I've got—peel off pens on the poly-pocket so I didn't waste your nice acetate. This is a sort of happy accident thing that happened. You know how those—Sorry, bathmat things that you stick on the bath so that you can get out easily? I get the two-pound ones from Asda, and this fell out but as did I'm more or less so the sort of eye shapes, because of the way the poppers had been. I wondered if I could get a photocopy of this, so it was more monochrome. Because this is like the opposite of freedom to me if you know what I mean. Everyone looking at me and stuff. And the other wee sort of thing that I've done when I did this straight after our meeting last time when I was thinking about how to get clear acetate without using yours. I made this with this sort of jotters stuff that you can cover jotters with I think is often called. And I think that I've got a thing about windows and freedom I think possibly because of the Zarina Hashmi that we've done as part of Open the Door as well because she's got artworks to do with windows. One other sort of related but not related thing. I noticed in the excerpts that you said that somebody had talked about freedom and, being outside and feeling the elements and stuff. It's funny when I read that, I think that's when I feel least free when I'm at home, and nothing's interfering with me. Nothing's touching me, nothing's—Well, other than Anthony, cuddling me. That's comforting. Like if nothing hurting me or being sensory overload, that's when I feel free. Which is strange.

Helen 1:50:41

Thanks Anonymous, they look really great. In fact, your kind of window shaped has reminding me that when I was starting to look at some of Joy's things, I was thinking, oh, yeah, I wonder what a kind of, like outlining kind of almost the kind of diagrammatical shape might look—mixing with the different things. So, I think if people just want to start sending me things, and then I can, I could definitely scan those eyes in and turn them into a digital file that we could then play around with. And I really like your kind of seeing that link between those, I've been thinking about those stick-on non-slip mats quite a bit, because we're trying to kind of redo one of my bathrooms so that my mum can come and stay and just thinking about those matts and how useful they are. But they've got such a specific look to them, haven't they, with all those little suckers on them? I kind of like the way that people's thinking is going off. I suppose that's why I enjoy being an artist kind of like starting at one point and then seeing how—what that sparks in your thinking, and if there is a kind of link between those things. So do people feel like that, if we carry on thinking about freedom, and people have got those materials over the summer, they can happily do some kind of creative things. I guess Leslie, you weren't here last time. But we were kind of talking about creating things in the layers in those different kinds of acetates. And there's a true-grain film that's got that kind of like, slightly rough tooth on it that you can kind of do

painterly effects on and the kind of acetate your type of material keeps that painterly, liquid-y quality. That we could start sharing some things together. I could put them up on the Padlet. And we could kind of see where we were come August, whether they were kind of—whether I've hooked us an exhibition. And whether we've got some obligations that we're working towards, a public output, and see where we wanted to have another discussion around.

Lesley 1:53:24

Sounds like a plan Helen.

Helen 1:53:26

It does. F if you've got any—I know you're often working away on creative things. Is there anything that seeing a few of those things brought up for you?

F 1:53:41

I had started, I've still not finished it, but I've pulled it out today and used one of the prints that you'd sent me in the original materials pack that we all got at the start. And I had been copying that out on to a sheet of acetate. Because I thought that might be quite a nice background to have some words over it. I'm not really sure I kind of work in this layered way anyway, it's intuitive for me. So that gives me a lot of flexibility. I suppose it's been some similar things that other people have shown. The drawing that I did show last week, I've still got that I was looking at that again. And it was just like really the word freedom in the middle with all these wavy lines often, I suppose, but they like filled the page. And then I had cut some dark circles from the black card that you'd sent as well. And I thought maybe in the dark circles that were on what I've created, like short phrases. I could maybe write some short phrases from the excerpts on in them that was just an idea. But yeah, I'm like—I can slot in easily with what everyone else feels comfortable doing. That's not a problem. I really like—I like that layered way of working. I don't know why. But when I started to learn stencil art, it just spoke to me a lot. I don't know if maybe that's just naturally how my brain kind of operates in this layered way. But yeah, I quite like the possibilities that everybody's like, put up so far, it's really nice to see other people's work as well. And like, what the discussions have inspired in them.

Helen 1:55:36

Yeah, I guess like the layering does seem like a kind of way that a collaborative thing could come together. But I guess we'll just see; I think we don't necessarily need to force it to be one thing or another. I think we could go—Yeah, see where things take us see what sparks things and share those between us and kind of see what they suggest to other people as well. Because yeah, yeah, no, your envelope Joy arrived yesterday, but I didn't open it until this afternoon. And then yeah, I was thinking, 'oh, right, oh, yes, I made an artwork, one time that had like vinyl letters on—it was a print that was framed. And then I had like, just some of those plastic vinyl letters cut. And I stuck that on the glass. And that was a kind of nice way of trying to kind of integrate different things on different planes, which suggests kind of different periods of time and things interacting in different ways, depending on how you're looking at them. So yeah, I got my brain firing off in all different directions, which was kind of excited me that I think we could do something really exciting together. But we will have to let it unfold in the time as it comes, I think.

F 1:57:04

I was gonna say, sorry, I was gonna say sometimes it's good to let the creative juices ruminate for a little while. And I think it helps whatever you're doing unfold in that natural way that you're talking about.

Helen 1:57:18

Yeah, so maybe we're perfectly poised for a kind of little pause in our meetings to kind of let some of these things digest and I'll keep putting things up on the Padlet. We're going to have the meeting in real life with a few of us, hopefully next week. And see where things go from there. Anything anybody else wants to—

Anonymous 1:57:46

Sorry, I've just heard a thought Helen are you going to arrange with the Library for—what would we say— special access on Monday?

Helen 1:57:59

I have been in touch with the Library to let them know that we're thinking to—that we're planning to come. What you thinking?

Anonymous 1:58:09

We're not usually open to the public on Monday.

Helen 1:58:11

Ah right, oh, yes, of course. I'd kind of said to Caroline about Friday, but it wasn't until—Yes. Okay. So the Monday that is maybe with a question mark. So, I will get back to Caroline and see whether that is—

Anonymous 1:58:27

Like we've had—like on Monday there, I don't think this is secret. We had people but in filming. So, it's probably possible just you probably need an extra bit of organising or something.

Helen 1:58:43

Yes, no, that's very good. Yeah, I've totally forgotten that the Library wasn't open on a Monday. So, I will email her just now to see if we can arrange that. And I'll email everyone the details. And hopefully, we can have a little get together of some kind. I think that'd be great. Okay, I know that people need to be a way to get to things at five o'clock, sharply. So, I'll say our farewells unless there's anything else?

Joy 1:59:19

I was just gonna say before we finish that we kind of mentioned about the disadvantage of being on Zoom, but I thought it was really, it was a good point that Anonymous made there in a chat about sometimes Zoom is a good way. I think there are things that can happen on Zoom and people can say things and interact in ways when they're not actually in the room with people differently. So that's just to kind of put in a bit of a word for Zoom, which I know is not in many ways, it's not always ideal, but it does have other aspects that kind of brings

out things that wouldn't come out if you're in a room together. I kind of appreciate that aspect of it quite a lot, so—

Helen 2:00:00

Yeah.

Joy 2:00:03

Thank you, Helen. It's been good and hopefully see you again. Maybe sometime later in the summer then maybe in August.

Helen 2:00:11

Yeah, that'd be great. Well have a lovely holiday Joy. Joy's off the Western Isles.

Joy 2:00:17

Yes, the Western Isles. Yes, later in the week. So, looking forward to it. Bit of different scenery and yeah, should be should be good. But we'll see you hopefully again, on Zoom or in real life, maybe something.

Helen 2:00:34

All right everyone. Thanks so much for your input.

Lesley 2:00:39

See you on Friday. Take care bye-bye.

APPENDIX 11: TALK TRANSCRIPT

Consciously Rising: Artist's Talk

Glasgow Women's Library

Saturday 5 February 2022

SPEAKERS

Lesley, Helen, Anonymous, F, Joy

F 06:58

Okay, hello, I'm F and on behalf of the Consciously Rising group I'd like to give you a very warm welcome to Glasgow Woman's Library, and our talk about our group show. And we're joined by our other group members Anonymous at the far end, Helen in the middle there. Just to my right here is Leslie, and Joy is just over here. Today is an opportunity for us to go into a bit more depth about the exhibition, the group workings and creative process. And to introduce to you our newest zine that's been created to accompany the exhibition. It is also an opportunity for you to ask questions, to interact with one of the works, mainly our amazing activist style poster, and to have a chance to look at the works upstairs as well. You'll hear from other members about their own experiences and reflections from Helen about different aspects of the project. And you will get to listen to some of the poetry that has been written during the project's duration. Hopefully, you'll all enjoy yourselves, and have a moment to think about how the works make you feel in regards to womanhood and our place within the society. I invite you all to laugh with us, to cry with us and to recognise that fire burning in your belly as we collectively hold each other gently and consciously rise together. Thank you.

Helen 08:45

I'm just gonna quickly introduce an activity that you've got. You'll see to your feet you've all got a copy of our zine, a few post-its and a pen. We're going to use the post it notes and like a little pause throughout whilst we're doing the talk. So, you'll hear from different members of the group and we would love to hear any questions that you've got in the pauses when you can write something down. We have a question and answer section at the end so they can feed into that and it will be a chance to interact with our poster as well. [unintelligible]. So, in our first section—I'm not keeping up with my slides, new slide. So that's the image that's inside the centre of your zine on your seat. Okay, so I'm going to introduce—I'm Helen his project is part of my PhD research that I'm doing at Glasgow School of Art and it comes from a really deep-seated interest in the feminist process of consciousness-raising. So, I'm going to give you a bit of a background about consciousness-raising. It is something who may well be familiar with and some of may have read the information about it that accompanies that accompanies the exhibition, but I'm just going to go into a little bit more detail. So, consciousness-raising was a practice developed in the late 1960s by the Women's Liberation Movement. These were women-only groups that met regularly in each other's houses to discuss issues relating to their lives. Going around in a circle, each woman spoke without being interrupted or challenged. This simple practice of opening up a non-judgmental space for women to discover where they were similar to others and where they were different. The aim was that I'm looking collectively at our personal experiences, women reflect on societal issues that will contribute to their oppression as women. The concept the personal is political, was developed in parallel to consciousness raising, and both ideas are interlinked. And it's interesting to note, I think that whilst

the practice of consciousness raising is maybe not so well known anymore, that idea that the personal is political is still very much in our consciousness. Consciousness raising was intended as a grassroots organising and educating tool, and many feminist groups at the time produced fact sheets and newsletters. A newsletters were a framework for women to follow when setting up their own group. Our group used guidelines from the New York Radical Feminists organising packet in our sessions. And these laid out functions of consciousness raising and supply the seven guidelines that can be followed to try and establish a successful group. And we used these are a group used these as our guiding principles. There were select a topic, go around in a circle, always speak personally specifically, and from your own experience, don't interrupt, never challenge anyone else's experience, try not to do that advice, and sum up. Another critical aspects of the original design of consciousness raising was the undertaking of actions, which were intended to use the summing up part of the sessions to shape what actions that they might undertake together. So to move from talking into action. And these actions would vary from personal gestures to direct political actions. I was introduced to consciousness-raising by our partners mum Pat. Pat's now in her mid 70s. And she'd been in a consciousness-raising group in the mid 70s, when her two kids were young. When she spoke to me about the group, I could see that it had had a significant and meaningful impact on her life at a time that she found personally challenging, and appeared that the group that Pat was part of for around a decade, had offered her access to social and political discourse in her life, where other areas of society had pushed her out from them. The group had helped her navigate through a period of change, and kept her connected with components of society that she felt passionate about. So I became really interested in what a contemporary version of such a group might be able to offer women today. So consciousness raising was intended to mobilise a mass movement of women. And it was widespread in the UK in the US, and I was in 70s. And apparently, in North America there was about 100,000 women in consciousness-raising groups in 1973. The core group of feminists who designed the practice, they were deeply involved in women's liberation movement and viewed themselves as very radical women. And that wasn't just—so consciousness-raising formed part of other activist groups that they were in. The uptake of the practice in the 70s was unprecedented with many women taking up the practice who didn't consider themselves to be radical. It became highly politicised at the time by the mainstream media, and prominence of the Women's Liberation Movement, and it was dismissed often as being petty or not political and the meetings were bitch sessions or forms of navel gazing. So it appears to me that it's just a tactic to kind of undermine the process and bring about its demise. Women were told that the topics they are talking about were banal and not important like housework and childcare. However, these are often the key areas where women are oppressed as a group. Some of the feminists who designed the practice did not see a problem with non-radical women taking it up because they believed it contained a radicalising potential within itself. So perhaps that was the real reason that it was criticised, to prevent a mass uprising of women. So in 2021 when we started our group thinking why is it still a relevant practice that's kind of 50 years on. For me personally, I'm interested in the practice of it as a kind of way of reflecting on my own experience, trying to understand myself better, it can often be hard to do that in an objective way. But I really like kind of the ongoing nature of the groups, it was designed to happen over time, so that that could allow for you to kind of build up a safe space in the group and reflect on your own experience over time. I'm also really interested to learn about other women's lives, and how they've navigated specific experiences within their lives. So being in a diverse group of women that's been really revelatory. I've been a few different manifestations of consciousness raising groups, and I really enjoy that aspect of it. Because you're talking on the same topic with people who are coming from different points in their lives. So you hear from women, of different generations, might allow you to see how conditions have changed over time. On hearing women from different races, different class experience, neurological makeups, different health conditions, just enable to see how society behaves differently toward people with different identities. It's helped me to understand some feminist concepts, which I maybe struggled with a set of abstract ideas, I think, particularly intersectionality seems so apparent

through consciousness raising. Intersectionality for anybody who's not familiar with the term, it's a theory developed by an American feminist, Kimberle Crenshaw, in the 80s, to describe the way that she saw aspects of people's identity, contributing to how they're discriminated against, or oppressed. So for example, gender, race, class, etc. The theory recognises that these levels of discrimination intersect together and can't be treated separately. So they build up in these multiple layers. So recognising, for example, that, the intersection of race and gender, that women of colour experience far greater levels of discrimination than white women and that it's actually a different experience. Being in a consciousness raising group, and perhaps hearing from people who have multiple intersecting identities, it's really helpful to understand how society—it preferences, the white, straight, middle class male doesn't it. So anything away from that, we can kind of start to see how those things build up together. And finally, the action element of consciousness raising has always appealed to me. And the idea that you can carry out active—these actions that can kind of challenge the terms or conditions, and thinking about the idea of collective action and what that can bring. I'm always interested in activism, but I often find it quite hard to integrate into different forms of activism and it doesn't always necessarily be as open to different lifestyles and different ways of being. So the idea of designing our own activism was really appealing to me and communicating some of the things that we'd talked about within the group. So within our exhibition, it kind of says that our actions are the artworks. And so hopefully, that's our way of taking this private conversation that we've all been having over time, into a public forum. To be able to share it with audiences such as yourselves, and we'd be really fascinated to hear how people have found the exhibition, whether we've successfully shared some of that with you. So I'm now going to pass over to Joy, if that's alright Joy. Joy is just going to come up and sit with us and I'll let Joy introduce herself.

Joy 20:11

Okay, can everybody hear me okay? Was that clear for you? Yeah, just put your hand up or shout something if you start to not be able to hear me. So I was really mainly part of the group when we were in the discussion phase and for different reasons I didn't then really take part in the putting together of the exhibition. So it's wonderful to see, the work that's been done over the last few months in the creation of this exhibition. So what Helen suggested was that I might talk a little bit about my experience of a previous consciousness raising group. So I was in a group in the 1980s, sort of a bit later than the period that Helen was talking about the 1970s. So a bit later, really sort of the mid 80s. And a few things sort of struck me about what was very similar in terms of the experience in this group, and what was very what was very different. So some sort of obvious things that were the same. First thing I suppose really to say would be the process. And the process that Helen was talking about having almost a guidebook of things that you cover this is how a group is set up, this is how a group works. You have a topic each week, you go around in a circle, everybody gets to speak, everybody gets listened to there's no challenging, there's no, as much as you can manage to stop yourself fixing other people's problems, no judgement or fixing etc, just listening really, and everybody getting to say what they feel that they need to say. And, of course, other women and their experiences. I mean, that was very, very familiar. This idea that all these women were coming together and talking about their childhood, their education, their parents, their experiences of motherhood, marriage, whatever it might be the different topics that we covered, that was all still very familiar. So to that extent, it felt like a very similar process and a very similar experience. But of course, there were things that were very different. One really obvious thing to say, of course, is that in the previous group, in the 80s, we were all meeting, again as Helen was saying there, in each other's homes, we would be in, you know somebody's house, every time we met a different place. This time, it all happened on Zoom. So of course, we were all at home, we're all in our individual homes, if you like we all finding space and time in our individual homes to meet up with each other. But we didn't quite have that same experience of being together, in a circle, it was a virtual circle, if you like, having said that, it was quite surprising the extent to which it felt like you were with the

other people I certainly did, it sort of felt like we really were sitting in a circle having a cup of tea talking to the other people. Whereas in actual fact, we were all we weren't all even in the same town or the same city, we were in different parts of Scotland. So that sort of circle feel, I think was created very successfully, perhaps because of the fact of everything that we were sharing. And we were able to come together in terms of topics and experiences. And just to say on the Zoom thing, I actually felt that that had in a sense, some advantages, it seemed to me that because some of the topics occasionally can be quite, quite personal, it can be quite difficult to talk about, I think perhaps being on Zoom in your own home gave you some times a sense of security, whereas if you actually had been sitting in a circle with other people, it could have been harder sometimes to share certain things. So and of course on Zoom, you can also switch the camera off if you know if you feel you need to at any point. So I thought that was actually a real advantage to the Zoom approach in a way that you wouldn't get if you if you're coming together in person. Another big thing that was really different this time for me, I thought was the composition of the group. So last time we were all in a sense, very similar. I was a postgraduate student at the time. There was postgraduates and undergraduates, but we were all kind of in that sort of academic phase, if you like. We were all a similar kind of age. I mean, there was a bit of a range, but it wasn't a massive range. This time the composition group was really different. There were more women than there were younger women there were older women. There were women from different backgrounds, there were women who were still studying, there were women who had not never studied really very much. So that was interesting and that was enriching, I think to have that variety. It did seem to me that it was kind of an extra challenge, in a sense, maybe an extra challenge for Helen kind of holding it all together, because the group was—that variety, and that mix made it rich. But it also meant that it was maybe a little bit tricky in terms of people's expectations, what they were coming to the group for, what they thought was, so it was maybe a little bit more—a bit of a mix, a bit more movable, if you like in terms of who felt at ease in the group, who stayed in the group, who came regularly, who didn't. So it kind of had, it was a little bit, maybe a double edged sword, I could kind of see two sides to that. And then yeah, the other thing that was really different was the creative output. The group in the 80s didn't really have any creative aspect to it. The creative side was more what Helen was saying that it was perhaps a little bit more political. So it was things like, maybe going on demonstrations was kind of a link up with anti-nuclear stuff at the time, obviously. I can remember with one other member of the group going down to Greenham Common, everyone remembers Greenham Common right? That was a really big moment. And then doing things like, you know, going around and spray painting ads that we thought were sexist, or whatever putting, you know, comments and stuff on it. So that was not wonderfully creative in the way that you know, this exhibition is, but that was, I suppose the action. So those are the sorts of actions will maybe more obviously, political. I think the exhibition is obviously political as well, and it's own way but it's sort of more boringly political, obviously, political, if you like, in the actions that came out. And that was another thing that I thought was, for me was kind of interesting that, you know, the group in the 80s, it was very clearly focused on you know this is consciousness raising, and you know, that's what we're here for and that's what we're doing. Whereas this current group had very much two sides to it, it had it was the consciousness raising, and then it was bringing it together with something creative, which again, was wonderful. It was a richness, but it was an extra challenge as well, I think it was kind of a challenge there in terms of maybe some people being a little bit more on the consciousness raising, that would certainly be my case, I think, and maybe other people being a little bit more interested in the creative side of things. So, again, you've got that challenge of how do you meld those together? How do you bring them together, and then, you know, obviously managed it really well. But I think that was initially a bit of a challenge. Yeah, and then just one final thing, which is, again, a really obvious thing to say, but which just occurred to me, the other thing that clearly has changed, so massively for me, is myself, the fact that, you know, in the 80s, what I was bringing to the group was what I was then. And in the meantime, a few years passed. In the meantime, I always have done different stuff. I've you know, studied, worked, lived in different countries, had different experiences. And

there are things that I am now able to talk about, simply because of their experience that I've now had, I can now bring them to the group, and even talking about the topics that I would have talked about before, things like family, parents, education, etc. I think my view of them has changed as well, because necessarily because it always does, doesn't it, because over time, we have more experiences of things. Different things impact on us, different things influence us. And we see things slightly differently. So I can probably look back now, where I am now to for example, my experiences of school, my parents, etc. And seeing things differently than I probably would have done when I was in my 20s and maybe a little bit more forgiving, maybe a little bit more perspective on things. Maybe not quite so harsh on certain things at the time. Maybe certain things seemed a little bit more obvious, cut and dried, whereas now I can sort of see actually it's shades of grey and things are a lot more complicated than maybe I thought they were with time. Yeah, so just concluding. Just to say really, I massively enjoyed the experience of once again, being in this consciousness raising group. It was really great for me to again have that experience of using that process. Meeting women I didn't know and sharing with them and what will stay with me I think, also is just how relevant it still is. I mean, it seems that it can seem I think, a little bit like, oh that's stuff that feminists did in 70s, and it's kind of a bit old and whatever. But what I found was it was actually it was still relevant, it was still fresh. It's still resonated with me. And it was still a brilliant experience. So it just goes to show how things that feel like they're part of the past, I think we can kind of resurrect them, you know, get them back out the covers, back out the drawers and look at them again and say, actually, maybe this has still got something for us now, here in the present, I think, definitely, that would be my conclusion. Thank you very much, everybody. And thank you, Helen for and everybody for inviting me to just say a few words. Thank you very much.

F 31:01

Freedom, may mean many things, to many different people. It comforts the trapped, the strong and the brave as equally as the people. What freedom means to you and I, most others may never know. What lies beneath that gives us hope to carry on with the flow. The path seems like a twisting one that's fraught with lots of hurdles, but life and love and what's in between, can feel like such a heavy burden. The lure of light and life and love with all its bells and whistles, feels like a far off distant thing. Just like how like how a mirage glistens. To the birds who to soar, ascend and fly it all seems so easy. But to those who dwell on earth below, freedom may not feel so breezy. Yet to a leaf that twists and falls, then flutters to the ground, freedom may feel like your final hoorah or something much more profound. As breathing free, or thoughts or sounds, sometimes I doubt this reality of being free is just a state of mind. And how can we get clarity. So there are those who deny and blame so they don't have to face the disparity. No rejection here, just peace and love such an open heart is a rarity. When they say to us, just free your mind, how did they know it wasn't open. Yet our eyes can say a million things, without a word ever being spoken. You know that way, that you just know, by breathing in the air? By digging deep and inspecting close what said and isn't there. Freedom seems like it can't be reached with ease or grace or poise. But if you listen with intent, you might hear it roar above the noise.

Helen 33:17

So we're just gonna take a little two minute pause. And if people would like to write some questions on the post it notes it would be really fascinating to hear any reflections that people might have on the idea of consciousness raising or maybe people in the room have got experience of being in groups over time and we're going to collect up the post it notes towards the end kind of feed those view into the questions. But just take a couple of minutes, thank you.

Joy 38:06

So this was just a few words, a few lines that came to me, because one of the aspects I found kind of sparked quite a lot of reflection was the idea of just reflecting on women over the generations and

how things have changed. Obviously, there are lots of things that haven't changed really or haven't changed nearly enough, but some things really have. So these lines just came to me on the back of that that reflection really. For my grandmother, marriage was an expectation. For my mother, marriage was an escape. For me, marriage was unthinkable. For my grandmother studying was unthinkable. For my mother studying would have been an escape. For me studying was an expectation.

Helen 39:33

So now we're just going to have a bit of a discussion about the way that the group formed and different people are going to dip into different parts about how it kind of came together and how we met and things and how the sessions worked themselves. So I would say it was it was part of my PhD research. But as I said, I formed a few consciousness-raising group before and it was interesting to hear Joy say how interesting she found the diversity of our group. I started a group with my peers, which was kind of fascinating, but actually hearing from women with really different experiences—I don't know whether it allows you to be more objective or it just kind of takes you to a different place with understanding [unintelligible]. So the Glasgow Women's Library support project all along and they have really helped with putting the call out for people who wanted to take part in the group. When I first conceived of it, I didn't know the pandemic would happen, so we'd envisaged that we would be in a space in a circle together. So when it changed to being online, that kind of changed the way we recruited for people to take part. We used lots of networks to put it out to different groups of women that they thought would be interested in the idea, and always have this, as Joy mentioned, the creative activity was part of the project as our actions. So after many organising things, the message went out via different ways, I sent it out to a few different organisations that I've worked with, in the past. [unintelligible] I'm not even sure how the group that did assemble last February did 100% arrive there, [unintelligible]. So there were about 12 or us to start with and then we developed our sessions in blocks. Every time offering the opportunity to carry on meeting, and we were able to, but it was such a changeable time from February to June, that we had two blocks. People's lives were changing on a daily basis. So people had to go back to work and had other commitments, childcare, all kinds of different things. So we kind of evolved as that process that went along. Also, we offered women an opportunity, if you wanted to remain anonymous within the group. We really wanted to create a safe space where women were able to feel like they can talk about their personal experiences in this non judgmental space. Also an awareness that for some women that might feel very risky, emotionally or under other means as well. So that is the kind of thing that women could operate under a pseudonym or an initial or—we did just use first names throughout our sessions. So we will also in this section, we're going to talk about the different sessions themselves and the topics that we talked about. We've got up the first slide that is from the New York Radical Feminists, organising packet.

F 43:21

So, during the discussions that we were having each session when we met, there would be one topic that we looked at it during that session. But I think that we will also kind of encouraged to go away afterwards and really think about that topic, or maybe it had sparked something inside you, so even though you've finished the session, a lot of us our brains are still firing about what we have talked about. So we looked at in various parts of our collective lives, like childhood, school and education, freedom, expectations that society has for us, and traditional gender roles. There were parts of our lives that I think some of us hadn't visited for many years. And perhaps that there were also experiences that we've had, that we got a chance to reflect on and to begin to heal from as well. When we met, on the Zoom sessions, and although, we knew there would be some kind of creative output at the end of it all, we did utilise writing a lot. So there is no pressure to write a lot about each topic. And the subjects may have garnered more thoughts and experiences than others just depended. For example, I can't really talk about marriage or motherhood because they don't apply

to me. However, once we all get back together in the next session, sometimes we've had enough time to think about things and found that there was perhaps an expansion on what had previously been talked or written about. Lesley.

Lesley 45:05

I think as Joy said, initially, you thought it Zoom, it's going to be very impersonal. And it wasn't that at all. And I was quite surprised by that. However, if it hadn't been for Zoom, I doubt if I actually would have joined the group, because I live on the east coast of Scotland. And it's more than an hour's drive to get here. So the thought of driving quite regularly to do this, to do the meetings, probably would have been enough to put me off. And then, of course, I couldn't physically undertake the travelling to Glasgow because of the restrictions that were in place. Other people Zoom, levelled the playing field for them because of childcare commitments, or they had a disability or were feeling unwell and couldn't travel. And, as has previously been said, Zoom also allowed you to turn off sound or vision, if you were overwhelmed by what you were hearing or what you were being asked to talk about. Or even just, for some people, it's very difficult to stare at a multi-screen online for any length of time. So Zoom, certainly levelled that accessibility. As I said, I was very apprehensive about using—meeting over Zoom as I only used it for formal meetings. But it really wasn't an issue. And conversation came quite easily amongst us all. Helen used a random selection app, and we all took our turn to speak. And we just accepted that. And that was, that was a very useful tool for you to get over, who's going to go first, or, Oh, I'm too shy, I don't want to speak up. We also—Helen brought a selection of videos, podcasts and visual material that she screen shared with us for stimulation, and to broaden understanding of particular topics. And we also we did creative activities with materials that Helen had sent out to all of us at home, we all got the same little creative packs, which was very exciting I have to say to get something in the post during lockdown. And we did these activities whilst we were part of the group, they'll usually lasted about half an hour. And then we did a show and tell on screen. And some of these are included in the exhibition upstairs these actions. We had a group agreement to ensure the sessions were inclusive and enjoyable for everyone. And there was a lot of emphasis placed on that. And that was reiterated at the beginning of every meeting, Helen was very, very careful to ensure that no one was being put under pressure to speak. She had to you know—she had to watch us all, she had to listen to what we were saying closely so she could pick up any anxiety or hesitancy or pressure that anyone was feeling under. And if anyone was troubled or anxious after a session, she made it very clear that she was available to speak to either privately over Zoom or by phone. So it certainly wasn't an impersonal experience in any way. It was very, very supportive.

Helen 48:55

I just wanted to say as well, there was something about the—because the consciousness raising had these rules that you have to take it in turns, sometimes if you try and have a conversation on Zoom, it can get really stilted if one person is talking over the other. Because we have this really clearly demarcated space it actually worked really well.

Lesley 49:21

Yes, it did.

F 49:22

Yeah, I was going to say, I'm somebody who is neurodivergent, so I really appreciate clear rules and guidance on everything. Even though that may not be a practical way to live your life. But it helped me a lot when I read—I've been in other consciousness raising groups before but it was not quite as focused as this and when I read the rules, I was like, how is this going to work on Zoom. It felt quite regimented. But actually, in practicality, it was super helpful. Zoom as you may or may not know, there's often a delay when you're speaking. So I think that that actually negated that issue that it

was never a problem. And everybody really did get the opportunity to speak and equally not to speak if things felt too uncomfortable

Anonymous 50:08

I was going to share a similar thing that came to mind.

F 50:17

Great minds think alike.

Helen 50:20

Anonymous I know for you that I things of being at home in your own space made it really accessible for you.

Anonymous 50:28

Yes, the rules of conversation are not clear to me most of the time, so it was really good to have those. And also, having dyslexia and Asperger's, anxiety there are [unintelligible], where it completely made the presence of a circle, I don't think I would have come regularly, [unintelligible] because I would have felt trapped [unintelligible] where I could just turn off my camera and people wouldn't know what I was doing.

F 51:05

It's quite a few, very liberating. So if you haven't actually tried to have a good discussion, over Zoom, I actually do recommend it, it's worth a try. Because that level of anonymity and like Joy alluded to as well, the fact that you're sitting in your own house, in your own living room, that in itself can really just free up an emotional part of you that probably would be more difficult to cope with when you're in an in person setting.

Lesley 51:34

But I think you have to make that clear. And that was. If in some meetings, people would challenge you why, oh you've got your sound off, why have you turned off your video. But it was made very clear at the beginning by Helen, you know, if you want to do that, that's fine. And nobody questioned it—

F 51:50

It was a very accepting space.

Lesley 51:51

Yes, it was accepting. And I think you have to lay—you have to make that clear at the beginning.

Helen 51:59

Yeah, that's true. We did some few sessions finessing our way of interacting, I think, the first time that we did the consciousness raising circle, we had the chat going at the same time, which was actually—which brought other things into it. But actually, we decided as a group that it was overwhelming to try and have those two different streams of communication going. While people were posting encouraging comments to each other, that we were straying into that like, you know, just allowing a woman to speak and for her words to exist in the space on their own. So we stopped into the chat completely, which at the time felt a bit like they were being quite draconian with it. But actually it really allowed the conversation—

F 52:48

I was going to say actually, I felt like a rebel not having to use the chat. Because any other time I've used Zoom, like, you must use the chat, put everything in the chat. And well, that's an easy way for me to communicate. I understood that within the context of this circle, at probably wasn't quite as appropriate. So yeah, I feel quite rebellious not having to use the chat was very liberating as well.

Anonymous 53:22

[unintelligible] So Lesley's going to talk a little bit about the kind of creative activities that we did.

Helen 53:46

We looked at some seminal feminists, second wave feminist artworks from—this is an image, we watched Faith Wildling's Waiting poem, a video of that, which is quite interesting to revisit 50 years on. And we sent out the packs in the post. So I wanted to kind of generate the idea that we were all in the space together, but that care and getting something through the post. So I put in a little teabag and different things. Ways into doing things creatively together. I think that did develop quite slowly as well. The design was very dedicated to feminist ideas and methodologies whereby, you know, it's my PhD research project, so there is a certain level of ownership, but I wanted to try and make it as open as possible, and each of the women in the group had a voice that has some kind of ownership over it. So we're asking everyone what kind of creative activities they enjoyed and there was feedback that—

F 55:04

I was just going to chime in then. I'd totally forgot it very much it was a cooperative space in that sense, because I have the—I'm a practicing artist myself as well, so I had the opportunity to lead an exercise in one of the sessions. But yeah, that was really awesome. And I think that Helen's been really open to anything that any of us have had to say comment on how we could do things in a different, stroke better way, or any other bits of information that you can find, and we could come to you. I feel that it seemed the group knew that that was okay. That that was a thing. That yeah, it was really a cooperative type of effort, I suppose when we were deciding how we would do things isn't it.

Helen 55:55

Yeah, we did like mark making, F led a session on collaging which was really fun, we did some journaling and writing, and then at the end, I think it was the first block of sessions, we made a zine together, to just try and find a way to quickly bring, all these artworks together.

Anonymous 56:19

I absolutely loved the mark making [unintelligible] make it very clear that it was just marks. But it didn't matter if they meant anything [unintelligible] but I think the fact that we were holding a paintbrush and had a pain, and it was, supposed to be something brave. And I think society has too much pain focus. But yeah, can't I just enjoy making marks. I really loved that.

F 57:14

Yeah, I think that's the modern fallacy about art isn't it, that if you're holding the brush it must look like some kind of masterpiece, when in actual fact, mark making is probably one of the most natural ways to express ourselves as humans, that's ever existed. So I say more play. Act like toddlers more often. That's what the world needs more of.

Helen 57:35

Yeah, so the little zines that we made to start with, were just one-page folded zines. And printmaking predominantly, so we were looking at printmaking [unintelligible] a little bit more about

that later. But we Riosgraph printed some of these and screen printed some of them and then sent them out to everybody who was in the group. I think everyone who was still in the group did contribute something, even if that was kind of taking them outside of their comfort zone. Yeah, and as has been said, I made it clear—with printmaking you can just do squiggles and marks and things and when it gets reproduced through the inks there's something that is pleasing about it. I suppose capturing something of that energy. And I think—I suppose when I was thinking—I'm an artist, so that's what I wanted to build into the mix between the discussions and moving to make these artworks together, I think there was something in allowing space to process some of what we've done, what we talked about, before we press the 'leave meeting' button, which can be so harsh and so immediate. I was aware of the idea of asking people to open up and then how do we kind of close our boxes again, before we leave a space? So I think for me, like my hope was that these activities allowed that space for that to a certain extent.

F 59:14

Just like on that point as well, the placing the 'leave meeting' button, for me is always such an anticlimax because I live on my own, so I was totally isolated during lockdown because none of our friends stay close by. And there was almost a small moment of grief that I would go through every time I pressed that button. Quite sad that we were all back in our own spaces but properly back in our own spaces and not having that virtual connection with each other. I mean it's always an excuse to celebrate when you get to see people online as well. So it wasn't that sad for that long. It's a bit strange when you've all been sharing so deeply as well I think and then you come back out of that and for me I was just sat myself in my house listening to the birds outside the window. Quite a different experience.

Helen 1:00:08

We're just going to have another one of our two minute pauses and I just think about what you've been hearing, write any questions that you might have on the post it notes maybe there are topics that you think would be good for consciousness raising groups.

Anonymous 1:06:37

Hi I'm Anonymous I took part in creating works for the exhibition after taking part in Consciously Rising discussions. My creative post process involves making art but also I tend to write as part of my creative process. I'm going to share a poem with you. My mind and body are my museum and archive. My eyes and ears gather everything. My hands create the items for the display cases. My thoughts feelings and memories, write the interpretation plaque. My heart and soul safeguard my precious archives. My life is my story, my story to write, my story to tell if you are very, very lucky you may be granted access.

Helen 1:08:05

So Lesley's going to talk a bit now about when we start to meet in person at the library.

Lesley 1:08:11

Well, it was extremely exciting because having been locked up for so long to actually start travelling again and then to meet up new people, although they felt very familiar to me, was really quite overwhelming actually, I think we all felt. But we felt as if we all knew each other when we did meet face to face, which was nice. We use the Community Room upstairs, which is a beautiful calm space to work in. If you've never visited it, if you're going up to see the exhibition, I'm sure you can pop in and have a look or look through the doors. It has beautiful light, there is a new artwork installed there, which is printed on curtains. And the views from the upper floors here are also very, very inspiring the environment you're looking out at. There's a lot to see, as well as the banner and I'm afraid I can't remember the artist's name. Again, the banner was just recently done for the 30th

anniversary, I think. And to see that fluttering in the wind is really very special. So being physically here in the library, we were able to actually view and touch material from the archive here, posters, books and leaflets from a wide range of groups from all over the UK because it's a national archive here, it's not just for Glasgow. And we were also able to view the exhibitions which were on. Ingrid Pollard's No Cover Up exhibition, the Guerrilla Girls billboard, artwork called the Male Graze, which was at the Barrowlands. And that had been chosen specifically as the billboard nearest to Glasgow Women's library, I think I'm correct in saying. But that was a thrill to see that because that billboard is throughout the world, and here it was in Glasgow, and we were able to see it. And the Guerrilla Girls had an online session, and we, as a group, Consciously Rising group, were asked to submit two questions to that. And we also saw Life Support: Forms of Art and Activism, which was a group show by a number of leading female artists, including Alberta, Whittle, Veronica Ryan, Olivia Plender and I'm sorry, I can't remember the other names. So I apologise to those women. But that was very stimulating. And of course, the current Joan Eardley exhibition. Before COVID, we took this kind of experience very much for granted, I would say, and it made it much more special, I have to say in the COVID era to be exposed to this stimuli, and particularly the archive. So I'd really like to thank Glasgow Women's Library for hosting us. It really has been a very special experience and the staff have made us so welcome.

Helen 1:11:44

Thanks Lesley, for me, that's been a really important part when—it seemed to kind of fit the flow of the project, that we were—when restrictions eased, and we could meet in person a time where we were beginning to work on the exhibition itself, and the Library here was the perfect venue for us, because it is a feminist space. And I think for me, I feel that being here, and I think the other group members did as well, that it's a public library [unintelligible] it's not got the kind of hierarchies of contemporary art galleries and things like that, but because they are so much about welcoming, all types of women, all types of people into the space and I know that GWL put a lot of effort into making that felt.

F 1:12:37

I have to say I agree with all of that. And even though it's a really, really spectacular building and there's, parts of it that are so grand, and you kind of marvel at the fact you're getting to sit here. There's also been a really kind of homely feel about it, and you're right Lesley, the very first time we met, I was overwhelmed, I had tears in my eyes, because again, spend so much time by myself. And like you say we had all built some kind of rapport with each other over Zoom, and then had this amazing opportunity to be in a space with other humans. That was just absolutely amazing. So I'll talk a little bit about the archive material that we looked at. But drew a lot of inspiration as a group from GWL's, poster and campaign materials that live within the archive and collection. In particular, I mean, a lot of what we looked at maybe to do specifically with women's issues, or that they were produced by grassroots organisations. We also looked at some zines then as well, even though we had already had a go at making our smaller group zine together. The materials really formed that start point for us to think about what our own pieces of work may actually look like. And as Lesley's alluded to though it wasn't technically part of the archive, then we visited Life Support: forms of care art and activism, exhibition that was on at the time. And I was actually so really deeply touched by Ingrid Pollard, No Cover Up exhibition being an artist of colour myself. I think as well, the other thing that looking in the archive was really good for was to see historically what's been done and how have groups or individuals tackled these issues that as women we kind of are still up against a lot of I think, not that much has changed. But to be able to see tangible pieces of work in front of you was really inspirational, and also gave you a sense of not carrying the load in a bad way, but sharing that load, of those messages that really still need to be pushed and put out there. Thanks GWL for having us and making us feel like this our home too.

Helen 1:15:08

So by this point, we were end of August after the summer. And we were down to the four of us, remaining ones who were able to dedicate the time. And we also had this exhibition planned at GWL, that was going to be at the start of November. So it kind of was a perfect time to start meeting in real life, and kind of working physically on that material together. I think I've said that I'm going to talk about the group dynamic, but I think everybody's got something to say about it.

F 1:15:44

We're all in this together.

Helen 1:15:47

Yeah, we started to brainstorm ideas. And being in a space together allows us to look at the material that we've generated in the online sessions together, and think well, how could we move this forward from things that were created for us as a group into things that were going to be in this public display in the exhibition. I suppose everybody knew each other by that point and there seemed to be a lot of trust and a lot of sharing, and a lot of creativity passing between different members.

F 1:16:27

So just to introduce our other two group members who are sitting on this black plinth at the front here, our beloved monkeys. And so like I said before, I'm also a neurodivergent artist, and I always have a fidget with me, this is the one that I bring everywhere. But I really did actually feel that I had a good enough rapport with the group that I didn't need to hide that. And I totally one day needed extra emotional support, so I brought my tiger you see in the middle of that slide there, and my wee monkey had been coming into some other sessions as well. And that kind of allowed the other group members to feel free enough to bring their own mascots with them too. So these are the other two group members away at the front here as well, in case you are wondering.

Lesley 1:17:19

And I think when we met up, we realised we actually had quite a large bank of material that we'd produced because we kept producing work at home, outwith the group sessions. And when it was all, I don't know, if there's a slide of when it—Yeah, it's starting there. When it was all laid out on a table, it was quite amazing what we actually had to work from which we could then move forward.

F 1:17:50

It's definitely been one of the most collaborative working processes I've ever used. And I've made art with other people before, but it's never been such—I don't even know how to describe it, it was just a really, really close working relationship, creative working relationship where we would ask each other for advice, or what do you think about this, or I was going to do this, but I think it's stupid. And other group members would be then like, no it's not stupid, I was thinking about that, too. There was really a lot of inter personal discussions that went on, in order for us to get to the stage where we knew what we wanted our final pieces of work to look like, because—

Lesley 1:18:35

We had the sharing platform on Padlet. And we use that a lot to share work that we've been working on at home and get reaction to that. And we're able to collaborate on that and moves, perhaps some pieces that people have created individually together with overlays, Helen was able to help us with that digitally. And then that would get re-shared on the Padlet. And there was more links to other exhibitions or reading material or podcasts that we could put up—information that Helen put up, but that we also put up individually that we came across that we thought would be of value to our process and to our subject matter. So the Padlet was a very good way to share as well.

Anonymous 1:19:33

[unintelligible] And obviously it was part of the exhibition that had happened. But I do also remember when we were deciding how to hang [unintelligible] And I didn't realise at the time but I'm also the cleaner at the Library, and at one point when the dusk was coming I saw the reflections on the wall and the nice dusk light and I suddenly saw that it's was a [unintelligible].

Helen 1:20:53

[unintelligible], I guess that means leads it's kind of nicely into that we decided or it was decided that we would kind of use printmaking to make your works in the show. As I say I am a print maker myself and that's kind of where my experience and skills lie, but I think also printmaking—the works in exhibition we Riso printed, which might be something people are not familiar with, but I can explain some of the process of that. But printmaking allows multiple different types of materials come together in one image. So through layering, like we could bring in photography, bring in drawing, bring in collage, you can see Lesley's working here physically with some elastic bands, but it just allows a fluid way of working that didn't preference one group member over the other. Because it allowed us to combine them all together. The Risograph printing that we used is—risographs are a bit similar to screen printing in that they print each colour in a separate layer. But it's a mechanised process, it's a machine that does it. And so there are a specific kind of controls to it, there are a certain amount of colours that a Riso printer might have. So we printed a lot of ours at Wild and Kind which is just around the corner from here, which is a very community oriented, creative organisation. It's got a Riso printer, and we also printed some of them at the art school. So there was this palette of colours that we had, which tied the works together as well. And they've all got—the largest scale that could be printed is A3 size so we all have this fixed paper size, which I think also bring a lot of works together. So like you can see we were working with things in 3D and then we'd photocopied and collaged them and then printed them out in the amazing—I'm very drawn to the—the Risograph has got some fluorescent colours which I'm automatically drawn to but we had a real spectrum of different colours that we liked as a group. And some people found the fluorescent a bit much but I think we—

F 1:23:29

They very much sang to the old school raver in me.

Helen 1:23:37

I'm going to pass over to Lesley to talk a bit about the—we paid a visit to the Riso printer around the corner.

Lesley 1:23:47

So just before I talk about the workshop, I'll—the reference to the elastic bands, I just like to let you know that that came out of an earlier just the group discussions we had over Zoom, because one of the commonalities that we had when we were discussing education, I think it was, or childhood, was French skipping or some of you might know it as Chinese skipping, where you joined up elastic bands together and you made one big long loop. And you jumped in and out of it and made patterns. Anyway, so several of us had this. So that's why I used elastic bands in a piece it was that reference. So Wild and Kind, what a great community workshop just round the corner from here within walking distance. And Lou, the technician and workshop manager was just a lovely, warm and engaging and enthusiastic person. We've had two hours and—so we had to just absolutely go for it. F was the only one who had had experience of working with Riso print. Although I'm a screen printer, I hadn't done Riso, and Anonymous hadn't done Riso printing either. So we had a quick tour from Lou, of how it all worked and the range of colours that you could achieve. And she did a warm up exercise with us. And this was a collaborative piece of artwork, which is upstairs in the exhibition, where we all just

did mark making, and then we laid our output together. And we worked on turning that into a piece of artwork, which was run off. Then we worked independently with our own ideas that we had. But all the time you're having these conversations with each other and saying, What do you think, would this look better? So there's a lot of collaboration in the process. Although you're clear in your own mind what you're wanting to do. But then you're also working with Lou saying, well, is this possible or that or what happens if I cross this piece, I lay this piece over that, what kind of what colour am I going to get. And you know that in a fine art printmaking process, and Riso is no different, there is an element of serendipity. Because you're never quite sure about your colour, you're never quite sure about your registration. And so when it comes out at the end, it really is like, opening up Christmas presents or something. It's the unexpected. And sometimes the unexpected is a sur—and a really great surprise. And I think we all felt that on the day. And we found—we tend to work in two-hour creative bursts, because that's what we were allocated here. And that time to use the spaces. And it's been really quite amazing what we can achieve in the two hours. And certainly at the end of the Riso workshop, I think we were all as high as kites because we were so excited by what we were producing, what we're seeing and just being creative. It was such a thrill to be doing that again after such a period of isolation. So it was a great experience at Wild and Kind I have to say.

Anonymous 1:27:32

[unintelligible]

F 1:27:33

That was a test print, believe it or not, we were just knocked together in five minutes. So of course, we're all consummate professionals. It was really exciting how it turned out. The green as well was pretty symbolic, we'd spoken a lot about trees as a group once we have gotten together, and we're looking at making more intensively. But yeah, we liked how this worked both ways. And although the words were slightly the other way around, when you turn it the other way up, the message was still the same, that actually sisterhood is powerful. I have to say actually, the thing I remember the most just quickly about that session was that the sun was absolutely shining when we came outside. And I personally took that as an extremely fortuitous sign that everything else was going to go well for us.

Lesley 1:29:19

Lesley was just talking about the elastic bands.

Anonymous 1:29:23

Elastic bands. And I took inspiration from that and added to the scarecrow, or the tree woman as I call it. But I've been trying to describe it in words over the phone to my mum who hadn't seen it, and she came away with, oh a tattie bogle. Of course it was more or less just [unintelligible] Then that day I'd been trying to think to draw tatties and put them in the bottom, or incorporate them somehow. And then of course, Lesley's elastic bands and seeing them loose in the print, I suddenly realised how I could [unintelligible].

F 1:30:19

So, I'll speak to you a little bit about the exhibition, as time goes on to the exhibition here, we started to think about how we might present the work. And in the upstairs gallery space, as a group, we looked at the exhibition that was already on display, which was the art and care and activism, oh so much to remember! And how they had utilised the space upstairs, as well as some photos of some other excellent exhibitions for inspiration, and to see how it could be done. We were aware of how different our separate pieces of work were, and examined ways to be able to tie things together. Two major pieces of inspiration, for us were, the groupings of different sized pieces of work by, and excuse me, because my Greek pronunciation is non-existent, but I think it's, Aikaterini Gegisian, of their site specific installation in Athens which you can see in this slide here. Which

actually inspired our feature wall up the stairs which has lots of different sized photos, and some lines of handwritten text as well. And the other one was a beautiful, multicolor repeating patterns, wall of works by Corin Sworn with Nicolas Party and Ciara Phillips. That's this over here, which was at the Gallery of Modern Art here in Glasgow. The photograph of the wall at the GoMA really helped us to see that even when individual pieces are quite different, repeating colours and themes can be used quite creatively to tie everything together and bring a sense of flow to how the works are shown. The use of text, and the same or similar fonts, everything being printed on the same kind of eco-friendly paper, and some of the choices of colour schemes and colours and another way that we collectively used to tie our separate pieces together. When it came time to actually hang the works, as a group, we decided that framing the pieces would be too difficult for the upstairs space. And so it didn't seem like a feasible option. And I think that I remember some discussions among us about how there was a chance that framing the work in may actually give it a very different look. And that that could detract from the impact of each of the pieces as well. So as a group, again, we've decided that unframed and simple non invasive hanging methods would be best in order to give maximum impact to the presentation. And the aspect of how the exhibition looks and how it is presented, is truly a group effort. And despite the daunting thought of having to work, all that kind of stuff out, you'll be very glad to know whether there were no arguments or bloodshed during the process, honestly, was really one of the smoothest type of situation on hanging. So I was very happy about that. And for me anyway, I actually think that that aspect of the project, working out how to hang the exhibition, how to make it work, the use of repeats, the use of colour, that that was really my unexpected favourite part of the whole project to work on. It has truly been a group effort although you might not see us all in the photos together, it's really everything we really considered. And even if someone had a very strong thought or opinion about something that was always put to everybody else and open for discussion on change. So yes, that leads me nicely on to reading another poem. So, as Anonymous introduced already beautiful sculptures up the stairs, and that she may be calling it tree woman, but I call it the tattie bogle. So I wrote this poem about this sculpture. Did you meet the tattie bogle yet? I met her in the circle. She's beautiful and so fierce and strong and yet can feel so worthless. I saw her in the mirror once, and truly balked at the reflection, for it seems all women are the tattie bogle, no matter how much we push for rejection. She feels so free, so alive and happy. You know, like you used to do. But the face that stared there back at me that pierced right through. All the BS with which society is gifted to me, despite none of it being that true. She lives within each one of us. She's the fire that burns deep inside you. The grant tattie bogle, that Magi and sage, the one who is always guiding can be trusted and tried and helped to elevate those most precious thoughts we keep hiding. Her great spirit that permeates the hearts of us all brings comfort and oh so much joy. Please don't doubt how powerful her essence can be, it just wouldn't be the same if she was avoided.

Helen 1:35:45

That kind of brings us on to the last little part of our talk where I'm just going to talk about our zine and in particular about the image that is printed large next to F there. It's from an image that we originally made up in Aberdeen.

F 1:36:13

This poster was actually part of a project that happened in Aberdeen and Helen it told us about the opportunity to be able to make a poster at Peacock Visual Arts. It was based around the work that we already created for the exhibition here. So as we sat in a circle, during one of our in-person sessions in the library here, we talked about what we might like the poster to focus on. This discussion became quite a heated one. As collectively, we talked about just how much hardship and restrictions are still placed on women and how they live, or how they are expected to live their lives. We realised that not too much had practically changed since the women's liberation movements of the 60s and 70s. And we also highlighted how women's voices and needs are still largely ignored or

dismissed. The photos were taken as a group memorial, affectionately became known as our band photos, as in like a music band. They started as a way to document the tree woman, or tattie bogle sculpture, but as I was editing photos, I saw that there was actually something much more profound captured in there as well. As with a lot of feminist principles based works, there are also many, many layers to the photographs. So it was a unanimous decision by the group to use one of them as the basis for our poster piece. It's actually Lesley who suggested that we add the speech bubbles within the image. And once Helen had into the workshop and printed out the posters, we were faced with the task of what text we wanted to include inside the bubbles. A couple of us had had a go at adding our own text and thoughts into the speech bubbles during one of our in-person sessions here at the Library. But we were all drawn back to that heated discussion that we had previously had about how we still feel unheard in society today. And so we decided to keep the speech bubbles blank in order to reflect this, we realised that the fact we have our masks on in the image could be thought of as having some deeper meaning too, not only do they firmly and clearly timestamp the project and images. But they're also very symbolic of the forced silencing that so many women globally need to cope with on a daily basis. And using the halftone dot format to print the image has given the poster an even grittier feel. And has very much given a vintage look that was reminiscent of lots of the activist and campaign materials that we had examined a way at the start from the GWL archive. So inside the zine that's on each of your chair, on the very inside of the middle if you totally unfold it. There's a wee copy of the poster. And it's got the empty speech bubbles. And we were hoping that perhaps you might like to fill that out with your own thoughts at home, and maybe even display it somewhere. But hopefully today, you've taken the opportunity to fill out some post its. And I think we may add them to the large format poster perhaps before the end. But we're very welcoming of others being able to have their say as well. And really just to kind of summarise about the speech bubbles, the reason as well we decided to leave them blank is that there's so many things that need to go into them or could go into them or even as time changes we realise that perhaps what's in those bubbles might change. So like I was saying before I was doing multi layers to this poster. I think it was probably quite unexpected to all of us but yeah hopefully you might when you go home and you've absorbed everything that you've heard and seen today that you might want to have a go at filling the speech bubbles yourselves and then feel free to display and shout it out.

Helen 1:40:31

Thanks so much F and everyone. We're going to have another of our little pauses now. F was suggesting that maybe you wanted to think of things to say in those speech bubbles at home but perhaps there's something that springs to mind immediately now and you might want to use some of the little speech post it notes there. So we see the women in the poster as markers for all women so statements that may be applying to you, apply to other women, things that—

F 1:41:04

Something personal that's on your mind perhaps although it is Saturday so well give you a pass.

Helen 1:41:09

And as well if anyone's got any more questions they want to note down and after a couple of minutes we'll do some questions and answers.

F 1:47:51

Usually on Saturday, I think a bit easier, but not today. So I'll start with this one. And someone's asking how did you sustain your courage and the strength to carry on over the years even if things change slowly or not at all? I'd quite like to start answering that one. So no, I am officially a crone. I am in my middle-aged years as a woman. And I was born in the mid 70s. And when I was growing up, Margaret Thatcher was in power. And then from a very young age, I've actually always had an interest in politics. I don't even know where it came from. But I've always been aware that it seemed

that society had wanted to keep women down. And so genuinely, perhaps, naively, when I was only a teenager, I thought, oh, things will change, things will get better. And by the time I'm in my 20s, or 30s, or by the time I get, to this age, into my 40s, that society would see women as the amazing creatures that they really are and that they would treat us accordingly. But what's kept me going is the fact that not that much has changed. And definitely not quickly enough. I think it's just been something internal that I've always had, where I've known that women do deserve to be treated better, and that there was no need for a lot of the oppression that actually does go on, and also culturally, I'm from a background that really sees women and as housekeepers, perhaps as baby making machines for want of better terms, but I feel that those are quite descriptive and accurate. So from a really, really young age, I never understood why did I need to be separated from my grandfather all the time, because I love to spend time with him. But there was very clear gender roles expected of me growing up. I think I'm just lucky enough to have had an inner rebel my entire life. And that's what's kept pushing me. I don't know if the others would like to answer that quickly as well.

Lesley 1:49:59

I think gets been cyclical for me, I've gone through peaks and troughs. And in the 70s, I did not identify with the women's liberation group at all. I didn't agree with what they stood for, because I found it very anti men. But I was very much for women's rights and women's equality. And I saw the Equality Act being brought in in '75. And I now look back and see it hasn't actually made a damn bit of difference. And what piqued my interest again, was the number of women working in local government to have had to fight for equal pay after the 1975 Equality Act has been brought in. And I'm just absolutely appalled by it. And the way in which women are continuing to be vilified in the media. That's my background and at times, I'm ashamed of my peer group, I have to say, the way in which we're presented.

Anonymous 1:51:07

I'm not sure I have the courage and so on the fact that I've learned from previous number of times [unintelligible] there's more courage needed to brave my day if I do try to, so I just have to go out and be in people's vision and be aware that I need to cope with it, and whether that's courage or intimidation, I just have to do it.

F 1:51:59

So this is a really good question, does consciousness raising ever lead to tensions between members on the basis that some hold more power or privilege over others? I have to say, I don't think it did. And maybe that kind of sounds too good to be true. But actually, it really is the truth of the matter. The fact that you are expected to be in this space together, and only speak from your own personal experiences, I think made it feel less judgmental, because nobody was saying, I experienced this, so what you're going through isn't valid because of x, there was none of that you had merely to talk about your own experience, you weren't always encouraged to reflect on it the time, maybe that came later. But even in people's reflections, there was none of that comparing that goes on that could create tensions. The think that would be a quick answer to that one.

Helen 1:52:58

I think it's interesting that a lot of feminists thinking around how to break down some of those hierarchies because they so easily occur in groups. I read this essay, which is almost as much of a mouthful as consciousness raising like called *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* by feminist called Jo Freeman. And that kind of outlines like the group's needs structure, otherwise, they're easy to— elites to form in them, and they're easy for people to manipulate them, if you haven't had a very free group. It has the appearance that maybe like it's nonhierarchical, but without kind of specifying like certain ground rules and things within it, that it is very easy for it to get hijacked by

the people who put the most or have the most privilege. So that's, part of the reason for the consciousness-raising is kind of quite strict in its own way of operating that allows it to open things up more.

F 1:54:09

I was just going to say that even though there's this kind of strict set of rules to go by, ironically, it allows for a sense of anti-establishment to happen, because you're really—your accepted exactly as you come that day. And that's part of it as well. So I don't think there was ever an opportunity for those other kinds of hierarchies that would naturally form and other types of groups to happen. It just wasn't like that. Also, partially might be to do with the individual people that we had in the group. Perhaps we just got super lucky. That could have been part of it but I just think that having some kind of framework to run your group by actually allowed for everybody to have a chance of free expression, for nobody to try and take over and none of that other kind of nasty stuff that does sometimes happen in groups,

Lesley 1:54:49

I think it's a credit to Helen as well, the way she ran the group. Helen was not dominating in any way. But she, was just very conscious of everybody's different needs and voices. And she made sure that those voices were heard. And she did it in a very, very supportive and structured way.

F 1:55:31

Yeah, definitely.

Lesley 1:55:33

Which was true to, I would say, was true to the origins of consciousness raising the way in which it was set up by the group that you referenced.

Anonymous 1:55:50

But I'm think that the rules that were set up back in the 70s, are so dangerous and so scary to the people that we're writing the headlines about them being petty and stuff. Because I realised as Helen was speaking earlier that it allows people, perhaps like me, who can't be easily can be political [unintelligible] but it let them hear from other people from [unintelligible] So that when they come to vote, and so on, or when they listen to the big loud voices of the politicians, and they can maybe accept them and decide who to vote for better and that [unintelligible].

F 1:56:42

Just wanted to actually read this one last question, because I thought it was a good one. Are you motivated by joy or anger? It fluctuates, I'd like to call it joyful anger.

Helen 1:56:56

And it was interesting, thinking about this idea of personal and political and how so much of what we talked about was very personal. But then when this opportunity came to make this poster, it was like the fire was unleashed.

F 1:57:14

If anyone had walked in on that discussion, they actually might have thought we were having an argument amongst ourselves, but it genuinely was not. On behalf of all women who were fired up that day, I think.

Helen 1:57:27

We've got loads more questions here, I'm aware that we're rolling towards three o'clock. I don't know if there are any particular ones in your grouping Lesley?

Lesley 1:57:37

Just one here that's interesting, what made you want to join a consciousness raising group, but I didn't want to join a consciousness raising group. The reason I joined it was because of the creative output, the consciousness raising was a side issue, I really didn't know what it was and what I was getting involved in. And I'm very glad that I did, because it strengthened my voice again, in this area. But I joined it for the creative output. And it certainly fulfilled that.

Anonymous 1:58:09

I was the same Lesley and also seamlessly and securely. So someone who's shielding and stuff like volunteering and helping society difficulty we're choosing not to do the job at someone.

F 1:58:27

And I think for me, I only discovered last year that I'm a socially engaged artists, even though that's always what my practice's been. So it just kind of felt natural to be in a space where they were looking at things in a slightly more political way.

Helen 1:58:50

This is one question here that I'd be interested to hear what people would say, it was how did you feel that you were in a non-judgmental space? I guess the kind of emphasis, of what maybe really allowed for you individually.

Lesley 1:59:07

I found it very, very refreshing. I've never been in a non-judgmental space before. I've always been with very strong willed woman, opinionated, giving advice, and to not have that was incredibly refreshing.

F 1:59:23

Really lucky that I'm in an amazing group of knitters, where they live, and they are extremely non judgmental. And I was really missing that physical space of being with them. That's usually how I start my week. And so for me, I think this was almost a mirror of those experiences for I did the [unintelligible]

Anonymous 1:59:53

Just forgot the question.

Helen 1:59:57

How did you feel that you were in a non-judgmental space?

Anonymous 2:00:01

It was quite freeing but I was worried that I'd broken the rules somehow.

Helen 2:00:15

I found it quite difficult to kind of sit with my own experience as well as someone that [unintelligible] shared things and heard other people's experiences. But I think because the group was ongoing, because of the day that you reflected back on it. And it built up into something more meaningful, say saving communities commoditization of goodness that was so petty what I said [unintelligible]. But actually, all these things do build up into the picture of who we are and how we are in the world. I'm

aware that we're not going to be able to answer all these questions, do we feel as a group we can commit to share these amongst us and we can aim to answer them on a blog or we'll they'll send them out to the people who've been here today. We really appreciate the time that everybody's put into engaging with us. I'm also aware that we've not given you any voice, we've talked about how empowering it is hearing women speaking in their own voice and then we've asked you to write questions down. Just to say that we really appreciate all your inputs, taking the time to come and join us today and engage with our project and the exhibition.

F 2:01:41

Thanks for coming and letting us talk at you. And definitely thank you so much for your time today. And hopefully it does reignite the fire in your own bellies, that you realise that actually women's voices are still really really important. And that the more that we speak out is definitely what is needed. However, that isn't just about bringing awareness because as Lesley pointed out, the Equalities Act hasn't really changed that much tangibly. I mean why is there still a gender pay gap. Discussion for another day, but those types of things, so know that at least putting your voice out there as the first step but we do definitely need the action that comes after that.

APPENDIX 12: EVALUATION TRANSCRIPTS

APPENDIX 12.1: PAULINE

17 December 2021 • 13:56

SPEAKERS

Pauline, Helen

Helen 00:03

[background noise] It's ready—hearing other people—Yep. So what drew you to be part of the group? I don't even remember actually, what are you—

Pauline 00:17

So, at the beginning a friend sent me the information. She had gotten the information from someone, but she wasn't available to take part and she wondered if I would be interested. And I suppose initially I was interested because with lockdown, I couldn't do what I would normally do. That was one thing. But the other thing is that some of my ex-colleagues used to talk about the library and in my head, I had always thought, I need to go to the library and I need to find out a bit more about it. But also the thought of being in a group of women was appealing, because I thought it might open opportunities to think about things that I wouldn't normally think about. Or think about things in a different way. So I suppose that would be the main things.

Helen 01:09

Yeah. Did you feel that you did learn things from other group members, like, either about other people or about yourself through the process of the discussions that we had?

Pauline 01:22

Yeah. I mean, certainly about other people, you know, having not met people before. It was really insightful to hear other people's experiences. And also, the discussion sometimes made me think about things slightly differently. Because I personally don't see myself as being a creative person at all. And I think the notion of creativity was something that was widened for me, and I've probably had quite a narrow view of what being creative is. So from my own perspective, yeah, I guess that helped me to see— maybe I've got more creativity than I thought and creativity is much wider. And I think it also made me realise that as our own family have diminished, and we've lost different generations, we have less opportunity to have discussion amongst women. So for example, when I was a younger person, even a young adult, when my mum in the aunts were all still alive, we met up regularly, and there would be, you know, just general chat about everyday events, or anything that was important. And I think in a personal level, I don't have that to the same extent, although I've got friends and I've got a small family. But it did make me realise how, in my formative years, the coming together as a family was really such an important part of my upbringing. So yeah. So I know that I'm no rambling but—

Helen 03:11

—no, not at all. It's fascinating. I think that intergenerational conversations like don't necessarily happen that much in day to day life as they maybe have done in the past.

Pauline 03:23

And I guess, you know—my mother and her sisters, you know, they may have had a part-time job. None of my family had careers, as such as you know. My mum worked in a shop once my sister and I

went to secondary school, she worked in Arnotts [department shop] in Glasgow. But yeah, it made me realise that actually I really quite miss that informal chat even though the group was structured, and there was a purpose to the group, but it made me think, you know, I really enjoyed that. I enjoyed hearing other people's stories. So now I've forgotten the question.

Helen 04:06

No, well, you've answered the question. Yeah, I haven't actually put one down on about, in person versus us meeting online.

Pauline 04:16

I think probably that meeting online was challenging for me. I wasn't participating in Zoom for much else. I do—I did for a book club but that was quite different because I know the people quite well. So I think there was the trying to stick to the methodology. And, you know, making sure that you don't interrupt and all of that. And that was quite hard on Zoom. It might have been easier face to face. But equally, it allowed us to meet—

Helen 04:54

—that we wouldn't actually have been able to do at all.

Pauline 04:58

We wouldn't have been able to do it. So that was a huge advantage that allowed us to get together.

Helen 05:03

Yeah, because like some Zoom things, in a way, like those rules of the methodology of it, where it did feel quite strict and quite like forced but actually, like conversation on Zoom can be really difficult to get a kind of natural flow. When you're not like 'oh, sorry, were you talking' that kind of like awkwardness that we kind of all knew when it was our turn to speak.

Pauline 05:33

I think what was great about Zoom was the ability to use the different technologies. So within each group when you can't remember the name—you know, one Slido and you know, just the technology generally. So, I mean, I've used blogs before and various methods. I hadn't used a Padlet. So I really like the fact that the technology allowed you to dip into things when you were outwith the group and I'm not sure to what extent that would have been available had we been meeting face to face.

Helen 06:13

We might not have gone so much trouble, to update things in that kind of way.

Pauline 06:20

Because it did feel as though you had made a huge effort to make sure that there were you know, things of interest or people's things being put on.

Helen 06:32

That's good to know that and people were interacting with that side of things. Did taking part in the group change your perspective at all on women's experience?

Pauline 06:48

Yeah, it made me think more deeply about what I have personally and—you know—my—our forebearers who have trodden the path for us to make things accessible or easier to happen. So it

did make me think, more than I probably had for a long time about how the previous generations have changed things for us, or for me.

Helen 07:21

Do you feel like you've seen quite a shift in what women are able to do?

Pauline 07:27

Yes, even from me personally, you know, as a mother, and I spoke about this in the group that the issues around maternity leave, for example, and expectations of being able to go back to the same job that you had. So yes, I have seen a big shift. I'm not sure that it's always makes things easier for people though. There has been a shift.

Helen 07:54

Yeah, I know what you mean. That kind of—I feel like women have so little time, with so much expected of people who say to be—like that kind of carving out of a space to talk is more difficult than it might have been in the past.

Pauline 08:12

Absolutely.

Helen 08:17

So we talked about the discussion—so the creative activities, how did you find the things that we did together?

Pauline 08:23

I think it took me a little bit of time to get into it. And when I say that, it's because I don't know that I've always seen the value in creative activities that I've not taken part of because I had no understanding of them. And I've not necessarily seen them as being therapeutic or helpful. So I found that really interesting and it opened my eyes to what you would consider to be creative, and the meaning that you can attribute to it and how you can then have it as an item that you can look on and then look back on, reflect and help to remind yourself of that time and what you've benefited from it. Does that makes sense?

Helen 09:14

And can you see a kind of relation between the prints in the exhibition and some of the discussions that we had?

Pauline 09:23

Absolutely, about the roles of women and the challenges and the nicer things. So yes, I can.

Helen 09:30

Yeah, because actually the members that carried on to the end, were probably the people who had quite a lot of creative background. And it's a shame that for various different, all the kind of myriad reasons that people weren't able to stay in the group but like some of the people who were less creatively confident I think, if we'd been able to go on that journey, together, like it might have been revelatory, like how far things went. Why did you leave the group in the end?

Pauline 10:16

I think because we'd reached a point where there were more freedoms opening up, and I was making a commitment also to help with my grand daughter's childcare for a period of time. And also, I think because I had expected it only to be a certain number of weeks. So in my head, I had other

things that I wanted to do. So yeah, it was a combination of it seemed to come to its natural end vis-a-vis what I'd expected, but also with other things opening up like being able to go back to the Leisure Centre for example, you know, I could go to things there.

Helen 11:01

I know it's so hard to I can't believe, like this time last year, how shutdown things were comparative to now.

Pauline 11:10

Because one of the things I wanted to do when I retired was to become fitter. And so I had been going to certain classes at the gym and going swimming, and I really wanted to try and get back to that. That was important for me.

Helen 11:27

Yeah, I started running during lockdown, which I never thought I would do at all but it was just that like, not wanting to lose any level of fitness as we were all trapped in our home so much of the time weren't we. Is there anything else you'd like to say about the experience of being in the group or the exhibition?

Pauline 11:52

I think for me the experience of being in the group was really positive because it was very different. And maybe also because I retired in 2018, I suppose in work I still had the benefit of having a coffee with people all be it was off—it was usually work focussed, but it reminded me of how much I enjoy being in the company of people. People that may be very different to myself, but just to have a nice shared experience was good. Sorry, what's the question again?

Helen 12:37

Just if there was anything else that you wanted to say about the experience.

Pauline 12:41

So interesting, positive, timely in terms of where it came in terms of lockdown. It was really timely to have something on the calendar. And also to understand that the group continued, culminating in the exhibition. It's nice to see that it did carry on and that there was that linkage between what we did in the early stages of and then it'd been further developed.

Helen 13:15

Yeah, I think we couldn't quite imagine that we would get to the point where we could put on an exhibition but it just kind of bit by bit kind of all came together, which was really—

Pauline 13:26

Really when I think about it, that's a long time that you have continued, isn't it?

Helen 13:31

Yeah, no, it is. It is amazing how the time has passed along. Yeah, but just both you and Dorothy thought it started in like kind of Easter, April time. Yeah, well, that's that was all my questions that's really useful, Pauline, and much appreciated.

SPEAKERS

Helen, Lesley

Helen 00:00

Let's see if it transcribes while we're talking, probably—Okay, so I'll just ask you a few questions, Lesley. No pressure is only me listening (laughter) the confines of our agreement—our confidentiality and things agreement, would be the same for this. But yes, if you don't want to answer any of my questions that's totally fine. I've got quite a few questions, but we can whip through them. So what drew you to take part in the group in the beginning?

Lesley 00:47

Well, it was during lockdown, and I was looking for something creative to do and the email popped into my inbox from my local library. They were circulating it round people on behalf of Glasgow Women's Library. And it just pricked my conscience. I thought it was really interesting because it was a mixture of discussion and creative activity. It was really the creative activity that attracted me most because I didn't know anything about consciously rising and I didn't know the concept at all.

Helen 01:36

That's interesting. So how did you find the discussion part, the consciousness-raising side of it?

Lesley 01:46

I find it surprisingly interesting. I really enjoyed it. And I wasn't embarrassed or self-conscious about taking part in the discussions. You prepared the groundwork, I think very well by reassuring that it was a confidential environment we're working in and that it was a safe space if you like, and that you would be sensitive about anything that was discussed or anything that people didn't want to discuss. So that was very reassuring because initially, my impression was, or is this a bit of kind of self-therapy, type session. And it wasn't that at all. Not at all.

Helen 02:56

What do you think it was about it, that didn't become just the kind of self-therapy was it the kind of the way it was structured, the kind of rules and things or—

Lesley 03:08

I think definitely the structure us going round in a circle and the rules although I'm not a rule person and initially I did wonder if this is going to be too prescriptive but when you actually see it in action it works very well and you realise that it is needed, and it makes the group a better structure for that type of conversation.

Helen 03:48

It's really, really interesting kind of responded that way, whether certain topics that you found more interesting or less interesting. You said that weren't any that you felt kind of challenged or maybe you said embarrassed but were there any that you found challenging or were there things that—you would have liked to have talked about that we didn't talk about? I'm kind of thinking of the topics.

Lesley 04:12

I think the most embarrassing session, I think from memory and I don't have my—I don't unfortunately have my notebook with me to refer to I think was adolescence.

Helen 04:27

Right, yeah.

Lesley 04:27

And did we do a session on—

Helen 04:30

We did one on bodies—

Lesley 04:32

On sex?

Helen 04:34

No, we didn't. I think the kind of adolescence—

Lesley 04:36

I think we decided against that didn't we?

Helen 04:38

There were certain people who were very adamant that we were not talking—

Lesley 04:42

I think the thought that we might, I thought, ooh, I don't think that I want to go there

Helen 04:48

Yeah.

Lesley 04:50

And you've now reminded me we did have a—well you said, well, what do people think about this? And there was quite robust discussion around that and we decided not to. So that was alleviated.

Helen 05:05

So that like selecting our topics together collectively.

Lesley 05:09

Yes.

Helen 05:10

Was a kind of useful process that we could—

Lesley 05:12

Extremely useful.

Helen 05:13

Rather than a little email popping into your inbox, saying we're talking about sex next week.

Lesley 05:18

Yes, I think there's an element—you felt an element of control over what you were doing in the group, rather than it just all being—coming from you.

Helen 05:30

And so, you said you were drawn in by the creative activities, how did you find that kind of early creative activities that we did? Obviously, we did more kind of exercises and little workshops to begin with and then moved on.

Lesley 06:02

Yeah, I find those really interesting because it was introducing me to artists that I didn't know anything about, or writers. So, it was it was new areas for me to learn about. And I was quite surprised because the structure was one hour discussion and then an hour of creative activity. And I was quite surprised how motivated I was. It was the creative activities. You know, I didn't really have to—I suppose because of the time restraint, you didn't you weren't able to think too much about what you were going to do. So, it was much more of an automatic response that you were doing. A dynamic response. And that was—I was quite surprised actually how that worked and what came out of me doing it that way.

Helen 07:16

Did you find that that kind of dynamic way of working continued when we started to make more individual or like more, less time constrained works?

Lesley 07:28

No. I would say I went back to being more thoughtful and more careful, I suppose. More—Thinking more about what I was doing more deeply.

Helen 07:48

And did you find a strong relationship between what we'd kind of talked about and then what you were making?

Lesley 07:56

Yes, very much so. I went back over my notes that I made and used them as a source of inspiration.

Helen 08:11

Is there a way you've worked in the past or was that a kind of slightly different way?

Lesley 08:17

No, usually I do quite a lot of research. So, this was a new way of working, which I'm actually incorporating into the work that I'm doing now, in that I'm doing more note taking than I did before. And, you know, maybe recording thoughts or reactions to something and then going back and looking at it again and using that as a springboard, rather than if you like just relying on pure research from a website or a book or a gallery.

Helen 09:10

I guess sounds like a kind of demonstration of like this personal and political which was kind of the heart of what consciousness-raising activists who came up with the idea. Were interested in that like linking together your personal reflections on kind of more political but me just kind of meaning public issues. Did you find the relationship between that and things that you were doing like, is that something you've kind of thought about in the past?

Lesley 09:42

No, I haven't. And it wasn't till you pointed it out that I realised it was something that was quite dormant in me. Or, you know, it had been something that I had been—My personal experience has influenced my views or my reactions when I was much younger, in particular I would say in the 70s in the early 80s, but that had all died down I would say, for various reasons, work pressures, having a family and then going back to work. I just didn't really have too much time to think about that dynamic. And it all came back. All came back through the consciously rising process. And I really quite like it, so I'm keeping going to become a radical you know, late 60 year old.

Helen 10:58

I had a question in about—Let's see—Yeah, that was—it was designed as an activist practice and is there anything in its activist roots that infused during interaction with the group and the work that you made?

Lesley 11:33

What do you mean by infused?

Helen 11:37

Influenced or were you?

Lesley 11:39

To me I was influenced by other people's experiences because at times there was common ground. But at other times other women's experiences were so different from mine. I realised how fortunate I was to have been able to have been such an independent young woman and to have followed my own path and made my own decisions. And there clearly were women in the group who hadn't had that same opportunity. And although I was—I'm aware of women who have been much more restrained or restricted in their lives. It really brought home to me when, you know I was sitting in a circle with them be it virtually or face to face.

Helen 13:04

So, you'd say you learn things about or reflected on things in your own life and through the process of learning through about other people's—That's something that I kind of found really powerful in it by hearing other people's experience that you hear or own experience in that shared space and then it brings you to look upon it differently.

Lesley 13:27

Yeah, there's no doubt the power of telling your story. Everyone has a voice, everyone has something to say, and if you chose to listen, it can really make a difference to you.

Helen 13:44

Do you think it was an important part of the process to you that we had the public outcome in the exhibition?

Lesley 13:49

It was for me personally, but I think overall for the project, I don't think it would have mattered because I think it still would have just been a really worthwhile experience. To have gone through this and if nobody saw the artwork or the, you know, the outputs that we produced, or read the words, for the women who took part I think that was—that would have been would have been okay. And it would have been okay for me as well if it didn't go any further. So, I would say it was the icing on the cake. Yes. Having the exhibition and that it was so well received by people. Again, it was a bit like being in the circle. People's reaction to the exhibition was really very moving. People really resonated with it. It had a message for them.

Helen 15:10

Yeah. When you are making the works, we're thinking about an audience for them. Were you making the works for yourself, for the group, for a public or—

Lesley 15:21

I was making the works for myself and for the group. I was not thinking—I don't think about—when I produce my work I do not think about an audience. I don't produce work for the viewer. My work is personal to me. This particular work was personal to the group, because it was influenced by the conversations we had, the input, other people's output and I saw it. And you know we all responded, we all bounced off one another.

Helen 15:56

Yeah. And we obviously showed the works kind of collectively they weren't attributed to individual artists do you think that was a kind of important part of the process, or did it not really matter to you that—

Lesley 16:15

No, I think, I think it was an important part of the process because the work wouldn't have been the work it was without the discussions and the input from other people, so whilst there was a personal element there, but it was also inextricably linked with other people's work. Thoughts, conversations as well. So, I think it was absolutely the right thing to do to have no attributes.

Helen 16:53

because I guess we talked about like collaboration and how we could make works collaboratively. And there was definitely a collaborative feel so the process although actually in the end, a lot of the works were made individually.

Lesley 17:10

They were made individually. But all the input was collaborative. Personal response. It's back to the personal is political. Yeah. That was in the output.

Helen 17:26

I suppose the most of the work that was most collaborative perhaps was a kind of activist poster, wasn't it?

Lesley 17:40

No, I don't agree with that. I think other work was pretty collaborative, if you think about the elastic bands that are used. So that came out of a discussion that was a shared experience that a number of us had about French skipping. And then, when I had done that piece with the silhouettes, Anonymous then responded to that. And she transposed that concept over to her work but interpreted it in a different way. So, there was that and when we did the session at Wild and Kind riso printers we produced a collaborative piece, that was each of us putting in our own responses, but then moving the responses around, so that they worked as one piece. So that was a collaboration as well. And the collage that we did. The big collage—

Helen 19:03

Oh right, yes of course.

Lesley 19:04

That was very much a collaborative piece which brought everybody in the group together. And I think it was really important that everybody, and the little zines, that we did, everybody's work was represented because it all had value. Everybody's mark making and words had meaning and had a place in this, not necessarily the exhibition, but just in what our final collective output was. And I think when we were in the Community Space, and we had all the work laid out, if you remember on the across the table, everybody's work. It was a real body of work that was there that had been created. And that was really very special. But the collage that we did was collaborative as well, in terms of, as I said, representing everybody's work, and then the way in which it was mounted. Everybody had a say in how that was done.

Helen 20:24

Yeah, yeah. And the medium of Riso printing, do you think that played a big role in the way that the creative outputs came together?

Lesley 20:48

No, I'm not sure. I'm not sure about that. Because when I started creating, I wasn't thinking about Riso or print at all, I can't remember at what stage we agreed—was it halfway through? That we were going to do a two dimensional—Or was it much later? Because I

came through with the textile piece. Yes, kind of whoa, I'm going to do a textile piece. Yeah. And you very gently said, actually going to be Riso print Lesley. So, I rolled up my textile and put it back in my bag. However, I did finish it to my satisfaction.

Helen 21:36

It found another output

Lesley 21:38

It found another outcome. So no, it's only much later, Riso— Sorry, I'm being hesitant here because I'm trying to think of the timeline of when that came in. But certainly, the beginning, it didn't because I was working on paper, I was stitching, I was collaging. So, I wasn't thinking on a flat, two-dimensional output at all at that point. And then of course, we moved into digital sphere as well, which was a new—which was a different way of working as well.

Helen 22:30

By the digital sphere, do you mean when we were kind of like, things had been digitised and we were kind of sharing them via the Padlet or email or as a way to kind of move works along.

Lesley 22:45

Yeah, that was a good way to get reaction to work that you were developing. But I was really thinking more about when you came with your laptop, right and work you've been scanned in and we were able to manipulate it. And again, we were doing that collectively. We sat all of us sat around the screen and looked and tried out different layouts, colours, saturations and that was a really interesting process to do because I don't have a graphics system, I can't afford one they're too expensive package to buy. Yeah. So, to have that facility and had to have someone such as yourself who knew how to work it so competently. That was very exciting. Actually, I found that quite stimulating to do so I use my little Microsoft Publisher now a little bit more creatively and getting actually better results with it than just kind of flat layouts.

Helen 24:04

Yeah, I guess like just being able to change the colour at the click of a button is quite—

Lesley 24:12

It is.

Helen 24:13

good sometimes, because you might not have the time. We were talking earlier about how long to print another colour in, if you're doing it in screen printing. Yeah, you run out of time don't you often to—

Lesley 24:24

exactly I mean, that's—it certainly helps speed up the process. You're kind of seeing the overlays in front of you and seeing the effects that you're getting. And adding texture, here or texture there rather than using studio time, doing it on the computer. Yeah. Although you

can't beat seeing it physically in front of you, get a completely different feel and texture. It does help a lot seeing it digitally beforehand.

Helen 25:06

So returning to the kind of consciousness-raising. Like obviously, it's a practice that was designed 50 plus years ago now, but do you feel it stood the test of time? Do you think it has a contemporary relevance?

Lesley 25:22

I absolutely do Helen. I am astounded. I am using it myself in a project that I'm developing courtesy of being inspired by you. I'm going to use it again. It's—oh what a great technique. Those women knew something back then.

Helen 25:40

Yeah. It's amazing how kind of perceptive it was, isn't it?

Lesley 25:43

I know. And when we did the talk in at the Glasgow Women's Library at the end of the exhibition, it was amazing the number of women also who had never come across it before but were also clearly stimulated and energised by that approach, and wanted to use it. And were saying gosh, you know, what a great way to work and this is what is needed now.

Helen 26:14

Did you find the talk an interesting process? Doing the public talk as a kind of moment to reflect on what we'd kind of talked about and what we'd made.

Lesley 26:27

Well, I enjoyed it more in Dunfermline than in Glasgow, because I was very nervous at Glasgow I was—I'm out of the way of doing public speaking now and talking about my work I find acutely embarrassing. But the audience were so nice at Glasgow Women's Library. Glasgow Women's Library themselves were so nice and so supportive. That when we repeated that at Dunfermline I felt much more confident about what I was doing. And knowing that people thought this was good. This is a good thing to do.

Helen 27:08

Yeah, it wasn't just going to fall flat.

Lesley 27:12

No.

Helen 27:20

Was learning new skills, an important thing—part of taking part in the group was setting an expectation you had or—

Lesley 27:28

No

Helen 27:28

or something that was a positive outcome? Did you learn any new skills?

Lesley 27:33

I did. I learned about Riso printing. And I learned about—I've never worked on a collaborative basis before with artists.

Helen 27:42

Yeah.

Lesley 27:42

So yeah, those were particularly collaborative working, which I think as I had expressed quite strongly at the beginning, that's not for me. No, no, no, I don't want my thoughts influenced by others. Boy, how wrong was I.

Helen 28:02

As well, I think there was a concern of like, dampening the creative spark through a kind of—

Lesley 28:09

Yes

Helen 28:10

—kind of like overly—

Lesley 28:11

And it didn't. In fairness, it was probably because the group, we all worked well together.

Helen 28:18

Yeah.

Lesley 28:21

I know, I've spoken to other people. And sometimes, you know, you get big dogs, usually men, who dominate, and that is not a good way to work. But that was, that was not at all everybody was equal. Everybody was respected. So no, I didn't go in to learn new skills. I went, as I said, right at the beginning of this interview, I went in to do something creative. I wanted to do something creative and be stimulated and have a purpose. And it just became so much more than that. And I did learn new skills.

Helen 28:58

Is there anything you would have changed about the experience; you can be as candid as you like Lesley?

Lesley 29:11

I don't really think so. I can't think what I would want to change. I just thought it worked really well. I think my answer has to be no.

Helen 29:32

Amazing. Is there anything else you'd like to say? I haven't asked you specifically about

Lesley 29:40

I think how well Zoom worked. I think a lot of people would maybe have—wouldn't perhaps think, oh, Zoom for creativity. Or to build up, you know, how do you build up trust virtually a group of people you're not actually seeing face to face. But I mean, I was taken aback by how well that worked. It worked really well. And I think as I said before, it was also a very level playing field because I was coming from quite a, you know, I lived quite a distance from Glasgow, ie Dunfermline and not having to travel over to Glasgow. Well, I couldn't have done it anyway, during COVID, meant I was able to participate. So yeah, that worked surprisingly, that works quite well.

Helen 30:45

Just one final question. In terms of your own work, how would you reflect on the things that you made for as part of the project? Were they kind of characteristic of the types of work that you made? Or did it take you in new directions or—

Lesley 31:05

I think it confirmed that I'm an art activist and that's my work has a meaning to it. It's not pretty pictures. That's not what I do and I think it gave me confidence to continue working that way. And that that's what floats my boat I suppose.

Helen 31:41

Thanks very much Lesley. That was really great.

Lesley 31:45

Honestly, it was—It's all genuine Helen. You should be very proud of what you achieved with that project.

APPENDIX 12.3: F

APPENDIX 12.3.0: 31 OCT 2023

• 50:55

SPEAKERS

Helen, F

Helen 00:26

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for evaluation. I printed out a tonne of questions that I believe I asked Lesley this time last year.

F 00:38

Awesome.

Helen 00:42

Just to get a sense of how like the project developed and the different things that you got out of it or didn't get out of it and like—feel free to be as honest as you like—

F 00:55

I will be yeah

Helen 00:56

Constructive evaluation is useful definitely, it doesn't need to be glossed over and obviously like the same level of confidentiality applies as to all the things that we did before. Okay, so what drew you to take part in the group?

F 01:18

So, it's been a few different things. Because I'm trying to think that time, had we gone into lockdown yet or did we all arrange to be in the group before lockdown had started?

Helen 01:29

We were already in lockdown, it was so—it was—I started meeting with people in December 2020 and the group started in the start of February 2021.

F 01:41

Okay, so part of the reason I wanted to join was to do with isolation I was experiencing during lockdown. But also as well, because they've been in a few other groups with you already, I knew that it would be a safe space to work in, but also that anything that we thought about or talked about or whatever was dealt with, with respect and dignity. There's another word that can't put my finger on it—decorum. Just sensitively but in the best way. I'm trying to think—and the other reason will obviously be to just continue my own artistic practice. That was the other reason for me. So yeah.

Helen 02:35

So, mix of the kind of discursive and creative.

F 02:40

Yeah, definitely. I liked that we were going to do writing on as well. Because I hadn't realised how big an influence any creative writing I have done has been on my art. So, this was an almost a chance to consciously bring the two together, which I hadn't really worked in that way too often before.

Helen 03:03

So, we started with our discussions, predominantly, and how did you find those?

F 03:10

I did really like them. It took a wee bit just to get used to the using the feminist consciousness-raising principles as our kind of group structure. But I did welcome the chance to try and work that way. And what I've found is now that if I'm in any group settings and the rules—the group rules, or the house rules aren't quite as extensive as the consciousness-raising ones, I actually find it really difficult to be in the group space and participate properly. I thought that was quite interesting.

Helen 03:54

What do you think those rules enabled for you personally? Or their absence?

F 04:01

Yes. When they're there that helps me to—I mean, I do talk a lot, but I do also think that I'm a good listener. I try my best, but it allowed me to go even deeper into to my listening skills and really absorb what people were saying at the time. I probably try to avoid that just because I feel things quite a lot anyway. So maybe, I aren't— it will look like I'm engaged, and I am engaged with people, but I have to hold something back quite a lot of the time, does that make sense to you.

Helen 04:37

Did us being online make that a bit easier to broach that?

F 04:41

Definitely. I love that about it as well. I forgot about that because it was online. I mean I know it was very difficult for us to meet at all in person at the stage the group started so I probably would have found that a lot harder even if we had been able to. But online was just—it helped me like I could sit and footter and fidget with my toys when I needed. It was super helpful not to have my camera on that's just—now when I'm online I can't open it any other way. So, like there's no point in a GP asking to request to see me on a video chat. Because I cannot switch the camera on. So, distracting. So, there is definitely accessibility needs or requirements that I have. That the rules that we decided on amongst us that were in place really helped me to be able to, like operate by which I'm never usually in group spaces where I get to just be. I have to like manage myself a lot.

Helen 05:48

I think it was a good discussion, wasn't it, like setting those—some of the rules out like between ourselves that we had the consciousness-raising rules, but then the accessibility

like what was okay and not okay, like the either it wasn't perceived that you were being rude that you've had your camera off. Like I think people genuinely did accept that that was allowing you to participate and—

F 06:12

Definitely.

Helen 06:13

—you weren't just being—

F 06:14

—difficult or wanting to be different or anything like that. It's no—I think but to say like it's not even specifically accessibility stuff on its own, the consciousness-raising principles, nurtured my ability to be able to fulfil my own access needs. Just by the way it's set up. Like for neurodivergent people it can be very helpful for things to be spelled out to the absolute letter, because it just takes so much anxiety away from us and stress about when I do the right thing at the right time. Will I say the right thing—like I don't know these are typical neurodivergent types of stresses or anxieties you might have in a social situation. And just by the way that the consciousness-raising principles are it really allowed that to be facilitated for me without feeling difficult or that was asking for anything extra or making things harder for yourself as a facilitator, like when I'm in other spaces that don't use consciousness-raising principles, I find everything harder. And that's not because I'm not afraid to ask for what I need. It's just because it's harder for me to operate under those types of neurotypical rules. I don't know I can't really put it into a better way than that.

Helen 07:46

Were there certain topics that you found more interesting or easy to discuss and were there other ones that you found uncomfortable or—

F 07:56

it was really—I don't know what the right word is. But it was strange to go so far back to my childhood. Just because of hitting 40 and above, and then it feeling like it was not even just so long ago, it felt like it was a different lifetime ago because technically several (laughs) but some of that made it difficult because it was difficult times that it was thinking about because the topic we were looking at but there was also really nice stuff that came out with that as well. Memories I had forgotten about, or stuff maybe that was buried under a lot of traumatic stuff. So even if there was difficult things, it wasn't all difficult. And there was some really nice things that came up. I remember or maybe just allowed myself to—Yeah, it's okay that I was like that when I was wee it doesn't mean not made me any less of a human being.

Helen 09:14

Yeah, because I think with their Platform group, we didn't follow that like chronological line with the topics. And that obviously is set out in the consciousness-raising packet that we used, and I actually think it was really beneficial to kind of go through that we then understood where people were coming from, like all those experiences that people had had that built up to the point that we're seeing the women that we were sat in a circle with.

F 09:49

Yeah, there's definitely something that you can't get out of just like dipping in and out of a timeline the way that we did at Platform and like that was okay as well. Because maybe that was easier for the ladies in that group actually, because I feel like maybe when you get to a certain age it maybe it's harder to go that far back and then just keep looking. Do you know what I mean? But I feel like in this instance, it was super helpful. Probably because a lot of the stuff we were talking about was so personal. And for a lot of people, I'll use the word stressful, I don't want to say traumatic because maybe it wasn't for everybody, but difficult stuff to deal with. When I'm trying to think back or even that feels like so long ago, we were meeting it so—

Helen 10:36

I think some of the things people were talking about they were carrying trauma with them and then other people were just reflecting on—

F 10:47

their experiences. So, it's quite interesting, then I think that but good as well and a nod to your project planning and facilitation. It's good that people felt safe enough to be able to be vulnerable and talk about such difficult experiences. Because I feel for a couple of them, they probably hadn't really discussed a lot of that stuff very much before. So, then it becomes more important to be able to let people—

Helen 11:23

Were there any topics that you might like us to cover that we didn't get a chance to?

F 11:30

I don't think we looked at disability as a topic did we?

Helen 11:34

No, we looked at health and bodies but—

F 11:37

I feel like disability, but that's just from my own personal perspective probably like personal reasons that I want to look at stuff like that. But I am interested in disability in the context of the wider world that we live in, because I'm neurodivergent and the world is not set up for neurodivergent people. It's not even about necessarily physical disability. I'm really interested in how could systems be done better? So there fairer for everybody, you know. Because it's a lot to ask neurodivergent kids to sit through such a prescribed school day. It's difficult for children to do that anyway. But I feel if you're neurodivergent like school is definitely somewhere you can be up against it.

Helen 12:31

And then get labelled and pigeonholed from there on in.

F 12:36

And then just never actually get the chance to explore what you want to in your life. I feel really sad for people who don't get that. For me, I feel like your education and your schooling is hopefully preparing you to be that inquisitive and feel brave enough to explore what you want to in the world. I don't know sometimes I think I'm too idealistic (laughs). But that's just how I see things, so.

Helen 13:07

We talked quite a lot about intersectionality. Not within the sessions themselves at all having transcribed them all, but when we were making the work and the exhibition and particularly in preparation for the talk.

F 13:23

That's quite interesting in itself actually.

Helen 13:26

We didn't talk—it wasn't, nobody said it at all in the transcripts of the recorded consciousness-raising sessions.

F 13:34

I wonder if—I'm trying to think of like the mix of ethnicities that was in the group. Because I wonder if when it's a more white centric space, by accident, I'm not saying it by design, but just how it's turned out, I feel like intersectionality is not always something that's apparent as an issue or topic to talk about. But I don't know, maybe when you go so far back into things as well, it's not obvious that actually there's— you've had intersectionality throughout your life, is like do you know what I mean? I think that's probably something in Western society we've been encouraged to forget about intersectionality because—okay, so is intersectionality—it's where all your differences meet?

Helen 14:31

Yeah. So, like, I guess it was a lot of black feminists who developed it. Thinking about it in terms of race, but race—all those different kind of protected characteristics race, gender—

F 14:49

class

Helen 14:50

—class and disability. Yeah.

F 14:57

It is interesting. I was looking at intersection—Something else I was watching they were talking about intersectionality recently. I think it was even something else like a tarot reader that came out with that as well.

Helen 15:11

Because I feel like we did talk about it quite a bit at the talk. Like how experience as a woman of colour would be different than—

F 15:18

Oh 1000, than someone has grown up the majority.

Helen 15:22

—a woman or a man of colour.

F 15:25

Yep.

Helen 15:27

And that is quite unique that way that those intersect. And I suppose the more of those different characteristics that intersect together—

F 15:38

—the more complicated you feel as a human being. Speaking from experience. That even I'm thinking like intersectionality is the thing that actually makes us—like binds us all. Because even though we're all different is intersectionality not where we can understand each other. Yeah, as well. I'm grasping at right.

Helen 16:03

Yeah, I guess so.

F 16:05

Like, in a way. Because you know, my brain is on many different levels, but unless—

Helen 16:10

—you're like a middle class white straight man.

F 16:14

We're not including them. But I mean, everyone else. But yeah, I feel like there's—it's so funny that then it was a subtext of what we were actually discussing. But didn't come out until we got to the talk, because that was the other thing I was gonna say, I think is probably good, I've had this much time between the project finishing and the evaluation, to just allow things to keep simmering in my head all the time, because I do sometimes dig out the notebook with the writing exercises on it and have a look. There is work—excuse me—I did start prepping to make that continued on from—so that's what I wanted all those old prints for like, I haven't forgotten about any of that. Real life has stopped me getting into my art at the moment. So, there's definitely other things I want to go back and look at that we talked about, not just about disability and health, there will be other stuff, but those were the ones that like straightaway struck out me and I thought, oh, I'm actually not ready to put that down yet.

Helen 17:17

Yeah, and did you feel there were things that made it into the artworks that were processed and where there other things that the process—you didn't want to bring to the process? Like it was—or it was too—

F 17:38

Oh there was stuff I had to leave out yeah. But there's stuff maybe I've—while I've made it I didn't even realise how deep it was. But seeing everything on the walls actually made it more apparent, I think and listening to other people's reactions as well. I don't know what really—because for me anyway, probably because of my neurodivergence, I'm constantly in another world. And so, when I make artwork, I'm in another world, making artwork. But when you make art, you're already in another world anyway, because you're so absorbed. So, I have so many layers of being absorbed in what I'm doing that I make the work and then maybe I just don't even see it the same way as anybody else. Until enough time has passed that I can process it properly. Or listen to other people's perspective of what they thought they've seen when they look at the work. I think time to reflect has been important, it's allowed me to see the value in what we were doing. Not that I didn't think it was valuable at the time, but it's allowed me to see more—even more levels of value. Does that make sense to you?

Helen 19:00

Some of the prints you made were so poignant. People were—I've just been transcribing comments from the comments book just up in the archive now and it's hard to gauge what people got from seeing the show, but people were—there was a lot of like, comments saying how thought provoking and how brave people's works were and it really felt like people were able to glean something of that process from seeing—

F 19:32

I like that.

Helen 19:33

—that exhibition like, what was it that allowed that to be translated into a creative form?

F 19:44

I'm sure I remember like a few people looking at the works and saying that they wanted to try some stuff like that themselves, not necessarily prints, but it was helping to spark some creativity maybe they hadn't accessed for a while or they didn't know they had or whatever or they felt they were lacking from. Yeah. It's interesting.

Helen 20:08

Was it important to you that there was the exhibition, that kind of public sharing of it?

F 20:13

Actually, yes. And not even just because—I already was a practicing artist before that. I think that—because this is what I understood from watching some of the other group members, I understood how important it actually is to show the work at the end of it. Because it can feel like, well what did I make the work for otherwise? But also because of what I just spoke about, that seeing your work in situ really allows you to view it and get more out of it that you just can't get from making it or looking back at it later. And I'm not even just talking about a creative satisfaction there's something on a really deeply personal level probably goes back to when we were all kids and we wanted that gold star on the chart, but you know, it feels good to, 'oh, I fucking made this, yeah'. It looks brilliant or all people are—I'm

sure people were saying there were quite moved by the fan prints as well. I'm sure I remember having a conversation.

Helen 21:17

Yeah.

F 21:18

It's hard because obviously I didn't want to start talking about everything either.

Helen 21:22

Yeah, yeah.

F 21:23

So, there's that kind of management but when you're made stuff, and you can see other people's reaction to it, and like there's no other way to get that other than display the work for others to come and see. So yeah, that was a really important thing for me. But then if I even just look at on an artistic level, because I'm already an artistic practitioner, it's always good to have an exhibition or some way to show the work. I feel after you've made it because then you get to talk to people or they get to talk, oh, I didn't know that project was running or what did you guys talk about or I didn't know about feminist consciousness-raising principles like all these things. Yeah, it can open up lots of discussions that might not happen before.

Helen 22:08

Yeah, because I mean the talk was really well attended wasn't it and people were—wanted to know a lot about the whole process of it.

F 22:17

Everything. And can we join, I remember being a common thing or when is the next one that was the other one people kept asking.

Helen 22:33

So, I suppose maybe talking about like, the creative side of things as we started to incorporate kind of creative activities, alongside—when we were doing the consciousness-raising. Did you find that a good balance to do discussion things and then—

F 22:58

Yeah, I really enjoyed that actually, as well. And because that's not a way that I often get to work either in group spaces that are creative, it's not usually like that. You're just told what you need to do. And you go there to do that. And then you leave again, usually or as part of a bigger project, you keep going back. But I feel like it was really good to have the discussions and then do some of the—sometimes it was the creative writing, sometimes it was like a visual thing. I really enjoyed that. I thought it was—I don't know really healthy way of working actually.

Helen 23:35

Yeah.

F 23:36

Because when you're talking about difficult stuff, it can be hard to then try and be creative after that because your mind is—especially if it's trauma, you've been carrying your mind back then again. So, doing those kinds of creative things, especially after the discussions I found really helpful for managing like my own emotions or thoughts after it.

Helen 23:58

I suppose at that point, we weren't working towards the exhibition that I that hadn't been kind of confirmed. So, we were doing them in and of themselves really weren't where there was no outcome for them other than to share amongst the group and as a way to, perhaps, to process some of the things that had been talked about.

F 24:19

I thought it was a good way to access difficult feelings as well, because they're not always easy to come back to your mind. You know, most of us try not to go there. So that's why it's hard to go back to them. You're not used to going back to them or not in a conscious way that you would in a group, where you're sitting and talking. So, I think yeah, I found that helpful in like managing any difficult emotions that came up.

Helen 24:47

And then when we moved to meeting in this space in the library in person, we then moved only to making creative things.

F 24:59

I was ready for it at that time, though. Again, I'm thinking back to so that was when we were able to start meeting again after—

Helen 25:05

It was very fortuitous really in terms of the way that restrictions lifted.

F 25:09

100%. And coming here was like one of the only things I was doing with any regularity apart from getting my shopping. So, for me on that level, yeah, it was good again, that helped with isolation. And it helped me not to feel too detached from my own artistic practice as well, that was good. Because my life is such that at the moment, I still cannot write. I can't really be creative at the moment. It's still difficult. And if I think to back then we were all living through one of the most stressful things any of us have probably ever gone through in our lives. But I couldn't stop fucking writing. It was good. I was prolific. That's the word for it, honestly, because it was in a few other research projects as well at the same time and I was writing for them too. So yeah. And then do my own just like—my own writing for myself to process life.

Helen 26:15

Yeah, because at the talk you presented a number of poems, didn't you, that were work not included in the—

F 26:21

Oh, yeah, no I forgot about those.

Helen 26:23

Yeah.

F 26:24

I was prolific (laughs). I'm jealous, I'm not like that at the moment. But it's good to—you know, I think things like that are helpful as well, because when I have a creative lull, I can now think back, 'oh, yeah. It's okay. It will come back again. I'm capable of it'.

Helen 26:41

Yeah.

F 26:42

Do you know what I mean? And it's understandable that sometimes life does become too much, and you just actually can't find the creativity in you, well apart from how you dress, I can just about manage that. But aside from that, nothing much else creative is getting done.

Helen 26:58

There was quite a bit of people dressing—I remember people were dressing for each other for when they came to the group?

F 27:07

Oh, yeah, I remember. I'd forgotten about that. There was all sorts of cool stuff like that going on. Cuddly toys were getting brought in because yeah, my stim toy and thought that was all cool as well. Yeah, I really liked—Yeah, there was a lot of like camaraderie which I enjoyed as well. And I felt that was probably a really fortuitous time too, because we were coming out of lock down.

Helen 27:28

Yeah.

F 27:30

Like I live on my own. Not everybody had people around them. So yeah, that was good. It feels so long ago, I want to sit and actually think about it properly (laughs).

Helen 27:43

How did you find the collaborative approaches to making in the group?

F 27:47

I like it, but I also struggle with that. And I enjoy to work collaboratively but sometimes it can feel like other people are taking your ideas before you've finished developing them. And that's okay though. I have a lot of ideas. So that wasn't an issue but I did notice I kind of felt a bit weird at points not all the time, just sometimes.

Helen 28:17

So, there was a bit of a mix wasn't there of like, people producing their own stuff. But then there were a number of things that were specifically collaborative.

F 28:31

Those were the easier ones obviously. But the other thing I was aware of was that not everybody had had the opportunity to be so intensely creative, like we were in the group, so for sure, happy to give away anything under those circumstances. Because I just would love everyone in the world to be creative as much as they could. So yeah, it wasn't—like it didn't make me feel any kind of negative way. But I was just like, oh, I kind of would have liked to have kept going with that one. You know, like after you've said it out loud, and you see what someone else is doing. Oh fuck. I could have had a good go at that too (laughs). Yeah, nothing bad and that way, I suppose that's like—it's not even competition, I don't want to use that word. I'm struggling to get my words today, Helen. Not good for an interview. But like—Yeah, that kind of, I suppose vibing off of each other. There was a lot of that in the group.

Helen 29:27

Yeah, I would definitely say like people were observing what each other's was doing in the space and that kind of making in the space.

F 29:35

Yeah. That's a good thing, though, as well. Again, I feel that shows how comfortable everyone felt in the space and the relationship we had all worked on building together and the rapport. So interesting to think back to.

Helen 30:03

So, kind of thinking about the collaborative nature, like it was decided that we wouldn't label work specifically. Like how did you feel about that? That they weren't—those were your works.

F 30:18

I liked that they weren't labelled that. I really liked that. For me, it didn't matter because I knew which works were mine. And I also feel it didn't matter because we had taken so much care in working out our layout for hanging the works, that there was clear sections.

Helen 30:40

Yeah.

F 30:40

So even though they weren't labelled, even visitors, I would like to think realised, oh this looks like it's all meant to be together. And this looks like it's all meant to be together. So. And then we had the wall with all the lots of wee pictures and that was like, super collaborative. So, I think balance is a word that I'm coming back to a lot there was levels of balance for lots of different aspects.

Helen 31:06

Do you feel operating under that slightly more anonymous umbrella allowed you to maybe explore things that if—

F 31:16

Oh it was more—

Helen 31:17

—you know, like that. That's your work.

F 31:20

Definitely. I think I probably—if I knew my name was going to be on it then maybe wouldn't have gone as deep into things. It's different for me, I just never want my ethnicity to be obvious. Because it's been the bane of my life. And even if we had had—because I use the alias—so even if I had had that there, I don't know for me I would feel a bit sad still, because I would know, I know why I'm using the alias. But then I just get told I think too much (laughs). Like when can you step it down? But I do really feel like the anonymity definitely allowed for levels of exploration that couldn't be achieved, if you had your—for me anyway—if I had my name up there.

Helen 32:18

Because I guess the flip of it is like, did you feel some of your voice was taken away by it not being attributed to you? Did you feel the benefits, more of the—

F 32:30

I felt the benefits more of the anonymity actually, yeah. Because I can go and explore any of these themes myself. That is the benefit of actually being a practicing artist, I feel like in this kind of situation. Like I wouldn't give it a second thought to go away and certainly explore these themes further, whereas for other participants, they might need to be encouraged or might not be as obvious to them that it's okay for them to go back and sit themselves and do some stuff. I don't know. I feel like I'm not explaining myself well today.

Helen 33:05

No you are.

F 33:08

So long as it's making sense. I'm aware of time, but we should have time for the last couple if you—

Helen 33:15

Oh gosh, it's twenty past three. Did you feel a connection between the personal and political, in women's lives was explored through the group? I know that we talked about that as a kind of concept, but do you feel like—

F 33:36

It was, but it was in subtle ways, I think. It wasn't necessarily an obvious way, but actually, even if you think about the topics that we discussed, I suppose they were all personally

political, or politically personal, depending on the topic. But yeah, I still feel like it was explored in it. But in much more subtle ways. But maybe that's a good thing.

Helen 34:02

Yeah.

F 34:03

Because I feel like while I've been growing up, it's very much been aggressive discussions in your face, for any of those types of things. And that hasn't really gotten women anywhere. And I'm not even saying we're the ones who are making the discussions like that. We live in a male centric world, so that's what we were up against for like for decades. So yeah, that's just a nicer way of doing it.

Helen 34:27

Yeah, I feel like people were connecting things that they were experiencing—Well, I feel like you were definitely connecting things that you were experiencing with a wider social structure that—

F 34:42

I'm really lucky. I've just always had the ability to be able to see from that bigger perspective, even if I've never understood what I'm seeing. So, I kind of take it for granted that everybody else is like that. But suppose it's not really necessarily an obvious way to be for people but yeah, I did. Doing anything creative like that always allows me to make connections between stuff.

Helen 35:07

Yeah.

F 35:08

Or work things out better or process them. It's the same thing but yeah,

Helen 35:12

Yeah, I guess when we like had the opportunity to make our activist poster up in Aberdeen, like that actually injected a different type of energy into the group making.

F 35:25

Oh god, I had forgotten about that as well. Oh, man. So, we were prolific in that group as well actually. All of us. I forgot we did that too. Oh, yeah, definitely. So then that I feel brought in another perspective again, and I wonder if that—did we do the poster was after the work had been made? Or?

Helen 35:48

Yeah, it was like early December. So, the show was up and I was like—

F 35:52

Oh right, that's it you went—Yeah,

Helen 35:54

We can go to Aberdeen and—

F 35:57

It's interesting because I wonder if the poster might have come out differently if that had been something that had happened during the art making for the exhibition like? Or maybe that's just me, my artistic creativity wandering but yeah, it was—

Helen 36:14

I think that's interesting.

F 36:17

I think like by the end of it, it was pretty obvious it was political.

Helen 36:22

Yeah I mean it really fired all of you up. I was like, what might you want to make an activist poster and it was like, 'and another thing'—

F 36:32

Oh that was a great discussion, that we had in here didn't we. That was a great discussion. I mean, we all felt sad and upset at points too, if I remember correctly that day, but I feel by the end of it, we all did feel very empowered. It was interesting how just by women sitting and trying to work things out in discussion, that it can have that kind of effect.

Helen 36:57

That's interesting. I have not thought about that, that that work that was in the exhibition was finished, and it was installed, your personal contributions, and then it was like we can do something creative together, but like it was outside. It was like following on from that.

F 37:16

Definitely. Yeah. This is why I knew there was stuff I wanted to go back to. It will have been partly to do with the poster as well. It will have. Have you got last couple? I'll keep the answers short.

Helen 37:28

Oh, yeah. Did taking part of the group change your perspective on women's experience, including your own?

F 37:38

It probably did a little, but that's just the wisdom that comes with hearing more women's experiences. I feel like. It's just when I have experiences like that lets me not be so hard on myself. Because I realise, 'oh, actually, there was a big collective of us who are going through the same things, but maybe it's a different reason that's pushing it'. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. A bit kinder of to myself, I could be because of what I was hearing.

Helen 38:15

Do you think there's a contemporary relevance for consciousness-raising? Did it translate?

F 38:20

Yes. I feel very strongly about this. You probably already know, Helen. Definitely, because I've spoken about and we did in the group speak about, I genuinely felt that women wouldn't be struggling this much in the year 22—in the year 20 anything. I had honestly thought we would have the same wages, the same rights on a daily basis as any man would have. I certainly didn't expect things to still be as difficult for women as they are in their day-to-day life. So yeah, a big place for this stuff in my eyes.

Helen 39:01

And the idea of kind of women taking time out together, making quite a defined space kind of discussion.

F 39:11

I think that's important. That's what I was saying. I think before you started recording, you can't always understand things just being in your own head all the time. And that those types of discussions where it's quite prescribed the space that you're in, I don't know I just feel it's more useful. Even if it feels intense at the time. I just think that you'll get so much more out of it on a personal level, or even emotionally if that's just where you are in order to be in a safe space and let things out. Because some people that's all they need, and that's okay as well.

Helen 39:48

Yeah. Did you experience any benefits from taking part in the group, in the c-r group, in the consciousness-raising group, but the group in general?

F 39:59

Yeah, it probably gave me a lot of confidence in myself actually, in my artistic abilities, I think. I felt a difference in that, and it's definitely faltered since then. But it allowed me to view what I do in my own artistic practice in a really different way, like in such a positive way. I think for many years, I've believed what everyone else around me told me that it wasn't a real job. And I was just faffing about every day. But that's not really of what art has ever been for me. It's always been about communication. And I think actually being in the group allowed me to work that out. Because I hadn't realised that before about myself.

Helen 40:40

Yeah.

F 40:41

Because art is something I've done since I was knee high to grasshoppers. So I feel like it helped me understand that art is my natural way to communicate with the world, whether it's consuming it, or whether it's making it myself, because even I just love to look at other people's art, and have always been like that too. I'm quite lucky I suppose that my brain's like that.

Helen 41:07

Was learning new skills important?

F 41:10

Yeah, actually, it was. I think that was a good thing because of what we were all collectively going through with lockdown. I think, for me learning the new skills, so how to be in a group that had quite strict, I don't want to call them rules, let's call them principles, because it wasn't rules.

Helen 41:27

Yeah.

F 41:28

It was a code that we all agreed we would conduct ourselves by. And even though it was challenging at times, because it can be for neurodivergent people. Actually, yes, definitely felt like one of the safest spaces I've been in, like probably ever, which is quite mad because I've been in a lot of different community spaces. That's a really good thing. Really positive to take from it, Helen.

Helen 41:56

I guess you've gone on to be in a couple of other groups specifically at GWL, like do you feel you might have joined those anyway or—

F 42:08

No, I know I wouldn't have. I know that that will have come out of—so that was the other really good thing about coming here every week or every two weeks however often we were meeting, for the practical sessions. It's allowed me to feel more oriented in this space, which isn't far from where I live. So I'm happy to come here myself whenever I feel like it, which isn't a lot at the moment but still, like I'm not averse to come here myself. Definitely gave me confidence to come and be in other groups here. But I'm very fussing about the group spaces I'll be in now. I feel like we were kind of spoiled with consciousness-raising but spoiled in the best way. Because it's just it's allowed me to know what I will and won't put up with now in group spaces. Because I know facilitation is not easy. But there are sometimes when you're in group spaces where facilitators, they're not really facilitating, they're just allowing people to run riot.

Helen 43:07

Right, okay.

F 43:08

And if you're neurodivergent that's really difficult to deal with, it stresses you out. Because it's probably irritating you at the same time as you really needing the person to just abide by the rules that you're trying really hard to abide by. Like, I don't know when I'm talking about this kind of sounds a bit school, kid-ish. But like I say when you're in those group spaces, you're talking about difficult stuff. You've all agreed to be a certain way. But like, not everywhere is like that.

Helen 43:38

Yeah. Because I guess the other groups were more kind of trauma related.

F 43:44

And then actually what I've found difficult as having to sit and listen to everyone else's trauma. Because it's just triggered my own. Actually, in the later groups that I joined, but that's okay, because maybe I felt a bit stronger in the mind that I could deal with it. Because of all this consciousness-raising stuff we've been doing and the talks and bits of journaling because you were encouraging us to write as much as we wanted to in between as well. There's things I definitely wouldn't—I didn't share in the group, but I wrote them.

Helen 44:16

Yeah.

F 44:17

Maybe they're not even in that journal, but like, that came at that time when I was doing the writing. So, there have been a lot of helpful aspects, but they're not always positive. What it has allowed me to know is what I can and cannot cope with—

Helen 44:31

Yeah

F 44:32

—in group spaces. So, I feel like that's always helpful because then you know what you need to do for yourself. It's worse when you don't know, because then you don't know how to help yourself.

Helen 44:46

What did you specifically enjoy about taking part in the group?

F 44:51

Probably the camaraderie, yeah, I quite enjoyed that. When we were meeting in person that was my favourite but I did actually really enjoy the online sessions too. It was good to know, oh at this day at this time—

Helen 45:05

Yeah.

F 45:06

—my routine is this, and while I'm there these are our codes of conduct this, this and this.

Helen 45:12

Yeah.

F 45:13

And we will be doing it like, it's quite helpful to have—like I say, things spelled out when you're neurodivergent. So, having the agendas and knowing beforehand what we were talking about. They're all things that made it even easier for me to be in this space.

Helen 45:29

Yeah. Is there anything you would have changed about it?

F 45:34

Probably had us do it not through lockdown? (laughter) But I can't change that. But that's the only thing, I think.

Helen 45:43

Wipe the pandemic away.

F 45:44

Totally, get that to fuck. I do genuinely feel like it's one of the very first projects where I think almost everything was thought about and considered. And so no, you should give yourself credit for that because you planned really well, you did. And I feel like that came across in the sessions, as well as like after it all, so yeah.

Helen 46:12

Is there anything else you'd like to say I've not asked you about?

F 46:19

Like, I can't think because now I'm put on the spot. If it comes back to me, I'll let you know. But probably nothing I haven't already said no, it was a really enjoyable experience, even though it was also happening—Because not just pandemic but it was one of the most difficult things I've been going through my own personal life. So, to have felt like I got so much out of it, it's been really good. And yeah, for it to have allowed me to see my own art stuff in a different light. That's just, that's priceless. I don't even know if I would have ever got that in any other way. You know that discovery about what I'm doing isn't worthless and meaningless. Actually, there's a lot of fucking value in.

Helen 47:10

Really well received, wasn't it? And—

F 47:12

If I even just think about the stuff it's made me think about wanting to make since then as well. I imagine it's things that other people could get something out of too.

Helen 47:24

Yeah, I think it was the whole, you know, we planned the exhibition, like you literally—you and I hung it together. Like it was—

F 47:34

I do remember that. Yeah, it was the creative stuff, wasn't it? But like—it felt like proper teamwork.

Helen 47:42

Yeah. I guess it was trying to guide the group but not dominate and let it—

F 47:48

—that was nice. Because usually when you're in that type of creative group, the lead artist is always making the work as well. And I found that quite different this time. At first, I was like, oh, oh, like there won't be lots by Helen in this. Like I knew you would have guided and had influences here and there. But at first, I was quite surprised. But then I think I realised what you were trying to do is just to allow us to kind of go with it. Which I really appreciated it even if I wasn't an artist, I think I would still really have appreciated that.

Helen 48:24

Yeah, because I suppose I was involved, in some of your works, helping technically.

F 48:38

It's good, though. I feel it maybe gave you a different perspective or allowed you to see things differently. Because you weren't really involved in producing work at the exact same time.

Helen 48:49

Yeah.

F 48:50

Like, do you know what I mean?

Helen 48:52

Yeah. Because like, through this vast amount of reading that I've done during the process, like, you know, there's different ways that people work with "Master" printers.

F 49:03

Yeah (laughs).

Helen 49:05

Like, one would be that you tell me what to do, and—

F 49:09

You go and do it.

Helen 49:10

Yeah, but we did it more of a kind of like—I suppose it did vary depending who I was working with, but like, there was a bit more of a back-and-forth kind of like suggesting things or like—

F 49:22

I think as well, when you're not sure of the medium you're being asked to use—

Helen 49:26

Yeah.

F 49:27

So for me Riso wasn't new. But to the others, it was new.

Helen 49:31

Yeah.

F 49:32

And so maybe when you're not sure of the medium you're using, there's got to be more back and forth because you probably want it to do things, maybe it's not got those capabilities of, that medium or there's things that you don't realise that it has the capabilities.

Helen 49:47

Yeah.

F 49:48

So I think—

Helen 49:50

We had discussions around the photocopying—

F 49:52

All of that.

Helen 49:52

—and like, I'm think of maybe of the health triptych that you did like, we kind of chatted about—

F 50:00

Definitely.

Helen 50:01

—photographing and scanning clothes and playing around with different things, that led to the final—

F 50:07

I liked that though as well. Sometimes when you're in group settings, you don't get as much technical input as you would like. And so, this not—I go back to the word balance again.

Helen 50:18

Yeah

F 50:19

Everything felt well balanced.

Helen 50:21

Yeah.

F 50:21

I liked that there was lots of discussions around the technical stuff between us all because it wasn't even just that we were asking you, we were all asking each other.

Helen 50:29

Yeah.

F 50:31

What do you think about this or how—I want it to look like this? I don't know how to get that. Like we were working things out between us all, which was really cool. Groups don't always operate like that. You did good.

Helen 50:46

It was good. Yes. Thank you.

F 50:48

Thank you Helen.

SPEAKERS

F

F 00:03

Something else that was really helpful for me to be able to be part of a group, and to be able to observe individual and group dynamics, which helped give me further insight that I am able to apply going forwards whenever I have my own projects, or if I need to facilitate for other people. And yeah, this other point, the last one I've got here is the group dwindling down and the final production group, and the project ended up so small, I think it was really good for my neurodivergence. I feel like I wouldn't have actually contributed as much or have taken part as much if it had been a much bigger group. That isn't just because there's more people to share the load with. I don't know, not that it's intimidating. But I think I would have felt less confident to assert my own artistic thoughts and visions for the group. Yeah, I would find that harder in a bigger group. I think in circumstances like that, I tend, which may surprise your Helen, but I tend not to say as much. And just like, I'm more happy to allow the group to do what they need to do to be happy. I feel like I'm probably too easily pleased in a group setting. But I like groups to be harmonious spaces. So I'm usually always prepared to kind of—not disregard what my own wants or needs are, but just like be much more flexible with them than other people might be in the same circumstances. I hope all of that has made sense to you. Yeah, I think that that was everything I wanted to say, because I'm sure anything else that was important, we'd already discussed.

SPEAKERS

F

F 00:00

I just had a couple of other bits to add, when I was reflecting on being part of consciously rising and my own artistic practice. I think I've said this one before, but that it allowed me to try new ways of working, which is the archive and research based approach. But specifically, I think that up until being part of CR, I didn't understand how you took your research and then made the work from that. I hadn't ever seen a full process of that before. So that was really helpful. And that ties into this other point that made me think of that being able to produce work for, plan and put on a group show was good to be able to go through that full process, rather than just simply making art based on our discussions.

APPENDIX 13: EXHIBITION COMMENTS BOOKS

APPENDIX 13.1: GLASGOW WOMEN'S LIBRARY

- So bright and beautiful! Poetic too. Love it.
- From someone who was in a consciousness raising (C-R) group in the seventies in Birmingham its refreshing and uplifting to see this way of being together as women revisited and documented in this lively way! KC
- Great to see much heart warming solidarity and art amongst women in Glasgow
- What a beautiful thing to do during lockdown. Very well put together. Much love to you all x
- I hope all the curse words and gendered expectation will cease to exist and / or hurt womxn. Love :) 11/12/21
- I love this exhibition!
- Joyous, furious and curious – loved it!
- Very thought provoking exhibition – I really like the idea of C-R group leading to these art works. Would like to be part of one!
- Awesome!
- Evocative and sincere. A pleasure to experience!
- Challenging and thought provoking impressive artwork.
- Beautiful Work
@ahahahaha
- Great to be part of this collective art project and share our creativity with you all.
- Deeply moving yet calmly beautiful at the same time.
- Fantastic. Inspiring. Beautiful. Important. Reflective.
- It just resonates a lot, even I was not attending for any process of creation, the prints represented
- And I was just thinking ... individually my intelligence is not recognised enough and appreciated...Different intelligence and I felt like I was drowning but it was still safer than home. An immigrant from Turkey.
- Flourish on! Safeguard all precious archives, we need them and each other! Great show! B

- A Lovely Space to look at. Linda Mc
- We are trying to set up a similar group for queer women in Carlisle, so it is so inspiring to see the artwork you had created here in Glasgow. Helen L
- Thank you for the stories. I love the idea of talking while creating.
- I really enjoyed my visit and seeing the Consciously Rising exhibition. Being a neurodivergent (dyslexic) author, places like this are really inspiring. Claire.
- Great to have the Joan Eardley paintings here. Really liked the perspectives and techniques in the Consciously Rising exhibition. Jenny
- Both exhibitions enlightening. D.
- Inspiring to be in this empowering space of dialogue. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and colours with us! Helen LP
- Inspired and moved by the words and images. Especially 'Tree Woman'! Jenny Rose
- Joan Eardley and Consciously Rising were such a thrilling dialogue! Thank you! Regina.
- Absolutely touching. Loved the riso! Sur5vor x
- I entered unsure
And found certainty
I have left the before
And come into the present
A present full of community
A community that I trust.
Now I go forward to embody my power
This place has enabled that.
Thank you.
- I like how you have used different things for the tatty bogle. Sadie de Main
- The words, images and presentation of the c-r group exhibition are BEAUTIFUL! Thank you for sharing.
- I learnt a poem about the tattie bogle. Myrtle.

- All the artwork ignites a fire! Thank you.
- Beautiful exhibition. Left feeling empowered and united!
- Always inspiring to visit GWL, loved Joan Eardley's paintings and felt enlivened by the Consciously Rising exhibition.

APPENDIX 13.2: DUNFERMLINE

- What an interesting and thoroughly challenging contemporary take on women's voices being heard. Beautifully presented with rich multi-layered imagery by these talented artists. Hurrah! Steve.
- Very interesting and informative. Jean.
- Really encouraging to see everything I think all the time to be put out there. Amazing! Annalise.
- Enjoyable. Anne.
- 17-3-22 A beautiful library. I have known it since I was 13 years old. Kim.
- Let the unhappiness be lessened and placed into contexts old and new. Rab.
- Thought provoking – looks like you had fun creating. Ax
- The prints and the messages are thought provoking and a clear means of getting the subject matter out there. AH
- A challenging exhibition that tells an important story – the prints look brilliant in the April sun. Andrew
- I had the privilege of a tour with one of the participants. Fascinating and touching, thank you!
- Absolutely inspiring – wonderful!!!
- Good
- Finally got along to see the excellent exhibition. Susan Smith
- Must have been fun taking part!
- What a wonderfully inspiring show. The work is very successful, and the Riso medium fits the project perfectly. I hadn't heard of C.R before so I learnt something new as well. Please keep me informed of future projects.
- The exhibition was fascinating, bold and thought provoking – really enjoyed it. Gavan
- 23.04.22 I have been absolutely inspired listening to the ladies speak today. What an incredible exhibition this has been and a great reminder that if we stand by each other's side, and voice our words, there is hope for change! Thank you very much F, Helen, Lesley and Anonymous. Sur5vor
- Inspiring! Contemporising consciousness raising combined with creative outputs fantastic.

APPENDIX 14: EXHIBITION INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The new print works in this exhibition have been created collaboratively and individually by a group of women who began meeting online during lockdown. The group used feminist consciousness-raising to facilitate open discussions. Each member shares their own experience with the group. This shared space became a starting point for making creative works on paper together.

Since the end of the summer, group members Anonymous, F and Lesley, with some help from Joy and Helen, have been working together to produce the works in the exhibition.

Background to feminist consciousness-raising

Consciousness-raising (c-r) was a practice developed in the late 1960s by the Women's Liberation Movement. C-r groups were women-only groups that met regularly in each other's homes to discuss issues relating to their lives. Going around in a circle, each woman spoke without interruption or challenge. This simple practice opened a non-judgmental space for women to share commonalities in their lives and observe differences. The aim was that by looking collectively at personal experiences, they could reflect on societal issues that contributed to their gendered oppression. Consciousness-raising was an organising tool for the Women's Liberation Movement and closely linked with the feminist idea **'the personal is political'**. Following personal discussions, groups used what they had learnt to design and carry out 'actions'* together. The 'actions' could vary from personal gestures to direct political 'actions'. The 'actions' for *Consciously Rising* are the artworks.

*'Actions' were defined by the Women's Liberation Movement as any activity specifically undertaken to further the cause of women's liberation.

Introduction to riso printing

The prints in the exhibition are all risograph prints or risos for short. Riso machines were developed in Japan in 1980 and are a type of duplicating machine. A riso machine has similarities to both photocopying and screen printing. On a riso machine, you can copy documents and images from a glass bed and make multiple copies quickly and cheaply in one colour. It is similar to screen printing as it prints each colour individually. Images are separated into different layers for printing. This way of separating layers and the specific colours of inks used in the process give riso prints a distinctive look and feel.

The prints in the exhibition were all printed at Wild Press (part of Wild and Kind) in Bridgeton and the Caseroom at the Glasgow School of Art.

Our Group - Consciously Rising

The group of women began meeting at the start of 2021, with online sessions taking place every two weeks. The sessions combined discussions using consciousness-raising along with creative making activities. In the consciousness-raising discussions, the group covered topics relating to different areas of women's lives. Sessions were dedicated to discussing childhood, school and education, adolescence, bodies and health, expectations and freedom. The prints in the exhibition grew out of ideas and insight gained from the group's circle discussions.

Initially, the group had around twelve members, but as the weeks progressed and lockdown restrictions changed, the circle grew smaller. At the end of the summer, the group were able to meet in person here at Glasgow Women's Library. This was when production for the work exhibited here began in a more focused way. Group members Anonymous, F and Lesley have worked together and individually to produce the body of prints presented here.

Meeting in person at the Library allowed the group to look at material from the Library's archive and collection together for inspiration, looking specifically at a selection of posters from the Library's extensive collection.

Meeting in person also allowed the personal dynamics of the group to flourish. Working alongside each other whilst artworks were produced, encouraged a fluid way of working. Members of the group learnt from each other's creative processes and were inspired by seeing works other members were making. Working in this way led to a rich and collaborative process.

Members have used collage, painting, sculpture, drawing, writing, and photography to make the prints in the exhibition. The works include very personal explorations of identity, which were sparked by discussions within the group. They have used printmaking to bring personal experiences from the discussions together into creative works, connecting the personal with the political.

This project is part of artist Helen de Main's PhD research project at The Glasgow School of Art.

Thanks

We want to thank all the members of Consciously Rising who have taken part throughout 2021. Each member's contribution to the circle discussions enriched the process. It allowed members to learn from each other and appreciate the different life experiences that have brought women to the place they are today.

We would also like to thank Glasgow Women's Library for hosting the group so generously and for their support with the exhibition.

Helen would like to thank her supervisory team, Professor Susannah Thompson, Dr Adele Patrick and Dr Nicky Bird, for their knowledge and guidance throughout the project.

A final thanks to Lou at Wild Press and Edwin and Ruth at the Caseroom for their technical help printing and their enthusiasm and support for the project.

These are a series of riso and screen-printed zines that the group produced collectively earlier in the sessions. Thanks to [redacted], Anonymous, Dorothy, F, Helen, Joanne, Joy and Lesley for the artworks that they contributed to these.