

Understanding Dignity in Client Engagement: An inductive approach to
understanding the development and delivery of dignity from case workers'
prospective

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a case study that investigates how to understand dignity in client service delivery. The current study explores the narratives of 5 employees of the Women's Network PEI over four interviews and one round table discussion, as well as a document review of their publication Common Ground Magazine and organization website.

Much of the literature explores dignity from various academic disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, biology, and law. These works explore dignity in terms of value, whether innate from conception or earned within social status or reward. The literature argues between the importance of the term, the relevance of awareness it has to one's everyday life, and the exchange that exists within evolution of individual self and relationship to others.

The current research contributes to the field by disseminating a model that includes four major themes of understanding dignity within client engagement: client-centered approach, positive corporate culture, a combination of both client-centered approach and positive corporate culture, and ongoing barriers to service delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research study was conceived after working years in the front-line case management for various organizations, including health care, government run social programs, and independent organizations. A topic that continued to confront both myself and coworkers was the notion that when systems were running ineffectively, whether from the perspective of the worker, the client (or both) the outcome suffered which meant people were getting inadequate care. After doing preliminary research and discussing my thoughts around the concept of dignity with my project supervisor, it was obvious that this was a topic that deserved a closer look. Front line workers are used to working in the trenches with minimal support, often working with limited resources and expected to give more of themselves than they are being fairly compensated for. With this firsthand knowledge, I was not surprised that I could not find any research exploring the narrative of front-line workers through the lens of dignity. Anecdotally, front line staff understand that the work is important but very undervalued by the systems that they operate within. Budgets are tight, and the constant push for people power is an exhausting fight that many learn to work within the constraints of being perpetually understaffed. We are called case workers, but really operate as caseload workers that do a delicate dance of balancing plates where we are afraid to take our eyes off the act. The added stress of self advocacy becomes a burden, so you keep your eyes on your work so people don't get hurt on your watch. If you're lucky enough to have a supportive team, you get through the day unscathed, however this dangerous rollercoaster becomes more difficult to exit over time as the more you prove you can work within the constraints of the system, the more they pile on the mentorship opportunities until you become apart of the system you know is dangerously underpowered. It's a very challenging position to find yourself in, when after completing your training, you understand how to do your job according to best practice, only to find out the systems in the real world do not support it at all. The expectation falls flat against the reality of

the job, and you are forced to swim along the current, so you don't drown (because then what good are you to the people who need you?) After discussing these thoughts with my supervisor, she recommended an organization that had a good reputation for navigating both caring for staff and the clients they served. She introduced me to the executive director at Women's Network PEI, and after an hour discussion on the challenges of supporting healthy staff so they can do good work for clients in a capitalist system, we were confident we would have an interesting narrative to explore.

Therefore, the goal of this case study was to hopefully uncover the reality of working with dignity in a client service setting. I would interview staff from WNPEI in a semi-structured interview style and explore what makes the organization stand out in how they approach their work. I would begin by doing a document review on the materials presented to the public in both their paper and internet publications to get a sense of who the organization was and what they offered, then prepare my questions to stimulate thoughtful conversation. All interviews were conducted online through video conferencing. Our in-person interaction existed in a round table conversation after the first three interviews were complete, both to offer opportunities for additional context based on preliminary findings, and to recruit any additional participants to sit for additional interviews. Two more participants showed interest, joining me in a joint interview that was included as supportive narrative to the initial three interviews.

The case study evoked robust conversation as to what it is like to offer a client service within a non-profit, non-government agency. Each of the interviewees described their experience in working for WNPEI as a positive one in relation to where they had been employed in the past. They discussed overwhelmingly the impact that a positive corporate culture has had on their decision to continue working for the organization. They also discussed the importance of delivering a service using a client centered approach, and further amplified the positive relationship between the first two points (which became a unique theme). The last

notable topic that was present throughout most of the dialogue was ongoing barriers to service delivery, and the challenges they brought to daily operations and planning for a small NGO. This knowledge will be presented in the form of the thesis below and be translated into a report for the organization to refer to ii future operational endeavours, such as program evaluation, training, and fund development.

The case study therefore aims to answer the question of how dignity is understood within client service delivery. It will dissect the conversations and create connections between the narratives, identify limitations and provide criticism, and make recommendations for future research within the field as an extension of this case study.

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review aims to provide an examination of the academic landscape in relation to both the fundamental concepts and applied foundations of dignity that are drawn from the academic fields of psychology, social psychology, business, medicine, education, and law. Articles for the current review are obtained by conducting a search using the databases Google Scholar, SAGE, EbscoHost, and JSTOR using the search string “dignity” AND “compassion” OR “communication” OR “history” OR “education” during the month of November 2020. The collection of articles are peer-reviewed and span the years 1981 to 2020. The referencing software *EndNote* is used to organize and store relevant articles.

The current review focuses on topics regarding education, empowerment, and the notion of degradation through charity and compassion with respect to dignity. The power of social connection and communication in dignity and the importance of visibility when considering internal and externally perceived worth emerge as key discussions. The overarching research question: “How is dignity conceptualized and applied in provider/client engagement?” is considered from synthesizing the dignity literature to offer a definition that

differentiates from its misdirected roots in respect and autonomy where general population often mistakes them for being interchangeable terms.

1.2.1 Defining Dignity

Defining dignity has been a polarizing debate within academic works, including fields of philosophy (Igras et al., 2020), law (human rights) (Glensy, 2011; Moyn, 2014; Shultziner & Rabinovici, 2012; Waldron, 2013), and bioethics (Casado, 1997). Given the personal nature of dignity, much like happiness or love, people define or understand the term in their own sense. This personal identification often lends to individuals assigning meaning to serve their cause, rendering disservice to the concept and leaving it as a generalized basic ideal (Glensy, 2011; Shultziner & Rabinovici, 2012). Hicks (2019, p. 68) reflects on this issue in academia, “Philosophers were knowledgeable about the meaning of dignity, but they were more concerned with defining and dissecting it than working with it to bring an end to conflict.”

Humanistic dignity identifies the importance of status and rank (Van den Brink, 2011; Waldron, 2013). For example, in Catholicism the interpretation of writings by man to be the superior species is a result of being created in the image of God, which implies power over the natural world. Man was further described as having a conscious mind, able to reason, use tools, and evolve to adapt to their surroundings in a unique way compared to other animals (Van den Brink, 2011). Darwinism supports this concept of humanistic dignity through the explanation of socioeconomic status, suggesting the wealthy class held a “dignified” status that provides freedom from the rules of law (Waldron, 2011; Waldron, 2013).

People began to associate dignity as a form of social currency and means of control internally or externally (Zawadzki, 2018). For instance, some people were born with an inflated amount of dignity based on the socioeconomic circumstance while others had to earn it through action and bravery. The preservation of dignity therefore occurred through the avoidance of

hurt or humiliation (Waldron, 2011; Zawadzki, 2018). Humanistic dignity served the privileged who used it to control and exploit certain groups of people for self-serving agendas (Van den Brink, 2011). In this instance, an authority could criminalize the act of self-harm because the consequences of the act would render the victim useless and contest their control.

In 1937, humanistic dignity entered constitutional history in the Republic of Ireland as religious constitutionalism. This was the first act and document to canonize the term dignity as an intersection of religion and nationalism (Moyn, 2014). The idea of dignitarian constitutionalism (which channelled Immanuel Kant's insistence on individual human worth) emerged after the Second World War in the United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration, and the Basic Law. The documents emphasized that dignity is the most basic principle of human rights (Moyn, 2014; Waldron, 2013).

Coinciding with the acknowledgement of dignity in official documents, human rights activism gained traction in North America after the Second World War and heightened in the 1970's. Citizens used the power of free speech and protest to fight for the expansion of human rights to minority groups including Black and people of colour, women, and people with disabilities (Moyn, 2014). This movement highlighted the strong desire to emphasize people's inherent value regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, colour or ability, and held the law accountable by modernizing human rights jurisprudence (Waldron, 2013). The prominence of dignity in this era is best captured by Igras et al. (2020, p. 6):

Devotion to democratic process, to equity and fair distribution of resources, to the obligation of people to help one another – these all come not from logic or scientific experiment, but from a value system that puts a premium on human dignity and relationships.

Contrary to humanistic dignity, personal dignity considers the moral value of humans, acknowledging they are more than a sum of their parts (Fileri, 2018). Philosopher Immanuel Kant would define dignity as intrinsic, unconditional, incomparable worth or value of every

person that warrants respect (Kant, 2017). To respect a persons' dignity is to acknowledge their reasoning, desires, interests and affections in their capacity to be autonomous, make rational choices and set their own limits and not furthering our self-interests (Waldron, 2013). Kant further viewed autonomy as the capacity to be self-legislating, self-governing and free to determine the meaning of one's own life. A violation of one's autonomy, includes their dignity.

According to Philosophy Professor Remy Debes (2009), dignity is an object of recognition and respect, as an unlearned and innate worth that all humans hold to demand fundamental rights and protection. Professor of Law, Oscar Schachter (1983, expands on this and further explains that dignity requires a recognition that people are entitled to their own feelings, beliefs, and attitudes, and have a capacity to make choices (Camargo & Vázquez-Maguirre, 2020; Debes, 2009; Schachter, 1983). Personal dignity is consequently subject to an individual's internal value system, the experiences that shape it throughout their lives, and their own perception of how they are seen by others (Chochinov, 2004). Perception of self-worth is fluid, changing throughout life, which is a direct reflection of the dignity they display to others. Demonstration of dignity therefore is relative to how people value themselves, which impacts personal and professional relationships affecting both emotions and judgement (Tait, 2013). There is an assumption that we are born with similar positions of dignity ("blank slate"), yet environmental and situational factors shape or violate our dignity that is "hardwired" in self-preservation, such as ones socio-economic status or identification as a visible minority (Hicks, 2019). In theory people are perceived as invaluable and irreplaceable beings, however society assigns a value of perceived dignity which is then internalized and acted on accordingly to secure an identity within an imbalanced system of oppression. This leads to the notion of comfort in knowing the position in which people hold within one's social group, and the discomfort and fear that comes with the unknown.

Dignity has its share of critics (Moyn, 2014) that question the necessity of the term, or obsolescence (Pinker, 2008), equating it to autonomy and respect such as cloning in bioethics (Casado, 1997). They would argue the term is a social construct where the question becomes a matter of perspective and inherent understanding, which has undoubtedly been a challenge as it is an implicit, learned, and subjective perception. We are not born with the understanding of dignity, but are expected to learn, appreciate, and lead humans and the surrounding environment with it to maintain order. Dignity explores the inalienable value and worth of life that cannot be replaced (Camargo & Vázquez-Maguirre, 2020).

Given the personal nature of dignity, much like happiness or love, people define or understand the term in their own sense. This personal identification often leads to individuals assigning meaning to serve their cause, rendering disservice to the concept and leaving it as a generalized basic ideal (Glensy, 2011; Shultziner & Rabinovici, 2012). Hicks (2019, p. 68) reflects on this issue in academia, “Philosophers were knowledgeable about the meaning of dignity, but they were more concerned with defining and dissecting it than working with it to bring an end to conflict.” It became an ironic contest to make sense of the world to establish their own worth in making a distinct contribution to their field, when really each iteration can be bridged to support the notion of innate worth.

Researchers such as Donna Hicks have attempted to expose the applied potential of the concept of dignity by identifying essential elements: acceptance of identity, recognition, acknowledgement, inclusion, safety, fairness, independence, understanding, benefit of the doubt, and accountability. These elements represent the pillars to one living and leading with dignity in their everyday relationships with both self and others. In turn, she has also identified temptations to violate dignity and the traps that humans can fall into for self-preservation; taking the bait, saving face, shirking responsibility, false dignity, false security, avoiding confrontation and conflict, assuming innocent victim, resisting feedback, blaming and shaming

others, and gossiping (Hicks, 2019). Such violations are cyclical within sense of self and projection to others within an array of different interactions and relationships. The more someone feels their dignity is being violated, the more violations they will in turn commit themselves, known as mirroring. When applied in everyday practice she argues, people can nurture their own dignity while inspiring growth in others.

1.2.2 Autonomy, Respect and Dignity

It is important to identify the relationship between autonomy, respect and dignity when attempting to distinguish among them. In both academic and applied settings, people have incorrectly used the terms interchangeably, inferring that if one is present then the other is implied. This is a fallacy as they are rooted in a unique definition and should therefore be respected as such (Nicholas et al., 2017).

Autonomy, as explained in Kant's definition is often seen as the basis for dignity; without it, one cannot experience a dignified life (Marquis, 2018; Waldron, 2011). This has been challenged in law with respect to people who may be viewed as unfit, wherein a higher-powered official such as trustee may be required to step in on the person's behalf. In a case where an individual knowingly consents to putting themselves at risk of harm, dignity would override their right for autonomy (Bergelson, 1981). In an analysis of Caranti's work, Filieri (2018) explains that autonomous agency does not need to exclusively follow the moral law grounded on the categorical imperative, rather the significance of self-determination of autonomy is the freedom to act under self-imposed moral restraints. He further explains how our basis of autonomy is the ability to silence natural impulses and strongest survival instincts to act from our conception of duty to humanity. There is an endless push and pull relationship within the concept of autonomy, the continual balance of internal and external forces.

Respect is another term used interchangeably with dignity. Dignity is acknowledged as an inherent and irreplaceable value, whereas respect is something that is “earned” over time (Waldron, 2011). Both dignity and respect are implicit and explicit, fluid, and subjective. To illustrate, a manager could hire someone based on performance but does not offer a fair value compensation for their skills. The manager is “respecting” the applicant’s skills but does not dignify their value with an appropriate/comparable wage. Conversely, guards are likely to not exhibit respect for death row inmates but are obligated to treat them with dignity by ensuring their basic needs are met, such as religious freedoms or filing appeals. Respect can offer a transactional acknowledgment at the expense of the inherent and irreplaceable longitudinal value that dignity provides, which is a disservice as the two should not substitute each other. One can give the perception of respect, often related to a person’s contributions, such as writing a glowing letter of recommendation as a reflection of good work. There is however an element of tension if they do not treat that person with dignity, such as using targeted misogynistic language in meetings with colleagues or refusing to promote them within their own organization.

1.2.3 Education and Empowerment; Leading with Dignity

To summarize philosophers Kant and Debes, the fundamentals of dignity are autonomy, value, and self-worth, which when applied to education and the ability to empower people incredibly valuable. Education leads to knowledge, opportunity of options and the ability to increase one’s perception of self-worth (Hicks, 2016; Lipi, 2016). Hicks (2019, p. 67) reflects, “We are not born knowing how to act like we have dignity. We are, however, born with the capacity to learn.” This is demonstrated in circumstances of poverty, such as a family without access to a job offering fair wages, limiting their options for better food security, freedom from abuse, and access to supportive medical care.

People are strong, resourceful and resilient when given a chance for an education and a decent livelihood (Anastasi et al., 2020). Education has shown to increase the perception of self-worth by feeling the empowerment to strive for independence (Lipi, 2016). Donna Hicks expands on these notions:

The truth about dignity is simple: We all want to be treated as if we matter and when we are not, we suffer. Inversely, when our inherent value and worth is honoured and recognized, we thrive (2019, p. 67).

Dignity is a complex, two-way street where in theory the more you give the more you receive. By leading with dignity in our lives, we are able to demonstrate our internal value, how we value others, the natural world, teach others how we would like to be treated, all in the hopes of working together to build a more dignified society (Hicks, 2016). This approach has worked effectively in conflict resolution across many cultures, including injustices in environmentalism and destination tourism that perpetuated postcolonial dynamics that affect Indigenous peoples dignity (Camargo & Vázquez-Maguirre, 2020; Hicks, 2016).

Hicks (2016) study on exploring the collapse of a major US corporation in the breakdown of relationships with its unions (through narratives), found that professionals were likely to deflect discussions on the violation of their dignity in conflict resolution. These professionals contributed to the breakdown in the relationship by subconsciously or instinctively resorting to reflecting on the emotions (anger, upset) tied to dignity instead of the core issues of *why* they felt that way. The individuals understood there was a violation to their dignity but were unable to clearly communicate that violation without being asked directly, which resulted in a cyclical negative spiral requiring mediation. Hicks' developed the *Dignity Model* (2011), consisting of ten essential elements of dignity where she provides a framework for understanding how attention to dignity can help to strengthen relationships, resolve conflict, and make organizations more successful. Her study highlights the organizations lack adoption in the Dignity Model where she further draws attention for the need of future dignity research

in conflict resolution/avoidance to acknowledge the participants own sense of self worth and empathy to understand others' dignity. This can be accomplished by prefacing the next study through educating on what dignity is, its role, and the importance it plays in the behaviours we demonstrate in communication and action. By providing participants the time to digest and be reflexive on dignity, it is hopeful to encourage constructive, meaningful and effective communication. Hicks (2019, p. 72) discusses the importance of education about dignity:

Only when we make the commitment to learn how to respect our own dignity and the dignity of others and the world around us, will we be capable of growing into the spiritual beings that we are all born to become. The stage will be set for our continued growth and development because we have finally recognized and accepted that we cannot flourish without loving human connections, and that respecting dignity is a prerequisite to such love.

1.2.4 Charity and Compassion Kills Dignity

It is important to be aware of the implications of charity and compassion on dignity when considering who needs help, what they need, what you want to give, and how to deliver based on the term's recipients are willing to accept help. The principles of charity are debated, but in its simplest sense, Davidson (2001) suggests that it is a sense of rational accommodation when interpreting communication, 'where we make maximum sense of the words and thoughts of others when we interpret in a way that maximizes agreement'. This ultimately suggests that we need to resist the desire to believe what we think we want to hear, which makes charity a complicated topic when the 'giver' is unable to really hear and comprehend the true needs of the person being helped. Instead, rational accommodation suggests we respond to the persons actual needs instead of it being a self-serving experience of the giver. In the academic field of medicine, Ashcroft (2005) in *Making Sense of Dignity* suggests that a hermeneutic approach to understanding charity in dignity should adopt Davidson's principle. Taking the literature into

consideration the current review understands charity as the act of giving with a rational understanding of their actions and no expectation of reciprocal favour.

Implicit or unconscious bias and the interpretation of one's value or dignity may impact or hinder the decision on how to aid someone in need (Powell, 2015). John Powell explains "Even when people explicitly and consciously support fairness, nonconscious processes can undermine their intentions through implicit bias". Fraser and Gordon (1994) exploring the role of dependency in the United States, suggests that industrial dependency is predicated on the reliance on relief (charity) versus making a liveable wage. These "paupers" were often degraded and stripped of their dignity because of their reliance on charity. In some instances, such as those in disaster relief, it would be important to take an immediate response by taking inventory and asking local officials what they need because of the short-term nature of the event.

Schwartz (2007) while exploring the negative impacts of charity in the Christian church, suggests there is an unhealthy reliance on receiving financial assistance that stunts development, growth, and dignity in a perpetual negative cycle. The author suggests through education and developing skills of independence, people can regain their sense of dignity and overcome this reliance on charity. For instance, families accessing services such as a food bank, need immediate help, but habitual (long-term) access to these services begs to question whether the societal systems at-large are flawed.

The examples above outline how charity and compassion can evoke significantly different responses. People want to be treated as if they are valuable and worthy regardless of cultural differences, however charity and compassion can be misguided when the person helping does not consider the dignity and autonomy of the receiving party throughout the process (Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Schwartz, 2007). While exploring restorative dignity practices in Illinois, Anna High explains (2017, p. 530):

The actions and reactions of dignity need to be learned. Sharing circles are an ideal response to both the desire to be treated with dignity and the need to teach to treat one another with dignity.

It is important organizations are educated and cognizant on the importance of dignity, kindness and compassion when delivering services as a lack of autonomy, choice and anonymity further exacerbate the reduction of dignity. Generational poverty exists in one way by building and reinforcing dependence through ongoing charity and compassion from the community, which can be a major deterrent for establishing independence (Schwartz, 2007). Charitable organizations are lifelines for communities in economic duress, and can be wonderful solution if they listen to and learn about communities they serve in moments of crisis, however long-term dependency should activate a closer look into whether the service is doing more harm than good:

Human beings are happier, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them (High, 2017, p. 530).

Those who yield power financially and politically hold the ability to rectify centuries of discrimination against the poor and vulnerable (Anastasi et al., 2020). The issue of dignity goes beyond politics, it is a human issue; however, the desire to rush to solutions before understanding the source of the problem is a common and understandable mistake. The problem lies when people do not take the time to accurately identify the root cause of the conflict. They ask the wrong questions, leading to wrong answers, leading to wrong solutions (Hicks, 2016). By considering appropriate and sustainable solutions, organizations can help contribute to building the dignity of the individual.

1.2.5 Communicating Dignity: Love and Empathy

The common denominator for human beings is the desire to be treated with dignity (Hicks, 2016). This notion of dignity can be understood as a central aspect of what it means to

be human. In her *Reflections on Love and Dignity in Resolving Conflict*, Donna Hicks after 20 years as a conflict resolution mediator explains that a major obstacle we face as a society is our ignorance to all things related to dignity. She elaborates further on the importance of connection by describing the experience as something beyond boundaries of the self, inducing a spiritual event where positive emotions can broaden consciousness and tolerance. She warns that connection of negative emotions narrow ones focus that closes off perspective and opportunities for growth, therefore, to maximize connection one must understand how to make someone feel seen, heard, and accepted.

The Dignity Model (Hicks, 2011, 2016, 2019) describes the use of dignity-conserving care and is often used in end-of-life circumstances for terminally ill patients. A parallel exists amongst people who require ongoing dignified accessibility support within the community. The model outlines three components to patients' perception of dignity: illness related issues (level of independence vs symptom distress); dignity conserving repertoire (perspectives and practices); and the social dignity inventory (referring to interactions with others that enhance or detract from ones sense of dignity, including: privacy boundaries, social support, care tenor, burden to others, and aftermath concerns).

One key intervention strategy discussed in congruence with the Dignity Model was Dignity Psychotherapy which gives the patient the opportunity to speak to aspects of life for which they are proud and which were the most meaningful. High (2017, p. 532) describes this as, "Indigenous people groups have long understood the circle as a space of equality, connectedness, empowerment, and dignity." This practice provides an opportunity for patients to see themselves beyond their circumstance of illness, which could hypothetically be translated to crisis, validating any concerns and ascribing meaning to their experiences. The Dignity Model has been shown to provide hope, and restore dignity by having the opportunity to share their story openly with another person (Chochinov, 2004).

Another method of connection and communication includes the use of a Dignity Circle, which consists of an outer circle that identifies violations and an inner circle that identifies promotions of dignity (High, 2017). It is used as a tool to stimulate connection between social workers and clients through descriptive language of everyday experiences of dignity versus abstract concepts of the term. As pictured below, the Dignity Circle helps to facilitate conversation between social worker and client on how they feel their dignity has been violated, offering examples of how they have been objectified, vilified, infantilized, or neglected within experiences requiring care. The inner circle then offers opportunity for identifying what promotes their dignity by discussing things that make them unique, active participant in their social environment, independent and in control, while creating a professional friendship that feels approachable by the person seeking care. This model is frequently used as a tool to check in and ensure the relationship and practice is serving the individual well. See figure

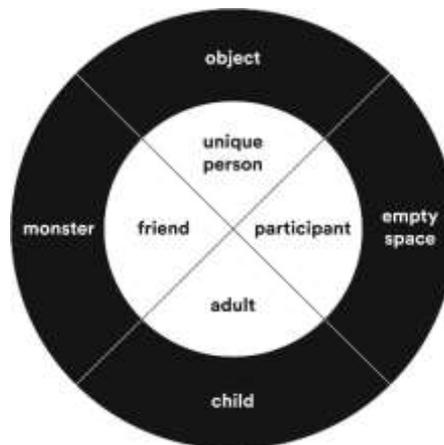


Figure 1.1. The Dignity Circle

The figure above is a visual representation of the Dignity Circle as described by High (2017)

Research has shown that people feel more comfortable discussing circumstances of indignity than moments where dignity occurred or was upheld. To discuss dignity in positive terms, people use more abstract language equating to being treated as being seen or as a human being (Schmidt et al., 2020). It is indicated that dignity is a performative act rooted in social

relationships within organization, whereby factors can affect employee's dignity both positively and negatively. Using a humanistic management approach for example, dignity should not be subject to relationships of exchange nor economic efficiency, acknowledging that the dignity of employees is based on concern and respect. Zawadzki (2018) in his study on dignity in the workplace echoes this notion by adding that the social interactions between employees impacts their sense of value, satisfaction, and dignity. A lack of connection to others or systems of status quo therefore can lead to people and groups experiencing invisibility within their communities.

Certain populations of people who misuse substances for example are typically stigmatized and marginalized, decreasing their self-worth as well as access to health and social supports. This invisibility and diminished social position further places people at an elevated risk for violence and exploitation (Tait, 2013). Sexual disrespectability contains a stigma so strong that it excludes individuals tainted by it from finding jobs. Jordal et al. (2020) assessing respectability and rights using semi-structured interviews with 300 women and sometimes their children in Sri Lanka, explain that the state does not protect women in prostitution because they are regarded as not fully human. In this context, dignity is reserved for those that fit the socially constructed model of acceptability, which directly impacts how people build their identity.

Donna Hicks Dignity Model acts as a rule book for understanding the elements and temptations of leading with dignity, while the Dignity Circle is a tool that front line helpers use to navigate communication while creating and maintaining a dignified client relationship.

1.3. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Taking a pragmatic approach to exploring and interpreting the information on dignity provides a level of flexibility in trying to find the root structures on the perception of being dignified or being treated with dignity. Ontologically, a social constructivist view is the belief

that the person's world is an assembly of interactions that combine to curate their reality (Saunders et al., 2012). People place meaning on themselves, which then defines their experience and perception of dignity, aligning with subjectivism. From an epistemological perspective, the aim is to explore the specifics of the social phenomena such as uncovering what is the perception and experience of dignity of people working in the frontline of a privately funded non-government organization (NGO) (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Taking an interpretivist perspective to exploring the truths of the participants helps to understand the meanings of these individual experiences and how they navigate the concept of dignity in their everyday environments (Leitch et al., 2010).

1.3.1 Ontology

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that explores the researchers' reality and assumptions about how the world operates (Saunders et al., 2012). These assumptions of reality divide external stimuli (objectivism) with internal consciousness (subjectivism) (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). This formalises part of an overall social structure, for example: dignity being experienced and perceived by a specific person in a certain way at a time. An objectivist view recognizes that each person experiences the concept of dignity, giving or receiving. Subjectivism therefore highlights the individual meanings people attach to their experiences.

Subjectivism identifies how the perceptions and actions of people shape social phenomena, which reflects the ideology of constructionism (Saunders et al., 2012). Each person has a different experience of dignity that shapes their reality. In the literature review, many articles take a subjective approach to qualify aspects of the experience of dignity. Building from a subjectivist approach, the current research explores the nature of how people, in this case staff of WNPEI, experience dignity and assess the meanings that are a product of this perception.

A social constructivist understanding in this research involves the WNPEI staff's perception of reality through the language they used to describe current and retrospective experiences (Howitt, 2010). . Exploring the social construction of the person's reality is an important contribution to the dignity literature because it gives context (like concepts such as happiness or love), can both behave like a currency and a language in which people communicate their intentions. The ability to qualify a subject such as dignity in gathering someone's thoughts and experiences related to the term provide an additional dimension to a basic definition or theory. It addresses the core fundamental truth of what the term means to each person specifically based on space and time and helps gain insight into how a persons relationship with the term has evolved along with them. The term and internalized definition of dignity will hold different power over different people depending on what value they currently place on it within their lives, which is another layer to explore through conversation in interview.

1.3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is how we understand the nature of the participants' reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The current study asks open-ended questions to uncover how/if people experience dignity in client service delivery at WNPEI (Greco & Sosa, 1999). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 111) discuss the relevance of interpretivism within social constructivism, noting, "Necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating the actions of social actors in order for the researcher to be able to understand these actions." Compared to positivism, which concerns itself with laws, rules, resources, and linguistic communication, one of the fundamental features of interpretivism is the discovery of emotional experiences, such as the relationship between the subject and their respective knowledge (Crotty, 1998).

1.3.3 Pragmatism

The social constructivist (ontology) and interpretivist (epistemology) underpinnings of the current thesis draw awareness to the relationship between human beings and their environment as an important aspect of social science inquiry (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). One can prescribe to an intermediary option between voluntarism and determinism values, which is pragmatism. To best understand one's pragmatic philosophical position, it is necessary to explore the changes and sensations causing such beliefs (James, 1975). A pragmatic approach to this thesis accommodates for the situational and voluntary factors that define the relationship between WNPEI staff and their experience with dignity while providing front line services (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The investigator must be able to take measures to understand the question, discussion, or topic through multiple lenses as the world exists differently to everyone. An effort to encourage deeper understanding of meaning can aid in identifying practical solutions upon reflection, rather than facilitating philosophical debates (Salkind, 2010). People can inform and socially construct their own reality (Creswell & Clark, 2007). A pragmatic approach to data collection and analysis permits interpreting and test a social phenomenon through complimentary philosophical underpinnings that build a greater understanding of the actions and events within the experience of dignity that can impact individual and/or macro levels.

1.4 CONCLUSION

From this review of dignity literature, the meaning and interpretation of the concept is highly contested and full of varying meaning. Dignity has a rich history that holds a great deal of influence if you can understand and harness the power of the word. As a concept, it builds depth of impact with the more you consider its implications on both the person and their surrounding environment that can be applied to any person, place, and/or object. Dignity is a

value system that is fluid across culture, generations, and genders that is expected to evolve throughout time. The current study is not directly testing theory from the literature; instead, the aim is to inductively explore the concept of dignity to understand the impact (positive or negative) in social service delivery and develop a model of best practice for this transaction.

2. METHODS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodological approach for the current research study, highlighting the research philosophy, design and procedure, secondary data, ethics, empirical context and characteristics, limitations, and summary. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no studies exploring the roles of dignity in Atlantic Canada from an individual-level perspective, specifically accessing the WNPEI organization. Taking an inductive qualitative approach (interviews), we expect the researcher to better understand how dignity may operate in client service delivery. The current research takes an inductive, exploratory approach to address the proposed "dignity" subject through narrative data collection to be analyzed using thematic analysis (Rescher, 1996). The current study receives full ethical approval from the *University of Prince Edward Island*.

By speaking with staff at WNPEI, the aim of the study is to uncover the multi-dimensional role of staff members and their perceptions of dignity in client service delivery. Qualitative inquiry aims to place the researcher/observer in the participant's world to interpret the interactions of the actors within that world in their natural settings (Gupta & Awasthy, 2015). The observer, in this case myself, receives information (primary and secondary data) about the participant's world through engagements such as interviews; memos; photographs or digital footprints that offer new meaningful interpretations of the content (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Interpreting information occurs throughout the researcher's experience that is influenced by daily life and major global events with reviewing the data collected (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997).

Qualitative research affords the opportunity to move beyond the initial surface-level questioning (such as surveys) to unpack events, including the experience of dignity among staff

members at WNPEI. By inductively exploring individual narratives, the researcher can uncover common themes that encourage new theoretical insights

Qualitative research must be methodologically consistent with a clear purpose. This requires the researcher to have self-awareness, proper training in qualitative methods to ensure they are conscious of the methodology, and have connection and sensitivity for the topic and a commitment to the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The quality of the study is ultimately determined by the reader's interpretation, synthesized by Willis (2007, pp. 150-151):

It is not a method or research technique that determines whether something is qualitative research; it is how the study is conceived, what is to be accomplished, and how the data are understood.

The research philosophy for this study takes a pragmatic approach, with a subjectivist and social constructivist ontological understanding of dignity in the world. To uncover this belief, the research takes an interpretivist understanding of how the participants perceive, understand, and realize the role of dignity in the participant/client interaction. This case study includes both document review and research conversations. Five participants take part in this study, and coded their narratives using pre-coding, initial coding, and analyzed by applying thematic analysis.

This section explores the pragmatic ontological and epistemological underpinnings in exploring how to assess the experiences of dignity from staff of WNPEI using narrative research methods. Using face-to-face interviews (specifically via the web-based application Google Meet because of UPEI REB pandemic restrictions) allows for an open approach to collecting primary data that moves beyond the surface-level understanding of how WNPEI operates. A document review of a WNPEI magazine and company website helps to inform the interview protocol.

The primary study has five participants, all active staff of WNPEI, which qualitative research methods authors identify as an acceptable number of participants to conduct a

qualitative study. Data coding and analysis occurs in three stages. First, data is pre-coded while transcribing the interviews to gain a general idea of what is occurring within the organization regarding staff's experience of dignity. Second, initial coding highlighting the determinants, actions, and events shaping their experience of dignity. Third, is the categorization of initial codes according to the discussion topics using thematic analysis to aid in understanding the experiences of dignity specific to the participant. The collection and use of secondary sources help to verify and support participant narratives.

2.1.1 Participants versus Clients

In this study, participants are the individuals who complete an interview and work at the WNPEI organization. The community members that they work with, who are accessing the services of WNPEI, are known as clients. Although there are some contentions that the term “client” can be perceived as derogatory, it is the industry standard and policy of the Government of Prince Edward Island to label individuals as *clients*. It is the perception of the researcher, and their 10 years experience as a front-line worker in the industry, that the term client is acceptable because there is the potential for individuals to voluntarily access these supports; and can discontinue or change their case worker if desired.

2.1.2 Design and Procedure

The following subsection explores how narrative research is used by conducting face-to-face interviews to explore the current and retrospective accounts of the participant's experience with dignity while working at WNPEI. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in probing deeper into their memories and beliefs of the participant, which is beneficial to compare current understanding and actions already taken. The sample of staff only comprises individuals who are currently employed at the WNPEI organization. The authentic account within a qualitative perspective allows for a deeper understanding and opportunities

for reflexivity, supported also with the use of secondary sources in the document review (see section 3.4). Researcher bias exists in all research regardless of the methodological type because of the investigator's interpretations within the process (Saunders et al., 2012).

2.1.3 Narrative Research: of a Case Study

Narrative research is a collaboration between the researcher and participant in the participant's natural setting; in this case, the natural setting was moved to a virtual environment because of the COVID-19 pandemic legislation and University of Prince Edward Island ethics approval policy (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This case study asks staff of WNPEI to recount their history and timelines through critical events; which is where narrative inquiry capitalizes on exploring these events to understand underpinning complexities versus superficial descriptions (Carr, 1991; Fowler, 2014; Sarbin, 1986). The participants' stories provide a depth and richness of the individual's understanding, social, and organizational settings, which are pertinent values of qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interpretation of these stories lends to adopting an interpretivist epistemological view, where actions and decisions develop a socially constructed environment (Kim, 2015; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Taking this into consideration, narrative enquiry lends to exploring how WNPEI staff experience the dignity and the impact it has on participant engagement.

Using a narrative approach can present issues, such as subjectivity and bias of both the participant and researcher (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; LeCompte & Quarterly, 1987). A common concern might be that a participant can create doubt or disconnect of retrospective accounts by possibility of "making up events" or faulty memory to make themselves look better—"espousal" (Chandler & Lyon, 2001). Espousal means that the participant has time to rationalize the outcome, which can lead to over- or underestimating the event(s) (Wilson et al., 2003). In qualitative research it is important to consider all elements of the collective narrative,

understanding that story telling is not often linear with different participants placing greater emphasis or weight in their individual experience. What is important or meaningful to one participant may be a foot note in another, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to identify themes relevant to the overall information. There are also situations of participant recall bias, when explicit details (times, dates, locations, people) are overlooked or inaccurate (Coughlin, 1990). Research involving humans inevitably has bias because of their actions, behaviours, and emotions (Creswell, 2013; Pronin, 2007).

To combat these limitations, secondary sources (such as the document review discussed in sections 3 and 4) help to better understand the complexity of the narratives through photographs, newspapers, and supplementary stories from other actors or organizations, such as those provided by the WNPEI for analysis (Berg & Lune, 2012; Gioia et al., 2013). The rest of this chapter elaborates on the methods used to collect and analyze data.

2.1.4 Face-to-Face Interviews

Face-to-face interviews collect information of a greater depth and breadth compared to traditional quantitative methods, such as surveys because this approach can uncover the unordinary, examine unique perspectives and events (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The interview approach gives flexibility in questioning and adapting the interview protocol to best suit the participant's ability and narrative (Kothari, 2011). Interviewing multiple individuals (as a group or cohort) on one experience it helps to validate the information given by the participants as "checks-and-balances" in validating or confirming stories that consequently informs future questioning. To combat individuals withholding sensitive information in a group setting, they should be given appropriate one-on-one time to express their views. This researcher first interviewed three staff members within the organization based on their availability. She organized a round table to collectively gather additional members of the team to discuss ideas

presented to date. This allowed for both clarification and presented participants with the opportunity to offer additional detail where they saw necessary. Upon closure of that round table, the researcher sought interest of two more full time staff members to sit down for a collective interview, which allowed for a secondary line of questions that built off information gathered to date. This allowed for depth without saturating information already discussed in both the first round of interview and the round table.

2.1.5 Retrospective Studies

This thesis looks at both the current experiences with dignity, but also events occurring in the past. Retrospective studies ask participants to reconstruct past situations and events where dignity has a role (Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, 2009; Chandler & Lyon, 2001). The perception or interpretation of dignity is likely to be associated with a unique event(s) or action(s) because of the topic sensitivity (respect, value, worth), making it increasingly likely to recall the encounter, especially in traumatic events which discussed above can be more notable and easier to discuss. (Chell, 2004; Christianson & Loftus, 1987). WNPEI is a culture of connection, assistance, and support. Staff are both exposed to systemic pressures of operating a small non-government organization and seeking support to do their job well, while also assuming the weight of their client's hardships when working in close environments. These everyday occurrences bear weight, both positive and negative and the tension between the two would only exacerbate their connection to the topics they openly discuss within the interviews. These experiences, while professional, affect them on a human level and they name them clearly.

2.2 SECONDARY DATA: DOCUMENT REVIEW

The current section focuses on the use of secondary data and how it influences both the interview procedure and analysis. I include the use of a document review to provide context into the organization.

The researcher reviewed the WNPEI magazine *Special Issue: Common Ground* (March 2020) and website (<https://wnpei.org/>) prior to interviewing participants. It was important to understand the persona of the organization that WNPEI were presenting to the public, which allowed for deeper level questions during interviews as the researcher understood the context of their mission and vision. The magazine specifically acted like a time capsule, carefully curated to represent the lifespan of the organization including historical moments and memorable milestones. The website rather was a resource for individuals and sister organizations to access program and contact information through a digital medium. The two sources detailed consistent information regarding the people behind WNPEI, services offered, and additional resources on PEI. The special issue of *Common Ground* featured local women including artists, academics, and social justice leaders. Their work was featured through poetry, special topics essays, paintings and photography portraying their experiences as women in the island communities. Both sources are a front-facing view of how WNPEI wants to be perceived by the public, their active participants, active and future funders, and provides the mission and values of the organization. The secondary data aids in developing an interview protocol that is informed by the existing information provided by WNPEI, making it easier to prepare to have meaningful conversations about the organization with the participant to collect valuable insight into dignity. When engaging with the documents the researcher explored each publication by making a list of the information WNPEI was presenting. The researcher then generated ideas and questions surrounding the topics the organization chose to present, which later informed the interview process and follow up round table discussion. It was important to understand the

essence of the publications and interpret the narrative they were trying to convey through style to their community to better prepare for the discussion.

2.3 ETHICS

To conduct research at the *University of Prince Edward Island*, each project requires approval from the *Research Ethics Board (REB)*. Ethical considerations for the current study include participants recalling retrospective events that may evoke personal mental duress. All ethics documents related to this study can be found in the Appendix (Ethics Approval Forms; Participant Information Sheet; Participant Consent Form; and Participant Debriefing Form). The current study has full ethical approval from the University of Prince Edward Island.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the REB also required the completion of an extensive Operational Ease-Back Plan, outlining safety protocols and instruction if the interviews occur in-person. Because of the brief period allotted to conduct this study, the study completed the Operational Ease-Back Plan but resorted to interviewing on Google Meet.

2.4 EMPIRICAL CONTEXT AND COHORT CHARACTERISTICS

The goal of this study is to explore the experience of dignity among staff at WNPEI and, by consequence, identify the factors impacting their ability to deliver a dignified experience to their clients in the community. The rest of this section elaborates further on the methods exploring the experience of dignity.

2.4.1 Sample and Geographical Details

Participation solicitation occurs through the ethical guidelines set out by the UPEI REB. Purposive population sampling offers control and ability to identify cases of interest by selecting a distinct part of a population intending to maximize the depth and breadth of data (Patton, 2002; Suter, 2011). The basis of this sampling method stems from the researcher's

knowledge, networks, ambitions, and research goals with an emphasis on selecting specific cases, like the active staff of WNPEI (Dattalo, 2008). The population sample of the current study is a combination of frontline workers and program coordinators that operate under typical resource constraints (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Welter et al., 2016). The researcher’s primary supervisor made the introduction to WNPEI, where the researcher’s information was circulated for participants to connect if they wished to take part in the study. It was in this meeting that both supervisor and researcher sat with the executive director of WNPEI to discuss intentions to collaboratively design a project that would be in line with their capacity to support the inquiry. Community based research processes were a central aspect of how this research was created and implemented, including the use of round table forum and offerings of summary reporting upon completion for their review and resource.

Inclusion	Reason
Language: English	Conduct the interview in the English language.
Organization: Active staff of WNPEI	Case study specific.
Gender: All	Inclusive of all genders.
Ethnicity: All	Inclusive of all ethnicities.
Age: >18	Ethics approval applies to age of majority subjects.
Exclusion	Reason
Language: Non-English	Researcher and study (literature, interviews) are in the English language.
Organization: Not active staff of WNPEI	Does not conform to the sampling agenda for a case study.
Age: <18	The University of Prince Edward Island ethics committee does not approve interviewing minors in this study.

Table 2.1 Participant Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The table represents the criteria for inclusion and exclusion from the current study.

Five participants take part in this study; three interviews were fully transcribed and the other two provided quotes and not fully transcribed because of semester time restrictions and

supervision advice on data saturation. The sample includes five self-identified women that are active staff of WNPEI with post-secondary education in social sciences.

2.5 INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

The original interview procedure was adapted because of the REB Operational Ease-Back Plan, moving to online video conferencing using Google Meet. Each participant contacted the researcher by email to set up an interview date and time. The researcher would reply with an email invitation, along with an information packet comprising the Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form, and Debriefing Sheet (see Appendix 1,2,3). The information packet outlines the study details, including researcher and supervisor contact information, issues the participant may incur (i.e., language barriers, psychological duress), permission to record audio, ethical considerations, anonymity, confidentiality, and data protection.

If the participant agrees to the study, they return their signed consent form and informed they have the option to stop and withdraw from the study (including contact information for the UPEI and local health unit if they have concerns about the study). The technical procedures (digital recording, transcribing narratives) remain consistent in the study. Secondary data collection (i.e., e-mails, pamphlets, websites) contribute to validating participant narratives. The researcher and participant meet online using Google Meet and questioning is unique to each participant because of their unique experience with dignity. After the first three interviews, questions are reassessed and changed from the proposed interviewing protocol to develop more defined questions to gain greater depth of information from the participant's narratives (which revolved around topics of power structure and, funder's genuine interest and care in the organizations mission and vision).

The interviews began on March 30, 2021 and concluded on June 29, 2021. Over this three-month period, the narrative develops as information continues to build and support with new iterations through cumulative messaging that builds on each other creating a more robust

narrative, which lends to developing new questions to probe further into the WNPEI staff experience of dignity. Examples of this will be provided below in future sections. Data collection produced five hours of narrative recording from five participants. Data is recorded on a digital device and kept in a lockable safe that holds all notes, secondary information from the interviews and external hard drives. All digital information on external hard drives and personal computer has a 128-bit encryption password. Upon completion of the interviews, there is a debriefing of the participants and thanking them for their contribution. Participants are given the researcher's information to be passed onto other co-workers who might be interested in the current study.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The current study imported the data into NVivo, a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), coded, and analyzed in a three-stage process (pre- and initial coding, thematic analysis). *Pre-Coding* is the first stage of coding and occurs while collecting data that allows for identifying rudimentary themes or concepts. This pre-coding process helps with understanding the general categories and themes within the dignity experience at WNPEI, which also helps refine and develop lines of questioning throughout the data collection process. The second stage of coding, Initial Coding occurred after the collection of all data. Thematic analysis follows the second stage of coding to identify major themes and the interconnectivity of themes surrounding the participants' perception of dignity.

The interview is transcribed immediately after it is completed using NVivo to develop codes and nodes for later analysis. Using an analysis software program allows one to manage data and ideas, recall information quicker, index information, report from the data, match and link information without losing the source or context of the data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Coding for each narrative was completed immediately following the interview during transcription stage. New codes were added in subsequent interview analysis, and the researcher

then reassessed previous codes to ensure the codes and categories were consistent and appropriate to the aim of the case study.

2.6.1 Stage 1: Pre-Coding

The first step in the coding process is pre-coding the data while transcribing the interviews. This approach helps to inform the questioning in the interview procedure by raising awareness of the general themes emerging from the narrative (Saldaña, 2015). This approach allows the interviewer to better probe the personal experience of dignity of staff at WNPEI to highlight intriguing findings, like important quotes, themes, and keywords (Layder, 1998). The primary themes from the pre-coding stage establish the foundation for the second stage of coding by creating a general picture of the staff of WNPEI experience of dignity. Mapping the codes aids in drawing preliminary ideas of the interconnectivity of the participant, staff, and funder experience.

When first conducting the interviews, the three pre-codes highlighted were service delivery, corporate culture, and funding. Service delivery was identified as a pre-code because the topic of service delivery as a priority dominated the conversations, which is understandable given the nature of the organization. Corporate culture was identified as a pre-code because staff made a point of mentioning how important it was to work for a company that prioritized a positive workplace, often comparing the environment to toxic organizations they had previously been employed by. Funding was identified as a pre-code because staff openly discussed the challenge of securing regular funding and the impact it had on the security of both service delivery and their employment status.

2.6.2 Stage 2 Initial Coding

The second stage of the coding involves dividing the data into subcategories to identify the critical factors surrounding the experience of dignity at WNPEI. To do so, the data is coded

into elemental parts for the analysis of similarities and differences within the participant’s story that can establish initial themes (Strauss, 1987). This method furthers understanding into the actions, events, and factors emerging from the participants experience of dignity and the factors shaping it (Saldaña, 2015). Factors in this study are separated into internal and external factors influencing the experience of dignity, including a safe workplace, staff wellbeing, reliable funding, participant access, and an ability to provide wrap around supports. Each initial code helps to understand specific unique attributes of the dynamic dignity experience.

Initial coding results (top ten items):

Client Centered Strategies
Women’s Network PEI Staff Responsibilities
Women’s Network PEI Policy and Programs, Reflexive Strategies
Communication and Connection
Accessibility of Services and Programming
Balanced Support, Boundaries
Women’s Network PEI Staff Integrity, Flexibility, Trust, Respect, Values, Autonomy
Women’s Network PEI Staff Value Alignment
Resource Sharing
Women’s Network PEI Consistency, Commitment to Providing Support for Staff and Participants

Table 2.2 Initial Coding Results Top 10

These initial codes emerged in relation to the frequency in which they were mentioned within conversation at the interviews. The researcher was mindful of marrying like terms that existed within a similar thread, creating a more robust code that represented an overall essence. An example of this is line 7, which combines integrity, flexibility, trust, respect, values, autonomy.

2.6.3 Stage 3: Thematic Analysis

The *Second Cycle of Coding* follows the initial rounds of coding and is significant in developing a deeper sense of the thematic, theoretical, philosophical or conceptual underpinnings of the data (Saldaña, 2015). Thematic analysis is a deductive analytical tool to uncover common patterns and regularities in participant narratives to reach a logical conclusion through the general reasoning of testimonials (Holton, 1975; Merton, 1975; Shank, 2006). When implementing thematic analysis it is necessary to familiarise one’s self with the data to

best develop initial codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The current thesis uses thematic analysis because it allows to categorize the initial codes into specific experiences. This analytical approach helps to develop the most salient categories from the data, which establishes a narrative that reflects the participants interpretation of dignity working at WNPEI. The researcher curated the list of themes by first analyzing codes identified through the transcripts and then grouping them into what felt like natural complimentary categories that described the narrative of the case study.

From the narratives emerges three major themes. First, the WNPEI and the staff emphasize a *positive corporate culture* (specifically staff well-being through leading with respect, autonomy, and sense of value). Second, staff focus on the acquisition and practice of *client centred approaches* by creating reflexive and accessible trauma-informed programming that is delivered through a low participant to staff ratio which enhances the client experience. Third, there are *ongoing barriers to service delivery*, including unreliable funding that leads to lacking planning time, disconnection of deliverables between funder and what staff know to be the best practice approach, and low perception of care of outcome for participants from management-level funders.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 DOCUMENT REVIEW FINDINGS

The Special Issue of Common Ground Magazine (March 2020) was presented as a professional publication with clear, organized, and thoughtful content that suggests being a trustworthy and overall accessible source for content that represents the WNPEI (see Figure 3.1 below for the magazine front and back covers). While they print the front and back pages in vibrant colours, contents inside are in black and white suggesting possible budgeting issues or highlighting WNPEIs need for fiscal responsibility (see Figure 4.2 below for an example of the inside pages).

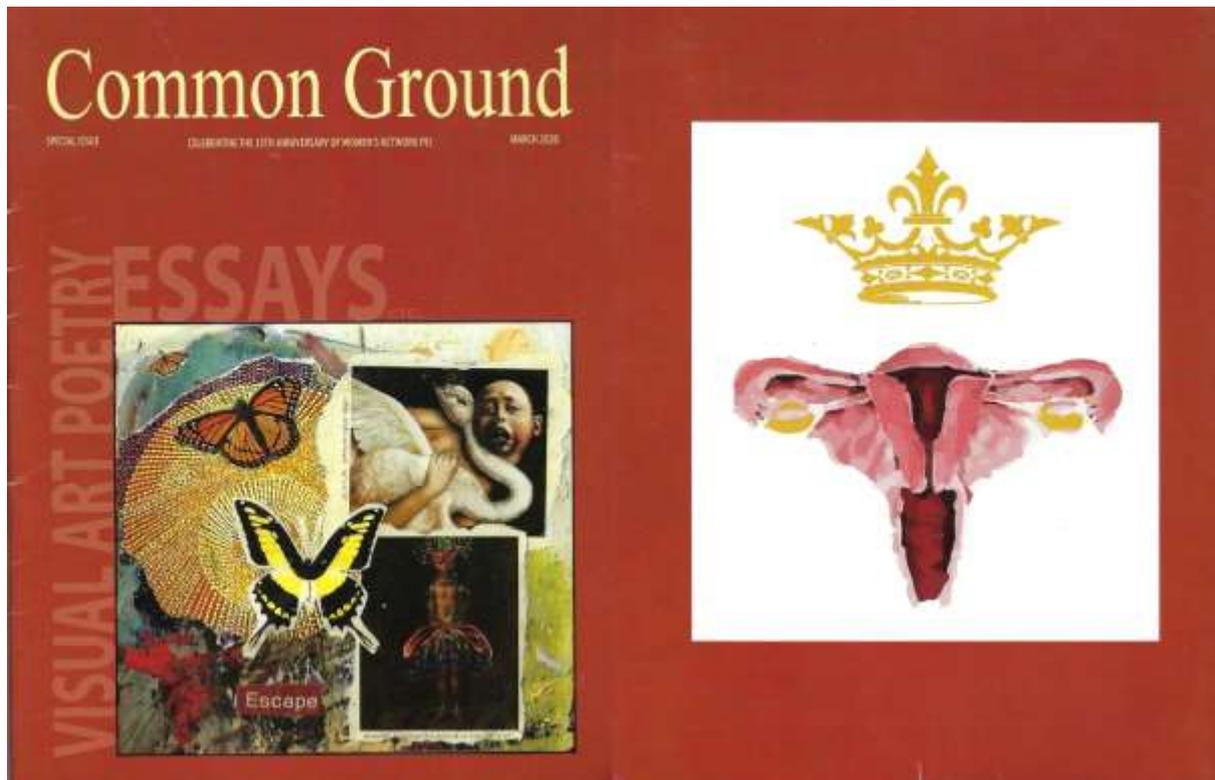


Figure 3.1 Common Ground Magazine Special Issue March 2020

The figure above is a scanned copy of the March 2020 Special Issue of Common Ground that is published by the WNPEI.

The socially progressive artwork on the front and back of the publication (the female reproductive organ covering the back page), implies that the content inside is bold and thought provoking. The brave imagery suggests potential audience discomfort by putting a sex organ

in such a visible position, which may limit the number of readers that would feel comfortable carrying or reading it either at home or in public spaces.



Figure 3.2 Common Ground Magazine Special Issue March 2020 Inside Pages
 The figure above is an example of the black and white printing inside of the magazine.

The purpose of using thoughtful logos, considerate names, and meaningful designs can grab the readers' attention on projects (i.e., Trade HERizons, PropELLE) instead of hollow acronyms. Common Ground highlights the power of their network by profiling other NGO's such as *Women Building PEI*, suggesting a connection to the grassroots community project: Trade HERizons. Promoting other organizations creates opportunities for additional peer support outside of WNPEI, consequently enhancing their perception as a professional network when contemplating a career in trades.

The special issue publication is only available in print (unavailable online or in digital media), which draws from its history as a grassroots publication hoping to activate and unify women across PEI on issues surrounding employment, health, and social justice. For example, the opening article in the magazine discusses the impact of women in trades, emphasizing

sustainable year-round careers for women to establish equitable wealth opportunities. The article also highlights historical information to emphasize progress, current emphasis on expansion, and places significance on the Women’s Network programming to promote tradeswomen in the field.

An editor reflects on how WNPEI birthed Common Ground Magazine to connect with other islanders:

From the beginning, WNPEI aimed to empower women through the recognition of women’s achievements and potential, and through listening to and providing a forum for women’s voices. Common Ground magazine was one of the first initiatives and ran for 15 years until funding was cut

- Sandy Kowalik (p.2)

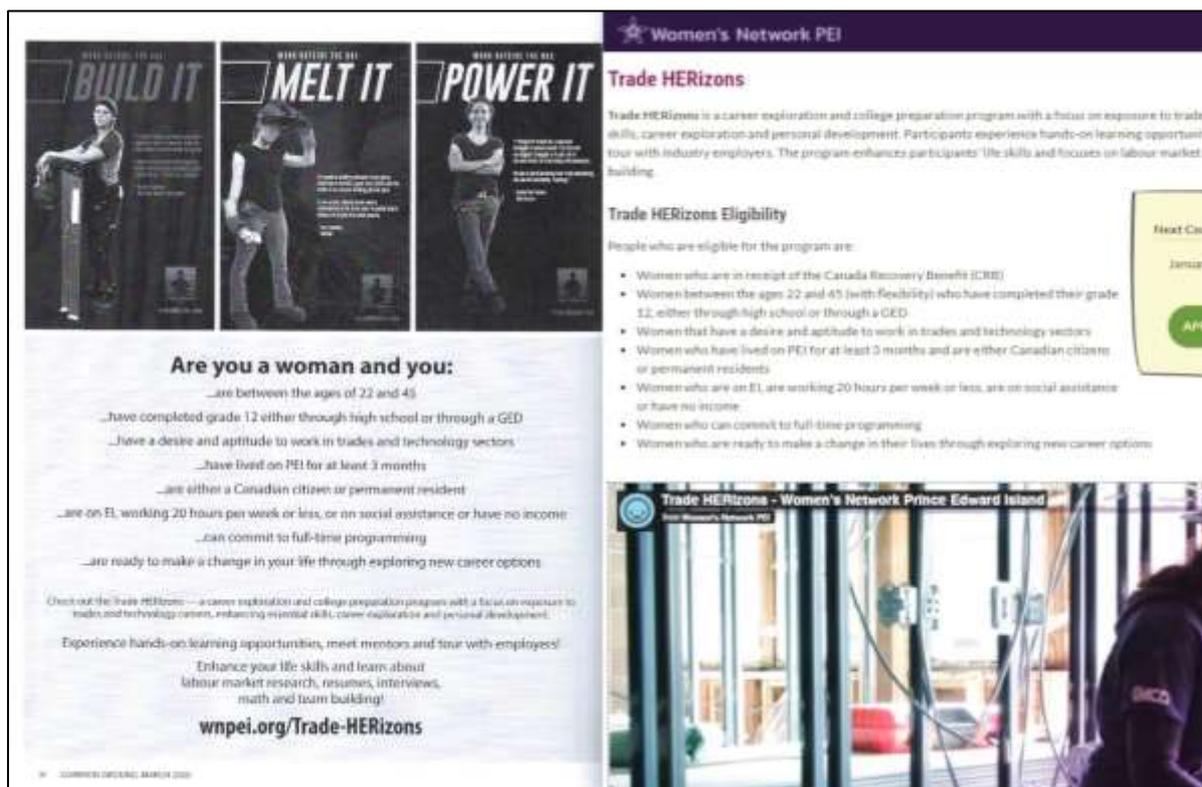


Figure 3.3 WNPEI Magazine and Website Content Consistency

The figure above shows an example from the magazine on the left and website on the right. This illustration shows the consistency in messaging across the WNPEI network. In this example, the topic is Trade HERizons.

Information about programming is consistent with details on the website (almost verbatim), showing consistency of content and messaging (see Figure 3.3 above for an example

of the consistency). The editorial staff could create a common thread between program descriptions, identifying the connections they have to each other (i.e., it takes a village and ignites) while avoiding placing people in specific categories of interest or need. This allows the magazine to speak to people at many stages of life, with differing experiences but may have common goals. Content focuses on empowerment, as it encourages people to get involved in the network regardless of their level of need or experience. Clear, informative content makes the magazine accessible to women who are first introduced to the network, including younger generations, by including modern influences such as hashtags (i.e., the #itstopshere project). The editors challenge common misconceptions of feminist-led organizations, like hysteria and/or sense of being too emotional and instead remind the readers of the value of their perspectives on important topics that affect them everyday. Seasoned staff members reflect on the significance of having a print magazine during the network's formative years:

Although most of these issues still require our ongoing attention, they no longer need a printed magazine as their forum. The strong networking and awareness-raising role that Common Ground played in the 80s and 90s has been taken over, more than competently by newer technologies.

- Anne McCallum (p.20)

Each section is methodical, with specific opportunities for connection and personal/professional development/education. The messages within show many ways to be an activist in the local community (photo story; written essays/poetry; fundraising; volunteering) by highlighting an array of topics with complimentary resources within the province of Prince Edward Island. A founding editor best describes the essence of the publication below:

In the spirit of inclusiveness, we named our new PEI women's publication Common Ground to emphasize the common ground that women of all ages and backgrounds shared, and for 14 years, we published 32-page issue every two months. I served as Managing Editor for 13 of those memorable years. All of our talented writers and illustrators were volunteers. In addition to celebrating PEI women's strengths and accomplishments, Common Ground acted as a key communications tool for women's groups, especially for organizations that sought to effect societal change. The magazine helped build a sense of community and shared purpose long before the invention of the world wide web.

- Anne McCallum (p.19)

Throughout the magazine, they reminded readers of sponsorship opportunities, however funders are not mentioned, which suggests the publication does not wish to inundate the reader with insensitive advertisements that would detract from the intentional messaging they wish to accomplish.

Pictures of staff and supporters are a powerful addition to the publication, which adds intimacy when discussing case studies for ongoing projects and the impact they have on the community (i.e., *Leadership: Engaging Island Women in Political Action*). The *Celebrate Island Women* article (pp. 12-15) feels like a “yearbook,” highlighting past events they were proud of that feature local artists and activists who use their platform to expand the reach of WNPEI.

Where possible, the magazine acknowledges supportive people from over the years, including the founders. This homage creates a relationship between advocacy and enjoyment by displaying the assumption that interacting with new and interesting people can bring joy while enhancing women’s experiences on PEI.



Figure 3.4 Irish Mythen Article

The figure above is an example of the women in the Common Ground Magazine profile.

The magazine elevates local women, profiling long-time advocates like Irish Mythen, who shows support through their art and ongoing generosity to the network and the events they organize (see Figure 3.4 above for the Mythen article). An essay by one woman who helped create common ground offers nostalgia, describes challenges of being a young working mother and the joy in collaboration with other women in the community with common goals for their lives. She describes the need for the publication here:

During the 1980s, a small group of determined PEI feminists was directing their great energy into building many of the island women's organizations, including Transition House Association, PEI rape and sexual assault crisis centre and women's network. Every aspect of a woman's life was impacted by institutional and personal inequality and misogyny. Things needed to change (p.2).

In each issue, we highlighted women who were knocking down the gender barrier to carve out rewarding careers in non-traditional areas—these were the stories that I loved best. We shared books and movies on topics related to women's health and empowerment, we published first-hand accounts from women who faced and surmounted incredible obstacles to realize their full potential. In every issue, we published women's creative writing. We reported on critical aspects of the national and international women's movements. And we forged strong, caring bonds with each other (p.20).

In another example, Common Ground profiled another woman who worked in feminist organizations throughout her career. The article highlights her journey of finding authenticity in the work, offering wisdom in communication, developing identity, and how to be a productive advocate and ally. Her thoughts on the experience of working with WNPEI are, “I came to WN, first as an illustrator and writer to the magazine and soon joined the board of directors. I found my pack” (p. 2). They designed the magazine welcoming, which is what this woman found. An original staff member describes her initial experience of being welcomed by WNPEI:

To my immense surprise and joy, they hired me to help turn their vision into a reality! I hoped they didn't regret that choice when on October 17, a week before I was to start the job, my son was born prematurely. I shouldn't have worried. In the true spirit of feminist solidarity, they first gave me flowers and then gave me all the support and encouragement I needed over that challenging winter. As my tiny baby

flourished, so did Women's Network plans for our building magazine (p. 19).

I have always appreciated how privileged I was to work in such a creative and respectful environment surrounded by remarkable women. They were proud and strong and determined to change our institutions, our laws, and our interpersonal behaviours so that women would have the same political, social, and economic rights as men. To some extent, we succeeded, but it surprises me, when I look back almost four decades, that the topics we wrote about in our early issues of Common Ground are still so relevant today (p. 20).

Common Ground magazine included several thought-provoking essays written over the years by women within the network that address difficult and controversial topics such as living with trauma, violence against women, and racism within feminism. These essays, while written in an academic format, can be seen as less accessible to the average reader which could stunt the opportunity for discussions on issues from a heterogeneous sample of diverse community members. This is an important distinction as those people in outlier groups or in small communities with difficult access to the magazine may wish to engage in such taboo subjects.

Each essay highlights how an individual experience is connected to larger systems and the importance of collectively moving through experiences to thrive as a community. For example, in the work *I See Your Walls Come Up*, the notion that repair and recovery is a living experience that identifies the dehumanization in weaponizing experiences which further build walls from connection. The author explains:

There's a fear response when people have felt powerless or survived terrible abuse, where we get stuck in trying to prevent what happened from ever reoccurring. In my relationships, this has led to walls going up to avoid harm—often preventative, often at the slightest detection of potential harm. On a larger scale, this can look like militarization and an obsession with zero-sum security that is won at the expense of others. Rather than building a new world, this keeps us stuck in patterns of the old, perpetuating cycles of harm.

Security will never be achieved through military power... Security—safety - is achieved through the cultivation of trust, mutuality, and belonging.

- Lauren Roi (p.26)

Remembrance and Action by Michelle Harris Genge, addresses the communal impact of violence against women, emphasizing the need for ongoing prevention work as a collective to impact change for future generations. *The Terminology of Equality in the Language of Feminism is Inherently Racist* by Stephanie Douglas, acknowledges feminist organizations are primarily serving white women. This article discusses how traditional feminism focuses on equality, meaning wanting what white men have. It challenges this notion by arguing that equity would suggest having the same access to opportunity through justice and freedom where women can carve out their own path, not following in the footsteps of toxic masculinity. This work challenges the reader to consider how white women are becoming a part of the problem they were so keen on dismantling. The explanation is detailed below:

It took women a lot longer to understand the meaning of the button than it did for men, and both would look uncomprehending, bemused, and puzzled. My button said, 'women who want to be equal to men, lack ambition. I have never understood why women wanted to be equal to men. To be equal to men is to perform in the same power-tripping, controlling, privileged way, and to be exclusive and inaccessible to other women.

The 'white male' systems (patriarchy and white supremacy) have always been rigid, narrow, exclusive, biased, and lacking freedom. Feminism has always had a certain implicit or explicit mantra and that has been, let's get 'in' first because then we can change the systems from within. However, women wanted to be equal, and instead of changing the rigid white male systems they adopted them and altered them slightly but neglected to examine their own hierarchal and dysfunctional methods that tend to run rampant in most women-led organizations. They remained incredibly racist, exclusive, and unsafe for women of colour.

- Stephanie Douglas (p.28)

A final short essay closes the magazine by highlighting the need for laughter and fun when working within a heavy field that deals with complex issues around trauma and frustration. The messaging suggests it is not productive to live in anger and addressed the importance of self care.

Additional artwork includes featured poetry throughout the magazine provides an additional outlet for people to connect and interpret based on their lived experience. A comic

strip illustrates the genuine struggles of accessing a safe abortion for residents of PEI as late as 2016. This presents an interesting visualization by introducing another mode of story telling. It addresses secrecy and shame of accessing the procedure while depicting little or no compassion from health staff. A collage of affirmations and motivational messaging is on the last page to leave the reader with hope, again highlighting their voice and strength in the presence of community of Common Ground.

3.2 MAIN STUDY FINDINGS

This section focuses on the themes identified from the narratives of staff interviewed at WNPEI. The diagram below offers an illustration of concepts and how they interrelate according to findings from the case study.

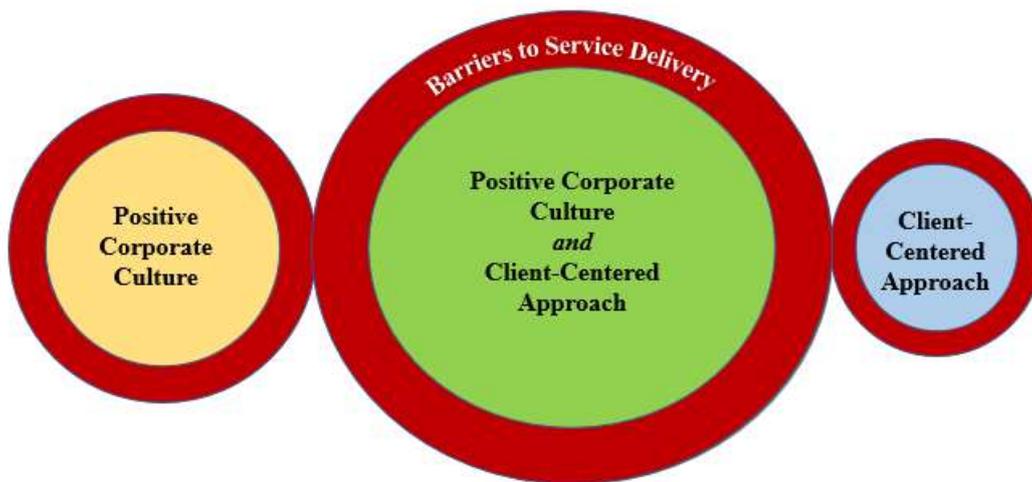


Figure 3.5 Conceptual Model of Understanding Dignity in Client Service Engagement

This model demonstrates the relationship between the four themes identified by the researcher; positive corporate culture, client centered approach, a symbiotic relationship between presence of a positive corporate culture and a client-centered approach, and the barriers of service delivery that surround each aspect within the organization.

3.2.1 Positive Corporate Culture

Findings show that there is an emphasis on positive corporate culture from front line management, specifically noting that staff wellbeing, respect, autonomy, sense of feeling

valued and empowered through ongoing collaboration within the network/among stakeholders and timely research projects that focus on current systemic issues that impact women on PEI.

Table 3.1 below represents the ‘Positive Corporate Culture’ theme from the fully transcribed interviews. The theme is represented in three interviews and collectively accounts for 224 references. Figure 3.1 below is a visual representation of the theme.

CODE	Files	References
WNPEI Staff Responsibilities	3	56
WNPEI Staff and Participant – Supportive environment with women in mind	2	41
WNPEI Policy and Programs, reflexive strategies	3	40
WNPEI Staff value alignment with program and organizational values	3	28
WNPEI Staff credentials and qualifications	3	24
WNPEI Staff retention	3	19
Feminist Organization, networks, and stakeholder connections	3	16
TOTAL		224

Table 3.1 Positive Corporate Culture Theme at WNPEI

The table above represents the codes that create the ‘Positive Corporate Culture’ theme. The codes are in all three fully transcribed interviews, with staff responsibilities with greatest number of mentions. There are 224 mentions that represent this theme.



Figure 3.6 Positive Corporate Culture Theme

The figure above is a visual representation of the codes that create the Positive Corporate Culture theme. The pie chart is weighted according to the number of references the code receives. For example, staff responsibilities are the most mentioned code, with feminist organization, networks and stakeholders having the least mentions.

The first theme the researcher extracted from the findings identifies the positive corporate culture of WNPEI. Staff described their experience working for the organization as supportive compared to previous positions they have held in other organizations and government structures, claiming “Oh, I’ve said dozens of times Women’s Network kind of ruins you for working anywhere else” implying it is a great place to work at. They claim:

I don’t want to leave. I find it interesting... when I first started working here, I’d left a government job and the executive director at the time said, we can’t offer you benefits. We can’t offer you the pay that you’re used to, but here’s what we can offer to you... and I said, I’ll take that in a second over a government paycheck and a pension... because working in a place like this, we try to show dignity and respect for all of our clients, but they also do it for all the employees as well. There’s really a push for us to take care of our own mental health. They’re not counting hours that we’re sitting in a chair at our desks as long as we’re getting our work done and staying on top of things, they’re happy. You know, if I have to leave in the middle of the day because my child is sick... there’s no worry about... oh, I have to stay late another day or I have to make up my hours, or I mean, in the end, you want to work for an organization like this and you’ll when the time comes for like crunch

time, when reports are due or whatever, you don't mind staying late during those times because there have been a million other times where they said, yeah, that's fine... if you're not feeling good, go home. Or if your kids are sick, don't worry about staying at home, we'll figure it out. We'll get things moving. It really is kind of like a family to be here. It's an ongoing thing that they are looking out for us, there's a lot of flexibility and they advocate on behalf of us as well. In my every day, having these sorts of values in this organization not only helps our clients, but helps the employees here.

Participants described an organized work environment that provides clear formal roles. The organization offers limited permanent positions in management with casual options for facilitation and special projects. They described responsibilities as fluid depending on the time of year according to the timing of service delivery, such as planning, executing, and reporting to funders. They carefully curated each position to maximize compensation for the staff, acknowledging the value in their time, and specialities they offer. They reported staff education credentials as holding post secondary degrees in social sciences, nonspecific to working for a feminist organization with no offerings of additional professional development upon onboarding. A participant explains how they build their professional skills through genuine interest in community involvement and activism to serve as powerful resources amongst other staff and clients:

A lot of people on our staff sit on premier's action committees or different boards in the community. They do kind of work on their own time with affordable housing or food security or with women in government. I think there's like a lot of overlap with the different women's organizations in the community where a lot of us will sit on each other's advisory committees or boards or take part in different kinds of reproductive rights, all kinds of different things. There's a lot of people on our staff who aren't specifically designated to do those things, but I think out of interest there, they take part in a lot of things in the community.

Mentorship plays a large role in introducing new staff to WNPEI; however, they report having the flexibility to adapt the positions to highlight their strengths, including special projects or introducing a new element to program facilitation, like daily mindfulness practices. Staff describe how WNPEI prefers to be proactive when considering policy and program delivery while remaining reflexive in moments of unrest such as pivoting service delivery

during the onset of the recent COVID-19 global pandemic. The aim of the participants is to make programming and services accessible for staff to deliver by drawing on the importance of teamwork (should they have to assist each other during schedule conflicts or necessary personal leave). One participant details why she feels WNPEI takes a unique approach to organizational behaviour practices:

I hope there's like a similar thread for people that they feel whether they're a staff member, whether they're participating in one of our programs. I hope that people feel like we are doing things differently and we're not just replicating the mainstream approach to everything. I do hope that the way we interact with each other as colleagues is the same way we interact with each other in part in programs. I think also having, not that we have a lot of time to discuss the things we'd like to improve in programs but having that trust in work environment also helps us to better evaluate, better hear the feedback from people in our programs, be better open to hearing criticisms and adapting to them. I think if us as a staff team are supported, then our participants are also better supported. We're better able to hear the good and the bad, and address that as best we can organizationally. I don't want to paint too pretty of a picture either because it's a workplace. We have a ton of stuff to do, and a lot of a lot of stress related to that. Hopefully, it's at least a place where people can name and identify issues, even if we can't always respond or address them or fix them now.

Staff continue to emphasize their ability to set personal and professional boundaries when considering the work, they can commit to, including available hours or special topics based on their personal comfort level and perception of safety. These approaches contribute to their personal value alignment with WNPEI policies and programming. Working collaboratively with people who hold similar values, there is a deeper level of connection with vested parties and less tension in the workplace, reflected below:

It's different for everyone how much alignment they need. I've always said if half of my values are represented in an organization, then that's a pretty good start, and I would say Women's Network is above that. I think when I arrived, we had we still have a lot of work to do to strengthen our values and our approach. I think, you know, there are some things that really needed to shift when I started, but I feel like those shifts have happened. No organization is perfect, and it's still a workplace, in a capitalist world... so it's not. It's not... yeah, it's just not... insulated from a lot of those issues that can occur in any workplace, but it's an organization that was started really to bring people across the province together who identify as women.

Participants discuss the importance of working for, and amongst, people who understand the pressures unique to women in the workplace, such as balancing societal pressures of motherhood or emphasizing the need for awareness of workplace sexual harassment and prejudice. A common goal for staff members is to treat each other as well as they treat their clients, which anecdotally is rarely the case in allied health and social service operations. There is an emphasis on the trust placed in staff experiences by acknowledging their professional knowledge as valuable and worthy when considering policy and programming updates:

I think people feel like this is a more flexible work environment than a lot of other places and ... I think, you know, it's not all directly correlated, but I think because we have an organizational culture that puts the staff at the center just like our programs put the people participating at the center, I think people do feel more valued. Although they may still head for another opportunity elsewhere, that there's still an affinity for the organization or still wanting to stay connected to the organization, so we've retained staff quite a bit. We've had some people leave, but it's by their choice. This work will always be stressful, doesn't matter how much we built into it, and so that risk of burnout and compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma are always there. I do think it makes it a little bit easier for people to stay in the team because there may be times where you have more or less energy and you feel like you can actually verbalize that. Hopefully that helps people sustain their work more long term.

If the staff are taken care of, they can pass along that value and sense of dignity to the clients they work with and therefore encouraging optimal results in client service delivery and long-term success (however, the client or program defines success). A participant details their experience below:

There's still a lot going on and so we can't reverse all the stresses in people's lives, but I think if we cannot be an additional stress for people and if we can support people to be as financially secure as possible and have as much job security as possible and know that this is a supportive environment, then even though people still have a lot of going on, and especially people who do identify as women get pulled in a lot of different directions. So, we can't fully negate that. But we can at least hopefully this be a place where people feel like they can bring that and get support and not feel like it just is another stressor in their life.

Our health and well-being is kind of first and foremost. We also have less stressful times of the year, so like I said, when you're working for

an organization who really values you and respects you, you're willing to work harder for them during those, you know, a couple of months of busy time, and then you get to... have a little downtime, a little less stressful.

This perceived value the participants discuss is further identified as being a major component to why they choose to remain an active employee in WNPEI, lending to the positive corporate culture. Participants note that working for an organization that treats them as valuable and understanding their need for safety exceeds the desire to work for an organization that will better compensate them. They reflect this sentiment below:

We are an organization that has an organizational culture that does support staff members in a way that I haven't seen before. That was really evident when I started, and I think we've maintained that and that ethos of, you know, if you're not well, your work won't be well and that we need to support ourselves first and the work will follow. That is very unusual in most workplaces, and I think was probably the thing that struck me the most, a women's network when I started.

The participant describes their needs as being acknowledged and cared for versus other reported employers who were more primarily concerned about their bottom line or public perception through client service delivery.

By working for a feminist organization, participants describe the benefits of being a part of a larger network with values in line with their own beliefs and values:

We are able to do some advocacy as an organization, but we are largely a more project-based programming organization where the bulk of what we do is to offer programs and services and advocate around some of the learnings that we identify through that process, but we never have people dedicated doing that work in the team. So, we're often looking at larger organizations. We look a lot to groups in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland in particular, to get a sense of how they are addressing some of these things and how we could ... we can never take something from another province and just do it here without adapting it, but we can always take things and adapt them to the PEI reality.

Participants can acknowledge that operating within a small province in Atlantic Canada provides unique opportunities and challenges, where they continuously adjust to ensure their delivery is appropriate for local island women. They describe valuing the resources within the

broader network, specifically in the Maritimes, in helping inform ongoing program and policy updates to best serve their staff and client base.

Collectively, positive corporate culture is portrayed by the participants through their acknowledgement of being valued and sharing complimentary beliefs. The staff also find value in the flexibility in their roles and ability to feel empowered to bring forward new ideas or challenges to help with program delivery. As it relates to development and leadership, they encourage staff members to set personal and professional goals to better themselves, and by consequence, the organization. From the narratives, the participants experience a positive corporate culture that is beneficial to the employee and bettering the organization.

3.2.2 Client-Centered Approaches

Client-centered approaches, explained by staff as creating reflexive and accessible programming that are trauma informed and staffed appropriately for positive participant experience to maximize positive impact in helping them achieve their goals.

Table 3.2 below represents the ‘Client-Centered Approaches’ theme from the fully transcribed interviews. The theme is represented in three interviews and collectively accounts for 172 references. Figure 3.2 below is a visual representation of the theme.

CODE	Files	References
Client-centered approaches	3	60
Client goals	3	26
Client diversity	3	24
Client - vulnerable population, marginalized community	3	22
Client positive feedback of WNPEI	3	20
Client natural supports, access to community resources, wellness teams	3	5
Client transferrable skills from WN classroom programming	2	5
Client access to reach back outreach at WNPEI	1	4
Client poverty, food insecurity	1	2
Client literacy about sexual health	1	2
Client taking part in voluntary program at WNPEI	1	1
Client youth integration of programming at WNPEI	1	1
TOTAL		172

Table 3.2 Client-Centered Approaches Theme

The table above represents the codes that create the ‘Client-Centered Approaches’ theme. The codes are in all three fully transcribed interviews, with client centred approaches receiving the greatest number of mentions. There are 172 mentions that represent this theme.

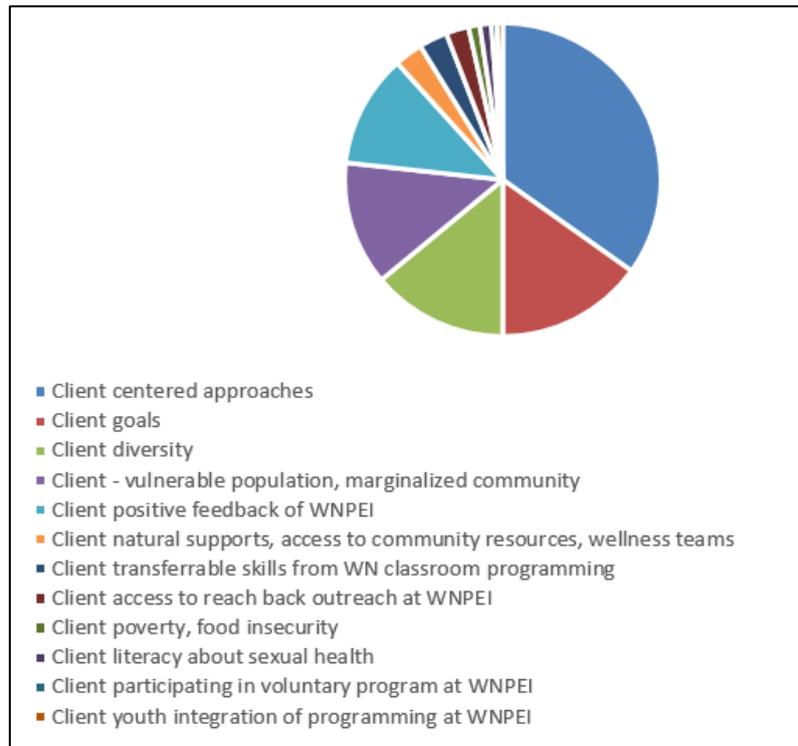


Figure 3.7 Client-Centered Approaches Theme

The figure above is a visual representation of the codes that create the Client-Centered Approaches theme. The pie chart is weighted according to the number of references the code receives. For example, client-centered approaches are the most mentioned code, with youth integration of programming having the least mentions.

The second theme identified in the narratives highlights how WNPEI uses client-centered approaches in their service delivery, implying they consider the significance and individual nature of client goals while considering their diverse experiences when offering programming and other service delivery. A participant details her experience below:

When I first was hired on, I hadn't really worked with the Women's Network in any... formal capacity, obviously heard of it before. I think I was really pleasantly surprised to see those moments of...how do we meet people with kindness and generosity and also how do we build community through these programs and support people to build themselves up? And I think, yeah, the Women's Network, when I was even just working 16 hours a week, I was like really often surprised. This is really comprehensive curriculum in terms of... there's something special about working towards... going back to school when you haven't

gone to school in a long time or working up the confidence to apply for jobs when you haven't worked a long time. There is also something really special, being able to create community amongst, 10 or 18 people who have never met before and facilitate friendship building and self care and all those other pieces that make people whole people.

WNPEI staff draw attention that many of the clients they work with identify as a vulnerable population, existing often within marginalized communities, and are continually creating bridges between other organizations (such as the black cultural society or newcomer's association) to inform policy and contribute to meaningful advocacy work. A participant explains in further detail:

Even before Black Lives Matter was happening, I feel like there was definitely a recognition that Women's Network didn't portray all the women. We recognize that we don't represent all the women of Prince Edward Island, because we were all around the same age, we were all white, you know, so we need to definitely get some more perspectives in here. We've definitely worked intentionally over the last number of years to create some more diversity on our board and in our staff.

The staff identify and supporting holistic aspects of a client's life, which might include acknowledging financial barriers such as food insecurity as an ongoing concern for some clients. To remedy this dilemma, the staff incorporated lunch into their daily programming, such as the senior women's group *Still Visible*. Another example of pro-activeness is the staff's ability to support their clients' cost of transportation or childcare for people with limited income, explained in further detail:

I think we value sometimes different things than other people and process is as important for us as the outcome. People need to feel comfortable; they need to be able to eat, they need to be able to socialize, they need to be able to share both their experiences. I think there're things we offer in our programs, doesn't matter what kind of program it is, that is sometimes it just, I think a bit more thoughtful and caring for participants, and we're always trying to ensure that you know if transportation's a barrier, that there's a subsidy available, if you have childcare, elder care needs, that there's support for that. We don't assume that everyone is showing up with full bellies and is food secure, and so try to integrate as much food as possible into everything that we're doing, and also make it possible for people to bring food home with them if they need to. Every program looks different and has different resources, but I think, you know, we aren't just going to focus on outcomes, results, and deliverables, even though that's what our

fundors want. We really do try to put the people in our programs at the center. Let them feel as much autonomy as they can about their own learning, and then provide that wraparound support that we know that enhances any experience for people.

Participants note that the feedback they typically receive in consideration to services and programming is overwhelmingly positive, for example clients acknowledging that facilitators enjoy their job and put thought and care in providing programming. One participant summarizes their experience of providing comprehensive services to their clients:

I think the biggest surprise for me coming into the Women's Network last year was... I think it was the desire to support people fully or to be able and... acknowledging that we can't do everything for everybody, but wanting to be able to give the people the tools to do that self advocacy piece. I think, was really important. Overall, I think The Women's Network tends to have a really good relationship with all former participants or most former participants and closely.

Staff integrate a wellness check-in for clients taking part in programming to offer opportunities for one-to-one support. WNPEI is concerned with the natural supports of their clients, connecting them with community resources, and advocating for them within their social programs and wellness teams. This demonstration of care continues post programming as WNPEI offers reach back services where they can connect with clients and offer support in other ways. A participant elaborates on the need for extra support:

I came into this job because, they were looking for someone to do that kind of extra support piece for participants, recognizing that the facilitators do the work in front of the class, but the participants are also just... experience a lot outside of a class. That work being put on the facilitators wasn't really... sustainable.

Over the years, WNPEI has had dedicated interaction with past clients, sometimes out of need for episodic support. The organization helps with transformative roles into a new volunteer and advocate for the work in line with the aims of the group. One narrative explains their connection to the network through familial ties:

I remember my mom having common ground at the house and now I work here. And so, yeah, there is definitely... there's definitely hints of that happen with people that have lived here, they've grown up on Prince Edward Island. Women's Network was definitely in their lives when they were very young.

Their reflection suggests a genuine appreciation for experience in wanting to maintain communication as a trusted resource. Another participant details the WNPEI policy on repeating programming for returning clients:

Generally, our program is only offered one time, but we try to provide as much wrap around support for anyone who's attended our programs in the past. It's not that we would want them to cycle back to the program, but they may stay in touch with a staff member and continue to get some of that wrap around support.

Participants describe the transferrable skills they hope to include in their programming, clarifying that while their programs (i.e., Trade HERizons) have clear objectives of introducing women into the working trades, their goal is to build confidence and encourage empowerment in their clients, reflected below:

This woman, who would have graduated from PropELLE three years ago I think, she told us this example of like being able to advocate for herself in front of her co-workers in a job that she just walked into and remembering these really funny group activities that we force people to do and drawing on those experiences to be like I'm going to stand up for myself in this situation, it was like a funny example, but that feels meaningful and, being able to equip people with... or allowing people the space to work on themselves that they don't necessarily get to work on in other programs or other days. That felt important.

It's being able to give people the tools that they need, the tools that they already have, but just probably not been practiced. It's not like... we're not saving people, or I think it just being able to highlight those pieces of themselves that they just never get to, to work on necessarily.

The participant's assertion proves to be a point of tension between what they value as an organization compared to what is qualified by the funders. It is important to note that WNPEI values the overall formative experience and journey of the clients over the absolute result (not always consistent with the funders bottom line goal).

Participants explain their ongoing effort to continue to expand services and introduce new content into their programs to build new relationships to better serve their clients. The aim for the organization is to be open to suggestions in ways they can continue to connect with their target market. For example, as part of the research conversations I wondered about integrating sexual health literacy within programming such as PropELLE, and the response from the

participant was open and encouraging, signifying they may take it as a helpful suggestion for their planning meetings. The staff members recognize that their programming and services are voluntary on behalf of their clients and to continue serving them well, they need to be receptive to social changes - reflected in the comment below:

We're not any type of authority in anybody's life here at work, so, I mean, even with our clients, our funders might say we want the participants to have seventy-five percent attendance rate or whatever the case may be. We'll pass that information along to the participants. If they're not showing up, we reach out to them not to slap their hand or to say... you get to class, we sit down and say, OK, so like what is happening in your life? You know, you were here for the first two weeks and then... you started not showing up more and more. What's happening with you right now. And so, it's more of a supportive role.

Clients are never mandated to take part, and in fact are often compensated with a stipend for their investment of time. It is important for the participants to deliver a thoughtful and dignified service to both serve people with dignity while maintaining their fabulous reputation in the community as a safe space for people to engage in. Collectively, the client-centered approaches mentioned within reflect an organization and staff that take pride in helping their clients. The narratives highlight the importance of experience, transferrable skills, and maintain communication with their clients to support and empower these people to accomplish their life goals.

3.2.3 Positive Corporate Culture AND Client-Centered Approaches

Table 3.3 below represents the theme that exhibits both Positive Corporate Culture AND Client-Centered Approaches from the fully transcribed interviews. The theme is represented in three interviews and collectively is the strongest theme with 406 references. Figure 3.3 below is a visual representation of the theme.

CODE	Files	References
Communication and Connection	3	34
Accessibility of services and programming	3	33
Balanced support, boundaries	3	29
WNPEI staff integrity, flexibility, trust, respect, positive values, autonomy	3	29

Resource sharing	3	27
WNPEI consistency of delivery, commitment to providing support for both staff and clients	3	27
WNPEI organizational behaviour	3	25
WNPEI encouraging autonomy, confidence, independence, and community connections	3	21
WNPEI providing a safe, comfortable environment	3	20
WNPEI compared to other local NGO's	2	19
Advocacy work in community, issues-based activism	2	16
Evolution of WNPEI - services, mission, practices	2	16
Small class sizes	2	15
Structured delivery of services	2	14
WNPEI mentorship, coaching	2	13
WNPEI diversity of staff	3	12
Academic influence on network decision making, policy creation, programming, and ongoing research	3	11
Peer support	3	10
Privacy of information	3	10
Long term connections to WNPEI - staff and clients	3	8
Building connections and friendships	2	7
WNPEI staff experience and how it shaped their decision to work there	2	7
Conflict resolution	2	3
TOTAL		406

Table 3.3 Positive Corporate Culture AND Client-Centered Approaches Theme

The table above represents the codes that create the ‘Positive Corporate Culture AND Client-Centered Approaches’ theme. The codes are in all three fully transcribed interviews, with community and connection receiving the greatest number of mentions. This is the strongest theme in the study, receiving 406 mentions.

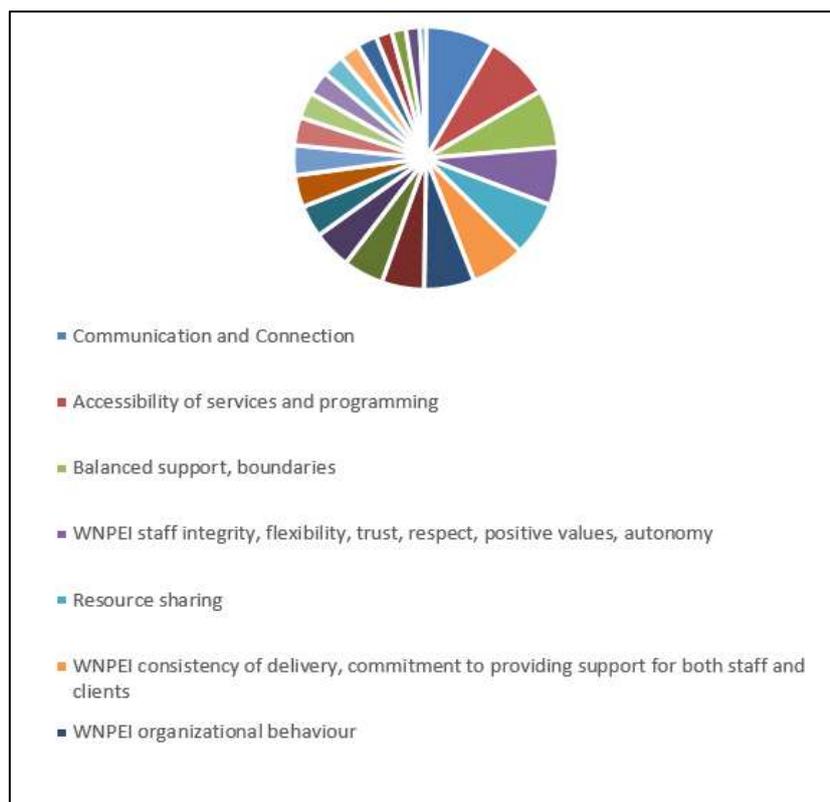


Figure 3.8 Positive Corporate Culture AND Client-Centered Approaches Theme

The figure above is a visual representation of the codes that create the Positive Corporate Culture AND Client-Centered Approaches theme. The pie chart is weighted according to the number of references the code receives. For example, communication and connection are the most mentioned code, with organizational behaviour having the least mentions. This is the strongest theme according to the number of mentions in the current thesis.

The third theme identified from the narratives is people, policy, and operations that exhibit both positive corporate culture *and* a client-centred approach. This relationship is a powerful representation of how having a positive corporate culture where staff feel valued and safe can create an environment conducive to operating a client-centred approach.

Participants discuss the importance of communication and connection within operations at WNPEI. They identify it as a multidirectional component in the layers of service delivery amongst funders, management, staff, and clients. Interviews suggest open communication must occur at every level of the organization as it provides opportunity for clarity in expectations and agreed upon service delivery. Communication enhances connection when exercised with integrity, which is important when building trust and establishing intentions for upholding the mission and vision of WNPEI. The importance of communication

and connection is to create accessible services and programming that are sustainable for delivery from staff to clients long-term. For instance, a participant reflects on this:

I think a lot of that is a lot of the work we do up front to try and create as safe of an environment as possible. Generally, I would say a lot of people do feel comfortable bringing that to us, but that's not to say that that everyone is going to in every situation. Just trying to be observant of non-verbals and body language and how people are interacting with each other. I think the best way to do that is to just have a lot of different people in different roles in the room at different times, but then working together to make sure they're catching everything.

An informed approach to policy and service delivery through active communication allows for more balanced support through resource sharing and the ability to set comprehensive boundaries. Participants describe examples of the importance of class size when discussing the impact of positive connection and communication:

Working with a group of ten, whether it was because they all just wanted to be around other people or it was a smaller group, they all made really close friendships, which isn't always the case when you're working with 20 to 24 people. There's different personalities in the group and different points of view, but this particular group, the relationships that they grew throughout the 12 weeks was really incredible.

Normally we would have 24 people doing this particular activity and it would take two days to do it, but this is nice that we get to like that kind of stuff. A lot of people in the exit interview online said, I don't think I would have been able to open up with a larger group of people, it seemed a little bit more intimate with each other, a little bit better. We got to hear more of people's stories, I think, because there was more time.

Staff narratives highlight that to mitigate the risk of cliques or bullying behaviour in the classroom there is an importance to build relationships in small groups. Taking this approach lends to the belief that conflict resolution seemed to be less of an issue by establishing professional boundaries and expectations of care for each other to exist respectfully. This sentiment is reflected by a staff member:

I find what we often hear is that, you know, programs that we offer feel different than a lot of other experiences that people have had with programs and people do, not everyone, but people who are highly engaged in our programs really feel like there's a different level of care, thoughtfulness that we put into our work that not everyone else does.

Participants go on to describe the ease of education delivery and mentorship in smaller class sizes, including a higher likelihood of being connected with people whose readiness is optimal for the expectations of an employment program. Another participant notes that staff do not report issues with conflict management and resolution:

In comparison to last year, I think there was the opportunity to go deeper with the smaller group. I think people felt really comfortable a lot sooner with one another and with fewer people there is....and again, this could be a personality thing, it could be a numbers thing, could be because of covid. There was a lot of... the friendships that were made, there wasn't clicks. Normally you see different groups and then there is group dynamics that you have to manage, and the conflict have to resolve within the classroom, and none of that happened. I think, a combination of all those things. We didn't have to mediate any interpersonal dynamics at all. It was a lot of... this is who I am, this is what I'm bringing, this is what I want to work on. Less of that interpersonal piece that always comes with facilitating groups stuff.

While there is no formal policy in place, participants argued that despite differing opinions, there is an expectation of treating each other with dignity and respect in the workplace. This understanding serves as a cornerstone for positive communication that creates a healthy and safe workplace. A participant provides a more detailed account below:

What we're trying to ultimately change is, create social change that builds more equity and justice, then we kind of need to do that from a place of love and care, you know, and so we are trying to maybe disrupt some of those patterns of harm or hate or anger and give people a space to identify those things, but not stay there, you know. I think it's having that consistency in your vision and your approach and so, it would be hypocritical of us if we were treating staff members differently than participants. I think it allows us to have that consistency in our values, but it also just means that when people are well supported, then they can feel like they have what they need to support people who might be even more vulnerable situations.

Communication and connection (relationship building) has a role in WNPEI, as staff work to build relationships amongst clients and neighbouring local organizations to bridge supports that they are not funded to provide. At program completion (considered discharge or exit planning), connection to other NGO's is a valuable service feature in offering necessary outreach supports by the staff at WNPEI. This process is commented on below:

A big part of each of those programs is also trying to connect people to the community. The team will do community connections fair during the program and have... whether it's Family Violence or Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, have different community... Peers Alliance or different community groups and services come in to really create those connections amongst participants.

Because we don't have specifically the ability to do wrap around or we don't have somebody designated to be that kind of support, it gets done off the side of our desks. It really is in the client's best interest for more than one reason to do a lot of the work themselves, because we have the work that we're paid to do, but then we also will fit in trying to find this support at the same time.

I think in an ideal world, we wouldn't need that wrap around support, you know, but we also know that recovery isn't linear. We're trying to find that balance between ideally people will be set up and on their own pathway. We also know that not having a supportive place to reach out to when you do experience bumps in the road can make it really hard to keep going.

Another element to this combined theme is the importance of autonomy as it applies to staff and client empowerment and trust in learned decision-making. For staff, it could mean frontline work or connection to academic best practice, whereas clients can appreciate being the expert of their life. This notion is explained below by supporting others through autonomy:

Creating that supportive place, but not doing too much hand holding either is really tricky, and so I think we're always trying to navigate that and different team members might have different perspectives on that, but trying to have a boundary without feeling like we're being too rigid and not providing people meaningful support that they need, but also not providing too much support so that we're then acting as therapists and counsellors when they should have their own therapists and counsellors that we're able to connect them to. Those are kind of some of the conversations we often have internally, and it is kind of a magic balance that you're trying to reach, and it's hard to know if we're reaching it or not.

Autonomy implies a sense of trust and respect for the positions the staff hold and the clients they serve. Both parties have awareness of their own needs and the nuance surrounding those needs. Participants emphasize that when they can operate WNPEI the way they believe it best serves their staff and clients, they are able to dedicate more resources toward their operations plan. One participant describes their experience of workplace autonomy:

I think a lot of employer's kind of feel that worry, if I give them too much, they'll take advantage of me, but I honestly don't think that very many people actually do that. If you're an organization that really values your workers and they and they feel supported in that, I think that there's a give and take for the most part.

The excerpt highlights the creation of an optimal environment for consistency of service delivery with a commitment to providing client-centred services through curated programming and outreach supports.

When exercised intentionally and safely, autonomy fosters confidence and independence for both staff and clients in their lives, as noted below:

There are some really wonderful places to work on PEI and there's some really awful places, I think. And I think what makes some place wonderful is the work that the management does to create an environment where people feel valued, and they feel supported and they feel autonomous in their work. They don't feel micromanaged. They don't feel like they're just a number or a cog. And Women's Network has really done some incredible work over the 10 years that I've been here and even before that to really do that for both their clients and their and their staff.

There is context to consider when autonomy is no longer appropriate, such as if the person or organization has demonstrated a pattern of reduced ability to make safe decisions. It is important to work alongside people to find an approach that maintains their dignity because it fosters confidence and independence for both staff and clients.

Another major area where the theme of both client-centred approaches and positive corporate culture exist is in how participants detail qualities that separate WNPEI from other NGO's available in the community. When considering limited resources of a small province, it is important to be mindful and intentional in how these resources are utilized to maximize a positive outcome for both staff and clients. An example of client selection is mentioned:

...[W]e do have maybe more interest than spots available, but it's more about finding people who are the best fit and maybe redirecting some people who aren't a good fit for that program, then they have a big wait list or things like that... Right now, we interact with a lot of people, but a lot of people get redirected to programs that are a better fit for them as well.

Another example from a participant detailing the unique policy around pay structure and sick time:

It's things like everyone here gets paid weekly because we know that people can face financial insecurity. Getting a weekly pay can be a lot easier for people. We're pretty flexible, try to give people the highest pay we can with the least amount of hours, trying to give people as much time off as possible, try to organize retreat time, reflection time for people. The team really rallies if we know that people need to take extra time off or we all need to step in, and... yeah, just trying to drive as many resources as you can to your colleagues instead of to the organization itself. We've been in situations where people need extra time off or need...and just try to figure out what that looks like and have our policies be as strong as possible but go well beyond what our policy states when we can as well.

The commitment to quality and aim for more diverse representation highlights the genuine care WNPEI staff have for the work that they do in wanting to serve the community according to client specific needs. One participant explains:

I think that they've never felt that amount of support before. A few of them wrote that in the exit interviews that we just did online, that... they said, I knew that I could come to staff about anything, and I wouldn't be judged. That they didn't realize that they even wanted or needed this amount of support. I feel like just having the knowledge that somebody is there for you, that you can go to with anything. There's a lot of mental gymnastics around even navigating who to go to with this particular issue or... and even advocating on behalf of yourself.

WNPEI demonstrate their attention to detail and active listening by choosing projects that are reflective of client experience (such as Gaining Retention for Women in Trades, or GRIT). For instance, one project explored why women were exiting their profession shortly after completing education and working in a male dominated industry. The project investigated issues around safety, accessibility, and other systemic issues that may create ongoing barriers to women remaining in their chosen field. The organization found that focusing on the barriers allows them to do community advocacy so they can improve conditions and ultimately foster more positive communication between their alumni clients and their hiring contractors. WNPEI exceeds expectations of community-based support, and it is with this added value of genuine

care that clients can foster their confidence and increase their sense of self-worth. A participant provides an example of alumni involvement below:

I would say there's definitely a number of folks who took part in the program that are now kind of like trades mentors in the program and still involved. Or that when they go, they may work at a work placement, and if we're at a worksite that we're visiting and so they'll host the tour. There is still a lot of connection between especially for Trade HERizons.

Empowering women has been a core value since WNPEI first organized, and while they have modernized over the years, their aim continues to be a standout example of how to support women well. They practice what they preach, at times have to get creative with funding and volunteers to get the job done well but have a consistent delivery of treating people well.

Participants speak to this further below:

We did exit interviews with them, in-person and online. Even though it's called Trade Horizons and it explores the trades, we do a lot of personal development. In the exit interviews, they talked a lot about the personal development and the relationships that they've built within this group. It was mostly I think the surprising part of the programming is the other kind of like personal development skills they got. We do sessions on things like conflict resolution, communication styles, we do a lot of team building activities. We do a lot of like goal setting, journaling, we do a lot of mindfulness. We take them out on kind of confidence building activities. We did snowshoeing and rock climbing and yoga and drumming and like all kinds of things like that, not expecting to get in a programming where you're exploring the trades. In the feedback, in the exit interviews, a lot of them talked about how meaningful that was for them. A number of people are saying, and they've said this for a really long time, Trade Horizons really changes people's lives forever. They come out, they're more confident. They are finding it easier to take the steps that they need to make a change in their lives, really super positive stuff.

The exit interview for Trade Horizons, for example, a lot of people were saying... you could tell how much the facilitator's loved to be there, and that was... made it so welcoming for me to come and make me feel comfortable being there, and I was able to open up more. I think I think by osmosis, that ability to open up and to feel supported just happens because of the culture that's in Women's Network. Women's Network did a lot of internal work over the past 10 years with around the conflict resolution and communication styles where we as a staff, like we explore people's communication styles and learning styles and conflict resolution. Even if there was an issue, it's practiced in the office that we

do conflict resolution, and someone would facilitate that if I didn't feel comfortable going to the person directly or someone would mediate that. If it was a major issue, we would get somebody from outside of the organization that we know a lot of other people who would... who've done that kind of conflict resolution work as well. Women's Network really practices what they preach in terms of those kinds of things. There was a lot of work done around that around that piece to make it a comfortable place to work for anybody.

To summarize, there are many overlapping qualities and characteristics among both themes of a client-centred approach and positive corporate culture where WNPEI sets themselves apart. This becomes clear through their testimony on the ways they can operate within the community to ultimately influence progress for people who identify as women. The next section explores the ongoing barriers to service delivery that impedes WNPEI's mission.

3.2.4 Ongoing Barriers to Service Delivery

Ongoing barriers to service delivery include lack of planning time when funding requires annual applications which leads to lack of consistency in program delivery, division between the deliverables that funders expect to have reported back vs what WNPEI understands and perceives as a valuable and comprehensive participant experience long term (tried and true on PEI and evidence-based approaches exchanged from other organizations in the Network)

Table 3.4 below represents the theme that exhibits the ongoing barriers members of the WNPEI face in business operations that are represented in all the fully transcribed interviews. The theme is represented in three interviews and collectively has 156 references. Figure 3.4 below is a visual representation of the theme.

CODE	Files	References
WNPEI Financial management, resources, budget planning and projections, grant writing	3	21
WNPEI staff limits of service	2	21
Gaps in resources, federal government responsibilities	2	19
Timing of services offered, reporting deadlines	3	17

COVID-19	3	13
Deliverables to funders	2	13
WNPEI Financial expectations and challenges (profits, struggles, fund development, funder restrictions)	3	13
WNPEI Staff stress and burnout	3	10
Investment vs Funding differences	2	9
Service silos, fragmented support, strict lanes	2	9
Power imbalances	3	5
TOTAL		156

Table 3.4 Ongoing Barriers to Service Delivery Theme

The table above represents the codes that represent the ‘Ongoing Barriers to Service Delivery’ theme. The codes are in all three fully transcribed interviews, with financial management and staff limitations sharing the greatest number of mentions. This theme emerges 156 times in the narratives.

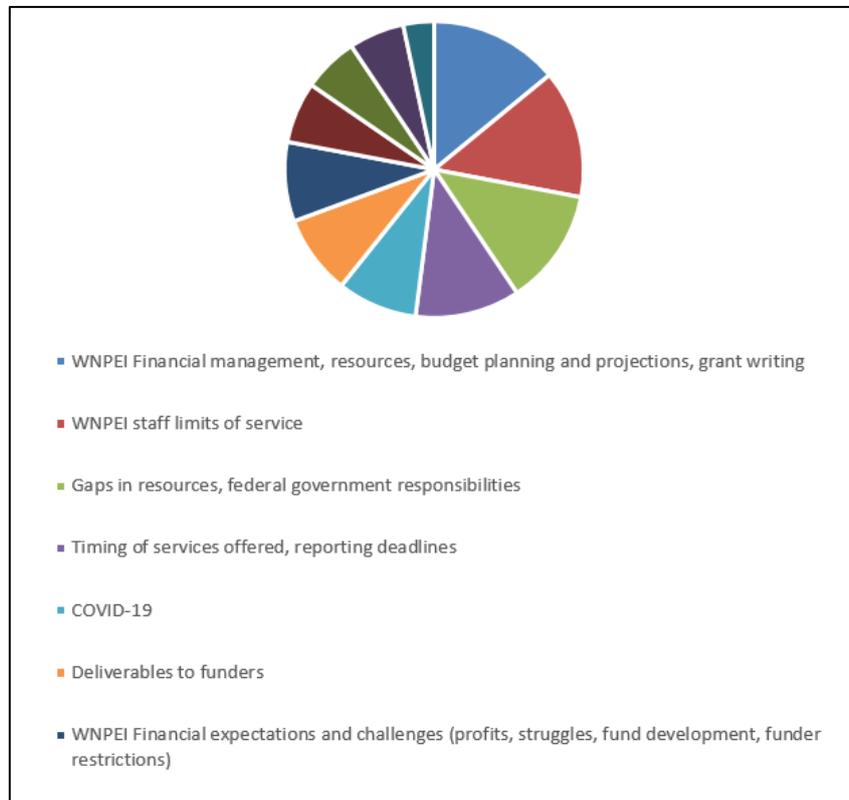


Figure 3.9 Ongoing Barriers to Service Delivery

The figure above is a visual representation of the codes that represent the Ongoing Barriers to Service Delivery theme. The pie chart is weighted according to the number of references the code receives. For example, financial management and staff limitations share the most mentions, with power imbalances having the least mentions.

Ongoing barriers to service delivery are overwhelmingly discussed concerning the limits imposed by their funders, who dictate how WNPEI spend their budget. For instance, the funding could be allocated for materials and not staff salary, an expressed need for quality people operating the supportive service. Participants further detailed the need to frequently apply for financial support to sponsor planned projects, often waiting on confirmation of funding immediately before the program starts without security. One participant explains:

Sometimes people want to start Trade Horizons today, and it just started in January, which means they're not eligible again until January 2022 IF we're able to successfully renegotiate funds. It's very kind of ad hoc and that's I think programs would have to be funded radically different for us to be able to do the intake all the time and then offer the programs based on the intake. Right now, we're not able to do that.

The participant qualifies their ongoing struggles with private funders as they discuss operating without long-term core funding despite proposals advocating for the need for optimal service delivery and staff wellbeing:

For us, it's our lack of consistency. We have to renegotiate every project contract year to year, so we can't, like right now, we can't promote for, we couldn't find participants for PropELLE in the fall if we were doing a new Trade HERizons in the winter, because until an agreement is signed, and sometimes the agreement doesn't get signed until the summer and then, but your project happened started three months before that kind of thing. I think if we knew, hey, we're doing this for the next five years and we were doing continuous intake, I do think there would probably be more demand than spots available.

Participants describe fundraising as time and labour intensive, with individual proposals required for each funder and project. The proposals have specific stipulations forcing the organization to negotiate each one based on a cost-benefit analysis and overall value alignment. It is noted by participants that upper-level management is unable to be closely involved with daily operations during the time-intensive funding process that drains the few resources they have on bureaucracy. An example of this is detailed below:

Even though we try our best to put the client at the Centre, it's often the needs of the funder that have to be put at the Centre for us to be able to survive as an organization. You're trying to balance the needs of both at the same time, even though the funder has a lot more power than the client. That is sometimes where your attention goes.

They further note the dangerous combination of a power imbalance and disconnect of value between funders and NGO's such as WNPEI. A result of this power imbalance is the funders distorted perception of their charitable contribution with terms as more positive than it realistically is. Staff members suggest that NGOs ultimately seek investors that recognize the value in the mission of the organization and allow for the freedom and flexibility to designate the funding appropriately. Further explanation is detailed below:

Every government I've talked to...when they give money to the private sector, it's an investment. When they give money to the non-profit sector, it's funding. In my mind, it's all investments. Until the government sees investing in social, political, and economic health as an investment, they're going to invest in the private sector and they're going to fund the non-profit, and those are two fundamentally different things. We're looking for investors, not funders.

To coincide with funding restrictions, narratives highlight that each funder has a list of deliverables. At times, these requirements are not consistent within a trauma-informed lens such as Trade HERizons, a comprehensive operating program. The participants offer examples of disconnecting outcomes in detail below:

I think every year there's this dance that has to happen. I've seen now, after doing that kind of research on PropELLE too, is where... our funder expects X amount of people in seats and that's all they want to see and they want to see that those people graduate. Whereas... for us, we want to have the people who are going to get the most out of this program there, however many that is. When there's an expectation that we fill 20 seats, there's probably a couple of people there that aren't ready to be there for whatever reason.

There's always a desire to have a smaller group, but then it's always this balance with dealing with the funder and, trying to check off the boxes, but also trying to facilitate a program that's meaningful for participants.

When I was doing research on PropELLE, the primary outcome that I saw was that there is that disconnect.

How do we get all the money that we need to run this program with all the facilitators that we need to front runner programs and make sure that the program is meaningful for the participants, but also give the funders the outcomes that they want you to write off. How do we disguise their outcomes and actually fulfill our outcomes?

The lack of autonomy provided to WNPEI staff from funding partners is problematic, where management is not trusted to make appropriate spending decisions that affect their overall budget. An example is detailed below:

What's so embedded, and Skills PEI is the worst in this, in my opinion, is... community groups are not trusted to manage money, so as a result, there's all of these accountability measures built in, and instead of creating accountability, they destroy organizations. I think a lot of it is there's just a lot of inherent negative assumptions about non-profits, community groups and registered charities, and some of those are very accurate and some of those not at all. Then all the systems get built around that, and it's this mistrust and this. You never feel very empowered to use the money in a way that you see fit. You feel very much like, oh, if we didn't ask to buy five napkins six months ago, then we can't buy five napkins today even though we need them and that's like a bit of an exaggeration, but it's just to say that most funding partners are not actually helping you achieve your objectives, they're giving you the financial resources to do it, but not the trust that you can actually achieve those outcomes.

Staff struggle with being put in the position where they are forced to either modify service delivery that does not suit the clients needs or meet the deliverables set by the funders. The participants are forced to get creative with their spending reports to satisfy a funding agreement that is disconnected from the overall goals to support staff and clients of WNPEI.

A consequence of the instability in funding poses a threat to staff retention with only a portion of their employees having full-time positions (facilitators, administrative support, and special project researchers are typically brought on for sporadic contract jobs) and recruiting quality people based on local competition and financial restraints of applicants. Fortunately for the organization, staff members suggest that the reputation of WNPEI has helped them access reliable candidates but no guarantee in the future.

Stemming from fiscal constraints, staff explain the limits of their service, being unable to provide wrap around supports as they see fit:

Especially for wanting to... do some changes in the program or be able to do that reach back with participants, if there's only one person who is hired year-round, that's not sustainable.

I think especially if you're working with vulnerable populations, being able to have that... the constant [of service] is really important.

The hope is to create opportunities to stay connected with clients after graduating the programming by offering support during the client's transition to employment and navigating the male dominated industry of the trades on PEI.

Participants acknowledge the struggle of operating within a community that continues to function from a patriarchal set of beliefs. One participant offers details describing ways in which WNPEI can address this:

The thing about toxic masculinity.... when we change things for women, we change things for everybody, and it benefits everybody, not just the women. What we found is when Women's Network has gone in to advocate with employers about things like flexible work hours or paid sick leave ... We advocate for those things, and it doesn't help just women. It helps everybody who has children. It helps everybody who might also be taking care of an elderly parent or, has other life situations that it can be useful for.

The COVID-19 global pandemic presented unforeseen challenges that have devastated families, including the overwhelming fear of a novel virus, job loss, loss of natural supports, limited health care access, including face-to-face peer support. The ability to provide organized wrap around supports would have allowed the organization to be proactive in any crisis response to clients connected to the network. One participant details their view:

They leave Trade HERizons, but everything that was going on in their life before Trade HERizon is still going to be going on now. If we're wanting to support people fully, what does that look like throughout the course of the year? Not just in programming?

Another example of a pandemic staff service limitation recalls core funding issues. As staff detailed the need to cancel their PropELLE program in 2020 because they were unable to secure funding in time for planned service delivery. Participants also reference an awareness of the service gap because of limited resources for other programs, such as the Newcomers Association.

WNPEI staff report knowledge of ongoing barriers to employment and lack of acknowledgement of international credentials as being rooted in systemic racism. A participant details their interest in involvement below:

We've talked with Newcomers of doing a similar type of work readiness program, but nothing's kind of gotten off the ground. It is certainly one

of those areas for people often end up in jurisdictional neglect because it's the federal government's responsibility, but the province is implementing a lot of it.

These barriers to service delivery, existing often in silos with fragmented supports contribute to staff stress and burnout. The constant tension that exists between meeting funder expectations and the ability to deliver a meaningful service in-line with WNPEI mission and values is a delicate dance that participants describe as exhausting. One participant described feeling jaded by the experience of interpreting the funders intentions, whereby committing money to the organization implies there is a degree of care. When that version of care comes with so many stipulations, WNPEI is forced to question their integrity and client care versus the optics of supporting an NGO organization. The staff suggest that the success of programming through WNPEI occurs at times despite funding contributions and the restrictions imposed on spending allowance. A more detailed depiction is explained below:

I will just say that the way the government's, philanthropists, charities fund this work, makes everything we discussed hard and more of a challenge. And so we're often working, it feels like we're trying to work against the same systems that are trying to support the clients that we're working with and that individual organizations in certain programs can only do so much, sadly, because we are so governed by the financial resources we're able to secure and so that... sometimes it feels like any successful program we do is in spite of the system or the funding that we've been given, not because of it.

3.3 SUMMARY

These findings represent a small but powerful collection of stories from the staff at WNPEI, exploring their experiences of working within a female lead non-government organization serving local community members within the smallest province in Canada. Each narrative is a unique contribution of ideas based on their personal and professional experience of working within the non-profit sector. The researcher curated the themes of client centered approach, positive corporate culture, a distinct overlap of the client centered approach and positive corporate culture, and barriers to service delivery as a reflection of their accounts.

4. DISCUSSION

The current chapter focuses on two discussions, document review of secondary data from the organization's website and magazine, *Common Ground*; and primary research analysis.

4.1 DOCUMENT REVIEW DISCUSSION

Findings from the document review uncover a professional organization that is welcoming and promotes the lives and actions of women in PEI through art, culture, and comradery. Although the magazine is exceptional at promoting feminism and positive actions within the community, there remains questions of possible funding issues (black and white interior pages), content accessibility (written for an educated audience), and lacking online accessibility to grow their audience.

One recommendation to enhance this magazine is to migrate the content online (some options are free, solving budgetary issues) on platforms like Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing; WNPEI Website; FlipHTML5; Issuu; or Joomag. Publishing online allows for all content to be in colour, can integrate social media, media content, and H5P content that is accessed through an internet connection. Whether in remote areas or abroad, this access can grow the WNPEI readership and networks. The final recommendation for the magazine is to get younger, meaning that approximately 50% of the PEI population is over the age of 50, which is reflective in the magazine (Statistics Canada, 2017). In the interest of continuity and promoting the coming generations of PEI women, moving to online platforms, and having more photographs and stories that reflect the Millennial and Z generations (and their interests, such as social justice, environmentalism, contemporary issues) would ensure the longevity of both the magazine and the WNPEI organization.

4.2 PRIMARY STUDY DISCUSSION

This case study explored the experience of dignity in client service delivery specific to WNPEI. Using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, the researcher identified four themes requiring further exploration. These themes will be discussed below, showing how they are connected to the research presented in the literature review. The researcher will then explore limitations of the study and make recommendations for further exploration connected to the topic.

The first theme identified that WNPEI had curated a positive corporate culture. The dignity literature (Hicks, 2016; Lipi, 2016; Hicks, 2019) identifies the significance of education in leading with dignity, where the person holding said dignity can then transfer it into their treatment of others, specifically in this case their colleagues and further the clients whom they work with. Findings in the current research supports the dignity literature through WNPEI's hiring practices, emphasis on staff well-being, flexible work hours and overall feeling of support in working with other women who understood the invisible labour that women take on at home and in the community. By working for an organization that values their staff and acknowledges their value, participants described being able to operate with dignity when they provide services in the community. As staff lead with dignity to both each other and their clients, they are modelling behavior in creating an environment that ensures safety of presence and permission to thrive.

A critique of the organizational structure that supports positive corporate culture lies in the eye of the beholder, where the fact is that 'better' never means 'better for everyone'. The literature from Christopher Olivola (2011) supports the idea that people are willing to suffer for the greater good. He explains further that at times the prospect of experiencing pain and exerting effort for a prosocial cause can lead to greater altruism. In an organization such as WNPEI, there is undoubtedly one person, typically upper management that receives a transfer

of risk and stress for the sake of supporting their staff. WNPEI operates with a lean team, and while participants described feeling supported in their corporate culture, there is a clear distinction in the degree of stress interpreted by each person in which issues they are expected to take on and assume responsibility for. The person holding this additional stress experiences their position in a unique way from their staff, regardless of how many measures they organize to support them. The notion of being ‘lonely at the top’ rings true in this example, as lived experience is critical to empathize with an accurate reflection of the tension they balance. It is this person who sacrifices their wellness for the safety and support of their team. The team’s wellbeing is therefore dependent on their ignorance of how their management has become the martyr, making this model not sustainable in the long run when considering the likelihood of burnout and eventual disconnection from their position at the top. Donna Hicks (2016, 2019) describes this disconnect in the literature, explaining the tension that exists when people are unable to acknowledge or rectify that their sense of dignity is being violated. The systems that the martyr creates to protect their staff are challenged by the systems that support the organization financially, and this tension will continue to exist until more fundamental changes around organizational autonomy are made to better support them, alleviating the expectations of constantly having to prove their own worth. It is ultimately through awareness of one’s own dignity that people understand their self-worth, which empowers them to curate the environment that suits their needs, both personally and professionally. To summarize, until the martyr receives dignity from the people they report to, it will be difficult for them to sustain their role and continue pouring from an empty cup.

The second theme identified was the emphasis on operating from a client-centered approach, providing services specific to clients’ needs based on awareness of trends in the community. This appeared to be a priority for participants as they described their reflexive approach to program planning as well as consideration for nuance in their clients lives when

determining ‘success’ (which was different from their deliverables set by funders). This is in line with dignity research (Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Schwartz, 2007) that stresses the importance of working alongside people receiving services to ensure autonomy and maintain their dignity. Participants explain the importance of being in tune to their clients needs, through active listening and educating themselves on the climate of the community they serve. The organization creates a safe space for growth as staff take time to listen thoroughly about the context to which their clients are accessing their services and curating a connection that allows for collaboration.

A critique of the client-centered approach is that in seeking meaningful connections, it limits the reach of an organization that has limited funding potential. When organizations are sponsored for programming based on enrollment, it does not make fiscal sense to reduce intake which could indirectly affect staff salary or opportunities for the team to expand. Also, when serving a smaller population through a client-centered approach, there is a large portion of the community that may remain underserved. A great deal of planning and preparation as well as wrap around supports is designated to small group of people, one might argue the euphemism of putting all your eggs in one basket. A concern would be therefore whether the community is being impacted in as large a way as possible if the program is only offered to a select group of people? Will their success bleed into the community to affect generational change? If that is the goal, what are client-centered organizations doing to ensure long term support for these people they have chosen to invest in? Findings from staff at WNPEI expressed concern that the wrap around support was not comprehensive enough to fully support people in the long term in a structured way.

The third theme identified a positive relationship of operating the NGO with a client-centered approach while providing a positive corporate culture. Conversations with staff identified at great length the overlap that existed between their ability to do their job well in a

true client centered way, according to their prior training, when they had the support of a positive corporate culture. As mentioned in above discussion, when the staff felt safe and supported, they were able to pass this onto their clients and fellow staff. This was discussed repeatedly, especially when discussing the comparison between previous employers and their current positions. This cocktail of support and was so important to staff that they were willing to give up a higher pay cheque, health benefits, and job security to feel well in their roles.

A criticism of this notion of having their cake and eating it too is the insecurity of it all. Does this work environment exist if one key player (the martyr as discussed above) has her fill and is unable to continue? Another obvious criticism that staff feel as though they need to trade in compensation to be able to be emotionally supported. They are willingly taking a job that offers them less money, no benefits or pension and no long-term job security (such as a permanent government role or tenured term in academia), simply because it offers greater flexibility and a positive work environment. I would argue that these staff should never have had to give up compensation for emotional safety. They are educated, capable women who decided to work for an organization that is in line with their values, which is beautiful that they get to do this, however society (specifically the funders in this case) have placed limitations on what they are able to earn simply because they do not value their role within the organization.

The fourth theme identified an overwhelming amount of information highlighting the barriers to service delivery, with fund development and relationships with funders being at the center of most discussions. In line with Jeremy Waldron's work on dignity, these results are important to note, because it identifies the need to respect and honour the autonomy of people operating an organization if it is necessary for them to be able to do their job well. It is those who operate the services every day while having a direct connection to the people they serve are the experts in what they need to provide a valuable service, however participants

report not being trusted with the money they need to operate the organization. Labour is spent in excess in quarterly and annual grant applications and reporting when they could consequently be utilizing their expertise to grow the network and continue to improve service delivery through more frequent programming curated to the clients they serve. Ironically, funders are reported to often have strict guidelines for whether WNPEI can spend dollars on staff salary, however if they did not require such frequent applications and reporting they likely would not have to request money in the same frequency. This unfortunate cycle leaves organizations like WNPEI in vulnerable positions where they risk not having the ability to operate according to their experience through trauma informed best practice. The women in WNPEI specifically identify the resilience it takes to collaborate and support each other through providing strategic and meaningful programming despite funder restrictions. The intentional positive corporate culture elevates their service delivery, as they understand that they cannot serve the community as they wish if they are not well themselves.

The concepts of charity, care, connection, and education were notable as well within the findings when reviewing participant testimony. They described the disconnect between the perceived level of care of their funding partners, however noted that when they attempt to educate them on resources that they require, they are dismissed and provided with deliverables that are important to the funder. WNPEI are experts in what they do, the programming they provide and the people that they serve, yet their expertise is placated by funders who ultimately control the narrative as they hold the cheque book.

Criticism of this theme would be we do not get diamonds without pressure, there will always be a counterbalance force to keep organizations balanced and on track. The funders have a responsibility to their investors as well, and it's possible that they are only able to commit to long term support if they set fiscal boundaries annually with organizations such as WNPEI.

4.3 FURTHER LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations of the current research include reliability and espousal of current and retrospective accounts (Chandler & Lyon, 2001). Participants in the current study discuss their experiences as vivid and unforgettable because of their emotional involvement and ongoing impact to their role in the organization (Christianson & Loftus, 1987; Ebaugh, 1988). Scholars infer that people closest to an event have the most accurate levels of event memory (Pezdek, 2003). While this does not absolve the potential bias of event recognition, it illustrates how the participants are increasingly likely to recall the significance of such autobiographical events.

When interviewing, there are three forms of bias: interviewer, response, and participation (Saunders et al., 2012). Interviewer bias is creating partiality through the tone, comments, and non-verbal behaviour of the interviewer. Response bias is the participant's partiality towards their perceptions of the interviewer (Powell et al., 2012). Participation bias stems from the participants' nature in agreement with taking part in the study (Brinkmann, 2013; Seidman, 2013). The aim is to mitigate the inherent biases to conduct good qualitative research fit for a purpose of being accessible (Cassell & Symon, 2011; Creswell, 2012).

Social constructivism is not without its limitations, such as the individual's espousal of events (Potter, 1996)

Despite the many advantages of interviewing, interviewer bias (because of incorrect interpretation) and misunderstanding of information given by the participant can give inaccurate accounts (Babbie, 2015). Interviewing can also be very expensive, time-consuming, and present negative psychological/wellbeing consequences depending on the topics discussed (i.e. deviance, drug abuse, death) (Kothari, 2011). To correct these challenges, it is important to be open, mindful and reflexive when interviewing (Clarke, 2006). The current study aims to offer the utmost respect and attention while providing opportunity for participants to discuss their opinions.

Scholars dispute the number of participants that make a robust qualitative study. In case studies, some suggest four to 15 to reach data saturation (Bertaux, 1981; Creswell, 2012; Guest et al., 2006). Other qualitative methods scholars suggest conducting as many interviews necessary to accomplish data saturation, but admit the number of interviews depends on the research purpose, saliency of data, and investigator's philosophical position (Saunders et al., 2012).

4.4 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS IN RESEARCH

There are many directions to take the research presented within this case study on WNPEI when understanding dignity within client service engagement. My initial instinct would be to suggest exploring the importance of dignity and self-care, specifically nutrition and wellness. When I visualize front line case workers in a variety of different fields, I see typically a woman who wears many hats. She is overwhelmed with attempting to balance the weight of the job with the rest of her personal life, and self-care can easily be the first thing to go. This is a symptom of the dismissal for one's natural capacity by employers, who forget the emotional work it takes to get through a day working front line. It takes time to transition from one hat to the next, and that emotional work can make it difficult to the proper preparation it takes to set ourselves up for healthy habits such as planning nutritious meals (and remembering to eat them), light exercise, preferably in nature to lighten the emotional weight of the day, and mindfulness practice to reconnect and reset to ensure we are able to be present within our private relationships. These few things may seem like a simple thing to incorporate into a daily routine, however the nature of the front-line worker is to be the helper. We tend to put our needs second when coming home, not prioritizing what we know we need when met with the opportunity to make someone else happy. The piece I am interested in is therefore the concept of dignity within oneself and the relationship between perceived value of self and their level of self-care. This could expand also in the time they take for themselves to work on their personal

passions, ambitions without the shame of interpreting it as a selfish act. How much do people have to value themselves, see themselves as a priority to make time for themselves? Further, what does the relationship between dignity and appreciation look like?

5. FINAL THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSION

This case study has made contributions to dignity literature by taking personal accounts of staff members of WNPEI into creating a narrative into what it means to work in client service engagement. These women explained the importance of working for an organization having a positive corporate culture so they can provide a client centered approach. They discussed ongoing barriers to service delivery, while maintaining overall that the benefits to working for the organization far outweighed the drawbacks. They explain that due to the fact that the overall environment of having a positive corporate culture that allowed them to provide a client centered approach was greater than the sum of its parts. These narratives are a powerful addition to dignity research as they openly discuss the nuance that exists within operations of a non-profit, and the impact the work has both on self, peers and the community they serve. The journey of understanding the role of dignity in client service delivery is evergreen, yet continues to evolve daily based on experience and environment. Opportunities for further research are presented everyday as dignity remains a core fundamental truth that impacts people to varying degrees, depending on their awareness of self and the relationship they hold.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. DEBRIEFING FORM



DEBRIEFING FORM

Project title: Understanding Dignity in Client Engagement

Researcher name(s): Sarah Spiegl, Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie

Thank you for taking part in my research project; your contribution is valuable.

As outlined in the Participant Information Sheet

- The information (data) you have provided will be stored in an anonymised form.
- Your information (data) will be stored in a secured location and only Sarah Spiegl and Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie will be able to access it.
- Your data will be shared (published and/or placed in a database accessible by others) in an anonymised form.
- Your information (data) will be shared as described above, and then the information (data held by the researcher will be converted into an anonymous format and kept indefinitely, and the un-anonymised data will be destroyed.
- Your data may be used for related research projects in the future without further consultation.
- If you no longer wish to participate in the research, you are free to withdraw at any time. You will be able to withdraw your data within 2 weeks of participation. If your information (data) is anonymous at the point of collection or subsequently anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it after that point because we will no longer know which information (data) is yours.
- You will have 2 weeks to redact information within the transcript provided.

Contact

If you have concerns or if you would like to view a summary of the results of this research, please email the researchers detailed below.

Sarah Spiegl
sspiegl@upei.ca
902-916-7080

Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie
cmacquarrie@upei.ca
902-566-0617

APPENDIX 2. CONSENT FORM



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title: Understanding Dignity in Client Engagement Researcher name(s): Sarah Spiegel, Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie
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The University of Prince Edward Island attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research and therefore ask you to consider the following points before signing this form. Your signature confirms that you are willing to participate in this study, however, signing this form does not commit you to anything you do not wish to do, and are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| | Initial Box |
| <input type="radio"/> I understand the contents of the Participant Information Sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had them answered satisfactorily. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving an explanation. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> I understand who will have access to my data, how it will be stored, in what form it will be shared, and what will happen to it at the end of the study. I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data before April 1 st , 2021 and because the data has been anonymised, it cannot be withdrawn after that point. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> 'I understand that I can contact the UPEI Research Ethics Board at (902) 620-5104, or by email at researcherportal@upeii.ca if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study.' | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree to allow the researcher to save and use the data for future scholarly purposes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> I agree to take part in the above study. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signatures

I confirm that I am willing to take part in this research

	Print name	Date	Signature
Participant			
Researcher			

APPENDIX 3. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

What is the study about?

Project title: Understanding Dignity in Client Engagement
 Researcher name(s): Sarah Spiegl, Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie
 Expected Completion: April 30, 2021

We invite you to participate in a research project about dignity in client engagement on Prince Edward Island. The study aims to understand the role of dignity in exploring narratives of social support service workers within The Women’s Network PEI.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason. If you request to withdraw, the researcher may ask, with your permission, to include the information you have given up to that point in the study. You will be able to withdraw your data 2 weeks after the interview. Once your data is anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it after that point, because we will no longer know which data is yours.

What would I be required to do?

You will be asked to take part in an anticipated 1-hour interview to engage your experiences on client engagement within The Women’s Network PEI; how you understand dignity in theory and in practice. The questions will be semi-structured, with an openness that encourages you to speak freely on the topics of this research. If you wish to redact any information in the transcript provided, please respond within 2 weeks of receipt of the transcript.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

However unlikely the possibility is, the potential risks of this research include inconvenience, emotional distress and retraumatization caused by recalling details of your past both during and after participation.

Informed consent

It is important that you are able to give your informed consent before taking part in my project and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent (oral or written). Your participation will only be known to Sarah Spiegl and Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie, unless you permit otherwise.

Who is funding the research?

This research is self-funded

What information about me or recordings of me (‘my data’) will you be collecting?

The interview will be recorded on an audio recording device at the time of the interview. I will collect your name, date of birth and opinions on questions relating to dignity and client engagement while



working with The Women's Network PEI. Demographic details are collected to aid in differentiating categorically specific details. For instance, date of birth helps to categorize generational experiences in relation to policy and practice.

How will my data be stored, who will have access to it?

Your data will be stored in an **ANONYMISED** form, which means that parts of your data will be edited or deleted such that no-one, including the researchers, could use any reasonably available means to identify you from the data unless you wish otherwise.

When will my data be destroyed?

The data will remain accessible to only the researcher, or, the data may be used for future scholarly purposes without further contact or permission if the participant gives permission on the consent Form.

'Will my participation be kept confidential?'

Yes, all information collected will be kept strictly confidential. During the study, Dr. MacQuarrie and Ms. Spiegl will have access to all data that you submit. Your interview responses will be stored in a password-protected computer. This data will be stored on the University of Prince Edward Island firewall protected secure server that is only accessible via password for security and safety. After finishing this study the data will be stored in a password protected computer of the Project Principal Investigator (Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie) for a minimum of 5 years and then destroyed according to the University policy on data protection.'

Ethical Approvals

'This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Prince Edward Island.'

What should I do if I have concerns about this study?

In the first instance you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the researcher and if you do not feel comfortable doing so, you can contact the UPEI Research Ethics Board at (902) 620-5104, or by email at reb@upei.ca.

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APPENDIX 4. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



INTERVIEW PROCEDURE & QUESTIONS

OBJECTIVE:

Understanding the role of dignity of social support service workers on PEI, specifically narratives of staff of The Women's Network PEI through interview and document review.

PROCEDURE:

1. Personal introduction.
2. Brief participant on the research project provide a copy of 'Participant Information Sheet'.
3. Brief participant on the 'Participant Consent Form' and clarify issues.
4. Ask interviewee's permission to record the interview.
5. Conduct the interview.
6. Debrief the participant with the 'Participant Debriefing Form'.
7. Thank participant for their contribution.

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS**

1. What is your first name and last initial?
2. What is your current age?
3. Do you identify with a specific gender?
4. What is your highest formal degree earned?
5. Are there specific credentials required for the position you hold? Additional training?
6. Is this your first time working with a vulnerable population?

PART 2: JOB DESCRIPTION

7. Tell me about your job. What are your responsibilities?
8. Tell me about your experience working with participants of The Women's Network PEI. What sort of feedback do you receive from them?
9. How do you think your personal values align with The Women's Network PEI?
10. How do you think The Women's Network PEI differs from other local organizations aiming to provide similar services?
11. At what frequency do you notice participants returning for services? Why do you think this is?
12. Describe a typical timeline of participant need in relation to services delivered. Does this seem appropriate given their circumstance?
13. When people reach out for services, what does the intake process look like? How is it different when participants are referred by another person or organization?

14. Describe the process of handling participant information. Do all requests require formal documentation?
15. Explain communication methods between staff and participants of The Women's Network.
16. How often do participants stay connected to The Women's Network in adapting a more supportive role? Why do you think this is?

PART 3: CONCLUDING COMMENTS

17. Do you have any further comments?

TABLES

Table 1: Initial codes

Name	Files	Reference
QUOTES	3	80
CLIENT CENTRED STRATEGIES	3	60
WN STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES	3	56
WN POLICY AND PROGRAMS, REFLEXIVE STRATEGIES	3	40
COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION	3	34
ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING	3	33
BALANCED SUPPORT, BOUNDARIES	3	29
WN STAFF INTEGRITY, FLEXIBILITY, TRUST. RESPECT, VALUES, AUTONOMY	3	29
WN STAFF VALUE ALLIGNMENT	3	28
RESOURCE SHARING	3	27
WN CONSISTENCY, COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS	3	27
PARTICIPANT GOALS	3	26
PROMOTION, REFERRAL PROCESS, INTAKES, DOCUMENTATION, PROCEDURES, EXIT INTERVIEWS, WRAP AROUND SUPPORTSS	3	25
PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY	3	24
WN STAFF CREDENTIALS	3	24
WN STAFF PARTICIPANT SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT	2	24
PARTICIPANT - VULNERABLE POPULATION, MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES	3	22
WN ENCOURAGING AUTONOMY, CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS	3	21
WN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, RESOURCES, BUDGET PLANNING AND PROJECTIONS, GRANT WRITING	3	21
WN STAFF LIMITS OF SERVICE	2	21
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK OF WN	3	20
SAFETY, COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT	3	20
GAPS IN RESOURCES, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES	2	19
WN COMPARED TO OTHER NGO'S	2	19
WN STAFF RETENTION	3	19
TIMING OF SERVICES OFFERED, REPORTING DEADLINES	3	17
WN CORPORATE CULTURE, SUPPORT WITH WOMEN IN MIND	3	17

ADVOCACY WORK IN COMMUNITY, ISSUES BASED ACTIVISM	2	16
EVOLUTION OF WN - SERVICES, MISSION, PRACTICES	2	16
FEMINIST ORGANIZATION, STAKEHOLDERS	3	16
SMALL CLASS SIZE	2	15
STRUCTURED DELIVERY OF SERVICES	2	14
COVID-19	3	13
DEVLIVERABLES TO FUNDERS	2	13
WN FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES - PROFITS, STRUGGLES, FUND DEVELOPMENT, FUNDER RESTRICTIONS	3	13
WN MENTORSHIP, COACHING	2	13
WN DIVERSITY OF STAFF	3	12
ACADEMIC INFLUENCE ON NETWORK DECISION MAKING AND POILICY, PROGRAMMING, ONGOING RESEARCH	3	11
PEER SUPPORT	3	10
PRIVACY OF INFORMATION	3	10
WN STAFF STRESS BURNOUT	3	10
INVESTMENT VS FUNDING DIFFERENCE	2	9
SERVICE SILOS, FRAGMENTE SUPPORT, STRICT LANES	2	9
LONG TERM CONNECTIONS TO WN BY STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS	3	8
BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND FRIENDSHIPS IN PROGRAMMING	2	7
WN STAFF PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT AND HOW THAT EXPERIENCE SHAPED THEIR DECISION TO WORK AT WN	2	7
PARTICIPANT NATURAL SUPPORTS, COMMUNITY RESOURCES, WELLNESS TEAMS	3	5
PARTICIPANT TRANSFERABLE SKILLS FROM CLASSROOM	2	5
POWER IMBALANCE	3	5
REACH BACK OUTREACH	1	4
TOXIC MASCULITY IN THE TRADES WORKFORCE, HEALTHY MASCULINITY PROJECTS	1	4
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	2	3
PARTICIPANTS POVERTY, FOOD INSECURITY	1	2
RACISM IN THE WORKPLACE, IMMIGRANT CREDENTIALS, PROGRAMMING	1	2
TEACHING SEXUAL HEALTH	1	2
VOLUNTARY	1	1
YOUTH INTEGRATION	1	1