

Building Accountable Communities

Barnard Center for Research on Women

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Speaker: Hi everybody. Welcome to this Barnard Center Research on Women's live stream! You're so lucky to be joined by us today! I'm Mariame Kaba. I'll be moderating this conversation I'm so excited to have. With Shannon Perez-Darby. Shannon Perez-Darby is going to introduce. And we're lucky to have Kiyomi Fujikawa today. She'll introduce herself to you.

We're trying to do an informal conversation with people who've been doing accountability work and processes for a few years. We respect each other and the work each other has done. We'll share the insights garnered over the years. And invite questions from folks. We've gotten so many questions in advance. We can't imagine answering half of them!

The plan is to go for 90 minutes in total. I'll incorporate questions throughout. So, join us. Be part of the conversation. We look forward to it.

Let's start with introductions. Kiyomi Fujikawa, introduce yourselves.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Hi I'm Kiyomi Fujikawa. I started in movements to end sexual assaults and domestic violence. I started with a group in the Northwest but I've done it with other organizations and non profit groups and with parts of the community. I'm excited to be here.

Shannon Perez-Darby: Hi. I use she/her pronouns. I'm in the anti-violence and domestic violence movements. In two organizations I've worked as a sexual assault and domestic violence advocate for 12 years. A lot of my information is from being in my own communities. I also identify as a survivor myself. Like many people I was trying to figure it out for myself. That's how I found my way here.

Mariame Kaba: Thank you. I use she/her pronouns and I've been doing anti-violence work for many years. I did accountability process facilitation 15 years ago. I had done it formally. I had done it all along but didn't have a name for it. I had been doing that work in communities now for a few years. I'm a founder of an organization that's an anti-abolitionist program ending youth

incarceration. I'm part of many formations.

I was a domestic violence advocate, I was in New York, I did anti-rape work, I also identify as a survivor. I'm one of the cofounders of a Just Project Collaborative helping people learn more about community accountability processes focusing on sexual harm and community violence. That's me. There are probably people on the webinar shocked that I am on a webinar. I feel I need to address them!

I am against it! But I really believe in this conversation. I respect Shannon Perez-Darby and Kiyomi Fujikawa. When asked to moderate I said I'll definitely do it. Though I hate the idea of this visual. I was hoping to put myself on black screen but I thought it'd be weird to have my disembodied voice! OK.

So we'll move onto the first question I want to post. About how you came to think the things you do about accountability. I hesitate to say how you came to doing accountability work. For so many of us it's just stuff we do in our community on daily basis and stuff we do with ourselves for self accountability. But how'd you come to know what you know about accountability?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Sure I can start. Also thank you Mariame Kaba for joining us on video. I was shocked myself. I'm really excited you're here. And thanks to Hope for all your logistical support.

So I came to accountability as a frame-- when I first started organizing against rape I was in Men Against Rape. I'm trans, that was where they put me. There's a student based group in the college campus I was at in Santa Barbara. A couple groups were court ordered to come to our group and talk to us. That's an unusual entry point for this.

Because my thinking around prison abolition and around frameworks for what survivors want and need isn't where I am now. We were sitting with men who'd sexually harassed someone. And could do volunteer service in Men Against Rape. But I heard more about survivors who didn't call against people. And my friend saw no justice in the criminal legal system. What do we do? So working directly with survivors.

Those community responses I now put on a wide spectrum of actual work for accountability.

And what might have been equally a part of the healing process but maybe more rooted in revenge. I'll say that without judgment value. But that's what some people needed. Working across the spectrum, and getting more into what was working for folks. And getting folks what they want. They definitely developed in my time at API Chia [sp?] and working with my communities.

And seeing survivors stuck without options. Where you go to the criminal legal system or nothing happens. Getting creative around that. Tracing my own lineage, critical resistance, that conference, enlightened me on the ways community accountability can look. How about you, Shannon Perez-Darby?

Shannon Perez-Darby: I appreciate you going first. I usually start the answer to that question in the context of being a survivor. But actually the actual answer is growing up in an alcoholic home. There were so many things I learned as adaptive and survival mechanisms. In a home where I was really cared for and folks were really struggling also. I learned skills to understand how systems of people worked.

I got my needs met through understanding how people worked. How interpersonally if I talk to this person about this, that's how to get my needs met. That's the core. Understanding how to navigate networks, systems, families.

And then the more conscious starting of this work is, I was in a relationship that really impacted my life. I talk about that relationship in different ways. I get exhausted now because it's so long ago. But it's an important part of my origin. It is my "wackadoo" relationship. It really wasn't working for me. A lot of wacky things happened in the course of that relationship. At the time it changed how I saw the world. I was so crushed by how that relationship went.

We were in a pretty small queer community and I couldn't figure out how to get out of that and also be in the community. So I actually left and went to Seattle. It's a strong reason I left. There had to be something better than just moving. I was in community with people having these conversations. I was in a relationship with someone also in LGBT anti violence work.

We didn't lack analysis, but lacked skills in manifesting what we were dreaming. That question is often one that motivates me. How do we actualize our great ideas? I come from queer and trans communities and queer and trans communities of colors who are good at breaking things

down. What are we building and actually doing? Those things motivate me in this work.

Mariame Kaba: Thank you for sharing your journeys and how you got to where you are now. I was wondering if we can talk about our definitions of terms. There is a lot of discussion now about accountability. It's heightened these days with what's happened in the past year with the revival of the #metoo movement. Both of you sharing, what that means. If you need to explain to somebody. Your 14-year-olds. What does accountability mean, what would you say?

Shannon Perez-Darby: I'm not sure who the exact origin of this is. But I think it's from this long time advocate in Seattle. "Accountability is taking responsibility for your choices, and the consequences of those choices." Being responsible for the things you say and do in your life throughout the day

Kiyomi Fujikawa: I always quote Shannon as the origin of that! I think of it the same way.

Mariame Kaba: I like the definition from Connie Burk who frames accountability as an internal resource for recognizing and redressing harms we've caused to ourselves and others. That's such a beautifully put way of thinking about it. This idea of an internal resource. The fact that it's about recognizing and redressing harms. We've not just caused those harms to others, but also ourselves. Shannon your work around self-accountability speaks to this definitely of accountability in general. Want to talk about that concept of accountability and what you meant when positing it?

Shannon Perez-Darby: It's a continuation of that "wackadoo" relationship. I felt really impacted by that relationship. I tried everything to feel a sense of peace and reconciliation. That was a relationship with someone who we had lots of on and offs. I came to a place where we actually can't be in contact with each other without doing harm. I personally came to a place where, I realized that that sense of peace and reconciliation wouldn't happen externally. It wouldn't happen from sitting down and having a great talk. It wasn't possible. So waiting externally for someone to change their behavior was crushing me. I worked on what was in my own control.

I can't control what others say. What was going on for me in that relationship? That wasn't a good situation and I kept working right towards it. That doesn't mean I'm 100% responsible for all the things that happened later. But it was good information for moving forward. Why did I do that? Was that person fulfilling, that I was willing to trade off these other things. And contort myself around unreasonable conditions. I got clear on how it was serving me. Stories

about being too much, or not enough.

Getting clear about how it served me and how it was too much or not enough was why I kept saying and going back to it. What was my part? This person was really clear about their capacity early on. They said they couldn't be monogamous. They really couldn't. Instead of believing them, I kept convincing them it was going to be OK. They could do what I wanted. The most loving thing would have been to say I saw them struggling, but it doesn't look like we're in the same place. That would have been the most loving justify or myself and the other person.

That's where I got a sense of peace. That relationship doesn't activate me anymore. It was impactful, but it doesn't activate me to talk about it. Self accountability is about looking at your own actions and choices and if they align with your values. There will always be a gap. Our daily actions won't always match up 100%. It's doing the daily reconciliation that's self accountability. It doesn't have to involve anyone else. How do I start being on time or whatever you're trying to be accountable about?

Mariame Kaba: We talked briefly about the role we put ourselves in when talking about accountability. Do you want to talk about that?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: One of the shifts I think is so powerful, and I feel I'm speaking directly from words I've heard from Shannon, and really thinking about accountability and feeling the existential dread, thinking of it being your boss or someone with more power than you being mad at you and honing consequences on you.

I appreciate both of your definitions because it really frames accountability as something internal and a skill that we do for ourselves, and being able to know it's not like a punishment. It's really a reframe around that. It does take internal skill. There may be different ways you can help someone move toward accountability or now or do things to move them away from it

I think of minimizing, denying, blaming, etc.

I feel that in a lot of our organizing work, the focus is really on imagining ourselves as the organizers as people who may be survivors or bystanders but not the people causing harm. One of the first people I worked with was excited about finding ways to change their behavior and

was diving deep into that. They had some of the lingo for transformative justice. They only had resources on enacting accountability on someone else rather than having self reflection to change their deeply embedded behaviors. It was a huge challenge to find those.

There's an example in the creative interventions toolkit that talks about self accountability and someone finding it both as a survivor and as someone who may have harmed. I really think that story and toolkit are so powerful in framing that.

I feel being able to start with, "wait, do I know how I hold myself accountable?" can lead to how you can hold others accountable. It's practicing on small levels. It could be on being late or white lies you tell that may seem innocuous but build up.

It could be not being open to feedback. Be able to start with those types of things. Usually, we start with some of the larger harms. There's usually a trail of unaccountability that leads up to those.

Be able to check ourselves and move through smaller things goes a long way.

Mariame Kaba: Both of you bring up important things. You brought up a couple times the concept of punishment. It overlays a discussion on accountability. Whether it's the punishment mindset we have or people's desire for punishment. Kiyomi mentioned the desire for vengeance.

I'm asking this from a place of non judgment. I understand why people feel they want punishment and revenge when harm happens to them. Let's unpack the concept of punishment versus consequences.

How can you tell the difference of when something is punishment vs. a consequence for an action that harmed someone else? You can speak to that and the punishment mindset.

Shannon Perez Darby: I spoke about it in the videos a bit. I think of the concept of reasonable or appropriate or right-sized consequences. It should be scaled to the harm.

I think we've moved beyond infancy. We're in a solid elementary school place with our skills and communities.

We often don't have a basis for skills in that area. We don't know what a reasonable consequence is. I am learning about myself all the time, and I recently learned that I am petty and competitive. I did not know! My partner was shocked I didn't know.

I think about what it is in me that wants to hurt back. Sometimes I'll do the pettiest thing to get that person back. I think about a friend and colleague, Sidney, who's been doing work around revenge fantasies and their functions in healing and exploring your own story. It can literally be a fantasy. We often have a fantasy we don't want to actualize that serve a function around the harm that's happened to us.

I think of punishment as something society does to someone. I think it just doesn't work. If it worked, we'd have a different situation. It might seem like a nice idea, but it literally isn't working.

We think about what the goal is. What do we want at the end? A reasonable consequence for battering someone may mean you have to move. It doesn't mean you don't get a place to live. Housing is a human right everyone has.

An unreasonable consequence would be living on the streets.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Connected to that, I think about accountability as something that needs support and that we can't do alone. It's rooted in our interdependence with other people. When I see someone moving, you have to move and that's it. You get no support. It's not about the level of support you give. Survivors can feel hurt seeing the support extended to people who caused harm. It feels it really reproduces the privilege politics and the politics around who is considered disposable or to have all the social capital in the world.

It's often treated like survivors are the ones disposable when that shouldn't be the case.

I do think support is needed. They need people close to them to help figure out solutions and who will lead them to understand and change their behaviors while not undermining fundamental human rights around housing or not being in prison.

Not to say so much is an intent between consequence and punishment, but I think punishment leaves people out to dry.

I know Mariame has done thinking about this. I'd love to hear from you on it.

Mariame Kaba: I'm definitely not an expert. I feel there's no expertise in this craft.

I think about it a lot because I've had occasion to work with people who have caused harm in various ways.

You may know Danielle Sarat who runs Common Justice out of New York. It's a restorative justice project for people who have used violence in various ways. People get diverted from the court system into their program if the person who is harmed agrees. 95% of the time, the survivor says they'd prefer it. We can talk about that later.

The myth is survivors are super retributive and wanting to have the harshest punishments. For the most part, and as a survivor myself, I'm practical and want healing to occur. I want to move from Point A to B.

Danielle has a book coming out next year. I loved a thing she said. Accountability is the corollary to grief for those of us responsible for harm.

She was saying she thought about in her project and organization how she's witnessed accountability being a tool for transforming shame for the people responsible for harm into something productive. It allows them to take actual responsibility for the acts they've done.

We don't think about that much.

She talks about the fact accountability does for those who commit harm what a healing process does for us when we are harmed. I love that thinking. It takes away the passiveness of punishment, something to you that you have to accept or reject-- usually reject.

It turns into an active thing you take on and do. No one can make you accountable. You have to be accountable.

That's its own reward. If we do that and offer what you mentioned before, that taking responsibility in a context of support, we will address more harm and people will be more willing to take accountability. We don't have a culture that supports that now, but it's important to keep in mind. Accountability really allows us to regain our sense of dignity and connections.

That's something we don't focus on enough in our culture. We know when we've done something horrible to someone else. We've all hurt someone else. You know how terribly you feel when you're thinking of that thing you did and you haven't done anything to transform it or to try to apologize for or to make it right again. You know that feeling it leaves you with. I extend that to everyone.

I don't think people like hurting other people even if you gain pleasure from the hurt. I think some people have this desire for that sense of whatever it is. It could be making other people feel bad because you feel bad for yourself. But that's not a well life or a healed life, where you're in connection with people regularly and people aren't running away from you.

I think about that a lot. I think about Danielle's concept of accountability being as essential as a grieving process in restoring ourselves to our best. I think about that and the difference between punishment and consequences within that spectrum.

If I'm trying to make someone suffer, that's punishment. If that's my intent and motivation, I'm punishing that person.

In that context, I may feel temporarily better because I think we're even now. I think about the

suffering and pain components. I'm not making a judgment about feeling those feelings if you've been harmed. I get it. But that's a punishment.

A consequence is something we basically do with someone around figuring out how they will take responsibility in order to, to the best of their abilities, repair what they did or somehow make amends for what they did.

I don't think accountability processes erase wounds. The wounds will always be there. The harm caused never disappears. What accountability processes do is sometimes put you on a path toward healing. It can put you towards that path. The process is still painful, but it puts you on a path toward healing.

I think about punishment as not being a practice. Accountability is. Those are things that come to mind for me.

Shannon Perez Darby: Thank you for sharing that brilliantly. You touched on how amazing accountability can be. There is so much fear about it. In my life, as I transitioned to recalling the harms done to me to thinking about accountability, it's been healing. I've taken care of my side of the street to the best of my ability. It allows me to be at ease and to let go of what other people do. I can't control it.

I can have a process for self reflection. It's a moving target. It's never something you are done with. It's an approximation. I am doing my best approximation and I can sleep well at night.

That's a gift. It's an amazing tool. It doesn't crush me. It's hard work like a lot of great tools and gifts are. It's a gift and not a punishment.

Mariame Kaba: I'm thinking about the questions around what accountability looks like in practice, if you have stories you want to share and would be useful in illustrating taking accountability. What does that look like?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Can you talk about finding your 7?

Shannon Perez-Darby: Finding your "6." I used to work at the Northwest Network of LGBT Survivors of Abuse. The organization was coming up the skills class and I founded the accountability class. They were trying to think of this tool for thinking about this thing that often happens. The tool is, imagine a scale of 0-10. People often find themselves at 0, "this is not mine." That's one way people are not accountable. The other way people are not accountable is "oh my god, I suck, why do you even want to be my friend?"

That's tricky because it involves words like "I'm sorry " It functionally takes focus off the harm you've done and doesn't actually allow for accountability. The 6 is the idea of approximation between 0-10. Closer to 10 than 0. The most grounded centered way of asking yourself, "what was going on when I made that decision? What will I do about it?" What was happening. Are there actions I need to take to be better aligned with who I want to be.

It's good to have self reflection practices. There are a million options out there. And ways to stay clear about what's going on for you. Especially people helping you in that process. It's hard to know if I'm being right-sized without being reacted against. So from "I didn't do anything" to "it's all my fault." The I didn't do anything to the shame spiral doesn't get us anywhere.

Mariame Kaba: Any stories you want to share Kiyomi?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Just a couple resources. A lot of stories shared with me are not mine to share but for survivors. On a webinar with the time we have it's not the place. But I want to name "Taking Risks" which is in the first Insight Anthology website. "Diffcult Powerful" which documents an accountability process that's in The Revolution Starts at Home.

There's a video made by the Canadian public broadcasting group talking about a tribe in Canada that works around what might be a more restorative justice. It's not super useful to me to draw those lines but it's a powerful example is practicing accountability around childhood sexual abuse. I put those as options folks can look at. Some things might come up. But given the time we have.

Shannon Perez-Darby: This is not a detailed story. But some context to see what the day to day work looks like. So my partner and I, our 11 year anniversary is next week. It's a third of my life, basically! Especially for someone who used to identify as a spinster. The health of that

relationship is directly related to the healing work. That is a relationship I started shortly after the wackadoo relationship.

I got to practice these ideas of accountability. I'd been out of my wckadoo relationship for 6 years. I still talked about it all the time. At some point my partner said, "hey I know that was impactful but it can't take up more of our Lives." That made me angry. "How could you?" After time I realized he was right. It was taking up more space than it served me.

It was doing harm in my relationship to have that relationship take up air in the room. It didn't mean I was instantly able to stop talking about that. But over time I saw that through a whole suite of tools and support and therapy and moving my body, I was able to have my relationship with my partner be right-sized.

4 years ago, my partner and I opened up our relationship. That's given me a lot of opportunities to practice accountability. Because I'm doing something I don't know how to do yet. And I've done it wrong a lot. Building that skill in a context of a relationship that's loving, where it's OK to mess up. The times I've messed up or gotten caught up in a relationship that's petty, the things that ground me are the people around me.

One time I was not in my integrity in how I did my open relationship. My best friend said, you are not being in your integrity. Every time that happens I'm resistant. "You don't know me, I do what I want!" Every time the people who come to me are right when they come to me in a grounded way. The reflection from people who love me help be get there sooner. I cool off for a day and see they are right. It's very hard to tell someone you care about that they are not loving right. Getting that is such a gift. I think about that with my closest people.

Mariame Kaba: I want to talk about the hovering question, what if people don't want to take accountability? They've caused great harm. They continue to cause harm. Usually this question is about, "we need prisons. We need surveillance." How are we going to deal with those folks? What's your thinking about that question, in and of itself? What do we do about those folks who don't want accountability, whether those folks are offered support or not?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: I'll start. Looking at the system that allows people to create harm. That harm doesn't come out of a vacuum. That person can cause harm out of a number of things. Their political power, social capital, access to wealth, any of those things. There is a delicate balance between, "everything will be fine" and looking at the political situation that lets us make choices.

Accountability doesn't exist without that political context.

People who know about abolition already have that context. But I want to make sure accountability doesn't just get delegated to the place of "OK I'll just live right by me." That's not the context we move through the world in. I'll start with that.

Also, the goal is not just getting one person to change or shift. But it can also be working with your friends. When you tell them you experienced violence from their friend, and knowing that harm doesn't happen in a vacuum. Seeing folks be able to pivot. If they were to experience harm again, what support would they want in place? What do they need from their community? Where is their core?

I use the theory, "transformative justice." Or where's their pod? Where's their group of folks? To not prevent the harm. But to have positive and healing response to it rather than the scripts we normally see.

Yeah. I do think that sometimes so much is focused on the individual causing harm. We lose sight of the bigger picture of the system in place to support each other or not.

Shannon Perez-Darby: The phrase that pops into my head is "loving to let people experience the consequences of their actions." Which is that, it can be tempting for people to try to prevent or decrease the harm coming from people's choices. This connects to the point of the "reasonable consequence." There are things people should get from living on this earth. And that's really confusing. That's a really tricky nuance. Where do you insulate someone?

And when you keep harming people people don't want to be in a relationship with you. That is a reasonable consequence. "You cannot make someone be accountable." You can't make people do things. You can make conditions to support them in accountability. But if ultimately accountability is about making people be responsible to their choices, you can't do it for them. It makes people angry. "I want to make that person be accountable!" You can't be.

We set up situations that are safe enough. We support them. Sometimes we try to dance around. Sometimes you need to knock this off. It doesn't have to be punishing. Some it comes from people's fear of conflict. Sometimes it means moving towards conflict sometimes says

"you need to knock it off" is loving.

You need to go engage with them directly. It can bring up safety concerns. And sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it feels uncomfortable. Uncomfortable is different from unsafe. That's good information for knowing how to directly engage with people who are doing harm in our communities.

Mariame Kaba: We're coming up on one hour. And we have more questions. I want to talk about metoo. It's driving what people are asking about with accountability. I want to hear both of you talk about that. Both of you have worked with survivors.

Some of us identify as survivors ourselves. Want to talk about what this current climate means for you, and how you are experiencing it? What are your concerns if you have any?

Shannon Perez-Darby: I can start. Mariame I imagine you're having this experience as well. But as someone who's been doing this work as my paid work for a long time, it's a little bit of a trip for me to see how people outside the work are thinking about sexual violence. I work in a very different environment from where I used to work. I've never had straight white cis coworkers ever. Now I have a lot.

It's going much better than I thought! I was sitting with one. It was during the Kavanaugh hearings. He was blown away and couldn't imagine the world in which that was possible. I couldn't imagine a world where he couldn't understand the possibility of that. Talking about it is so normalized for me. That was fascinating.

When I started dating turns out freaks people out when you talk about domestic violence on a first date. There are great things about it. There are things that help me understand where I need to go.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: I think it's powerful to have a political moment where folks can share their stories. Where folks are stepping down from their roles and moving away from positions of power. That was so powerful to see. I think it's hard in a moment after those hearings. Feeling like we're in a political space where folks still won't be believed. This weird double-speak where we believe the survivor, but not the part where she says it's the Supreme Court justice nominee.

That's heartbreaking and I felt so much rage in those moments. I do have a fear that some of the metoo is going to be distilled down into being just about cis white women who are middle class and above.

And I think there's fear in that even some of the calls are towards putting people in jail. It makes sense when people feel that's the only option they have. And that's the only thing that makes a statement. That the harm that happens is the degree of harm that it is.

It's hard when our movements are signing up for people to rot in jail. No one should rot in jail. I think there are some things getting over simplified in it. I'd love to hear your thoughts, Mariame .

Mariame Kaba: It's difficult for me right now for many reasons. What you both said, I felt. I'm shocked so many people are having these conversations and that's so great. I'm glad for that.

I have a lot of ambivalence about the believe survivors thing. I always have. I still have that in terms of what it means to believe a survivor. Believe them in what context? For what reason? In what ways? I want more definition around that, not because I think people should have to justify themselves, but I don't know what believe means. People said they believed Dr. Christine Ford, but believed she was too traumatized to know it was Brett Kavanaugh. What does "believe" mean?

There is a lot of confusion around that for me. I've been thinking a lot, as a PIC abolitionist, about my own-- I just don't think punishment works. I just think that prison can address gender-based violence since prison are central organizers of gender based violence.

I understand people want something, but I'm concerned that people think for the harm to be considered seriously, that we have to imprison people because it shows our lives really matter to people. I'm struggling with a landscape of thing.

I'm worried we're going to go down the line of ending violence with more violence. I don't want to see more institutional violence.

I think about what it would be like to think of the question of a just system for evaluating and adjudicating harm within a context of non punitive responses.

I've been thinking about a lot of that stuff. I don't know if they're room for that conversation in the broader public, which is disconcerting. I've been thinking about this in that context and maybe what our work has to offer in creating other alternative spaces outside the state which might attend to these issues. As soon as a trauma or problem occurs, we tend to turn to the state. I'm more in line with the radical feminists of the 60s and 70s, where harm should have you running from the state, not toward it. I don't understand why people want the state's validation. I see the state as an abuser, not protector. Those are my thoughts.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Thank you for sharing.

Mariame Kaba: Of course. I'll ask two other questions and then we'll open it to the public and then questions asked through us.

There's a question about accountability in relationship to online callouts and disposability culture. What does accountability for state violence look like? What does accountability for state violence look like is what we'll start with. We're talking about accountability for sexual harm within the #MeToo movement. We can talk about that and accountability in relationship to online callouts and disposability culture.

Shannon Perez Darby: My response to what accountability looks like related to state violence involves much of what we've talked about. I really don't know. I don't have in my mind or heart a vision of that. Thinking about accountability on such a huge scale is so overwhelming that I personally shut down. I've seen movements and communities feeling defeated by it.

It's such a huge scale with working out very basic skills. I use the example of dishes. I've never been in an environment where that isn't an issue.

There's something about dishes. It's easy to think about. If we can't plan for dishes, how do we hold the state accountable? My computer did a thing.

Let's start where we are. By doing self accountability and starting with getting right by ourselves and our people and building communities with accountability is possible, we can get the tools to deal with the state and its violence. I hope it will build on itself and we'll know when we get there. Right now, self accountability is the task, Though.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: I can respond to that question. My answer also comes from not necessarily knowing or being sure. In the case of state violence, particularly police violence, while there is a level of individual accountability that needs to happen, the state is built on being violence. No amount of individual accountability will end state violence.

Just being able to focus away from individual accountability, while there may be a small piece of practicing that, or if you're someone who has participated in police violence on someone else, please do work to be accountability for yourself.

I'm just going to repeat myself. It's going to reinforce this idea there are bad apples when we know the state and police as an apparatus are the violence.

I don't know. That's all I have.

Mariame Kaba: Those are excellent interventions and points. What are your thoughts related to accountability in relationship to social media and disposability culture? I have a reaction to the social media thing. I'm old. It's clear I don't have a purchase over the things social media is used for by and large. I see a lot of things happening online.

It's not dissimilar to things happening online. It just travels faster. 500 people know within a minute. The scale is so big.

People in my community ask me to intervene in an accountability process for harm. I'll ask if it's been in social media. Has the thing left the barn already? If it's already all over, it's hard to hold accountability processes which need an element of confidentiality and trust building.

What are your thoughts about that and the callouts on social media for people to "be accountable?" "I'll make someone accountable through that piece!"

When you are not in the same space as the person you're trying to "hold accountable" and the person has more power to you and you don't have access to them, I can understand how social media can be used, but there's so much there. I'm wondering about your thoughts.

Shannon Perez Darby: Many of the things you shared are things I feel.

One of the things I often talk about is I love my communities. It's one of my primary orientations. How am I in service to my people and communities?

I would really love us to be better our critique and burn it down mentalities to be scaled down a bit. We've already got it down.

We need to build a diversity of tools. We need other things other than calling people out or having the best critique or connecting the best words about structural oppression and why that person is messed up.

I understand it as a survival skill and how you can use it to get more power or more of a voice when you feel you don't have any. But I think more and more the harm or the consequences have outweighed the benefit.

It often comes a time it doesn't serve you anymore. I wonder with many of my communities, if we're at a place with our critique muscle where it's actually doing harm now, not serving its purpose. I've pulled back significantly from social media because it's not serving. For people, it does serve them in many ways, but we need many tools. Those are some thoughts about that.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: In thinking about what social media serves and why people go to it, there is a piece on it being a tool. "OK, we got our tool. Call it out." But I think there are times people use social media because they don't feel they have another outlet.

I do want to ground us in that.

I also want to say that it blew my mind. I went to a Just Practice workshop in Chicago. You can tell people to keep it on social media. That was powerful to know how much headache it can be.

In some ways, you lose control of it and the narrative and the story when you put it on social media. Things can get out of hand.

The other piece it serves is the distance folks. There's a mentality that there are moments we should collect our people and working with folks and offering some alternatives. "That person fucked up, so I don't want to be fucked up. I'll move away from them."

We need to be moving closer to folks. There are trolls on the internet. There are people you won't be connected to at all and who will ruin your day getting into an internet fight with. I'm talking about people you have a relationship with offline. Don't just blow that person up and leaving them out to dry. Move in.

It's all about responsibility. Their behaviors don't come from nowhere. If you feel you need to distance yourself from it, that's probably the moment to move in.

Mariame Kaba: I love both your comments on that. I want to talk about the issue of disposability and disposability culture. It's a double edged sword. People don't want to take accountability and don't want to be responsible complain about being disposed of.

I think a lot about powerful people being asked to step down from power being a consequence, not disposability. People are saying you can't have that position of power anymore. They're not saying you can't have another job. It's important to be clear about the concepts and language.

Asking someone harming the person they say they love to leave the abode they're doing the harm in isn't disposability, particularly if you're providing context for support such as another place to live or support while they look. We need to be clear about disposability. Having consequences is not disposing. Exiling someone is very different from that.

Those have been conflated. I wanted to talk about that because disposability culture is often weaponized against survivors, when you want a consequence for the harm caused to you. You just want actual redress for what occurred.

Shannon?

Shannon Perez Darby: What happens when you dispose people who do harm is they go and do harm someone else. I care about the next community over, especially in small and interconnected communities. You're just kicking it to the next people. A new group gets to experience it without information or resources.

It's not a solution. People who do harm just get better at doing harm and get further from the origin of some of the harm they're doing. Like trauma, the further you get from the origin, the harder it is to tend to.

It doesn't mean you have to tolerate the person in your business all the time, but you can set boundaries. You won't be besties, but you will treat them with respect for their base humanity. That's what we do for each other.

Mariame Kaba: That's what I expect people do for me when I do harm them. We don't think about how we want to be treated if we lose our shit and harm people. How would I treat people if they do the same?

We have a few minutes and there are many questions

I'll try to put out a few and we'll pick up on what we want to answer for the next 10 minutes.

One thing I'll respond to is what accountability might look like in childhood sexual abuse. I would love to shout out the Bay Area Transformative Justice collective. The work people are doing there surround the issue of childhood sexual abuse. Generation Five is a resource. They don't exist anymore, but their website is still up. It's a big reason we talk about Transformative

Justice now. They coined that term in the 1990s. It's about ending childhood sexual violence in 5 generations.

There are people using those models. You can turn to the collective and Generation 5's website. Do you want to add to that?

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Anetha Swedding.

Mariame Kaba: She's doing great work with which group?

Can you talk about accountability processes within organizations, work, groups, workplaces, schools, etc./ How can it work in an organizational setting? The question came from an HR professional and wants to know how to incorporate it into work.

I don't think community accountability processes are for everyone or every place. I don't think every harm needs a process. I feel strongly that organizations shouldn't be engaged in community accountability work. If they're doing other work and they want to add a process angle to it, organizations can help by fostering outside spaces to hold processes and be resources to the organization. It shouldn't subsume the whole organization. Organizations can do conflict resolution and mediation and a bunch of other practices which aren't a formal CA process. There are skills. People can hold circles for conflict, but a community accountability process has specific parts to it that don't lend themselves to being run by organizations that are doing other work. That's my version of that. I have seen so many debacles where organizations hold processes and do their work and they don't have the skillset and haven't practiced it. It takes up every piece of oxygen and the organizations can't function and collapse. They could have funnelled it out and learned conflict resolution within their own organization to address things that need addressing.

Seeing conflict as a resource is something organizations can do. I don't want to see them in CA processes. I want to hear from you two. Give me good examples if you think I'm wrong.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: I'm not an HR professional. Sometimes it's law which can be at odds with communities at work.

Having the conversation predating the policy. "What would you want at work?" Knowing the safety plan. I've seen folks explore that. If we're talking about our pods, the bay area transformative justice model, which you can look up, would you want your pods to be people from work or not?

It's so contextual to the work you do and how you do it. I do that think that when harm occurs in a structured group you have a set of resources. It doesn't always turn into a formal community accountability process. It might look a million ways but there are strengths to it. Versus when someone's unclear who's a part of the community. Shannon do you have thoughts?

Shannon Perez-Darby: Yeah. I was trying to work out the quick version. Basically what Mariame Kaba said. So ditto that. And I haven't worked out this newer idea yet. It's what people have said forever. About how non-profits absorb resources and absorb things. With some benefit. If you're paid for it to do it as your job, you can do it more. Versus as a side hustle.

And there's a way non-profits can take up the air in the room. And the non-profit structure around funding and all sorts of things. As someone who did it as my paid work for so long, it was a huge gift. And came at high cost. This being my paid work, and my communities, and my life, didn't make it big enough. It's weird. I work for the government now. In some ways I'm more balanced having more balance. My expectations for my day job are low. They give me a paycheck and insurance. I'm clear.

The non-profit I worked at which was one of the most radical non-profits, there were real limitations. It gave me more. It's complicated when you bring nuanced work into things with limits. Movements are bigger than non-profits. It actually does harm. It did harm to me personally. We have to get right about the limits of that.

What's the container. Containers are important. And what can it do or can't it do. Get clear on your container.

Mariame Kaba: I love that. Let's each of us share what we want to share. If there are things you didn't get to say. If there are resources you want to share. Whatever you want to close out our

time together.

Shannon Perez-Darby: I want to start with gratitude. Similar to what I was saying. This video series came at a huge transition in my life. In a time when I went from anti violence as paid work to anti violence as not my paid work. Domestic violence work is my home, where I come back to. I consider it my life's work about how to actualize this stuff. I can do this work from many positions. Figuring out how to do it is scary. Maybe this'll make me cry! This gift that Kiyomi Fujikawa put together, to put together the series, to offer it to me at that transition point, I'm so grateful for.

It was this universe being like, "it's OK for you to do this not as your paid work!" Yeah. That was so important for me. People have done so much labor to make this happen. Basically I showed up at Kiyomi's work for an hour. My gratitude for that is so big. How well organized this whole process has been I'm really really grateful for. I want to end on my deep gratitude for what everyone did. It's a huge honor to participate in these conversations with people I look up to so deeply.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Similarly I'll start by sharing things. And just to name that none of this work would be here without folks like Mariame. Mariame, I've learned so much from you. Yeah. I think the legacy of work you've produced and continue to produce, I think dang when do you sleep!

Also a shoutout to Hope for holding down logistics, editing the video, and to Christine for filming the video.

One video I didn't share was from the Icarus project. Called The Mad Maps. It's an adaptation of an advanced directive. In practicing accountability, all those hard things like shame and self-loathing can come up.

Map Maps offers your people, your support, the people you are interdependent with, tools to know how they should approach you. And how they can support you in those moments when you think you aren't making sound decisions.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis. Or if you're not acting right. How do you want

people to show up. What are signs. What do you want people to say or not say. Those tools are hard to say. I want to name it as a powerful tool in all of us exploring our own self-accountability or if you're working with someone practicing their own accountability too. That goes a long way.

This focused less on date violence. And also a moving back from sexual violence and domestic violence in the ways we talk about it. I don't mean to not center those things. Because they are crucial to understanding. But I'm grateful we are offering a remix of that.

Lastly thanks Shannon for sharing on the video and the great smarts you share. I appreciate you.

Shannon Perez-Darby: Can I offer one more. For one and a half years I'm working on a book on all these things. Check back with me in 1-3 years. All I have to do is write it! The ideas are in there. Don't worry!

People ask so much. And I feel very called to put some stuff on paper and get it out into the world. I thought if I said it here it'll help manifest it to life.

Mariame Kaba: I want that book and I know publishers who want that book. I want to thank both of you so very much. For the video series. For taking the time to be here today. And for your work. Which inspires me, gives me ideas, and keeps me going.

I do feel I'm in my third season, heading toward my fourth. When I see younger folks doing this work I feel so much hope for the future. You give me that hope.

I thank BCRW for their resources for this kind of thinking, this kind of action, Hope's work. And the organizations over the years who've laid the groundwork and foundation for so much work we take for granted. INCITE! Women and trans people of color, API CHAYA. The Bay Area Collective. Creative Interventions and the toolkit at the Creative Interventions site. Using it as a conversation piece. The list is so long.

So many groups over the years who've helped us think through community based accountability. To use non-punitive ways to address harm. So much rooted in people of color's history. Here

and beyond. All this wouldn't be possible without these groups.

There are a few things coming up if you're interested. A webinar called TJ in the #metoo era. Everyday feminism partnering with Vision. Partners in crime of mine are running a TJ transformative justice webinar. On November 20, super cheap.

I'll do a TJ 101 here in New York City. On December 8 here at Barnard. Look on the website. Finally I hope Shannon will come too. I haven't had a chance to reach out officially. Shannon and Kiyomi and other people. Amita, Dean. Others mentioned. They are coming to New York on April 27. There'll be a daylong conversation on how to support people who cause harm to take accountability.

A conversation with other people. Some of you don't come to the day before conversation, which is our skill share. But you can come to the April 27, 2019 day. So there's more conversations. Email BCRW if you have questions, suggestions beyond those we can handle now. We haven't gone through all the questions so we'll think through how to post them.

So you can see them and post your own answers. Tell people about this webinar. We want people to watch and be inspired. To do your own thing. To take self-accountability and help people take accountability. The video is also on BCRW's site. Their youtube channel. So you can watch beyond today if you couldn't be here live. We had over 120 people viewing. We appreciate that on a Friday afternoon when you can do anything else. Thanks to Shannon, Kiyomi, and everyone involved. Thank you.

[End of conversation.]_

*** This transcript provides a meaning-for-meaning summary to facilitate communication access and may not be a fully verbatim record of the proceedings. *** _