

Join the Conversation!

HEALING FROM RACIALIZED TRAUMA

Monday August 24, 2020 | 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Presenter: Mosa McNeilly

Margaret Horvath: My name is Margaret Horvath and I will be your technical assistant today. This session is being recorded and will be available on the TDSB website at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Conversations-Series>. To ensure a smooth session for all attendees, we have enabled the Q & A and the Chat function. You have been muted and you are unable to share your screen. Everything in zoom is customizable based on your individual settings. So, your display may not be exactly as I described it, however, what should be similar is the black toolbar at the bottom of your screen. It should appear when you move your cursor. To use or view the chat box, press the "chat" icon that looks like a word bubble at the bottom of your screen on the black bar. If you want to open the Q&A, simply click on that Q&A icon. Everyone will have access to Q&A, so please ask your questions there. If you are calling into the session, please use *9, the Raise Hand function and the moderator will try to get to your question. Next step is audio and microphone. The audio quality of this session is based on your individual bandwidth. If you're worried about slow internet connection, you can call in by using the dial in information included in the invite. The invite is located at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Conversations-Series>. If for some reason your speakers' bandwidth becomes unstable and things become choppy, please bear with us. We'll hear it too and we will work as quickly as possible to resolve the issue. We do have interpretation for this session. Please click on the interpretation icon at the bottom of the screen to see the available languages. There is a quick survey that we would like you to complete after listening/watching this Conversation. The link will be put into the chat. Lastly, you may exit or change the full screen speaker or gallery view by clicking the top right button or view options, drop down menu. Now to get things started, I'm going to hand it over Kaydeen Banks, the Ward 8 Rep for the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC). Over to you Kaydeen.

Kaydeen Banks: Thank you, Margaret so much. I would like to start by saying thank you all and welcome to the join the conversation webinar series. Tonight's session is healing from racialized trauma. My name is Kaydeen. As Margaret mentioned I'm the ward 8 representative on the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee also known as the PIAC. I would first like to take a moment to welcome and thank our lesson Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin, who is going to also offer a bit of greetings to all of you this evening. Thank you, Rachel.

Kaydeen: I apologize, I'm sorry. Also like to take a moment before we get started on our -- this evening's program to: We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognise

the enduring Presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. You'll now pass out over to trustee Rachel Chernos Lin.

Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin: Thank you, Kaydeen. Good evening and thank you for joining us tonight. As the Trustee to the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee and ward 11 trustee, I'm pleased to bring greetings on who had been the Toronto District School Board. It is my sincere pleasure to introduce another session in our conversation series to help parent, caregivers and staff as we get ready for back to school. Tonight's topic is both a timely and important one. So many parents, students and staff have felt the impact of racial trauma on their health and well-being. Past spring and summer have brought into focus more sharply the need to examine, confront and deal with these experiences in meaningful and healing ways. Tonight's session will focus on coping and healing strategies and serve to continue discussions in the speaker series began last June. We know how precious everyone's evenings are right now and so I thank you for joining us and do hope you find tonight's session to be of value. So without further ado, back to you, Kaydeen, to get this session started.

Kaydeen: It is my pleasure to be able to welcome and introduce our facilitator for this evening conversation, Mosa McNeilly, who is an artist, educator and who investigates the themes of black radical imagination, the middle passage memory and embodying the sacred as in her visual art and performance practice. Her works have been exhibited, published and performed extensively. Mosa has lectured and spoken on panels in universities and has cultivated dedicated cultural and spiritual practices, informed by diasporic African knowledges. She has received numerous arts and academic awards, and has delivered hundreds of arts education programs in elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools, reaching thousands of learners. Thank you, Mosa, for joining us this evening for our speaker's series.

Mosa McNeilly: Sorry about that. Thank you very much, Kaydeen, for the introduction. So I would love to begin with an opening ritual. So I would like to invite everybody to you know settle in to its very -- very sensitive topic that we are covering today. So I want us to begin right. You always like to begin with breath. So, you know, let's begin by grounding ourselves in this space together. It is virtual space. But I'm hoping that you're all comfortable wherever you are in your homes, and let's prepare for having a moving and nurturing and fortifying experience together. Many so
let's begin with breath. I'm going to ask us to make three, deep, cleansing slow breaths together. We're going to breathe in through our noses. We're going to hold the breath for a moment when our lungs are full and then we're going to breathe out through our mouths. So when we breathe in we first allow our bellies to rise and then our lungs to fill up and then we breathe out through our mouths and release the breaths. So let's do that together. Let's breathe in through our noses. Hold for a moment and breathe out. You can close your eyes if you want. I'm going to close my eyes. Breathe in through your nose and hold and breathe out through your mouth. Breathe in through your nose. And hold. And breathe out through your mouth. Now I'm going to light a candle so I'm -- I'm demonstrating, you know, the way I like to start my day each day and so I'm inviting you to consider this as an example of self-care practices that you could incorporate, you know, into your own lives. So every time I light a candle I light it with intention. It is my intention to be a light bearing being on the planet. And when I say light, I mean within us that those -- those feelings of love and generosity of spirit, our kindness, our joy, our sense of inner peace. To me those all represent light within. Next I'm going to make a burnt offering as a black woman and a spiritual practitioner. I make a burnt offering in the Ethiopian tradition. I have a clay bowl with a piece of charcoal on it I have just lit. And here I have some frankincense. I'll open and just show you if you want to see inside there. There is like little rocks. It is a resin from

a tree that has collected like the sap from a tree. I put a little frankincense here on the charcoal: And then it begins to smoke. You know, so as we do make a land acknowledgment to the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island we can acknowledge the African ancestors who were originally brought to this land by force. Hundreds of years ago. Those who vanished across and transported their Indigenous knowledges and practices with them to this land and shared knowledge, beyond forces and stood in ally ship and solidarity as we do today. With the Indigenous people. It smells really good and glorious and in the indigenous tradition there is a practice called smudging and so this burnt offering is serves a similar function to purify the space, to -- we can bring the smoke up over our heads in the same way as we've learned about smudging from the indigenous people to purify our minders and our consciousness so that we are prepared to be present and really bring our hearts to the work that we're going to do tonight. So finally in our opening ritual, I want to pour libation and this is a Pan-African tradition. It is practiced in many different countries on the continent but meant. So when we pour libation, we honor our African ancestors as a prayer of deep gratitude to the legacy of the African cosmologies that have sure have you had. It is an account of reclamation of our spiritual heredities, inheritance. When we pour libation, we pour a liquid. It could be water. It could be spirits like gin or rum. We're inviting the ancestors to drink to be present to witness our devotion to their memory and show them that we have taken up the mantle and here we are, we're carrying forward their legacy into the future. So I have learned to say Ashae in the Aruba language from Nigeria which means many things but for the purpose of this libation we could say it is the equivalent of Amen. I have also learned to say Unsa in the tree language from Ghana which means drink. Each time I pour I'm going to say Ashae and I invite you all if you want to unmute. You can join me and say those words with me as I pour the libation. So this is spring water filtered water. I give to all increasing that cause the universe and [speaking in another language] I call you by all the name I know. I call you by all the names to call in the multitude in this aspect of your divine presence that animates all of life. I say Ashae. Next I give thanks to the Mother Earth. And the elemental ones, the earth, wind, fire, water, animal, plant, men spirit, medicines and totems of the earth. Then I give thanks for the lavish and lush beauty and subsistence and beauty we receive from the mother earth I say Ashae. Unsa. Next I give thanks to the ancestors, and the all of our origins and here I invite you to unmute if you want to join me and calling the names of your ancestors along with mine. We pour for each of the names you call and we can say Ashae each time I pour. Let's allow our voices to join in honoring those who came before us. Those that have been victimized by racist police violence and those whose lives we honor. George Floyd. Asha. Breonna Taylor, and Daddy Asha. Grandma Lila Asha, Grandpa George Ashae. Anti-Jim, Ashae. Anti-tintin Ashae. Nelson Mandela Ashae. Tony Morrison Ashae. Mis Angelo Ashae. Nannue Ashae. Ashae. Ashae. Ashae. Ashae. We honour the middle passage ancestors whose bones lie on the ocean floor. Ashae. When we call one, we call all. Ashae. Ashae. Ashae. Madasu-pa. Let's make some noise.

[clapping] [singing]

Okay. So now we're ready to begin. In a good way. So I am not hearing the voices very loudly so I'm sorry if I didn't hear you if you were calling the names of your ancestors but we did pour for everyone. Normally what we would do if we were all in a physical space together is we would ask the youngest person in the room to take the water for the libation and offer it to the earth. So I will do that after our session. So as you know the focus of this series of this session is to provide a form to explore and dialogue about self-care and mental health strategies. For healing from racialized trauma. And I understand that racialized trauma can trigger the trauma for white when allies; however, this webinar is centered on the experience of racialized or

BIPOC caregivers and black and white and people of color and those that identify as people of mixed race. It is open to all caregivers and I will prioritize the voices of the BIPOC participants. So I would just like to share a little bit about my work. Share some visuals with you. I have been working for 30 years as an enter disciplinary artist and educator and editor and more recently I have been doing sacred leadership work and mentorship work in the black community. So I use the pronouns she and her. I identify as a black cis gender woman. So I'm going to share my screen. Just -- I want you to see some images.

To begin. This is just a stack of books that when we talk about -- I'll be talking to you about my toolkit of self-care strategies. One of them is to read books by black authors about healing and spirituality and that is a real touchstone for me. So I hope you can see this image. I know that our boxes are showing on the side there. But here you can see some of my work. In my current interdisciplinary work I work through installation and mucked media and performance. You center the black female subject employing hybrid and iconography, memory, morning and memorization. In my arts education work, I have seen the evidence that immersing black children in African art forms holding space for them to dialogue about racism and teaching them about histories of resistance. Fosters African cultural literacy, catalysis agency and nurtures black self-love. In my sacred leadership work I work collectively to envision black futures of possibility, to curate and hold space for black healing in community care with the intention of contributing to a momentum of innovation and freedom. I just wanted you to see some images there about my work. Here we go. So I'll just post some links in the chat. For you to be in touch on social media. If you would like to follow up with me. So the format of what we're going to do today, I'm going to just share some information about trauma and share a poem with you. We're going to -- I'm going to share a grounding affirmation for us to do a meditation practice together. A short meditation practice. Then I will share some agreements of anticipation and quotation and a song for us to be as a springboard for our knowledge Shaving about racialized trauma. Then I'll share some of my best practices of what I'll call my healing from racialized trauma toolkit. And then I'll open it up again for knowledge sharing about self-care and strategies. We'll have a few minutes at the end for question and answer period and -- I forgot to ask this before but we'll see if we can -- I would like to, you know, hang out for ten minutes after the end of the -- at the end of the session if we can. We'll let you know closer to the end to just have some more informal sharing. The I just want to begin by expressing my gratitude to you for the immense burden of responsibility that you carry. Caring for children. You want to acknowledge that the current climate of anti-black violence adds a layer of trauma for black caregivers to the already overwhelming impacts of COVID 19 that we're navigating and to the trailer trauma that all racialized folks navigate on a daily basis. L of and there is a huge need in my opinion for -- a huge demand for black centered healthcare and mental health support in black only spaces for collective grieving, raging and healing. So you want to speak about trauma. Just to give us some guidelines about -- just some principles of how we're going to engage this topic tonight. I am hearing some sounds -- sorry there is an ice cream truck going by my place if you're hearing that. But I'm hearing some sound on the line. I don't know if there are -- up everybody is muted but that is -- that is better. Okay. Great. I recently led a webinar series for black service providers for OCAS, Ontario agency for serving immigrants. Part of their promotion in immigrant and refugee serving organization project. And so I think there are parallels between the front line workers and racialized caregivers of racialized children. OCASE developed a set of policies and practices called trauma and violence informed approaches that acknowledge the widespread impact of trauma and that emphasize incorporated anti-racist and anti-oppressive and feminist principles of practice. So I refer to these guidelines as a black caregiver of a black child who have both experienced racialized trauma and I am going to let this be a context for us for this webinar. So I will post in the chat Ocase's guidelines and I'm also posting some other resources for therapy, for holistic

care, for -- in addressing racialized trauma that are available in the city. So I'm just going to share my screen again. The I want to just let you look at these principles that we're going to use as guidelines for our conversation today. So the first principle is working from a generalist approach. So I have made a statement here. I agree to treat everyone as if they have been subject to trauma. You know, if we agree to treat each other and our children as though we have all been subject to trauma, this enhance what is called a universal trauma -- universal trauma precautions which aims to provide a common ground had and create a culture for addressing trauma offering consistent ways to respond to each other's stories. The statement I have here I agree to be mindful I may need support following this session if I experience vicarious traumatization or up my existing trauma is triggered. So this principle acknowledges that caregivers, we -- when we listen to the stories of other people's trauma or disclosures from our children and we witness the impacts of these experiences, it can trigger trauma -- our own trauma or we can experience vicarious trauma. So this principle just alerts us to be mindful to seek support for care following this webinar and when we are responding to our children's stories of trauma, the next one is fostering safety. The statement is, I agree to be sensitive to everyone's emotional psychological interpersonal social cultural and systematic vulnerabilities. You know, safety is the foundation of trauma related work; however, in the context of this webinar, you really don't believe I'm able to make that promise of fostering safe space. I think that I have issue with the term safe space at all. I don't know if it was actually possible. But what I think makes more sense is fostering brave space. We can agree to participate collectively and strive to be sensitive to the emotional, psychological, interpersonal social cultural and systematic vulnerabilities that we have and if I feel that the dialogue moves in a direction that risks the safety of anyone, I will intervene and finally continuing growth and community building. I agree to make the effort to foster this space as a space of hope and to support everyone to cope. So despite our adversity I have a belief in the human capacity for growth so I'm wanting to, you know, work together with all of you to foster this as a space of hope. So this poem I think is fitting in this respect. Speaking about brave space. So I will just read it to you. It is written by Mickey Bey Jones and called an invitation to brave space. Together we will create brave space. Because there is no such thing as safe space. We exist in the real world. We all carry scars. And we all have caused wounds. In this space, we seek to turn down the volume of the outside world. We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere. We call each other to more truth and love. We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow. We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know. We will not be perfect. This space will not be perfect. It won't always be what we wish it to be. But it will be our brave space together. And we will work on it side-by-side. So what I would like to do next is lead us in a meditation practice. I am going to play some music. I will give some guidance, I'll share a grounding principle. A grounding affirmation for you to hold in your mind. And I'll give you a mantra to recite silently. So, please find -- make yourselves comfortable. Sit in a comfortable position. I'm going to share some music first. Still moment by Tu in. De Jegede. Our grounding affirmation is, when I care for myself, I'm caring for my community. The symbol here is a symbol from the Ghana system in West Africa. The symbol is called San Koffa and San Koffa means learn from the past. Go back and fetch what has been lost. It shows the symbol because I feel that self-care and healing is a kind of return, a return to the self. So now we will begin our meditation. Drawing from the words of Depac Shopra of the as we prepare to med taught together. Let's take a minute to consider the grounding affirmation. I am caring for my community. When I care for myself, I am caring for my community. Let's prepare for our meditation. Make yourself comfortable and close your eyes. Begin to be aware of your breath. Just breathe. Slowly and deeply. With each breath, allow yourself to become more deeply relaxed. Now generally introduce the mantra. Mojuba ei. This means I praise the mother in the Aruba language from Nigeria, Mojuba is the

essence of reverence. Giving praises, devotion. This mantra connects to you with the architect energy of the mother. Nurturing, caring, protecting in honor of our mothers. In honor of the roles we play as caregivers in our children's lives and in ourselves. As you repeat the mantra, feel the flavor, feel the energy of giving subsidence enlivening your spirit. Repeated silent read to yourself. Mojuba Eia. With each repetition feel your body, mind and spirit open and receive a little more. When you find yourself distracted by thoughts, noises, or physical sensation, simply return your attention to silently repeating the mantra. Mojuba Ei. Mojuba Eipoint o. Mojuba eipoint o. Please continue with your meditation. I will mind the time and you'll hear me play a soft chime at the end and beginning of the meditation.

[chime]

It is time to release the mantra. Continue to sit restfully. Inhaling and exhaling slowly. When you feel ready, you can open your eyes. As we continue with our webinar and tomorrow if you remember, contemplate the grounding affirmation. The when I care for myself, I'm caring for my community. When I care for myself, I am caring for my community. When I care for myself, I am caring for my community. Ashe. Let's move on to our next session. I'm not able to share. Let's see here. Here we go. I'm going to share my screen again. And I want to on this quotation. Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare by Audre Lorde. So here we have a symbol that is called duaphe. It looks like a wooden cone. An afr pick and this represents beauty and self-care. It represents love. And it represents hygiene and being well groomed. So I just invite us to reflect on this quotation caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation. I think a lot of racialize folks we sometimes may feel a little squeamish about this notion of self-care because it may feel like a -- an indulgence or an extravagant or -- but you know I have come to know and believe in my own life that it is absolutely critical and as Audre Lorde puts it, when we talk about racial violence then choosing to care for one's self, black self loves is caring for one's brown body, one's black body, it becomes a real political act that counters the hatred and violence that is person against us. So I want to share with you here a song by sweet honey in the rock. That is galvanizing and uplifting and from there we'll start to dialogue about racial trauma and we who believe in freedom cannot rest [Applause] We who believe in freedom cannot rest. We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes [singing] We who believe in freedom, cannot rest, hear me talking to you, we who believe in freedom, cannot rest until it comes until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons is as important as the killing of white men, white mothers' sons that we who believe from freedom cannot rest, sing it with me if you like. We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes the older I get the better I know that the secret of my going on, is when the reigns are in the hands of the young, who dare to run against the storm to me young people come first, they have the courage where we fail, and if I can but shed some light as they carry us through the gale. We believe, in freedom cannot rest, we will talking to you, we who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes struggling myself don't need a whole lot I've come to realize that teaching others to stand up and fight is the only way my struggle survives I'm a woman who speaks in a voice and I must be heard at times I can be quite difficult, I'll bow to no man's word, we who believe in freedom cannot rest, we talking we believe in freedom cannot rest until it the comes I need to clutch our power and I need the light just to shine on me I need to be one in a number stand against it. We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes, we who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.

[♪ we can we who believe in free cannot rest, we who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes. Freedom]

[Applause]

Mosa: Okay. So, all right. So we're back. So I would like to invite us now to do some knowledge sharing. To share I know there must be a lot of knowledge in the room. We have 26 participants who are, you know, caregivers. I would like to invite you to share your knowledge, wisdom, experience, your insights, reflecting on the content we have covered so far. And you know I just want to have some agreements of participation. I know it is a bit difficult because we're not actually hearing each other's voice in a room together but I would like us just to have these agreements in mind as we hear from each other. So I call these the freedom agreements. I -- they're guidelines that I learn from a Professor from the Environmental Studies Department at York university for establishing ethics of shared responsibility and group agreement. So we begin with the principle of respect. So we agree to use appropriate pronouns and other modes of address as requested. We agree to step forward and then to step back. We agree to support each other knowing the difference -- that difference and opinion are okay. And that some opinions have more power than others. And we agree to give-and-take time to reflect but. Second we agree to confidentiality. We agree to the right of privacy and seek to -- and receive declared permission before sharing the stories of others. We agree to events, dynamics, possibilities instead of personalities. And we accept that we have personal investment in our own biases. And third, we agree to the principle of agency. We agree to share responsibility and accountability. To allow mistakes as part of learning. We agree to address conflicts with freedom from institutionalized modes of violent communication and we agree to ask questions when we don't understand while learning and honoring boundaries. So you know I want you to expect that this may be a difficult or an uncomfortable conversation for some people in the room, uncomfortable if our biases are challenged, if trauma or shame is triggered. And I'm going to support everyone to stay present to keep your hearts open, to but listen and speak from the heart. No one is expected to teach anyone or be responsible for anyone else's feelings but your own. We're working towards sharing accountability and responsibility for change. So please be mindful to share only what you feel comfortable sharing in an open forum such as this. As your facilitator I'm holding space for vulnerable sharing using parameters of the freedom agreements. So yeah. So I think we will field any questions that are in the chat or in the Q&A. And I'll -- I'll try and answer. If you have -- if you want to -- if you have more private comments or questions that I can -- you know, you address previously I can be in touch with you after the session. Let's see if we have -- I'll turn it over to Kaydeen to share any questions that may be already there in the chat.

Kaydeen: Thank you I'm just taking a look in the chat and the Q&A. At the moment there is nothing specific I was going to put in there. We have in the chat a number of links that you have shared earlier. Just around mental health, resources, therapists in the City of Toronto. And then as well for all participants at the very beginning of the chat there is a survey just to record your experiences and the conversation series and that is -- that there is also a link there and one to complete that survey.

Mosa: I could maybe offer some guiding questions to inspire some dialogue. So here I will just lay out a few questions for you here. What are some examples of experiences of racialized trauma? How can we address it in the moment? How can we protect ourselves from traumatization and re-traumatization? What are some impacts of racialized trauma? What are some of the barriers to addressing racialized trauma? What do racialized caregivers need from white people to support our healing from racialized trauma? What do racialized folks need from people in our own racial groups to support our healing? And what else can the TDSB do to support racialized caregivers in addressing and healing from racialized trauma? So I'm going to

just -- I'll post these questions in the chat as well. Yes, it is a bit of -- you know, to -- it is a bit of a difficult space maybe for this kind of dialogue considering we don't see anyone's faces, we don't hear your voices. But you know perhaps we can still engage in some dialogue about them, about the topic, you know, in this format. I'll give it another moment or so for anyone to post anything. Oh you see some responses here. This looks like this is from Michelle being in a work environment where racial slurs are used frequently. Politely. That definitely is -- that can -- that is a form of racial trauma that can be triggered by an experience like that. It is so difficult in Canada, there is a particular kind of brand of racism here that is veiled in this kind of politeness that is -- that we're known for in this country. And there is also a sort of narrative of benevolence that the nation state has managed to maintain though that is being tarnished recently with -- in the last years with the truth coming out about the residential school history in Canada. There was the state was forced to acknowledge that as cultural genocide. With the Black Lives Matter movement that is -- that is really caught fire. Canada's anti-black racism. The police violence has become visible so those -- so the whole veneer of that Canadian politeness and national benevolence is getting challenged. But in the -- in interpersonal experiences, yes, those kinds of comments can happen. People may say things that they don't even realize are racist. I know I spent -- I lived for ten years in Guelph with my daughter and part of the reason I returned to Toronto was because sort of unchallenged white supremacy that was -- before you could even address it you have to actually convince people that it actually exists that it is happening, you know. So yes. That is -- it can be challenging to even name it. Many here is another comment. The trauma at times seems to sneak up on you slowly. Constant fatigue. Stress. Anxiety in certain spaces. Can't sleep. Eating challenges. So it is -- it is like a PTSD response. It is a cumulative. The term micro aggressions became popularized in the last years and this sort of, you know, bit-by-bit it is like a slow kind of erosion of your health with having to be confronted with those daily seemingly nine encounters and experiences the cumulative effect begins to affect your mental health, your physical health, so are you seeing any other comments or questions Kaydeen?

Kaydeen: I did put in there that -- just having your own personal experiences going validated or acknowledged and having to constantly justify your truth to others. Even being able to share our experiences or even thinking about our children's experiences, particular to the school system and otherwise just having -- I feel like you have to justify it to somebody else why, you know, you may have experienced an act of racism. Intentionally or unintentionally.

Mosa: Yeah. And so, you know, what are some strategies that you've used in coping with that?

Kaydeen: They become very personal, right? It is really the ways in which we are able to fortify at home in our own personal family unit how we can speak about those things. I find as parent being able to offer space to my children to speak their truth. Whether I may agree or, you know, expect accountability in other ways being on there and/or on the other end of it. But really just to hold that space and be able to speak as openly and directly as we can about those things. Many at home to be able to offset the fact that they're not quite as many spaces outside of home to be able to do this thing. And I don't know that it is a very clear strategy but one that we're just trying to nurture about how we can support each other through some of these challenges and experiences and also needs to just say it and focus and not become dishearten by some of the things that happen as well in our day-to-day lives. Right?

Mosa: Yeah. I think that is definitely a strategy. We may not even validate this strategies that we have because we don't name them as such, you know. But I -- that open and honest communication space for validation, that is very powerful, you know, to offer that at home. So I

would definitely put that in your toolkit, sis, because -- I satisfy see a question here. Can you share some strategies to help overcome? So, yeah, why don't I move on to that then. I have here some strategies that I would like to share. Let me share my screen again. So I have divided it into a few different categories. So this first one I -- the statement is, when I allow myself to feel, I'm healing. From racialized trauma. This symbol is not -- it is called apa and it means handcuffs. It actually visually is meant to represent handcuffs and so it is a symbol that represents justice. I chose this to represent trauma. The trauma of racialized trauma, the trauma of mass incarceration that black and indigenous people experience. The handcuffs are like chains and representing slavery. And I consider the current industrial complex of modern day slavery. I think it speaks to confronting anti-black racism, mourning and message always the loss of black life and this is a symbol of something that you have to break free from to attain freedom from the injustice. So I -- so when I identifying understanding and creating a political position on racial trauma, I see this is my first kind of set of strategies where first I strive to understand what is racialized trauma. I unpack trauma with my therapist on a regular bases so I have -- having someone to talk to, a professional person, to unpack whatever those experiences of trauma are on a regular basis. Allowing myself to feel because that's like the validation that -- that Kaydeen was talking about. Our feelings, our experiences are being questioned and we're not -- the -- you know whether or not it is real. If we allow ourselves to feel the pain and the outrage, that is really important for it to be, you know, to be real to us and to be validated by somebody that we share it with. Knowledge sharing with black folks and I mean I'm speaking from a black perspective many these are my tools. So you can -- if you're -- you know, if you're an indigenous person, if you're of a different racial group you can adjust these strategies to suit, you know, your particular cultural and racial identity. And engaging in culturally relevant research is another aspect of this, you know, having that understanding of awareness and language to really unpack what is it that I'm experiencing, what is this trauma to make it real and to -- and to, you know, look to thinkers on the topic and inform yourself with that kind of research that is relevant to your cultural and racial identity. When I dwell in stillness I am communing with the divine. This is another symbol which is another version of the Sankofa symbol which means to connect to your history, to re-claim your roots. To -- this is particularly important for people of African descent in the diaspora and colonialism was a thorough project that has severed many of us from our connection to our identity as people of African descent so this symbol of it is people of African descent who are making that by reclaiming their positive sense of black identity. So this -- this set of strategies are around spiritual practice. 'when you cell in stillness I'm communing with the divine. I keep an altar. Or a -- you could call it Asia Ryan or it may be a window sill with a special stone or candle. Just a dedicated space in your home that you can go to and that is a sacred space for you where you may sit to practice meditation. You may contemplate there. The you may water a plant. You may light a candle. You may have objects that are meaningful to you. Beautiful piece of cloth. And I also participate in ceremony. I'm part of the spiritual community. That is very fortifying and nurturing for me to attend ceremony. We go to the water's edge. We light a fire. We build an alter. We make offerings. We pray. We dance. We sing. We chant. We play the drum. We feast. So these and journaling. For me I find it very cathartic if I have had an experience that was painful, I feel emotions are building up in me. I'm outraged. I journal and I -- it helps me to release it so it is not all built up inside my head and in my body. And I can release some of the pressure by journaling. So I consider all of these to be spiritual practices. I heal the temple of my body with medicines from mother earth. This symbol is called assasa do: It speaks about the divinity of mother earth. We must respect the earth and care for the earth as -- and recognize the importance of the earth to human life. So this -- this set of strategies has to do with my physical health. So I drink plenty of clean water. I have a quota. There is an app on my phone. My water app. I try to keep up with drinking a minimum of the liter and a half of water

every day. Clean water, filtered water, not necessarily tap water. I am very dedicated to eating wholesome foods. I have a predominantly vegetarian diet. I try to keep out the food organic in the household as much as possible when I can afford it. I practice yoga regularly. Many or any kind of physical activity. But I find yoga to be a wonderful practice because it builds strength. It builds balance. It builds flexibility and it ties to the spiritual practice. When you're on your Matt, depending on the teacher, they can bring you the practice through a spiritual lens which you know tied body, mind, spirit, it helps to integrate those different aspects communing with nature I think is critical especially those living in urban environments. In the City of Toronto it is such a green city. I heard Toronto in fact received referred to as a city in a forest. We have a lot of green space in Toronto. There are rivers. There are ravines. There are -- there is the lake. There is the beach. So I find when I commune with nature it is so grounding. It helps me balance. I feel there is a essential kind of relationship that I have with nature that is very healing for me. And working with medicinal plants. There are many we can work with in supporting our health. Ever day I put a chunk of aloe in my smoothie. I take black seed oil a tee spun every day. I use frankincense and cobiba and herbs and healing my body and my aches and pains to reduce Indigenous Floridamation to calm hue nerves. The shea butter is my go to for moisturizing my skin. Coconut oil has healing properties. I work with medicinal plants as part of my regime, my physical health. And finally, leh we dance and be free. This is another symbol that represents freedom, emancipation. Independence -- independence. So I chose this symbol because I want to be free. I want racialized people to be free. I think it is our responsibility to find freedom proxies, people of African descent we have reveled in dance to free up ourselves and defile oppression and the ecstasy of freedom so dance is one of my freedom practices. I make sure to dedicate time to pleasure. Again, this probably sounds like an extravagance or indulgence, but truly, you know, children are our best teachers when it comes reveling in pleasure and joy and life. I think it is very important, especially for those of us who are caregivers, those of us who may be activists or community workers, we can be -- it can be a real grind to always be serving and nurturing others and fighting against oppressions and societies. I think it is so important for us to cultivate, to dedicate time to pleasure in our lives. I nurture my relationships with black women in my life. That is a way of my staying connected to my racial group. It is important to me to cultivate and nurture relationships with women in my community. I strive to have the courage to speak my truth. To speak out. The to voice myself if I have to express something that is -- that is difficult to say. That may ruffle feathers. I think that is my sense of personal freedom. I

cultivate my cultural identity so it is not just something I paste on or something that I speak about. But it is an integrated part of my life. And then I devote my life's work to what matters to me: So I try my best to cultivate my life's workaround what is meaningful to me. For me, what breaks my heart the most is seeing children suffer. So I have dedicated much of my life's work to serving children of African descent through art and arts education projects and what matters to me is black women having freedom and -- to lead intentional lives and to be creative so I make art and I work with women and my spiritual community and so that a-- these are the ways that I strive to devote my life's work to what matters to me. So those are some of my strategies.

I see we're at 7:53. I would just like to open the floor again and if anybody would like to share any of your self-care strategies, I'm sure there is a lot of wisdom in the room that we could all benefit from learning from each other. I wonder if at this point we have just a few minutes left. Perhaps we could open floor for folks if we're not seeing much in the Q&A or the chat, I don't know if people would be more inclined if they could speak maybe we could allow people in the participants if you want to raise your hand. If you would like to speak. There is a comment from a participant here that the self-care practices are definitely soothing and encouraging healthy approach to life. So thank you for that comment. Maybe we can just close then with

some take-aways. I would just ask folks to make a multiple to yourself to build one or more of these practices into the toolkit I gave you into your daily life adjusting to your intuitive sense what works for you and what is meaningful for or according to your cultural identity. But the day throughness, I believe the dailiness is important. Even if it is short, just five minutes every morning, as soon as you wake up, before you brush your teeth or maybe five minutes before you lay down in your bed at night and just talk a moment to breathe. Take a moment to journal. You know maybe try and eliminate something from your diet that you know isn't working for you. Drink more water. These are practices that we can -- we can incorporate into our daily lives. Maybe I'll play some music to take us out.

Kaydeen: We actually had a comment in the Q&A. It just says from Sophia, thank you for the session. Can you end with a short meditation? And then also would like to read a comment from Tracey holiday that was in the chat that just said, thank you so much again for sharing these different areas of self-care. I plan to incorporate these areas in to my classroom this September as I'm sure both my students and I will be under some stress at the beginning of our journey together. Again just thank so much for your sharing and your offering your tools. A request for a meditation.

Mosa: Okay. So we have two minutes left. So let me maybe play some music for you. Some quiet music to take us out. Again, this is Tunde Jedge. So please just sit comfortably where you are. Sit with your back straight. Your feet planted on the floor. Rest your hands in your lap. Close your eyes. Allow you -- yourself to just focus on your breath. Breathing slowly and deeply. Allow yourself to feel more relaxed. Allow your mind to focus on the affirmation. When I care for myself I am caring for when I can do this. I carry it. And just breathe. Slowly and deeply the affirmation. Continue to sit restfully. Inhaling and exhaling slowly. When you feel ready? You can open your eyes. And take this affirmation with you. When I care for myself I'm caring for my community. Thank you everyone. Thank you for participating. Thank you for having me. Thank you for inviting me. Many Michelle shopra Monroe and the Toronto district School Board and for your commitment to this work for racialized caregivers and addressing these important issues in our self-care and health. Thank you so much.

Kaydeen: Mosa, I also wanted to extend our greatest thanks as well for your time and your energy and your presence for joining us for the speaker series. And from all of the parents at the pi committee as well as those in attendance tonight. I appreciate you sharing from your toolkit but also for creating a space for us that was so warm and welcoming and so nurturing. We appreciate you.

Mosa: Thank you. Thank you, Kaydeen.

Kaydeen: I just noted in the chat that Michelle has also said thank you Mosa and thank you to everyone for joining us this evening and to have a wonderful week. Margaret, I don't know if there is anything else that needs to be done or said before we close for the evening. I'll hand it back over to you as well.

Margaret: No. I just want to thank everybody for coming tonight. It was a great experience. We'll be having another session very soon but thank you Mosa for sharing your time with us. That was very relaxes.

Mosa: Thank you so much,