0:00 - 1:30

Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Hello everyone, my name is Cherilyn Scobie Edwards, and I'm your moderator for the wrap-up session. I am currently the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, and I am a cisgendered Black woman with shoulder-length dark brown hair. I am wearing a striped blue and white-colored shirt, and my voice is a bit raspy today, as I'm battling a cold. For this session, we are going to wrap up, and we're going to talk about next steps towards action. Thinking about the incredible discussion that took place today, there is so much to unpack. I am joined by my esteemed panelists, who include Liza Arnason, chair of ASE Community Foundation for Black Canadians with Disabilities, and University of Calgary Black Alumni Network, Sarah Gauen, the Inclusion and Diversity Specialist at Algonquin College, and Vice President for the Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education, Jodie Glean-Mitchell, the Executive Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the University of Toronto, and Karima Hashmani, the Chief Inclusion Officer for Metrolinx. I am also joined by Vice President and Principal from the University of Toronto, Scarborough, Wisdom Tettey, for comments and closing remarks. I will now invite the panel to introduce themselves in the order that I introduced them. We'll start with Liza, then Sarah, followed by Jodie, and culminating with Karima, before we enter into broader discussion. Liza.

1:32 - 12:37

Liza Arnazon: Hello, many of you know me from the University of Toronto, as I'm on leave. And I'm Liza Arnason, and yes, I am on leave from U of T and Ontario Tech,some of you may know me from. I am involved with U of C and all those great things. I'm a mother and a grandmother, but you know what, who I want you to know who I am, which I never told anybody or even asked till I was 47 years old? I'm a Black woman with disabilities. That journey for me is a lived experience journey, and I understand absolutely why Black, racialized and Indigenous people do not want to disclose. I've built my framework on who I am and what I believe off of Audre Lorde, and I have to spend my five minutes so people know that this is how I came to be as a university student. One of hers, it's now a little book, but it's an article that says, "The master's tools will never, the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." That has been consistent against the conversation today, and of course, always giving her the credit for understanding there is no single thing as a single-issue struggle, because we all do not live single-issue lives. So what is it that we do? What is it that I do? I work with the ASE Community Foundation for Black Canadians with Disabilities as a volunteer. And what they do is look at research policy. They're building a Black accessibility national hub right now, and there's a youth programming, there's a Black Success Summit, and I recently was invited to the minister and Trudeau's, Prime Minister Trudeau's reception on individuals working in disability. And the importance of that is, you know what I saw? I could count the people of color on one hand, and I could say there was only two that were actually involved with organizations as a person with disability who's racialized, for people with disability. So I absolutely believe in the "nothing for us without us," but ultimately if you understand the Black community, it's For Us, By Us. You'll see it as FUBU. And that means is, when you're talking about intersectionality or when we're talking about my experience, or others, it really has to be

for us, by us. That means is that a lot of these spaces have not included us. And now the new dangerous word of intersectionality means they add people, but we do not have the power or the voice to be included. And to be honest, I was excluded, to a Pan-Canadian coalition funded by the federal government. And in front of one of these major, one of these major people in the unit that funded it, two people flat out said, "There's no space." And she says, "I want Liza to be there." And they say, "You know, we have a fire code." And she goes, "But I'm paying." And even in that space, where they can see in the reception, there's so few of us, and they can, they know me at least, and they know the work that people are doing, and still, in front of people with power who gave them the money to start their Pan-Canadian coalition, they refuse to allow me or others who look like me in the room to attend, 'cause it's a closed meeting. So when we saw what we saw this morning on the panels, is a lived experience for me, and a lived experience for many people, from different communities, and particularly Black and Indigenous people. We make choices about who and how we work with our disabilities. Normally it's hidden, and the other intersection that people actually don't talk about, culturally as well, we must hide it. So there's a considerable amount of pressure and harm that comes to us, to our mental health and others, as we journey through this space that we're in. And so all we can do is work with researchers like you, work with staff and committed people across Canada, who are interested. And we've got researchers at the University of Toronto right now who've brought on Black researchers from ASE to be a part of their U of T team. And that's what we wanna see. I'm really proud of it, and proud of those researchers who didn't know what was missing, learned what was missing, apologized for missing it, and then created room for others. These are the things that we want to promote and be a part of. So in your own world, include. You've got professors at the University of Toronto, Dr. Roberta Timothy, who just started the first Black health hub or lab in Canada. You've got Laverne Jacob, Professor Laverne Jacob in the law department out in Windsor, who's the only Canadian that's ever sat on the United Nations Disability Committee. And she's a Black woman, also again, with disabilities, same as Roberta. We're here, we just wanna get in the club. We just wanna be on the radar. We wanna be accredited for the work that we're doing. We wanna be paid equitably. We wanna be valued for volunteer work. We wanna be well. And I'm still going through that journey of accepting the disabilities and the loss of who I once was, and accepting those limitations, and what I can and cannot do. And I think that when, over and over again today, I heard the word ableism, and that is the word that I don't hear very often anymore. And I think once I understood that, and moved forward with it, I understood what was happening, more. And then of course, if you look at the intersectionality of being a woman of color, being a single mother, living in social housing, all the other identities that I've carried, it becomes really difficult to balance and know when to say, "I need help." And if I ever give any advice to anybody going forward, take the risk, find the right person, ask for the help, ask for the accommodation. Because even if you think it's going to be a double whammy, which I felt, and I do feel it is, or a triple whammy, if you're a woman, or you belong to another oppressed group, find somebody that you trust, and have them help you. It's not a weakness, it's a strength. And I've always appreciated those. Many are on this group today, that have helped me in my walk, in private and confidentially. But I think we need to take it outside of confidence and privacy, and make a space where people with disabilities who are

racialized, Black or Indigenous, don't feel that fear of the loss that may happen once all those things come together, and know that this space is for them as well. So on behalf of everyone, I'm really pleased to have been invited to this, and know the experience of that broken ladder or that ladder Black women have to build, on their own, piece by piece and prove themselves, and push the ladder against that, that stairs with the staircase. I've heard it called a broken ladder, but I believe that we have to build our own ladder, proving we can do everything step by step. And we are fearful that if we make mistakes, that ladder gets kicked, sometimes you get kicked off the ladder. Sometimes the ladder breaks. Sometimes you have to go prove yourself, to repair the ladder. But you have to always be proving yourself and never making mistakes. And then you can push that ladder and see women, mostly white women, on that ladder, on the stairs, struggling themselves, to get up. And I don't wanna see that anymore. I wanna see that when researchers and staff and organizers and community is involved together, that there can't be a Pan-Canadian coalition that has some researchers on it that do not look like me, or others, and don't even look at, that don't have the wealth of knowledge that the professors or the researchers or the staff that I heard this morning. I've learned so much. I don't, I can't tell you how many pages. I'm not the person that can do this and read the chat and do all those things at the same time. I have to accept that, and the old Liza could. The new Liza can't. So, thank you for giving me this moment, to speak and be a part of this significant activity across Canada, and reach out to ASE Community Foundation for Black Canadians with Disabilities if you'd like to partner, if you'd like to work with or to build Black researchers who have disabilities, because they're there. And just so you all know, ase is a Yoruba word, which is Nigerian, that means the ability of the self, the most powerful part of a person, to manifest something into existence. It's an affirmation. It's a soul. I say, so it will be. So I leave this off with ase, this will happen. It will be, and it will be intersectional. So thank you for your time.

12:40 - 12:46
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you so much, Liza, for that. I now pass it over to Sarah to make opening remark.

12:47 - 19:15
Sarah Gauen: Thank you for those words of wisdom. This is Sarah Gauen. I am a white settler woman with long blonde hair. Today I'm wearing a blue blazer. I have blue eyes. Along with the words we just heard, we've heard so many informed, data-driven, compelling ideas to address the barriers to inclusion in education today. The scholars and practitioners attending are just absolutely inspiring. A couple nuggets that stuck with me today were, one was that there's an inherent failure of accommodation to achieving inclusion, which was shared this morning by Dr. Lashewicz. Darla Kearney shared that there's a need to deeply and authentically value diversity and take action towards access. And then, I really appreciated Frederic Fovet, who said that we need to acknowledge how broken the system is, to help us really drive that sense of urgency. So clearly, being able to identify the issue or develop innovative and powerful solutions is not the reason that our post-secondary educational institutions aren't fully accessible or inclusive. I'm gonna suggest that the overarching barrier to addressing the challenges

that we've discussed today is a financial one. So painting the current financial picture in Ontario's college, starting right at home, it's estimated right now that Algonquin, at Algonquin, we're seeing about 15% of our student population disclosing they have a disability and working with our Centre for Accessible Learning. In real numbers, this translates to supporting more than 3,500 learners in 2018 and 2019. This number is trending upward post-pandemic. '21-'22, we're seeing around 3,700 learners supported and growing. We acknowledge and appreciate that the ministry funding is provided directly to learners with disabilities, yet that annual amount that we're receiving has not kept pace with the increases of learners that are really arriving in our campus. And then the broader context, which I expect most institutions here today are also experiencing, is really significant financial pressure. In Ontario, 2019-2020, student fees accounted for over half of all college revenues, and public funding decreased to 32%. So as a point of reference, in 2008-2009, public funding accounted for over half of revenue. So that's a significant drop. At the same time, when we're looking at where revenues are coming from, we know that in 2019 the Ontario government froze tuition, and actually reduced fees by 10%, which is amazingly positive for students unable to financially access education. But it doesn't reflect the increased cost to deliver programming. And the funding model we're under right now in Ontario is not indexed to inflation. And we all are facing those inflationary pressures right now. We really need to work with the government to find solutions for this financial squeeze, to ensure that all students throughout Ontario can continue to access incredibly powerful, quality programming in our institutions. So my call to action really is for government to engage, to invest in accessibility supports for post-secondary education across country. We need federal and provincial governments to come to conversations like we're having today, with the intent to financially support the solutions. We can convene. We need the funding. It's essential that any new funding stream that's created to support new standards, programs, really focus on a long-term solution. So one-time funds are great. We've seen them in the past, offered from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, but they really cause challenges when we are trying to make long-term sustainable change to have this one-time funding, and we're scrambling to spend it in a timeframe. Many speakers today, especially panel two, called for a renewed vigor in implementing UDL, Universal Design for Learning. I absolutely echo the importance of that in finding cost-effective inclusion. So at the college right now, we're forecasted to have year-over-year increases in learners with disabilities requiring support from our Centre for Accessible Learning. Perhaps that increase is due to the fact that we aren't seeing the push for UDL and the investment in training and learning to deliver that kind of programming, that's truly inclusive. So short-term investment in UDL would have a long-term financial savings, when we don't require those accommodations. And I think about panel three today, reflecting upon the Built Environment, the technological environment. Our college has prioritized accessibility. We've made significant financial investments. Last year we spent over a million dollars on the Built Environment, specifically focused on accessibility. This year we're scheduled to spend over two million, in targeted accessibility improvements in our physical spaces. However, the college has not received any public funding since 2018 for capital investment. Much of the infrastructure today on college campuses dates back to 1960s, 1970s, although not compared to what Kate was saying about Dal with university buildings that are over a hundred years old.

But these buildings all require maintenance, and we have a huge backlog of deferred maintenance, both physical, technological, and so it's increasingly difficult to maintain the pace of improvement that we have been, without significant investment from the government. I really think there's an opportunity for public dollars to focus on maintenance, and tie that funding to accessibility improvements in those packages. Lastly, I'd like everybody to keep in mind that as we make these changes to policy, training, auditing, reporting, all of this requires an additional administrative undertaking. The incremental work for all of these activities has to be put top of mind as well and is going to require dedicated funding for ongoing resources, as capacity does not exist in the systems to assume this incremental work. We know workload is an issue that came up this morning as well. In summary, I really would like to see us partner with our public funding bodies to ensure that accessibility and UDL are explicitly provided targeted additional funding to ensure that we're able to achieve the objective of post-secondary education in Canada, for all students, and that everybody has access to quality programs, that we know our labor market and the economy need for growth, but more importantly, education which changes lives. Thank you.

19:16 - 19:21
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you, Sarah. I now invite Jodie to her opening remarks.

19:22 - 28:58
Jodie Glean-Mitchell: Thank you, hello everyone. My name is Jodie Glean. I am a dark-skinned Black cisgender woman with shoulder-length dreadlocks that is pulled into a ponytail. I'm currently in my home office, and positioned behind me on the wall are three photographs, which include an image of a Black woman. And in one of the other photographs is an image of continental Africa, with a drawing of a lifeline running through it. I am wearing clear glasses and a dark green button-down shirt. I am joining you from the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas and Chippewas of the Anishinaabe, known today as the Williams Treaties First Nation, and also known as the Municipality of Clarington in Ontario. I enter this discussion as someone who identifies as enabled or able-bodied, and who has held and continues to hold EDI leadership positions and portfolios within post-secondary institutions, which include the responsibility to support the deepening of understanding and practices in accessibility and universal design, for our community members here at the University of Toronto. I would like to take the time to thank the panelists and all of you for the great dialogue, the questions and insights shared throughout the day. As someone who does not identify as a person with a disability, I enter these discussions with a maintained posture of learning, so that the work engaged within the institution, within the equity, diversity, and inclusion portfolio, is done through the spirit of community collaboration, that the work is significant and meaningful, and is led by the expertise of persons with disabilities. As I listened to the panel discussions today, I was struck by some of the key themes that resonated with me throughout the discussion over the time we had together. And one of those key themes include the need to maintain the focus on challenging the balances of power, to keep our focus on the systems and cultures that uphold the status quo. You cannot challenge the balance of power, though, if you are

not willing to name the constellation of that power within which ableism and the many forms of isms thrives. We cannot talk or mention colonialism, and not address and grapple with whiteness and white supremacy in their daily manifestations that sustain ableism and ableist practices. I invite all of us to continue to engage in the lifelong and ongoing education and work, to help us address and grapple with these concepts and their impacts on the discussions that we are having today. To bring in the words of queer, disabled, fem writer, and educator, Leah Piepzna-Samarasinha, from their text "Care work: Dreaming Disability Justice," "We cannot comprehend ableism without grasping its interrelations with heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, colonial, and capitalism." We must be prepared to address and unpack how these realities show up in our institutions, as well as how it shows up in our equity, diversity, and inclusion work, advocacy and activism work. Far too often, the work and contributions of Indigenous and disabled people of color, immigrants with disabilities, queer folks with disabilities, trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities are rendered as non-consequential to the work and the solutions that we are aiming for. The questions on the discussions today raise the extremely important need to understand and utilize the intersectional approach. This is a term that is very popular right now, but I would argue it is a term that is not greatly understood in practice. So I even think and reflect on the discussions that took place with panel one, as we were addressing the ableism broadly and the landscape of compulsory fluency came in mind. And immediately I started reflecting on, "I wonder how this landscape impacts persons with a disability of which English or French may not be their first language," for example. So as we move ahead with our discussion today on this panel, really wanting to focus in on the action items that we're going to be exploring and unpacking today. I want to take the time to address the very real sentiment and perception that the manifestations of equity, diversity, and inclusion work have not included or advanced accessibility and universal design principles and systems change work within our institutions. If I have to be honest, there's so much emotions that flow through me when I hold those discussions with my partners, with my colleagues, and with my friends in the movement and in the field. And the reflections that come about for me is that the sentiments raise for me the very real work EDI or equity, diversity and inclusion practitioners must do to deepen their intersectional approach to their work, to ensure that in our practice, in our education programming, in our strategic planning, in the guidance that we provide to our leadership, in our decision-making, that community members who identify as persons with disabilities in the multitude of their identities are able to experience the impact of the work that we are leading and/or supporting. Equity, diversity, and inclusion work and access work are meant to be experienced and felt as synonymous and interchangeable. You cannot do one without the other, or you're not doing any of them properly, okay? I reflect on the ongoing work as well, though, on the work that is needed to avoid the sentiments of the Oppression Olympics, that is an undercurrent that plagues and hinders the growth of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism transformation work. This notion of the Oppression Olympics creates this myth, this myth that only one issue or one cause can be addressed at a time. And I'm going to echo the words of my colleague and fellow panelist Liza in reengaging the quote from Audre Lorde, because none of us live single-issue lives. The intersectional lens is the sharpest tool that we have in our toolkit, to dispel this myth. In our action planning, we must continue forward

from a place of solidarity, collectivity, community, care, and compassion. We must demonstrate how unique and yet deeply connected the many forms of oppression are, and that equity, diversity, and inclusion leaders particularly have a responsibility to emphasize accessibility and universal design in the transformative change work that we are engaged in and that we promote. We must find ways to address and mitigate the friction and tensions and the failures, which was a theme that rose from panel two today, in accessibility and EDI work. And it was a discussion that I deeply appreciated. Behind the terminology, faculty,university, systems, policies, senior leadership, behind these terms and labels are people, students, staff, faculty, you and I, with varying levels of understanding, resources, personal journeys, challenges, at different levels of power and privileges, and different ascriptions to commitments to these institutional transformation. So our focus on action needs to center people in our advocacy work, not labels, just people. We need to get to know each other's stories, so that we can increase our strategies and planning of community collaborations and relationship building across the many levels of institution. Without a doubt, the role of senior leadership is critical in the advancement and in the movement of dismantling ableism and increasing accessibility in universal design within our institutions. And yet so too is the role of mid-level managers and directors in our administrative portfolios. So too is the role of chairs and deans, student leaders and faculty members. We must find innovative and creative ways to activate the fulsome community in engaging the collective responsibility we all have to this work and to our institutions. And I'd like to take this moment to end with the words of Leah once again, who states, "It's in the big things, but it's also in the little things we do, moment by moment, to ensure that we all, all in our individual bodies, get to be present fiercely as we make change. When I think about access, I think about love." Thank you.

29:00 - 29:19
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you, Jodie. And I'm seeing so many comments and so many questions that are already coming up as a result of all of the different comments that have been made so far. I'm now going to invite Karima to share opening remarks, and then I will start to pose some of the questions that are in the chat, as many are coming through. Thank you, Karima.

29:20 - 35:40
Karima Hashmani: Thank you, Cherilyn. Hello everyone, so glad to be here at the National Dialogues today. My name is Karima Hashmani. I am a cisgendered Brown woman with long, curly hair, and I'm wearing a black blouse and a rust-colored blazer. I'm also a settler, and coming from Toronto, lands that are home to many Indigenous peoples, including the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Huron/Wendat peoples. As many of my colleagues on the panel have said today, it has been such an insightful day, with rich dialogue. I've been reflecting on the personal experience that have been shared with those, with lived experience with disabilities, barriers and challenges experienced by students, staff, and faculty on disclosing status, navigating accommodations, and creating disability culture spaces on campuses that are intentional. We also got to hear from people about the deficit narrative that continues to be used by many of us, and the need to examine and disrupt systemic challenges that

exist for persons with disabilities. How do we as practitioners in EDI, push in our own organizations? How do we look at procurement processes and vendors to ensure accessibility, but also, how do we ensure that we have accessible or social procurement policies that think about the way we do business? There were many actions that were shared today that could be taken personally and collectively, that I'm hoping this panel will explore as we close today. What also resonated with me was the importance of embedding ableism, disability and accessibility to be, into what we do in our EDI offices, into our strategies, into commitment from senior leaders and the need for a shift in culture, in our academic institution, but also within public and private sectors. We need to think of how belonging gives you the ability to thrive. Are we truly creating systems? Are we creating meaningful engagement with persons with disabilities? And are we thinking about this? Is this top of mind to us? How are we serving employees and students collectively by removing barriers? And are we doing this in our institutional silos? We need to be intentional. There needs to be collective disruption, collective access, and the push for change, from all of us. I don't identify as a person with a disability, and I'm compelled to learn continuously. In many of my roles in equity, diversity and inclusion, and human rights, in social housing, in academia and public sector organizations, over the past 15 years, I have seen firsthand the challenges that exist with TCHC residents that have faced discrimination, because the systems that we have in place are not inclusive. Staff have limited understanding of human rights, the code, or AODA. And the system is really not designed for persons with disabilities. Something critical that we need is, we need people to inform our sectors. We need to engage with persons with disabilities, meaningfully, so they're part of the process. I have seen this work well. We were able to have persons with disabilities to inform our human rights policy, for example, Toronto Community Housing, to inform our practices. So there are good examples out there, where people are engaged, that create an impact, and we ensure the needs are met, but they're leading. They're not engaged in a less meaningful way. Something I wanna ensure I speak to, since it has come up throughout the conference, and Liza and Jodie have also spoken to this, is how people with intersectional identities, including students that are often risking or scared themselves, by disclosing their disability identity. Because spaces are not welcoming. Practices don't always take this into account. And cultural stigma and nuances are not part of this design. Accessing and navigating systems by being from the disability community, but also being Black, Indigenous and racialized, or part of the LGBTQ2S+ communities make things more challenging. So really raising these issues when we think of how we design policies and practices are key, because understanding the student experience and the employee experience is essential. Being the new Chief Inclusion Officer at Metrolinx, it's important to have feedback from our customers and our employees. So we have engagement processes that exist. We have an accessibility advisory committee that is comprised of customers from across entire service areas, with a wide range of disabilities. And the main purpose is to provide input on policy, on planning, on procedures, on our services. This informs the work that we do, in terms of inclusive design teams, and many of the services we provide. So how do we work together as an EDI team, employee resource groups, inclusive design teams, and accessibility advisory committees to inform our work? It is important to gain input and insight by our employees and customers with lived experience. And how do we feed

that into how we design things that matter? In our workplaces, we also need to think about how we engage and consult with our employee resource groups. At Metrolinx, we have two employee resource groups called Diverse Abilities and Healthy Minds, which create spaces for employees to engage, create a sense of belonging, and inform their employee experiences. The real critical part of all of our work is around accountability, transparency, personal and collective responsibility. How do we demonstrate this in our actions? How do we create our actions so they are meaningful? How do we create belonging? How do we create thriving communities? So I'm looking forward to exploring this change, and disrupting these broken systems that exist. And today we're hoping to have this conversation, and really think about our actions. What can we do collectively as EDI practitioners, as researchers, as students, as faculty and employees? And how do we disrupt those systems and create actions, whether they are small, or indeed big, and disrupt our systems of oppression that exist? And over to you, I think, Cherilyn. I think you're up.

35:41 - 36:17
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you so much, all of you. As you were sharing your comments, there were, you know, questions, exclamation marks, people shouting "Yes," and now we wanna talk about concrete action, and that's something that I always think about. Thinking about in post-secondary space, I'm coming from a background in K-12 education, where we're talking about these topics in high school. And one of the comments here says, "How do we ensure that we take an intersectional approach when addressing disability? What are actions that we can take?" So I'm going to pose this to the panel, and I'm excited to hear what you have to say.

36:27
Jodie Glean-Mitchell: May I start?

36:28
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Yes, Jodie, yes, please.

36:29 - 41:21
Jodie Glean-Mitchell: Okay, sorry. Wasn't sure, fantastic question. Thank you so much for that question. So, two key tools come to mind for me when I think about how you adopt or implement an intersectional lens in your practice, and in the work that you're doing. Now, education tends to get a pretty bad reputation in EDI work, right? Many times it is seen as the thing that an institution uses to demonstrate that they're doing something, but it doesn't really result in systems change work. And that's not wrong. That sentiment and that reality is not necessarily wrong. But I also want to invite people, particularly as we are engaged in, and members of education, academic institutions, that there is no cultural change work without the vehicle of education. So, really wanting to think through what role education plays in even helping people to understand what intersectionality is. What does it mean to have this lens and approach? You know, we are not, no one person knows all things of all communities. And so in order for me to deepen my intersectional lens requires me to engage in the learning, in the relationship building, and the education opportunities with the communities of which I don't belong

to, for example. So I really don't want, I want to one, emphasize the importance of structuring very strategic, deeply connected education opportunities. And it doesn't necessarily have to mean a two or three-hour workshop. Education can take so many formats. It could take, I was speaking to a practitioner recently this week within the University of Toronto, who talked about engaging students through field trips, and providing those types of opportunities into different communities and sectors within the GTA, right? So, really wanting to focus in on education. The second tool that I would say that can help support the building of the intersectional lens is that there's a need to build and customize a tool. And what I mean by a tool, you could call it a checklist, you could call it a, you know, a framework of some sort, but one that you have to utilize each and every time you're about to make a decision. And so, that tool should entail or encompass questions that helps you to think about the ways within which you're about to be, you're about to do something, before you do something, right? So for example, the questions may include, "Was outreach and consultations engaged before I about to make this decision? Who was around the proverbial table? Who was missing from this table? Am I doing this work for a community? Am I doing the work with? When am I,if my initiative is to impact a particular community, did I bring in those members of the community from the onset of the planning," right? So there are some key questions that we are called to ask ourselves, and to help deepen the ways within which we're about to engage in an initiative. 'Cause the more you bring in the different stories, the different identities, the different communities around the decision-making process, the more you are literally implementing or putting intersectionality at work, because that's where you're going to really be able to grapple with the tensions and the frictions that may arise, that will arise when you're moving forward with your initiative or program. So I would say education opportunities to even understand what intersectionality is, and by that meaning to understand the unique and yet interconnected forms of oppressions, discriminations and harassments that the diversity of our communities are experiencing. And then two, to literally build out a framework, and you can build it out individually for yourself. Even more so powerful if you build it out as a team. For those of you who lead groups, collectives, whether you're people managers, whether you're leading departments or divisions, how have you centered a intersectional framework tool that is expected of your team, of your members, to utilize in their practices? So I'll offer that to kickstart the discussion.

41:22 - 41:27
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you, I would now like to turn it to Liza, who would like to add additional comments and thoughts.

41:33 - 48:43
Liza Arnazon: I'm gonna start with the, not the theoretical, not the what we should and could do. I'm gonna start with the very basic. Let's take a look at how many lived experiences have been on these panels. How much time has the persons with lived experience had to speak? Were they given more time than others? Let's start with the basics. Let's start within ourselves. And I did listen very carefully and you know, talk about collective action access, the most impactful. My life is embedded in disability justice principles, because I don't have a choice. And what I need for people to

understand, for the community I work with, the community I belong to, and all of the other communities and the students as the first Assistant Dean of Students who built student life at the Scarborough campus. We have to stop and let people talk. We have to get right down to the bottom, and ask the question, where are you in this? Are you able to understand and listen, and hear from them? Are you able to give up your seat at the table, like the example I put in earlier, for those people to come to the table. We can ask ourselves the question which I always ask. Who's in, who's out, and who is selected out? But really at the end of the day, the question just get asked. Somebody's gotta be prepared to give up their seat. Like what happened with me at that, in Ottawa. Two women, white women said, "I will not go, so Liza and ASE Community can go," and that's what we need of the most impacted. So when you're thinking about doing things, or you're doing research, whatever you're doing, make sure, absolutely make sure, the voice of those most impacted comes first, is valued first, and is given whatever accommodation or support they need to be in those spaces. Because what I've learned, and I can, people know me and they know I can get, I can talk a long time and, but at the end of the day, what I have learned in the last three-and-a-half years on leave is, it's actually at the root of where people are and want to go. We wanna be intersectional. Well, then you have to be intersectional, which means you have to step to the side, which means you have to reach out and say, "Include someone." You need to look, you, you as the individual, because you are the individuals that are at the policy tables. You all are the individuals creating the research. You're the individuals that are supporting staff. When I, or your staff, when I was working, one of the best jobs of my life is working and building UTSC, and the students, and the diverse students, supporting Black Lives Matter students, all of those. That's because I let them speak, and we did a lot. And I'm watching what, when I saw Wes Hall and I'm like, "Wow, it's back." Let's let people tell us what they need, and then let's give it to them. And so I really want to speak to the core of what intersectionality is, what disability justice is. It's the for us, by us. It's the nothing for us, without us. So it means exactly what that means. And I just wanted to go back, because I did not describe myself. I'm a light-skinned Black woman with usually purple glasses, who has a favorite color. So I'm wearing black. It probably has purple. I cut my hair that was long, to short in a bob, and I usually are very expressive, but I'm not feeling well, as one of my conditions is chronic illness. So it comes up and down. So if you don't hear my energy, you don't see it, it's a strong passion of mine. Before I went through the process of accepting. So thank you for letting me speak on the idea of intersectionality, the idea of disability justice. If you ask me, take a look at your pay equity scales,and look at your pensions, look at all your programs, and your ID, and the things that everybody gets equally. They are not experienced equally by persons with disabilities. And look at the salaries and how compensation for jobs are set up. There's no compensation for that lived experience, or that emotional baggage you take into your job if you're not in an equity position, which I was not. I want people to dig deep and think about those pieces, and build a culture around where, where by listening to people who are going through it, who are involved with it and are affected differently, we accept that. But if we're affected differently, then intersectionality means that you have to look at your policies. You have to dig and do an audit and make sure that people who have intersectional identities, who also have disabilities, are there doing the audit safely with you. And so I'm gonna stop talking,

'cause we don't have a lot of time, but I really wanted to express the importance of having persons like myself, faculty like myself, staff like myself, students as what I did. And I can give a list of things, including this experiential learning and how it's exclusionary to persons with disabilities, or immigrant families, or students, or racialized students, because they are caregivers in their families. There's so many ways that are just, even just low-hanging fruit that things can move. And I hope and I know we'll figure out how to do that together, thank you.

48:45 - 49:38
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you Liza for that. It was, I was not alone in hearing that your passion came out clear, and there were comments in the chat, and many keep talking about, "Well, what are the actions?" And I'm hearing "Audit policies, include those with lived experience." I thank you for the example of who needs to step aside to make room for those to have a seat. The next question that I am going to pose to the group is, how can we facilitate collective unlearning of cultures and attitudes that shape current approaches to disability and accessibility, and the adoption of a framework that embraces intersectionality at the integration of inclusive design into all that we do, to ensure that the needs of individuals and groups living with disabilities are holistically addressed, and that they are supported to flourish? I open that to the panel. Is there anyone who would like to speak to that first?

49:42 - 49:43
Karima Hashmani: Hey Cherilyn, can I speak to that?

49:44 - 49:45
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you, yes, please, Karima.

49:46 - 52:10
Karima Hashmani: Thank you, so unlearning is a required theme in equity, diversity, and inclusion work. In all of my roles in various sectors, we know that disability is not always intentionally considered. And we've heard that today, with many experiences that were shared. Also, intersectionality is also not considered. So how do we facilitate this unlearning? First, we need to make a commitment from our organization to address ableism, and to truly create intentional workplace or academic environments. It really is about being intentional in our practices and processes to ensure that we are thinking about these things ahead of time, not at the end of a project, or something that we are thinking about at the end of the road where we're, when we realize that we haven't spoken to a community. So do we have policies that speak to this work? Are they grounded in human rights? Are we engaging those, as we've mentioned, with lived experience in this journey, is super important. Who is leading? Is there power that is being shared? Who's in the room? Who's represented, who's not in the room? And are these groups supported with funding, with a voice, or with power? How do they engage with you? Do you just engage with them as a check mark exercise? And you know, if so, why? You know, I think we need to challenge ourselves. What does meaningful engagement actually look like and feel like? And have we given folks the ability to flourish within the systems that exist? Sometimes EDI or HR professionals do not see

their role as creating intentional accessibility spaces. Do we truly champion this work? It's important to challenge one another, and create these systems of accountability and transparency. And I think these are the ways that we can think about unlearning, collectively, and thinking about some of our actions, and when we're starting to design our systems, and we're thinking about addressing the needs of people with disabilities that are engaging and include them. And I think these are really important, where we're thinking about the systems that exist, and how do we ensure that these systems are truly inclusive, and folks actually feel a sense of belonging?

52:12
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you, Karima.

52:13 - 52:14
Sarah Gauen: I had one little thought on-

52:15
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Oh, go ahead.

52:16 - 52:43
Sarah Gauen: I would like to suggest that our institutions and organizations need to give people the time to do what my colleagues are talking about here. So we need to value the energy and the time that it's going to take to do this, build this into the process. Do not rush it. Allow building for trust and time, and know that this is not something we can do quickly as a checkbox. That was my little additional thought there, thank you.

52:44 - 53:46
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you, Sarah. I'm going to ask one more question, and really, and thinking about the time, there are so many things that are coming up. So I think there's so much more that will be discussed after this. The last question I'm going to ask is, sometimes people, well, a lot of times people look at this as checkbox work. So how can we move beyond checklist responses to meeting legislative requirements? What are some of the concrete actions that supervisors and peers can proactively take, as part of our collective responsibility to address systemic barriers that perpetuate ableism? And in that question, really focusing on our collective responsibility to do so. Who would like to share first? Okay. I will ask for, okay, so the teacher in me is coming out from high school education, and I will ask Sarah, would you like to make some comments first?

53:47 - 53:50
Sarah Gauen: Sure, I'll make a few comments, and then I do wanna give space to my colleagues.

53:51
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you, Sarah.

53:52 - 54:30
Sarah Gauen: How do we do that? I think that there is an important place for legislation. Early on in the conversations today we talked about, you know, how do we get senior leaders to listen to this? How do we get them to engage, to participate, to prioritize this? How do we break down the silos? And I do think that there is an important place for well-funded legislation to be put in place to support these changes, to move that benchmark ever higher. And I think that's very important, and it's the first steps. So that's kind of my early thoughts on that one. But I do wanna give space to my colleagues.

54:31 - 54:34
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you Sarah for that. I now turn it to Liza.

54:36 - 56:49
Liza Arnazon: It's very quick as well. Somebody mentioned earlier, about moving from the medical model to the social model. That is what's written within the Federal Accessibility Act. And so it, I think that if we're talking about even being aligned, we need to start moving because that act is clearly expecting the treatment of persons with disabilities to move from that deficit model, from that model of serving us, to the model of, we're quite capable of doing the work for ourselves as long as the accommodations are there. And the other thing is, there's the new Disability Action Plan, people looking for strategies across Canada over the past year-and-a-half. Communities and organizations that work with persons with disabilities or advocate for people with disabilities have been doing work, and now there's a Disability Action Plan. So there might be some crosswork or some understanding where we can get a boost to where would be the ways to start, and the ways to move forward with this work. There are some very concrete things you can do. You can make sure in your hiring, your job descriptions, if people are on your hiring committees, and you're not sure if they understand intersectionality or ableism or anything, you should probably either not have them there, or you should make sure that there's training happening before interview sessions. I know faculty's been doing this at Scarborough, and that's been amazing over the years to watch. It's important, because the relationship as a staff, a faculty, or even when a student comes on board, it starts from the first interaction, and it's beyond a customer service experience. So I would actually say, let's look at those concrete things from the beginning. There's already work done. Let's take a look at them and see how they apply to the institution, and let's make sure that we are all a part of that, as we talk about what would be priority number one, two, and three.

56:50 - 57:29
Cherilyn Scobie Edwards: Thank you so much for those comments. There absolutely is not enough time, as I see the clock winding down, and we're now moving towards closing. But I want to acknowledge that there's so many comments about wanting to talk about actions now, individuals who want to collaborate, people just, you know, thankful for the dialogue. And I know that no session is perfect. There's so much more to unpack, to talk about, to go into, to unlearn. So, really grateful to be in this space. At this time, I'm going to turn it over, 'cause I've said much too much during this day, and I'm

going to turn it over to Wisdom Tettey for closing remarks. Thank you so much for being a part of this today. It really was an honor.

57:31 - 1:02:58
Wisdom Tettey: Thank you, Cherilyn. You know, just wanna join everyone in saying thank you to our panelists, our moderators, and to our participants. You know, about a thousand of you from across this country, from about 80, actually over 80 institutions, representing colleges and universities came together to partake in this conversation, because you believe this is important. This is important work for all of us, and is our collective and shared responsibility to pursue. And we're better off when we do that together, as opposed to sitting in our individual spaces to do this kind of work. And I'm particularly grateful to colleagues that have been on the planning committee over the last, what, more than a year, thinking, listening through, working, reaching out to folks, and just our gratitude to all the people who said yes to this. And we don't take it for granted. And for folks who have raised questions about representation, I can assure you that this committee was very much attuned to that, and a lot of work was done to make sure that this covered the range of people who are reflected in our community. And I hope that over the course of the day, you saw through the composition of the panel that that was accomplished to a large extent, even though there were others that would've liked to see on the panels. But we also grant people the right to say no. So the fact that you don't see some people doesn't mean that a hand was not extended to them. But that is work that continues to be part of our collective mission. And we hope that today we've been able to unearth and acknowledge a number of truths, some of which are difficult for us to accept, because we tend to think that we're making progress. And this not to deny that progress is being made, but it's to state the fact that that progress is still not good enough, if we're gonna create that inclusive community where people feel a sense of belonging, and that they're made to be the best of themselves, not because they're asking for something that comes out of generosity from anyone, but just asking that the basic modalities being placed so they can be who they are. And through that, that the kind of deficit model that stands in the way of our collective benefits from sharing is removed, so that we can benefit from what all of our community brings to the table. And talking about the table, you know, I think one of the things we all leave here with is recognizing that that table is not representative, and if the table is not representative, we're not likely gonna find the answers. Because the answers come from people who live these things and have a sense of how you manage and negotiate yourself around it. So I just wanna say thank you to all of you. And I want to shout, give a shout-out to folks who came from outside of Canada, because I know that we have international representation here as well. So thanks for joining us in this conversation. It's a global conversation. And tomorrow, as we know, it's gonna be a global conversation about the international day, you know, for people with disabilities. I want to answer the question about what next, because I know that is gnawing on people's minds, and we see this as a conversation that we help to bring together. So we don't have the answers about particular action items. We are hoping that what you've heard from here gives you some sense of the actions that need to happen. What we will do is pull it together into something that we can all share, because we have co-created it today. We can share it, we can continue to learn together, and we continue to refine

these things. But we need to make sure that this is available so that we can take a sector-wide approach to solving this problem. One of the advantage of the high education sector is we pride ourselves about mobility of knowledge and people. So we need to have consistency across our sector, so that irrespective of where you move, that you're able to benefit from a shared understanding of ableism and the need to dismantle it, and to make sure that we're able to create opportunities for all of us to thrive and to do well. So we'll be reaching out to you after this to hear your further feedback. We'll be sharing with you what we pull together in that report. And today is not the end of this conversation. It was important for us to bring this into the public space, and do it collectively. And I hope that we'll continue to work together as a community to address the issues that you've all talked about today. So on behalf of everyone here, I just wanna say thank you, but I'll be remiss if I didn't say huge thank you to our colleagues from PROOF, who have done a stellar job of making sure that from across this wide country, we can all come together in this space and have a conversation without many, if at all, you know, glitches. And so this has worked really, really well. And thanks to you, PROOF, for being a partner on this journey, for being understanding of the fact that we needed to do this in a way that was embracing of people of different experiences and backgrounds. So with that, all the best to all of you. You'll hear from us in due course. Enjoy the rest of your evening, and many, many, many thanks. Bye-bye for now.