[SLIDE 1]
Awish:
Hello Everyone! Welcome and thank you for joining us for today's webinar, "**Taking care of yourself in an uncaring institution**."

[SLIDE 2]
Awish:
Before we begin, I would like to let audience members know that if you do have any questions during the webinar, you can submit those using the Q&A function, which you can find at the bottom of your screen. Your questions will be visible to all attendees and panelists, and audience members may also 'like' questions to prioritize them. Ariane will address those questions during the Q&A period, following her presentation.

[SLIDE 3]
Awish:
My name is Awish Aslam and I am the Chair and Central Rep for the CSA Student Concerns Subcommittee. Our committee also includes our Eastern Rep., Emma Kay, and our Western Rep., Nicole Malette.

We'd like to thank the Canadian Sociological Association for sponsoring this initiative and Sherry Fox, the Executive Director for the CSA, for working with us to plan and organize this series.

[SLIDE 4]
Awish:
Our guest speaker is Dr. Ariane Hanemaayer. Ariane is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Cambridge, and she is also an Assistant Professor at Brandon University. Her recent book, "The Impossible Clinic: A critical sociology of evidence-based medicine," tackles the conundrums of medicine from a critical engagement with Foucault's method. Ariane is also quite active with the CSA, and she is currently the chair of the Social Theory Research Cluster. She's actually in the UK right now, so thank you very much for joining us today, Ariane. **Now, I will turn the webinar over to Ariane.**

[SLIDE 5]
Ariane:
Thanks, Awish and Sherry and to all of you for being here. Before we get to this poll, I just want to start with a disclaimer.

Many of us have benefitted from others caring for our learning, our intellectual development, accommodating the challenges we face personally, and even caring about ourselves as whole people. Most likely, many of us have similar stories of why we came to academia in the first place, that we were encouraged by or inspired by a teacher. Those important folks are not to what this title refers. In fact, I personally owe great debts to many people who showed me compassion and enthusiasm at various stages of my career. Even today. No. What this title

does refer to are the various structures and roles and routines that perpetuate within our institution that have caused many of us setbacks and even harms.

I hope you have had a chance to gaze over my obviously not very well-designed survey methodology here. I am wondering which statement you identify with so please take a moment to respond. All right, so we have lots of folks feeling that struggle some days. Oh! Some of you are living your best quarantine life. My hat's off to you - that is wonderful!

[SLIDE 6]
Let's set the stage for why we are here. Over the last 7-8 years there has been an increase in research about us, about academics and their work, and particularly about our mental health. The title of the seminar is borrowed from a Guardian article written all the way back in 2014, when Gail Kinman and colleagues' research emerged on mental health in the academy. Academia, then, was labeled an uncaring environment. And while students and advocates have been pushing for a culture change and changes to workload, economic and infrastructure constraints have not led to institutional change. By all indications, mental health remains a problem at the forefront of higher education at all stages of career.

[SLIDE 7]
So that's why we're here. To cultivate these discussions, normalize it, begin to whittle away at the stigma associated with it, and to offer some strategies around dealing with it and changing the culture. You can see some research highlights here, calls to action to deal with these issues as an institution.

For example, that study by Gail Kinmen and colleagues was done on behalf of the Union of Colleges and Universities in the UK. What they found is that academics have much higher rates of psychological distress than the rest of the population. Later in 2018, there was a study published in Nature where Evans and colleagues found that almost half of the students they surveyed (which was around 2,300) from 26 different nations were experiencing disproportionate levels of depression. What they called for was that it was time for change. It was time to give students stress management strategies because they were part and parcel to any higher education among the recommendations listed.

Ivy Bourgeault, CIHR Chair in Gender, Work and Health Human Resources at U Ottawa, stated that patriarchal environment of higher education makes it unique in that it is "hypercompetitive, masculine environment is not good for men's mental health — but it's uniquely challenging for women to navigate it." Academics also tend to list anxiety as their primary mental health concern. The increasing pressures on our performance, evaluation, and decreasing job security are among some of the challenges facing academics.

Finally, a recent article by Chan and Purdy in December 2019 in UA lists many aspects of grad school, from the pressure to publish, to imposture syndrome, to financial stress as some of the causes of student mental health distress. And in line with their advice to students and faculty, I hope to contribute to positive change in the academy.

[SLIDE 8]

Here is an overview of what we will be talking about today from a basic premise from what I call 'You are not what you produce.' I will then go through a few of the strategies and tactics and then end with broader meta-skill concepts.

- ➢ Brain-break or brain break
- ➢ 3-days now or 3-weeks later
- ➢ JSN Protocol (Just Say No)
- ➢ Gettin' real
- ➢ Self-Advocacy
- ➢ Coping with rejection
- ➢ The meta-skillz of learning how you work

[SLIDE 9]

Disclaimer number 2. I am NOT a counselor or clinical psychologist. What I was asked to do here was to talk a little bit about some of the strategies for coping with that very uncaring and stressful environment. I'm just going to speak about some broader strategies and tactics based on my experiences and anecdotes from others.

[SLIDE 10]

Starting off with a big question, "Are you all that and a bag of chips?"

You're sitting in class. In a meeting with your committee. Your exam. Your defense. Wherever. And what if you say something and it's the stupidest thing you've ever said and then everyone finds out that you don't belong here and you just got into grad school as some fluke or that you're the dumbest person in your program or that you don't know what you're doing? Sound familiar? This is a typical scenario for many of us.

Imposture syndrome was a term coined in the 70s and it refers to behavioural patterns that cause people to (1) doubt their achievements and (2) fear being exposed for the fraud they believe themselves to be.

The thing about Imposture syndrome is that it is wrapped up in our imaginary worlds: in how we think others see us, and it's tied to the kind of recognition we are searching for. Think of it how Weber did, that our interactions are shaped by our interpretations of others' actions and their interpretations of us. When there is a discrepancy, however, between how we think of ourselves and how others treat us, we try to rationalize it, and this can lead to some debilitating feelings and thoughts. Typically, 'IS' is associated with shame: worries associated with others finding something out about you and they will reject you; fear of being rejected getting kicked out of your program; and anger – being angry with those who you perceive as threatening or fail to recognize your belonging or achievements. Different people will experience these feelings differently. If these feelings are debilitating, I encourage you to seek counselling therapy or to voice your concerns with someone you trust.

In terms of coping with these beliefs when they pop up, and this is based on the things I've observed to be helpful; we have to start from the following premise, which is like a foundational assumption for what follows.

[SLIDE 11]
Here it is: you are not what you produce. That is the fundamental assumption.

Part of your training is being evaluated. As Kevin Haggerty wrote in "how to screw up in grad school" – people are talking about you. But what might have been better said, is that people are talking about YOUR WORK.

It's often easy to conflate the evaluation of our work with the evaluation of ourselves. And I'm not denying the intertwined nature between what we experience and what we write, as phenomenologists such as Max VanManen have written. But what you wrote down is subject to all kinds of circumstances and constraints. Let's be a bit sociological about this and think about an example. The end of my second term of my first year in a thesis stream master's degree was a trainwreck. It was March 30. I was getting over a difficult break-up. I was taking three courses, all of which had major, independent research papers due at the end of term. I was experiencing sexual harassment from a member of my supervisory committee. And on top of that, I was trying to get ready to travel to Portland to present my first paper at an international conference, which was coming up in a week's time. And then I lost my grandmother. It's fair to say that the work I produced at that time was not my best work, as I was struggling with many circumstances that affected my thinking. The thing is that I was so afraid to tell anyone what I was experiencing because I was afraid that they would think that I couldn't handle it. That I would wash out of the program.

[SLIDE 12]
So, there's lots going on in this little anecdotal snippet, but there's a few things that I took away from that time. And those lessons became formative in how I handled the years of grad school to follow and my career. First, the imposture syndrome: I believed at the time that I should be able to handle this, and that if I couldn't I'd be a fraud, the weakest in my program. Our programs tend to let us think that our worth is quantifiable for example, in scholarship dollars, but our humanity isn't what's at stake here. Back then I had this real aha! moment when I realized that my self-worth wasn't tied to my performance. It's just what I was capable of doing at the time.

Be sociological about your judgments: The fact of my situation is that I didn't have the time to do everything I needed to do. What I wished I had done, if I could do it all again, is that I wish that aha! Moment came earlier, and I had told someone, sought out campus counselling resources. I did ask for what I needed, extensions. (More of self-advocacy later)

This might also be a good time to consider the circumstances we're facing as a result of Covid – how can you expect yourself, under new circumstances to be held to the same standards?

To accomplish everything you expect of yourself if you had access to the resources you need prior to library and office closures? You can't.

Which brings us to the last point about handling imposture syndrome and the unique environment of academia: stress from within and outside your program. And this deserves its own little foray.

[SLIDE 13]
Stress is defined by the Canadian Mental Health Association as when our demands outweigh our available resources. Resources can be everything from our time, finances, mental abilities, and others.

[SLIDE 14]
Demands aren't always a negative thing, CMAH tells us. Often, we are stimulated by challenges. That reminds me of the folks who say they "work well under pressure" (this is sooo not me). The academics that I know find deadlines exciting – the final rush as you close in on the end of a project, or the stimulation of working on a hard problem but something that fascinates you. These are all positive things in our lives and probably a part of why we applied to grad school in the first place (the drive and force of our curiosity – lawd knows we ain't in this for the money or the fame). In fact, this kind of stress is what propelled me forward and through the final weeks of writing my dissertation: that excitement of reaching the end of actually doing it.

[SLIDE 15]
The flipside of stress, however, is – and we all know this word – burnout. Burnout comes in many forms, and it can even lead, according to CMHA, to prolonged psychological disorders if we're under stress for too long. Remember those trainwreck days in my MA? That was the first time I experienced burnout. I had all the most common symptoms, fatigue but poor quality of sleep, anxiousness, difficulty concentrating to finish my papers. Physical and mental symptoms. Remember that finding from Bourgeault? Academics often over report anxiety compared to other professions. What I wish I had done was take a break.

[SLIDE 16]
Much of the research on academic mental health highlights the normalization of the stress and pressure of academia. One of the main things that I noted during my PhD was the culture of talking about how much work we have and how we're so stressed out all the time but how much we've managed to do in spite of it all, etc. – you know the "humble brag" stories. It was almost a joke that all of us were sleep deprived but also somehow getting scholarships and submitting papers. It felt so unhealthy and a major trap. My impression at the time was that my cohort and the others before and after me, were performing some kind of academic habitus that integrated the exploitation of our mental health with some sort of norm – as if the one who took care of themselves was somehow less deserving of accomplishments than

the one who worked more hours or was perpetually unwell all along. Frankly, I loathed being in these conversations. Before I discuss the strategies, I use to set boundaries between myself and others, first, I want to tackle this pressure, and its normalization by offering some professional strategies to how to manage stress and pressure. This first section explains some of the strategies that I've seen work for others and myself, and it's part of a premise of working in this institution that means caring for yourself.

[SLIDE 17]
The first strategy to dealing with stress and pressure is this little diddy I call brain- break or brain break. The inflection here is a little cheeky and in no way to aims to undermine the severity, difficulty or challenges of dealing with mental illness which I know first-hand. But the fact is that if we don't rest, we are at higher risk of psychological distress and disorder. This strategy is based on the premise that you, your health matter the most.

[SLIDE 18]
One of our primary resources as academics is our brain – that organ in our skull with the capacity for what we call "rational thinking" and communication between other systems in our bodies. Sleep. Remember that thing that we normalize getting very little of? Poor sleep hygiene can be a vicious cycle. Conversations I regularly have with my brain go something like, Brain, we need to sleep to have the resources to deal with all our obligations and the things we love, so why do you not sleep and then it's worse?

[SLIDE 19]
This is a vicious cycle so it's really important to try and establish some good sleep hygiene routines. There is not a one-size-fits-all strategy here.

Google strategies for sleep hygiene (infograph). I realize that all of us will have different caring responsibilities and/or access to space. I try to keep my sleep space separate from my work space. When I was writing my thesis, I used to live in a studio apartment. My bed was directly across from my desk, where I worked from home. I would wake up in the middle of the night with things I needed to do that day or following week – or worse, that I forgot to do already! Sometimes I would get up and write an email or a paragraph with an idea I had. At the time I romanticized it as part of the normalization of bad habits we do so often – that I was some whiz at writing in my sleep. But really, it was taking a toll. It was hard to get consistent sleep, and my mind would swirl and race while I tried to sleep. Eventually enough was enough and I found an office on campus where I could work. It played a major role in separating my work and life habits. This worked for me but experiment and look for other online suggestions to improve your sleep.

[SLIDE 20]

Other tips for success include planning breaks for yourself in order to give your brain time to rest. That means not doing tasks like checking emails, or being in front of your computer, or reading dense or assigned texts. For me, I even refuse to talk about work with others when I'm in break mode. Lately, I've been spending time doing nothing. Like actually nothing. No phone games, no mediation, no tv, literally doing nothing. Just petting brubru or staring out the window or sitting outside. For you, you may be ok reading fiction or watching your fav reality show guilty pleasure. Whatever it is, find it and schedule it. And importantly…

Be disciplined. Make a schedule and stick to it. This may mean having a conversation with your supervisor or manager about whether you will work outside of normal business hours. Finally, you're more likely to do the things you enjoy. So, do something fun.

This is one of those tasks that has limited immediate gratification. It affords you longevity rather than rewards. When you feel exhausted and anxious, those are more like negative feedbacks to tell you to do more resting. The positive outcomes of doing rest regularly is that you will feel able to keep trucking rather than some immediate sense of glory, as I've found it.

[SLIDE 21]

Of course, our bodies have limitations and sometimes our schedules run us aground. This little strategy is something I came up with during my PhD, 3-days now or 3-weeks later. This was my sad calculus of how much time I was really sacrificing for self-care. Basically, it works like this: first signs of a flu – I could take some Tylenol and show up for my TA office hours, but that would make things worse. What my body was telling me is that I need rest. I need rest and sleep and soup and all those nice things you do for yourself when you feel unwell. I found that if I kept putting those things off. I would have a cold from hell that would drag on forever. Or, I would burn myself out and lack any motivation for weeks just because I didn't take the break when I needed it. One of my symptoms of burnout is when I notice that it takes so much longer to do simple tasks. When we're at our peak performance range, we can accomplish a lot because we can focus. But those levels of productivity or creativity require our health. This question (above) about short vs long term gain is a consequence of our immediate circumstances, what resources we have and that includes time and our bodies. Remember that you have to be well to do what you love (including your work and all those other obligations - caring for yourself or others). These decisions come with big choices sometimes, like choosing to be late on that deadline or letting students down when cancelling your office hours. But you can do your best work or be the most helpful only when you yourself are well. To paraphrase Neitzsche, diet matters more to people's philosophy than what they've read. You need to be well to do well. In today's lexicon: live your best grad school life.

[SLIDE 22]

How do you do all this? JSN – Protocol. Just. Say. No. There will be times during your program and your career that you will have to push. You know what your body needs, taking time for

brain breaks, to eat well exercise sleep etc., and there are only so many hours in a day you can physically and mentally work. That means leaving things aside or not taking on new commitments. Goodness is this ever the hardest one to do, for me. The first time I started deploying this technology was in the last two years of my PhD when I was in the final push to write and submit. I had some teaching assistant duties, which took up some number of hours of my week. And I had other deadlines that had spilled over from other projects. But I had to make a hard choice to let people know I was unavailable until after a certain date and to not get involved in new opportunities. We often think that we have to be yes people in academic life. Not just for perceptions of our character but also to build the cv and so on. Part of doing that is saying no. Showing you can get shit done, to deliver on those things, and that means sometimes saying no. JUST SAY NO TO GET SHIT DONE.

So, putting these to task requires another set of skills. John Hamilton from the University of Leeds refers to the burnout phenomenon that is unique to academe as "significant disengagement". Often, Hamilton found, academic staff lack a sense of potency over their workload and sometimes don't feel in charge of it. So, how to take care in that environment.

[SLIDE 23]
In order to self-advocate, you first need to get real. I know I'm probably dating myself mega here by making a title that sounds straight outta saved by the bell or fresh prince, 1990s gurl fo'lyfe, but I mean this slightly more ontologically. What capabilities and resources do you have? And how can you respond? Taking care of yourself and advocating for your health means setting boundaries. First, let's discuss boundaries with others.

Here's another 'don't-do-like-Ariane' story: I remember having an RA position in my first year of my PhD where every few weeks I'd receive a frantic email from the project supervisor "I need five sources on X right away". Sometimes it would even be late at night. (First mistake could be checking my email that late – yelp review one star.) Likely the PI didn't intend for me to do it late at night, but the fact is that the urgency triggered my anxiety and my imposture syndrome and other things. One of the things that would have helped this relationship thrive rather than be anxiety- inducing would have been if I set boundaries and expectations upfront during the RAship and what would be reasonable and most successful for working together. Boundaries are ways that we create space to care for ourselves and our well-being. Boundaries form the access points we create with others, to our bodies, our emotions, our time, and many others aspects of living. When you set boundaries with others it's to let them know that you won't answer emails outside business hours and / or that you would be better at your job if you had two days to accomplish an RA task, to take my example. And you don't need to explain why. Another example of setting boundaries with others is related to one of the questions that I received ahead of time: how do you advocate for the culture of the department that you want to see? I did this a great deal during my PhD. I refused to talk about work at the pub. I would be happy to speak with my cohort and peers about their lives, their struggles, their feelings, problem-solving about supervisory relationships and others, but I didn't want to engage in any of the hype and stress-inducing humble not-so-humble brags about who got what award or submitted what paper for publication. I didn't want to give others access to that mental energy required for me to deal

with the anxiety of it. I guess I was success at this because I remember that in my last year of my doctorate I presented my research at the sociology graduate conference and afterwards people came up to me and said, you know, that was the first time that I heard about what you do! We could be friends and supportive without talking about work and that was the culture I wanted to engage in and create for myself.

Which brings me to setting boundaries with yourself. In addition to letting others know your capabilities or time management boundaries, you also will need to set those boundaries with yourself. This was something I didn't learn until recently in my career. I remember being a student and feeling guilty when I took a vacation because I wasn't working, and wishing the rest of the time that I had actually taken a break during the vacation (stay-cation included!). If you decide you will take one hour a day for brain-break, respect that boundary for yourself. Respect that you need to take that time to care for yourself. This skill also means that you need to get real with yourself and acknowledge when you're running outta gas – when you need help or resources from others or the program and when you may even need to take a leave of absence from any teaching or research or program duties. Getting real: there may be times when you don't have the mental energy or the time to accomplish what you want and need to do in a way that promotes your health. That's a time when you need to set boundaries around what you are capable of, taking three days or however much time you need, to rest and to say no to the things you can't manage.

[SLIDE 24]

Once you're getting real with yourself and others, and becoming aware of your unique needs, you can begin to advocate for what you need to succeed. Most programs want to see you succeed. Ideally, student rates of completion are budgetary considerations for departments, so by a little loose deduction, that means you too.

Part of advocating for your needs is knowing what they are and clarifying them and justifying them. In my experience, good administrators and mentors want to take care of their students so long as they have the resources or funds. So, clear needs and costs. Do you need some funding to pay for your CSA membership? Send an itemized invoice and say that it's necessary to broaden your networks and opportunities to present your work and learn about what trends are at the forefront of the field. Being kind, diplomatic, and grateful always goes a long way, too. reasonable asks – but always ask. BTW the same goes for negotiating job contracts!

We tend to individualize the responsibility of our progress to ourselves. But that doesn't always have to be the case. Ask for what you need to succeed and ask who to ask. When I was a grad student, I wanted to attend an international conference but the costs were more than I could afford. When I asked for funding support, I was only able to get a fraction of the costs covered, so I asked where else I could apply for funding. My grad program coordinator knew of so many more resources and pots of funding and where to look – I would have never found those things myself.

This one is tricky, and it co-exists with privilege and entitlements (perceived and actual). So, without getting into the nitty-gritty of that analysis – although we could always certainly discuss that later on – the point of this is that if you believe in what you're doing, the need is clear, and well-justified, there are always loopholes, alternatives, and dollars waiting to be found. The diplomacy involved in this tactic is paramount, because the character judgments that are laden with misogyny and discrimination are abound within the university (like all places of work). Learning the ins and outs of the institution, utilizing the resources and resource pathways, the organization of awards, timelines and applications will serve you to get creative. Often people are busy and don't have the space or time to find a way to make things work for you outside of their one budget line. Coming to others, to whom in your program you are making an "ask", with real solutions goes a long way and keeps the conversation going. Don't forget that creating demand is also information for the institution, learning what students need to succeed is a benefit to everyone. Chances are that others would benefit from your work. Remember that advocating helps make things better for others. Share your strategies and success. Tell each other what resources you use, how you negotiated, make things better for every cohort after yours.

[SLIDE 25]
Coping with rejection. Why is this under self-advocacy? Because beyond dealing with the feelings associated with rejection (which you should definitely talk about with your shrink or someone you trust), you can find ways to advocate for yourself through response to criticisms and disappointments. Remember how I just said that justification is an important part of advocacy? You're going to have to hear no a lot through your degree and into your career. The adage if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen is a gloss for the circumstances that put us there, but getting real, yup it's hot. There are many Nos and fewer Yeses.

So, it's important that you develop listening skills. This seems strange to write here, since we spend most of our time listening and reading, but this is paramount. Why are you hearing no? Why can't you get funding? Is there nothing left in your department's budget? Find a different budget. Is your candidacy examination being pushed back due to more revisions of the proposal? What is in question? One of the things I learned to do in grad school was to listen. I hear the comments and the reasons and I make an evaluative judgment. This skill really became central as I moved toward my candidacy and it prepared me for a lifetime of responding to comments and rejections. I remember being in a long back-and-forth at one stage with my committee. They kept telling me that I needed to change the design of my study – why wasn't I going to do interviews if I was studying doctor's judgment? I realized that I needed to listen to why they thought that. What did they understand about my object of analysis that I needed to clarify? How could I justify that a historical analysis could be carried out without interviews? I realized that instead of being told no, I could make what I was doing better, I could justify it to them and convince them.

My first experience submitting a paper to a journal was rough. It was desk rejected. After the initial disappointment feelings passed, I realized that I wanted to know why. I wrote back to the editor. I told the editor that I was a junior scholar and had written the article for that

journal, that I had responded directly to debates launched there, and I would welcome any advice to improve. It still didn't end well for me, but I advocated for myself even after the rejection. I eventually took the editor's advice, revised and submitted the paper elsewhere (and it was later accepted).

[SLIDE 26]
The last part of this presentation is probably the most important. I probably buried the lead as my journalist friend would say. If I leave you with anything, I hope it's this. It's What I'm calling the meta-skillz with a Z – of learning how you work. What are meta-skills? They are the set of abstract strategies that allow you deploy the specific skills like JSN and brain-breaks and getting' real.

Your career is likely to be carried out in different spaces, places, cultures, work environments, with different tasks, workloads, and other life obligations, responsibilities and events (moving, caring, loss, challenges, life stuff!). You've probably already had to change locations to start your program. Studying for your comprehensive exams is different than writing your thesis. These tasks actually require quite different levels of concentration and different outputs and different rhythms of working. You will have to adjust many times over the course of your career to new circumstances and duties. SO you need to learn how you work, you need to learn the strategies to adjust and to deploy tactics of self-care.

You will need to think about this at two interrelated levels: existentially and cognitively. Existentially: where does working feel good? Office? The couch? Coffee shops? Bars? How much sleep do you need to feel focused? Cognitively: how long does it take you to answer an email, to read an 8,000-word journal article (different types might take different amounts of time, dense conceptual work vs medical science output), and how long to write a paragraph? What conditions do you think best under? Quiet? 20-minutes on 10-minutes rest? Loud music? With friends for moral support? Writing groups? In an office? At your table? I tend to quantify all my tasks.

Knowledge of your capacities will help you organize your time. This could be trial and error. Check in with yourself and journal at the end of a two-week period. How did that feel (tired, good etc.)? How long did it take? Tasks completed, best conditions. Getting to know what works and reflecting on that will help you learn about how you work. For example, my partner does all creative work first thing in the morning. It's when my partner feels most awake, concentration is high, and the "creative capacities" work. The afternoon is for going to the library, going to talks and events, reading papers, doing emails. I'm totally different. For me I have to take care of all necessary administrative tasks like emails and working to deadlines of the day as a priority. I can't deal with creative work until I've "cleaned my inbox". It's a major distraction to me to know that there are tasks hanging over my head. I also find that it gets me in the "thought to page" mode where I have to write something out in an email, say, and so I'm already focused when I get through the list and can just focus on my creative work. It's like I trick myself into writing.

Everyone always says time management is key – well, they're freaking right. And we had so much feedback asking about this before our webinar today. We have so many pressures -- and other people's deadlines, not to mention caring responsibilities and other things -- that time management is kind of a must in this world. You need to know how much time you have and what things need to be done. What deadlines are flexible and which ones are hardfast (like that SSHRC post-doc app). I can't hold all these things in my head, so I list it allll out. So in order to show you how I do this I took two perhaps embarrassing photos of my own planner to show you how I do this. Embarrassing because recently someone said "you have a day planner in paper! Cute" And I felt like maybe I was still living in 1995....

[SLIDE 27]

OK, first up is the month. I make lists of everything I need to do that month. I map out all the months of the year, and things move around as the year progresses. Sometimes deadlines get moved back, some tasks are ongoing, some new opportunities get added. But this is what I learned to do since grad school. If you want to finish in a year, how many weeks do you need to write each chapter? Know that you will need wiggle room. This also helps me visualize when busy periods are coming up and when to deploy JSN.

[SLIDE 28]

Then per week. I LOOOOOOVE me some to-do lists each day. Making a little box for myself and crossing it off. I live for that rush. So each day I work towards these things. Lots of days those boxes stay empty. And sometimes entire months have to be reorganized because I was sick, I had an unexpected obligation, I had a new opportunity come up. Whatever it was, there are many things that shift. When this whole covid thing started for us in England back in March, let me tell you that day square had ONE thing in it. It was like, "write an email to so and so" and that was it. It's all I could muster as I coped with a changing world. Once I got used to checking that single box, which let me tell you took me almost two weeks at the one thing only situation, then I started to get in a groove and find a new way to work from home. Because I had the general idea of how to work, I could plan and slowly ease into the new normal. Or at least I had the metaskills to adjust.

[SLIDE 29]

If you can't work in a way that allows you to meet your progress goals and what productivity means to you, it's time to seek support. That might be financial – needing some bursaries or a dissertation fellowship so you can get off the teaching treadmill and GSD. If you need resources like an office or access to software, hardware, whatever, it's time to make reasonable requests to admin. If it's a resource related to your program and accessibility, talk to those administrators or the faculty of grad studies. Whatever it is, support and resources are there to help you, ideally. You aren't taking advantage of the system in a negative way by asking for what you need to succeed. Use the resources, and ask for help when you need to. (We could return to Covid challenges in Q&A)

[SLIDE 30]

And lastly, don't forget to celebrate every little accomplishment! This business is difficult, so you need to pause and recognize how far you've come. Even Socrates said the traveler needs to turn on their path every so often to see the distance travelled. So celebrate, dammit. Those who know me know that I'm the kind of person that popped a bottle of champagne the day I made the title page of my dissertation (the document was faaaaaar from finished, but that title page needed celebrating). It's those little recognitions that help you cope with the pressure and sometimes thankless small steps that make up the whole of your journey.

[SLIDE 31]

Awish:
Thank you, Ariane, for that excellent presentation. It was really, really helpful with a lot of practical tips. We are going to turn to the question and answer stage. I will read questions from the audience members as well as those we received in advance.

Question:
How do you navigate working with others who have different styles or work differently? I am like you and need to get admin things done before anything else but my advisors are not.

Answer:
That's the million-dollar question! I was just talking to colleagues about this recently. I think every time you collaborate with someone, even on a project together, you are back in that meta-skillz kind of zone. You are trying to figure out, how did they work, how do I work and what is the overlapping part of that Venn diagram where we can really excel. Having conversations about expectations. Do you expect the other person to only put their best work into the drafts that you are sending back and forth, letting people know that you can't look at it for a week, communicate how often you will meet, etc. Develop broader kind of strategies. Figure out how you all work (recognise that it will be different with different people) and discuss expectations. This takes some courage especially if there is a hierarchical imbalance; student, junior and senior scholars or RA and supervisors, etc. That is a really helpful strategy and almost every University has a grad program policies which requires that you have a conversation upfront with your RAs to define tasks and duties. I know that this is the case in my institution as well.

Ask questions about the project timeline, your colleagues' schedule, task assignments, division of work, etc. Know that there will be trials and tribulations and you can always complain about the other person's work habits to you partner at home! That last bit is a joke by the way!

Combined Questions:
How do you suggest we reach out to departments and/or advisers when we are struggling? Do you have any strategies that you recommend to build solidarity among students?

Answer:
I wish I had the gumption during my grad program - I told you about my trainwreck days… The struggle is real. There are days that you have a bit more courage than others but I think it is actually really important to remember that everyone wants you to get your work done and for you to succeed. That is why you were admitted to the program - because they believed in you. So, when you need support to succeed (even if it is a break) communicating that with your supervisor is really important. I think we always feel like we have to have a good reason but we don't have to communicate our reasons. We can say "I need to take a paid leave of absence. How do I apply for that?". If you feel that you can trust your supervisor on a personal level, then let them know that you are struggling. Explain what you need and what kind of supports or resources would help you succeed.

I was the worst kind of grad student I am pretty sure because I would go and work in my little hidey-hole and then get to a crisis moment and call my doctoral supervisor on the phone. Fortunately, she was an amazing rock star! She would try to help me. However, it would have been better if we had regular meetings set up in advance to stay on top of the situation or boundaries around emergency phone calls. If you trust your supervisor, don't be afraid to ask for support because they want you to succeed.

With respect to building solidarity among your student cohort, I would be happy to discuss if anyone wants to reach out to me. It is good to sit down together and discuss your common experiences and struggles to determine what support or resources would help. Clarify your collective interests. Then decide what is the best medium to communicate those interests and accomplish your goals. Do you approach the administration by writing to the chair of the department? Or maybe request a mediator from Graduate Studies to hear your concerns and ideas for resolution. Either way, bringing clear solutions allows you to have conversations about your objectives and what you'd like to see change.
This is what we are experiencing.
This is what we want to accomplish.
These are our ideas/solutions.
What kinds of support or resources can the department offer?
How do we go about arranging that?

Question:
Do you have any suggestions for how to deal with institutional racism in the workplace?

Answer:
I recommend reaching out to build solidarity among your peers and find any support that you can. Maybe a future webinar on this topic would be useful. Discrimination, as I mentioned earlier, is abound in every workplace but I feel radically unable to strategize about this topic.

One example of building solidarity among students occurred a couple of years ago. International students were concerned that the government of Manitoba advised academic institutions that there would be no tuition caps. Many students could no longer afford to continue their studies in Canada. I advised them to start a conversation among eachother to

coordinate their experiences and concerns. I was then able to provide them with data evidence from our department. Figure out what is needed, what are the collective interests, what are the resources required. Hopefully, there will be those in the department that create a safe space for you to work on that.

Question:
Part of the mental health issues I find comes from the productivity normalized at an imbalance of the individual. With mental health, PTSD, anxiety and depression, and dissociation can all swirl and compound each other which causes people to go into survival mode. The message I see here is that kindness to self is a way to (re)balance yourself.

My question is, how do we forward that practice of kindness into the institution so the solution isn't only at the individual level and individually led?

Answer:
Whoever you are, yes! What you just said - a 100% yes. A lot of people who have heard me speak about my research know that I really get frustrated about health promotion and how it is responsibilizing at the individual level. I hear you and I am here for you but all that said, how do we create change? We are having these conversations in the academy as students, administrators, professionals, and people are actually studying the effects. Yet at the same time, we are seeing economic constraints and institutional constraints. In my humble opinion, the situation is not one such that we are in an environment that is facilitative of change. We just don't have the social conditions. We are not at that current historical conjuncture (to use a very Marxian way of thinking about it) to see any other kind of change other than actually cope. Even in my cheekiness (it's hot in the kitchen), I am trying to think about how I can cultivate change from that individual level. Participating civilly, voting, etc really matters. Having those barriers removed matters. Going to your student union or academic professional union and sharing that data and story actually does give some institutional force behind your faculty/student associations to advocate for change. When I advised not to take 'No' for an answer, I meant that you should enlist the other person you are trying to advocate to. You are enlisting them in the problem-solving process. "This is what you told me and I think these are the alternatives." When you have those conversations, you are enlisting the responsibility of the institution at those touch points which are the hidden background assumptions. Go to those people who have authority, who have access to resources that you can apply to. Enlist them in the conversation so the onus is not just on you.

Question:
Could you please speak to how to stay motivated in a PhD program given the uncertainty and long-term impact of Covid-19 on the labour market especially university positions for junior researchers and professors.

Answer:
Not speaking professionally but as a human self, it is really hard taking care of yourself and not pushing yourself to do more than you are capable. If you feel unmotivated right now that's OK. Even when I was going through grad school, I was very anxious. I felt a crunch

and worried that I was never going to finish. One of my mentors, Dr. Tara Milbrandt, had a beautiful piece of advice. She reminded me that at the end of this, I will still get my doctorate, I will still get my intellectual development and that means something. Placing all the emphasis on what comes next is undermining all that I was gaining from this graduate school experience. Getting a job is not required to validate the work I have done in school. That advice was a game-changer for me. I did want to continue doing the thing I really like, but at the end of the day, I only had now and I only had what I was doing in the program and only able to throw myself into the things that are available to me and try to cultivate opportunities. Building solidarity with others, trying to find opportunities to be involved, challenging institutions. Making opportunities for those of us who were staring down the end of a program with very constraining possibilities and coming out of it with a perspective that is so much more than just what's next.

Be kind to yourself if you feel unmotivated. It's hard right now and I too had the feeling of 'What's the point?' early in the quarantine. But try to find the opportunities to enjoy the journey. I know it sounds trite but it is a really helpful perspective.

[SLIDE 35]

Awish:
Thank you everyone for attending and thank you, Ariane, for your presentation and for answering all of our questions!

A recording of the webinar will be posted online on the Students@CSA page. Audience members will also be receiving a feedback survey from us, so we'd appreciate if you could fill that out. Before you go, we would also like to let everyone know that we're going to have some additional webinars scheduled for June. And we'll be sending everyone on our mailing list some more information about those soon. Thank you everyone for joining us today and enjoy the rest of your day.