



**From Principles to Practice: Designing Equitable Access  
to Wellbeing Transcript**

**October 4, 2023**

**0:00:50.0 Lotus Yu:** Hi, everyone. Welcome to this webinar From Principles to Practice: Designing Equitable Access to Wellbeing. So excited to see so many people joining us today. If you wouldn't mind just saying hello in the chat, dropping in your names, pronouns, where you're Zooming into, it'd be great to just hear from everyone and connect in that way. My name is Lotus Yu. I'm with the Full Frame Initiative. I go by she/her pronouns, and I am Zooming in from Pocomtuc, Nipmuc and Wabanaki land, also known as Western Massachusetts, and I will be a host and facilitator for this session. I'll be doing some grounding at the beginning, handing it over then to some panelists and closing out with some questions and answers from you all. We have enabled closed captioning, so you should be able to enable that by pressing CC down in the bottom. This webinar, which you probably got a message for when you popped on, is being recorded, and we'll be sure to share the recording afterwards.

**0:02:03.4 LY:** Like I mentioned, we'll have some Q&A at the end of the panel session, and so feel free to drop your questions and comments into the chat. We've got some folks at FFI pulling the questions so that we can make sure that we answer them. Since we are a really large group looking at 84 and growing, if you are able to just mute yourself when you're not speaking, that would be great, help us all hear whoever it is that's upfront there speaking at that time. If you have any tech issues, feel free to drop that into the chat too, and someone from the Full Frame Initiative will get back in touch with you. So we'd love to just get a sense of who is here in the room as a whole. So we've got a poll that will be popping up on your screen, if you wouldn't mind clicking where you are at and where you're coming from in this space. It would be great to just see who we all are, or at least this part of our identity.

**0:03:29.0 LY:** Alright. Looks like everyone has responded. If we could share those results... Looks like about a little over half of us are from non-profit and a fair mix from government, philanthropy community, and just individual people who are excited about designing for wellbeing. So great to have such a range of us here in the room thinking about designing for wellbeing orientation and designing with equitable access to wellbeing. This work requires all of us from all kinds of fields and sectors to be working towards this movement, towards wellbeing. So a little bit about the Full Frame Initiative for those of you who don't know us. We are a national social change organization working towards a country where everyone has a fair shot at wellbeing. That's our north star, that's what guides us. And unfortunately, in our country right now, we don't all have a fair shot at wellbeing. You can see that in the news, you can see it probably in your everyday work as well.

**0:04:39.2 LY:** And this is because there are inequities that are baked in, oppressions that are baked into our systems, which means that there are fast tracks to wellbeing for some people and additional burdens for other people, which results in deepening inequities. So even though our systems, because our systems are designed in this way, it also means that we can design in a different way. Rather than designing for these inequities, we can design with wellbeing in mind. So I'd like to actually start us off with a story. This is not a story of things that have gone well, but rather it's a story from my past of learning and learning how to do things differently and better. So many, many years ago, I used to administer a meals program, and at that time, there was pressure to do better. Pressure on a couple of different fronts though. It was pressure to collect better data and also to increase the diversity of program participants.

**0:05:54.1 LY:** And so at that time, we tried to do well by those standards, trying to meet expectations. And so we added more data fields, we added more data fields to our intakes. And we were surprised when people refused to fill out the form. And at the time, I remember thinking, we

aren't checking IDs, we're not verifying any information, people could put down whatever they want on the form. We weren't checking. But now in thinking about wellbeing and thinking back to that time, if we didn't need that data, why were we collecting it? And who was it for? And what was the point of that? At the time, we also knew that our meals program wasn't adequately supporting the Latino community. So at the time, I spoke with a community leader who told me there was already somebody in the community who was volunteering to make meals. So they really didn't need that service. And I kept approaching this challenge as thinking about, okay, well, then how do we get other people to come to our program?

**0:07:04.4 LY:** What do we change about that program that gets people coming here? And now, many years later, thinking back, I wonder why I and our team weren't thinking about how do we strengthen what's already working in community, how do we support the volunteer that's already making the meals and building those pathways? So we were approaching the situation as trying to change the people rather than focusing on what we could do better as a system. So the question today and the question we're exploring together is what new solutions become possible and emerge when we focus change where it belongs, on the systems themselves rather than the people that are caught up in them. The wellbeing design principles are a guide for helping systems, organizations, and programs design the work by focusing on what's most important to communities and those certified systems. They come from an understanding that we are all driven for wellbeing.

**0:08:24.1 LY:** These are the set of needs and experiences universally required in combination and balance to weather challenges and have health and hope. This lens comes from what is observed as well as grounded and behavioral and brain science. And this is what is at the heart of what we mean when we're talking about designing for wellbeing. When we understand wellbeing in this way, we do a number of things differently. We design for what matters to most of us and all of us, wellbeing and what's most important for us. These design principles come from our experience working and collaborating with other systems to shift toward wellbeing. And that's in multiple fields, the built environment, juvenile justice, housing and homelessness and more. Everyone here, from government to non-profit to philanthropy and more is designing in some way, shape or form. Designing culture, designing practices, designing policies and structures, and these can help guide all of that.

**0:09:31.1 LY:** When we understand wellbeing in this way, we do things like we start with what matters to people and try to understand from their point of view, how did they define wellbeing for themselves? How do we make sure we're not inadvertently creating barriers to wellbeing. We also design and implement with community members that are served by the system and not for them. How do we shift that power to community while also shifting the risk and the burdens out of community? How do we make sure that we are fully compensating people for their expertise and their lived experience expertise in doing this work? When we do work in this way, we create space to heal and regenerate. It's probably no surprise to the folks on this webinar that our systems have historically caused a lot of harm that continues to persist. And so we can't move forward without creating space to heal. How do we use restorative and transformative practices within our communities and with others?

**0:10:36.8 LY:** We foster social connections and social capital in communities. How do we support people in helping other people instead of creating new programs? And we span boundaries in our work across systems, fields, sectors and with uncommon partners, and we integrate all aspects of the human experience, including arts, culture, and joy. And all of this is done through building on

assets and innovation. What is community already doing that's working? How do we look at new ways of understanding a problem? And so I am excited that we are joined by folks across the country doing really incredible things. Right now, we are living in a country with lots of compounding crises and persistent challenges, and we just can't keep doing things the way that we've been doing them. Even if it's the way that we've been trained. We need new solutions and we need to do things just differently.

**0:11:46.8 LY:** When we focus our change on systems instead of the people, it unlocks a new way of thinking about solutions and new way of creating solutions. The principles are how we're doing it. And I am delighted to introduce you all to some partners across the country who are doing really incredible work, and I know that there are those who are not on the panel also out there in the audience who are participants on this webinar, who are also doing great work, would love to hear from you too in the chat. We are joined by Alicia McAvay and Julie Garay from FRESH New London, Kishana Smith from Massachusetts Women of Color Network, Naomi Campbell from the Right Question Institute, and Julia Martinez from the USC Keck School of Medicine. And I am delighted to turn it over to Alicia and Julie from FRESH New London to talk more about what they're all doing and introduce themselves to you all.

**0:12:57.0 Alicia McAvay:** Hello everyone. Hi, my name is Alicia McAvay, I'm the Executive Director of FRESH New London.

**0:13:07.2 Julie Garay:** Hi everyone. My name is Julie Garay. Sorry, technical difficulties right now. Hold on, give me two seconds. Of course, we came on early and I thought we were prepared, but no. Why isn't this popping out?

**0:13:19.8 AM:** While Julie is setting up our slide deck for you all, I just wanna take a moment to thank Full Frame for putting together this great webinar. I'm excited to share about our story, but really excited to hear from the other panelists today. So thank you for putting that together. FRESH is a tiny but mighty food justice organization, and our work is centered in New London, Connecticut, which is occupied Pequot land. And it's a small distressed city in the southeast corner of Connecticut, that while we are financially struggling, we're rich with cultural diversity and grassroots spirit.

**0:13:51.1 AM:** For us, food justice work moves beyond taking a look at food access and really looks at the historic and systemic power dynamics around food and land power and control. And like most of you, we root ourselves in a set of mission, vision and values that guide the work that we do. A part of our holistic approach to wellbeing is making sure that we're paying a close attention to our values, I think we look at our mission and think, oh, are we on track? But over the last couple of years, we've really switched focus to match all of our programs and initiatives up to our values. These values were co-created with community and are the center point with which we make all of our decisions about everything we do moving forward.

**0:14:40.7 JG:** All right, so before I get started with just the buckets of work that we do, I wanted to introduce myself. So my name is Julie Garay. I actually have been working at FRESH in the spring for 13 years now, and I am one of the examples of what we really strive for in FRESH New London. Right? If you see all of our buckets, we have growing food, empowering youth, and connecting communities. And one of our biggest goals is to bring young people up through this leadership pipeline, and I'm one of the examples of that. So it's pretty awesome to have that in our

main mission. So in our work at FRESH, our work is just work, right? So we focus on the growing food aspect in relation to a lot of the things that Lotus was mentioning earlier. So restorative work and regenerative work through our land, but also our community, right?

**0:15:33.6 JG:** Supporting and making sure that we're growing culturally relevant crops and food that is sustainable, healthy, culturally appropriate, and all those beautiful things that we hope our food system is in our community, right? And then empowering youth, just like I mentioned. Our young people, we have year round seasonal programs, and in our programs, we make sure to build in leadership pipelines for young people where they are able to advocate for many things, not just what we can grow, but how do they want their political atmosphere in New London to be. What do they want to see in New London? What do they wanna see in the state of Connecticut, right? What do they wanna see in grocery stores, what do they wanna see in schools? So our work is really holistic and we make sure that we are hitting all topics of the existence of young people, folks of color and low income folks in New London.

**0:16:25.7 JG:** And that brings us to connecting communities, like it says here, a lot of our values is self-determination and food sovereignty. We don't wanna live in isolation, we don't wanna live in individualism that we are brought into within capitalism but also our community in the United States, Western America in those ways. We wanna make sure that we are relying on one another and really living and existing in support through our existence. And something I did wanna mention is that in our growing food bucket, new solutions, like Lotus said, but also looking back on our history and our indigenous folks. We at FRESH make sure that we are always connected and rooted in the land that we currently exist in as well as the teachings that our ancestors have brought to us and have always been regenerative, right? We have been able to exist, co-exist through our communities up until profit became the importance in our community. So yeah, that's what we do.

**0:17:37.7 AM:** We thought one way we could talk about the wellbeing work that we do is through the story of McDonald Park. So before 2017, FRESH was working to grow food with young people on a two-acre farm just outside of our city. And we were bringing that food into the city through a mobile market and setting up a youth employment program to run those markets, growing culturally relevant crops, but really focused on growing outside of town and bringing things in. At the end of 2016, we realized that what we really wanted to do was inspire people to be able to take control of their own food access by growing in small scale ways within our city. And in the meantime, we could be reclaiming blighted land in our neighborhoods working together and creating something beautiful where we could grow food. So just about the time that we decided that we were lucky the city of New London actually approached us and asked us if we would build a community garden on this blighted piece of property you can see on the left-hand side.

**0:18:35.5 AM:** That's a city-owned Park called McDonald Park Now, before that, we also had one community garden, and we probably would have been like, yes, absolutely, of course we'll build a community garden there. But we actually said maybe, maybe we'll do that. We don't really know because what we wanna do first is see if the folks who live in this area would like to have a community garden there. So this neighborhood is primarily renters, you can sort of see behind the fence, there's some light industrial... There are some large four and six apartment buildings right in there that are old homes that have been restored, and a lot of the owners of these properties don't live in New London. So there's a lot of absentee landlord work happening here. So we thought it was really... If we were gonna make any decisions about this, that we could engage this community, and I'll let Julie tell you how that happened.

**0:19:23.6 JG:** Of course. Alright, so we did this through a multitude of ways, right? The first thing that we did is we had a community meeting where we just kind of did a pamphleting and kind of door-knocking throughout the entire, I wanna say four to five blocks up the park. And we asked folks to come out to the park and just have a dream conversation. What do you wanna see? What do you imagine? And the really interesting part of that was a lot of the landlords showed up, and not a lot of community members. So we were like, oh, this approach isn't good, let's try again. So we just went door to door and were really knocking on doors. Folks were inviting us in, asking if we wanted coffee, all those awesome things. And that's where we really saw the vision of what community members wanted. So through strategic planning, so we did a lot of...

**0:20:16.3 JG:** Well, first of all, which was really awesome, this is a perfect example of community organizing. Right? I think something that's really interesting about maybe the climate of where we are right now, but also just in historical context through Black Panthers and all these other organizations that did amazing work in our communities. Community organizing, the term of community organizing is a scary thing, right? Like, what are you doing? What's going on? Are you gonna start these things in the community? It's like, no, we just wanna hear from folks. So we did a lot of connections with folks, and we ended up hearing they want a park for young people, they want a safe space to just hang out, and they wanna grow food. So all of these awesome things. So through this work, we actually did this steering committee of all neighbors.

**0:21:09.7 JG:** And they were all like art folks, they all wanted art, they all wanted food, they all wanted spaces for their young people. And we were able to truly create a strong pilot group to really build this mission. And the really cool thing is that the staff had no control over it, right? What we did was we managed the money, and when they told us to put the money somewhere, we were the ones that did that. Right? So folks were like, we want this, we want that. We want the city to ask for this. And we said, alright, perfect, let's do all of that. Through that, we actually ended up creating a really strong five-year agricultural plan as well, where our first gathering was about 150 people, where we talked about what is your dream vision for growing food for profit for people in the community, not like everyone. Or not just solely one person. So this was like an amazing pilot for what we want to continue to do in New London.

**0:22:15.4 AM:** And as you can see, we're super passionate about this and so many things we do. We are about to run out of time, but I just wanted to share really quickly about how this relates to the wellbeing principles. We didn't have this framework when we started doing this, but seeing this, we realize how intentional we actually were specifically about principle 2 and principle 3. And how important it is really to be working with your community and letting them decide what wellness is and to heal and regenerate together. And that is the acknowledgement of historic trauma in the food system and land ownership, but it's also coming together and celebrating our rich culture. Okay. And thank you so much for your time. Now, back to Lotus.

**0:22:56.4 LY:** Thanks so much, Julie and Alicia. If you have questions for them, feel free to drop them in the chat. We'll be collecting them for the Q&A time at the end. And excited to turn it over to Kishana with Massachusetts Women of Color Network.

**0:23:19.4 Kishana Smith:** Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for being here with us this afternoon. That was wonderful. Thank you for this opportunity, and I will get right into it since time is limited. Again, this is the wellbeing design challenge. I'll be talking with you about Mass Women

of Color Network values, reflections and some recommendations. I am Kishana Smith, she/her pronouns. I'm the Executive Director at the Massachusetts Women of Color Network. I identify as a survivor leader, I've been in the field for 12 years. And Monday through Fridays, I like to drive in silence. That's something cool I think about myself. For this presentation, I hope that after the time that we have together, you have an understanding of the importance of centering the voices of survivors. I hope that we can build on your previous knowledge.

**0:24:18.1 KS:** I would love to explain Mass Women of Color Network's approach to wellbeing in our work and invite some self-reflection and ask that you take care of yourself as there are no built-in breaks. So first and foremost, I want to uplift Full Frame Initiative's five domains of wellbeing. So that is social connectedness, stability, safety, access to meaningful resources, mastery. And as they say, we need assets in all five domains to thrive, and we at Mass Women of Color Network agree. The project that I'll be talking about today is our keeping black survivors alive project. We started this project in 2021, out of a report that we published called keeping black women alive, responding to intimate partner high risk in black communities. And what we shared in that report, and this was from data and different lived experiences from black women, we found that the interventions that are currently in place for black communities don't really work well for black communities.

**0:25:34.7 KS:** This report is published, and so I hope that you can check it out after this presentation. From this report, we ask community to consider five recommendations, so five action items. One, we ask for shifting away from an over-reliance on law enforcement. We ask that folks challenge and undo the stereotypes that they hold, and we ask that there is funding for culturally specific models and best practices. From that report, we formed a cohort. The cohort is comprised of five black women-led organizations in Massachusetts. The Center for Hope and Healing in Lowell, Mass; Brookview House in Roxbury, Mass; Transgender Emergency Fund in Boston, Mass; Love Life Now Foundation in Brockton; and the YWCA of Central Mass, which is located in Worcester. And so from that cohort, we have about 12 individuals, and we meet several times monthly, we are in our third year of the project.

**0:26:42.6 KS:** And our North Star is to create a multi-media toolkit of best practices, training tools, and a live database of resources for providing better services for black survivors. And so in designing this, we said to ourselves, where do we need to start? And it felt very obvious from the start that we needed to center the voices of black survivors. We started by centering the voices of black women, because black women, black trans women are the most marginalized of the communities that we serve. And so we feel that if we focus on the most marginalized, that there will be a ripple effect in enhanced services for other marginalized communities. At Mass Women of Color Network, we strive to meet the needs of our communities with an inviting invitation to co-design. This is really similar to Full Frame's approach of not centering community engagement, but centering community, which I'll talk about in a moment. But also at the start, when we said we wanna center black survivors, we also felt the need to come up with guiding principles for our project.

**0:28:05.3 KS:** Our guiding principles for the Keeping Black Survivors Alive Project are, one, we wanna prioritize strategies that are grounded in survivor experiences. Two, develop frameworks that break down the distinctions between service providers and survivors. Three, implement approaches that address both systemic and individual harms. And in our approach of an inviting invitation, we do so by centering our values. We design with community, not for. And this approach is very similar

to that of the Full Frame Initiative. We would like to expand on that in the next few minutes. So oftentimes, as service providers, I feel that we can get caught up in asking ourselves what needs to change, what are the problems we're seeing in communities, where are the gaps, where are the things that we need to see shift and change? And we may often times have great intentions, but not always go about the process correctly.

**0:29:20.5 KS:** Either by providing theoretical solutions, seeking internal solutions based on evaluations from different programs and saying, oh, the evaluations state that we should shift in these ways, let's shift in these ways. While that may be part of it, it's not the full way forward in our opinion. And so as the Full Frame Initiative stated about community engagement and why it's not so effective, community engagement tools such as surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, they only scratch the surface. And they extract data and can oftentimes further tokenize and harm the communities we serve. So we at Mass Women of Color Network, we focus on authentic connections, imparting history and knowledge, storytelling, lifting as we climb, power sharing, community building, community care, fostering, encouraging, thriving, radical self-preservation, and collective liberation.

**0:30:27.6 KS:** For the sake of this presentation and for the sake of centering the voices of community, I've highlighted the values in orange that I feel we should focus on the most. So let's start with power sharing. Power sharing means that I know I have self-awareness about myself, our team, we have self-awareness. For example, I self-identify as a black woman, I also self-identify as a survivor of sexual and domestic violence. Many others on my team identify similarly, but we still wanted to focus on the voices of those we serve. While our lived experiences may be very similar, we don't know all of how we can put this puzzle together and move forward in the way that really enhances the services and meets the needs of our communities. So we said, even though we hold these identities, we still want to invite community and when we invite community, we wanna make sure that that invitation is intentional.

**0:31:37.6 KS:** When folks see an invitation for an interview or a listening session or any of the other tools, we want to show them who we are and let them know the point of the project. And not just the point, but then when they come to any of these activities, one of the first questions we share is, what would you like to see happen? Let me pause and go back a little bit. So with the keeping black survivors alive project and our North Star of the multi-media toolkit, we stated that we wanted to hear from black survivors. And in that we said, how can we invite people in, in a way that feels inclusive, in a way that feels co-created and allow people to feel like this is for them, we are designing with them? One of the things that we do is, in our flyers, we share what the objective is, we share if there's any compensation that would be attached, we share what the goal is, right? And that's similar to the objectives. One moment.

**0:33:04.4 KS:** From the start of the project, throughout the entire process, we want folks to feel like they are in it with us, that we are not the service provider's holding power over them, but that we are inviting them into a co-creation, into a co-process that will bring forth a result that really uplifts their voice. We invite them to tell their story. So in telling their story, we take time. With the authenticity that we bring, we come to the space saying that, yes, we are service providers but we acknowledge the power difference and we say, how can we make that not feel so present in this moment? So yes, they come and we allow them to lead, we share the questions ahead of time and say, these are the questions we would like to ask you, which of these questions feel okay for you to answer? If you don't wanna answer all of them, we understand. And we also share what will happen



with the information, what information will be confidential and what information do we hope to pull the themes from and use to create the multi-media toolkit? Also lifting as we climb.

**0:34:32.8 KS:** As we learn things throughout the process and we learn from each other, we share those things in a way of cross-training. For example, in one of our interviews, a woman of color was sharing her experience for the very first time. And as she was sharing, it was a special and sacred moment because she was trusting us with such delicate information. And so in that moment, I shared with her that I'm gonna stop taking notes and I'm going to allow her to take over the session and lead in a way that felt good for her. And she said, yep, you taking notes is not distracting to me in any way, I actually feel supported by you taking notes because I know that you are capturing what it is that I would like community and others to know. And as we were doing that, I also encourage ways that she could take care of herself. So I didn't just say, please take care of yourself, we can do deep breathing or there's a hotline that you can call, but in the moment, we went slow. Slow and steady wins the race, and so it's how we feel. And so we really slowed it down and allowed her way more than the time that we had planned.

**0:36:00.3 KS:** And that's what we mean when we say we share power and we are authentic, 'cause oftentimes we say, oh, we have an hour planned, and we're sometimes watching our clocks as the hour is going. And that has impact on those that we are interacting with. And so we said, take the time that you need. And she cried and I consoled her. It was a really powerful experience. Also building community. We feel that when we invite survivors to show up and when they come to the space that is inviting, that we can build relationships and those relationships are what it takes for us to heal through many of the things that we are working on. And collective liberation. So as I stated before, I self-identify as a survivor and many others on my team and we share with survivors that, yes, we want them to share this really delicate parts of themselves, and this is gonna inform the toolkit, but we are also sharing as leaders at different parts of the project, and so we are also willing to be vulnerable in achieving the North Star.

**0:37:25.0 LY:** Thank you so much, Kishana. So many really great insights here. Just wanna make sure that we also have time to hear from others. If you wanna take a quick minute to wrap up your piece, that'd be great.

**0:37:44.2 KS:** Yes, thank you. So I just wanted to share that I think it's important that we are thoughtful about the invitation that we extend to those that we serve, that is one that is mindful of who we are in the proximity, that we hold to power, and that we also invite in a way that is uplifting and really intentional.

**0:38:09.7 LY:** Thank you so much, Kishana. Again, if you have questions for Kishana or would like to hear more, drop some questions in the chat and we'll make sure that we have some time at the end. Up next, excited to hear from Naomi Campbell from Right Question Institute.

**0:38:33.1 Naomi Campbell:** Thank you, Lotus. And thanks to all the presenters and to the Wellbeing Blueprint for hosting this session today. My name is Naomi Campbell. I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the director of legal empowerment program at the Right Question Institute. And we are a non-profit organization, we actually work in many different fields and across the globe, and we have developed an educational strategy which we share with those folks who are working in many different systems and fields. And this educational strategy is based around two skills. So, fostering the development of asking better questions and participating more effectively in decisions.

So you may be asking yourself why questions and why decisions, those are two seemingly simple things, simple skills.

**0:39:27.0 NC:** But what we found through our work in many different communities and what the argument we make is, is that asking questions is a foundational skill for thinking, learning and taking action, that the ability to focus those questions on key decisions helps people become more effective and strategic, that people become more engaged, they understand more, and they discover their own power. And these two skills are rarely deliberately taught. And so that is our work is to figure out how to teach these two foundational seemingly simple skills. And I'll tell a quick story about where this actually comes from. So, many years ago, our co-founders were working in Lawrence, Massachusetts, primarily immigrant community north of Boston. And they were working with parents, and one of our co-founders from Puerto Rico was a parent herself in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Lou Santana.

**0:40:26.0 NC:** And they were working in a drop out prevention program, and the parents that they were working with kept saying to them, well, we don't go to the school to advocate for our children because we don't even know what questions to ask. And so they thought, wonderful, we know what to do. We're gonna give you a script, we're gonna give you a list of questions. You're gonna be able to go into the schools, advocate for your children. And of course, what happened was that the parents would take that list but then would need to know what to ask in any other situation they were in. So they realized from these parents naming this overlooked, long overlooked barrier to their participation, that it was really about building people's skills so that they could participate and ask questions no matter the setting or situation. And what the parents also taught them was that they could share these skills with the people in their communities and use them in different areas.

**0:41:15.2 NC:** So they say, I shared it with the parents and the Housing Authority, I didn't use it here, but I used it in the community health center, and so they were really showing how universal these advocacy skills really were. And that original work with parents led to our work in many different fields. What we do is we encourage people who are working in systems to transform those systems by doing their work in a different way, by doing their work in a way that creates space for people to ask their own questions, gives them the process for asking those questions, builds those skills. So we've done work in healthcare, having patients improve healthcare outcomes and partner more effectively with providers by coming up with their own questions before a provider visit. Done work in school family partnerships, work in classroom education around the world. And then I, of course, partner with legal professionals, social workers, other direct service providers, and give them a strategy to work with their clients in a different way.

**0:42:16.2 NC:** And so all of that from the original insight by parents in Lawrence. Just stepping back a little bit. The way that we see the impact of teaching people how to ask their own questions and use those questions to advocate for themselves, people feel a stronger sense of agency as they navigate these many different systems that impact their lives. They're better able to advocate for themselves and families and hold decision makers accountable. And then frontline service providers are able to partner more effectively with the people and communities they serve. And I just wanna give some examples of how people, when they're learning these skills have changes in what they know, how they feel, and in what they're able to do. So I'd like to just share a couple of quotes from people. So this is from Nelita in Sacramento, California. And she said, "You're better prepared. You know what you want, and when you know what you want, you can look for a way to get it."

**0:43:15.9 NC:** So she's able to identify her goals by asking questions and then can use those questions to get what she needs. This is from Alicia in Boston. She said, "It helps you advocate for yourself without feeling overwhelmed or inferior to what someone might have. I wasn't intimidated anymore. It makes you feel like I can do this." So changes in how people feel, in their confidence, in their ability to advocate. And finally, this was a session participant who had a son with a hearing impairment and said, "I didn't know I could ask questions at the school." That's what we hear a lot from people, I didn't know I was allowed to ask questions, "But by doing that, I was able to get my son the services he needs." So just some more concrete examples of how this has been applied in different fields. We've seen legal professionals use this strategy to help prepare families for individualized education plan meetings. So when they're advocating for special education services in schools, preparing their questions ahead of time and understanding when key decisions are being made.

**0:44:23.9 NC:** Social workers have prepared youth through our homeless or at risk of homelessness for both court appearances and meetings with attorneys. Students who are in a GED class, learn this strategy from their teacher, and we're able to advocate for themselves at the welfare office where they were constantly being told, you didn't fill out this form right, you did this wrong. And they were able to use these questions to hold those decision-makers accountable. And a community... This was actually a community organizer who used the strategy to help a community who is advocating for violence prevention programs after a school shooting. So it's been used in many different fields, many different ways. That's actually something that we love about the full frame initiative and the wellbeing design principles, is how it connects people working across many different systems who care about wellbeing. And just to close with some connections that we see to the wellbeing design principles.

**0:45:21.2 NC:** We talk a lot about agency and how people feel agency and how that is connected to wellbeing, and so the way that wellbeing is described in the Wellbeing Blueprint really resonates with us in our work. We look at where this comes from, so communities naming overlooked barriers to their participation, and that has guided our work. That was the original mistake that we made, and the original lesson that we learned was from those communities. We look at transforming partnerships with providers who are working in different systems, and we look at how to leverage existing infrastructures. So instead of creating new programs and services, how do you actually transform the way that people are working to center wellbeing? So I think that might be my time, but I'll just leave my email address here, you can register to access free resources on our website. We also do trainings and love to hear from folks who are doing work in many different fields. I'm [naomi.campbell@rightquestion.org](mailto:naomi.campbell@rightquestion.org). Thank you.

**0:46:26.4 LY:** Thank you so much for sharing your work Naomi, the work of Right Question Institute. Again, if you have questions, feel free to drop them in the chat, folks can answer as we go along or we can save them for the end. And up next, we have Julia Martinez from USC Keck School of Medicine.

**0:47:03.8 KS:** We're unable to hear you, Julia.

**0:47:11.6 Julia Martinez:** Well, that'll eat into my time. [laughter] Hi, it's such an honor to be here. I'm Julia Martinez. I'm a researcher. I just wanna say I appreciate what Lotus shared about how important it is to assure that data collection is both meaningful and if possible, uplifting. My academic research often focuses on understanding problems, so we can design solutions, but the

initial focus on these problems can create some problematic blind spots to what's working well, among other things. So I'm gonna share with you today a snapshot of our efforts to conceptualize and define person-centeredness in the field of elder justice. This project is still in process, so I'm grateful for the chance to share the reason for this work and a little bit of what we've learned so far, and especially grateful for the partnership with the Full Frame Initiative. So our focus has been on elder abuse multi-disciplinary teams, which we call MDTs.

**0:48:05.4 JM:** And if you don't know what that is, don't worry. I'll be explaining shortly. First, a quick acknowledgement that anything I say is not the opinion or position of our funders, the Department of Justice. And some background, elder abuse is an act or pattern of harm, neglect or exploitation committed against an older person. Our best estimates are that one in every 10 older adults experience abuse each year. There's numerous responses to help elder adults who've experienced abuse, because these cases and solutions are complex and span disciplinary boundaries. MDTs are a promising way to break down silos and to develop coordinated plans for older adult survivors. MDTs are really good at helping these siloed service systems communicate and work better together to create comprehensive solutions in addition to being a forum for cross-agency training for members, which has a lot of value to the people who attend and potentially for their organizations.

**0:49:11.0 JM:** We did a national survey in 2018 and found out that the top priority of these teams was safety and protection followed by self-determination of the older adults. No one respondent ranked older adults wishes as a top priority, but they did say that the survivors wishes were mentioned in the case discussions, if they were known. And about half said that plans were changed sometimes if they opposed the older adult's priorities. So with MDTs, the underlying assumption is that breaking down organizational siloes will result in better solutions and therefore improved outcomes for older adults. And in many ways this is true. MDTs are capable at assuring the completion of intervention, such as prosecution, guardianship, and restitution. However, as Kishana mentioned earlier, legal interventions don't necessarily equate to success in terms of wellbeing. One major challenge is that older adults are most often not included in these case discussions within the team.

**0:50:16.3 JM:** So teams most often don't have access to the older person to ask them how they're doing after the intervention, and there's some really good reasons for this, considering public safety and Criminal Justice priorities, and also that many older adults' cases are reviewed, may have some levels of impairment and trauma that would make inclusion really difficult for them. However, some really big decisions can be made in these meetings and knowing how important choice and empowerment are for wellbeing. So it's worth making sure that this is facilitated whenever possible. And so, just briefly, what is person-centered care? I know I'm showing you a lot of words right now. Two different definitions of person-centered care, but I wanna emphasize two things. First, it's just the general concept that it involves the inclusion of needs, values and preferences. And secondly, the difference in these operationalist definitions.

**0:51:19.1 JM:** The first definition was developed by physicians and it specifies the importance of eliciting these preferences and that they become central of the care plan. The APS definition, Adult Protective Services, frames person-centeredness as a consideration. And there are no details on how this should be done or what to do in preferences but again, safety. This isn't to say that the medical definition is applicable to elder abuse interventions, but I think we could do a better job about outlining the specifics, 'cause the reality is we don't know what services designed by older people

would look like. However, there are some clues. When older adults who experienced abuse were asked about their perspectives and what would be helpful, here's what was found. First, they may not identify as victims or having had experienced something called abuse. And what they want would include several of these things.

**0:52:23.1 JM:** A sense of purpose, hope for themselves and for the person who's harming them, to be heard and believed, advice from peers, to maintain autonomy and relationship with the person who's hurting them and to avoid facility placements. So the takeaway is that teams focusing primarily on protection and safety may not be equipped to naturally include or consider these needs. That's not to say that MDTs aren't using person-centered practices or approaches. I've seen with my own eyes some practices that do a great job of including the older adults voice. The problem is there no guidelines, and it's also unclear which situations patient-centeredness may not be feasible. So this is where our work comes in. We've designed a three-step process of outreach to experts in elder justice across the country to better understand what practices are out there and what the limitations are to person-centeredness in the context of these teams. And also to learn about what tools and trainings are needed.

**0:53:30.0 JM:** In May 2023, we convened a group of 25 interdisciplinary professionals with vast experience in elder abuse and MDTs to offer some workshops and learn about person-centered practices that do exist and discuss those that could and should be developed. We also learned about existing barriers. During the process of administering a questionnaire to teams nationwide, based on what we learned from the convening to see what the perceptions of person centeredness are and the prevalence of specific practices being used and what the barriers are out there. What we learned from this survey will inform a national symposium, which we're planning for March next year. We'll be inviting MDT members from all across the country to share what we learned and to workshop discussions that will lead to more concrete guidance. What we're envisioning is essentially a catalog of approaches and practices, training and policy recommendations to help reduce barrier.

**0:54:34.1 JM:** I may be running short on time, but briefly, I wanna share some things that we learned in the convening. We surveyed the participants and asked an open-ended question about elements of person-centeredness that they envision in MDTs and results branched into three teams. First, values meaning foundational principles that are important. Secondly, mechanisms, what are the concrete activities and things that you can do? And third were considerations, which I think this is the most fascinating part. Recognizing that we all have a limited lens of working at the situation, what other things might we can consider in order to more clearly understand the situation? And this relates with a lot of the other presentations that were share today. So this is being recorded, I'm not gonna read these for you, but here are some of the values. And if you wanna check back on this later, take a good screenshot, here are the mechanisms in no particular order. And also some of the considerations.

**0:55:44.9 JM:** And I think what's interesting here is individual definitions. What an outsider might define as safety might be very different from the way an older adult might find safety, and I think that's a crucial finding. So I wanna close by acknowledging the critical importance of including older adults' voices. And I think our field could do a much better job at, but from what we've learned so far, person-centeredness is not an either/or, but it exists on more of the spectrum. Some of the challenges stem from organizational culture and perceived or actual resource limits. And we know enough about what may be important to older adults, and that just having a variety of professionals discussing solutions may not necessarily incorporate or prioritize those needs. So

here's my email, feel free to reach out if you have questions or wanna share ideas. And stay tuned for updates. I hope to be able to share in a year's time some of what we learned. Thank you.

**0:57:00.0 LY:** Thank you so much, Julia. And thank you to all the speakers, all the panelists for sharing about your work, all the really exciting initiatives that you're doing and ways that you're incorporating wellbeing for design. What really strikes me is just the range of type of work that's happening that is making it possible to be designing for equitable access to wellbeing. And that fills me with hope for where we're headed. So I'd love to kick us off in this Q&A session in the last few minutes is around a question that is... And I know that these are some examples, and there are so many of you out there listening in on this webinar. I would love to hear from you all too, your experiences around incorporating wellbeing and design. The question I'd like to post to the panelists and also to those of you who are listening in the chat, and we'll be sure to put the questions in the chat as well, is what is something that helped make it possible for you to implement these wellbeing design principles in your work, and what barriers did you encounter and how did you deal with them? And I'll let whichever person feels ready to respond.

**0:58:27.0 KS:** I can go first. So the...

**0:58:29.8 LY:** Thank you.

**0:58:30.3 KS:** Thank you Lotus, and thanks everyone. I learned so much. One of the important points that made it possible for our organization to approach the work this way is our culture, the culture in our organization. Slow and steady, and knowing that many of the timelines that we make are internal timelines and that those can have flexibility and can shift. And so in working with survivors, sometimes we may have allotted two months for something, but midway we realize we need six months. So slow and steady and flexibility with timelines.

**0:59:12.3 JM:** And I'll jump in. For us, being an academic institution, we're so reliant on funding and funding objectives are always pre-defined by somebody else. So I think what has been really helpful is the recognition in this country that taking trauma-informed approaches is crucial because person-centeredness is a tenet of trauma-informed care. And so I actually kind of snuck this work into a grant that had another focus area, and this was sort of another arm of the work and I overwhelmed myself as a result, but that was another strategy was to take a funding source and say, okay, we're gonna mostly do what you want, but we're also gonna do this little thing. And I forgot what the second question was.

**1:00:01.6 LY:** Oh, it is what barriers did you encounter and how did you deal with them?

**1:00:07.6 JM:** I think culture. The culture in that field of elder justice. I think there's a lot of unintended compassionate ageism where people just assume that they're doing the right thing if they're... Even though they may be assuming what is right for the older adults. That has and continues to be a barrier.

**1:00:30.2 JG:** I guess for us, I think that taking the piece of individualism out of this work is so necessary to just get further in the work or in the dreams that we want to achieve. I think there's a lack of trust and solidarity within our work. And it's also right for those who are "marginalized" but we aren't marginalized, right? We're the majority populace of folks of color, low income folks, all these things. We aren't asked what we want, right? A lot of times we are told what we need, and

here are scraps, figure it out. And so I think removing that piece of, I know what's best for you, and because a lot of times those who are struggling the most, they're seen as like, you don't have the privilege to ask for what you want, right? I'm gonna tell you what you want. So understanding that that is extremely harmful and really undoing that work is essential to getting to where we wanna be.

**1:01:43.2 AM:** I'll just add a bit about the barriers. I think the lack of understanding, and I heard this echoed before from funders and others about building relationships and measuring that piece of actually being focused on the real whole person. It doesn't look like fancy numbers, it looks like good stories and long-term relationships. And that still continues to be a challenge. Although I do find webinars like this and the more work we do out in the community of this work nationally, it's starting to shift a bit, and so I hope that continues to shift.

**1:02:19.7 NC:** And I'll just add, I think one thing that has made it possible to implement these principles is just valuing iteration and valuing kind of doing things over and then rethinking and re-thinking. And that's kind of how we developed our educational strategy is we started with a three-day self-advocacy workshop, and the people in the field told us this is too cumbersome, takes too long, we do not do our work in this way. And so that was a lesson and we kind of iterated until we got to a different place, and that's the same thing I think with implementing the design principles is incorporating that value into our organization's work. And then just one barrier, I'll echo again, I think finding, especially foundations who wanna think differently and who don't look at... Yeah. They've always done or fitting organizations into a particular box, that has been one of our biggest challenges. So finding good allies, both in the field and in the funder world has been the way around it, but we haven't figured that out yet, so.

**1:03:30.2 LY:** Lots of themes, lots of similar themes, I'm hearing from all the folks, everyone. There was a question earlier, Kishana, during your section. I'm gonna pose it to you, although I think anyone else can answer as well. This sounds much like systems theory, is that correct?

**1:03:52.4 KS:** I think it is, and I think it's us looking at systems and what has been happening and saying what is working and what's not working, and undoing what hasn't been working by centering the voices of those we serve.

**1:04:11.8 JM:** And I just wanna echo that for the work I described, and I think, yeah, it was a very astute comment that this is systems theory. And I think systems are not just organizational systems, there are also family systems and individual human beings, their systems and resources, and all of those are important to consider and also really difficult. It does take, like it was mentioned, a careful mind asking the right questions, the humility to recognize that there's a lot that we don't know.

**1:04:45.0 LY:** Thank you. Another question that was posed in the chat is, how many have hired consumers to be working in the agency? I find that this has helped with bringing consumer voice to the system design.

**1:05:02.4 AM:** Yeah. We can speak to that a bit. So we hire young people to work with us, we stipend community members to participate. When we did the McDonald Park project, we worked to build the fence and we hired the neighbor across the street who had just built their fence beautifully. We're really centered on keeping resources within our community and offering opportunities for people to train, while being paid, with us to move forward. And in turn, that's made us a much more robust organization. So as a director, I rely on this wealth of people on my staff who are connected

to us to input into the decision-making process. So we're really stronger all around because we do that.

**1:05:50.5 LY:** Any thought that others would like to share to that?

**1:05:53.9 JM:** This is Julia. Well, I just wanna say that that's my dream. Again, this is something we haven't done a great job of, elder abuse. And I think it's not because people don't want to, it's because the resources aren't there. But I've had so many conversations with professionals in the field who have created and want to keep creating things like peer support groups and who really have done great interviews in the field with older adults who are APS clients, that are actively sharing and working on getting this work published and disseminated in the field. So I think the tide is starting to change.

**1:06:31.5 KS:** Thank you, Julia. And similar to Julia, at Mass Women of Color Network, we prioritize the hiring of self-identified women of color, and also with all of our volunteers, we don't say volunteers. We say circle members, because of the structure that we have, it's not hierarchical, although there is some power differences, but we look at it more centering us as a community, and how do we uplift those that we serve and support by them seeing also a reflection of them in those doing the service. And for those that we invite to take part in any of our listening sessions, interviews, we also prioritize compensating them. And so every time I write a grant, I put that into the budget in the form of gift cards, in the form of supplies and food, so that they also feel appreciated for the efforts.

**1:07:37.7 JG:** I also think that... Sorry to cut you off Naomi. Just really quick, I think something about the work of bringing our own folks into it, there's this complexity of are you certified enough? Do you know enough about this work to be able to do that? And one of my favorite little analogies of systems is like, there's babies going down the river, and this guy is like, oh my God, there's babies going down the river. So he starts taking babies out. He calls more people for help, then there's people certified to take babies out of the river, but no one's asking why are their babies in the river in the first place.

**1:08:21.9 JG:** So a lot of times we don't trust our own folks to know their history and know their experience, because you need to have academia behind you, you need to have 20-plus years of experience in the field itself. And it's something that I really love that we do is we intentionally make it our mission to support people in training to get there because they already have the lived experience, which they're already 10 times further out than those who just have academia. So let's train you up so that you're "certified," but you're already an expert, so let's get you there.

**1:09:04.4 NC:** Yeah, and just similar to everybody, this is something that we obviously prioritize in hiring. I think what are the difference for us is that we actually were not a direct service provider. So we work with direct service providers often who are closer to the communities that they serve and know more about the communities they serve. And what they do is they take what we teach and they adapt it, they change it, they make it work for them and we learn from them. And so I think that's one... It's just the difference in how we work, I think, is that we want to not change the work that's being done on the ground, where people already know the communities that they serve and are part of the communities they serve.

**1:09:50.2 JM:** I just wanna speak briefly mentioning academic institutions and the culture that is



there. I just want to agree that, yeah, in academic research, especially the paradigm that is prioritized here in the United States tends to want to understand things by getting an expert's view who's usually vary far removed of the problem and then taking the problem apart into different pieces and collecting all of that data. And it's really hard to understand the systems perspective from that research modality alone, that the stories are crucial. The relationships are so important and we don't have adequate ways of collecting that information, at least within again, the paradigm that we use in this country. In other parts of the world, I think they use more action, action-oriented research and participatory research. And those are highly prized, those I think are the ways of the valuation that are the best at getting at the heart of what folks are doing and helping us understand the nuances of wellbeing.

**1:10:55.8 LY:** Thank you so much, everybody who has shared here. Julia, Naomi, Julie, Alicia and Kishana, sharing your ideas. I feel like I could listen to you all talk to each other all day, just around all these common approaches we have to paying attention to wellbeing and designing with wellbeing. And it's really appreciating the folks in the chat for sharing all their experiences as well, what they're doing. Love to continue this conversation, and yet knowing that we all have other things on the horizon as well. So I'm gonna share my screen one last time just to give a couple of concrete action items for those of you who are listening in.

**1:11:41.1 LY:** Some things you can do next immediately after hanging up this webinar. This could be your next thing, you could take the wellbeing design challenge, if you haven't already, and invite others to do so. And you can evaluate how you're doing on wellbeing designed. There's a nifty little self-assessment that you can go through and see see how things are going at you or your organization. And you can join the movement for wellbeing at the Wellbeing Blueprint, which is a community who share common thinking around various principles, wanting to work towards this country where everyone can have a fair shot at wellbeing. Hope to see you in some of those spaces, doing some of those things, and look forward to seeing you and connecting with you at a future time in some kind of space towards this movement. Thank you, everybody.