

Master of Gender Studies Internship Report

**Feminism is Necessary: Interning with the St. John's Status of Women Council
on the FemFest NL Organizing Committee**

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Abstract

Throughout my twelve-week internship with the St. John's Status of Women Council, I held the Coordinator role on the FemFest Newfoundland and Labrador Organizing Committee. FemFest NL was a four-day community feminist festival, celebrating and highlight feminisms in Newfoundland and Labrador from August 25-28, 2016. Safety, accessibility, and inclusion were primary goals shaping my work on the FemFest NL Organizing committee, and my internship as a whole. I will report on the successes and challenges of these goals, of doing committee work, and of community organizing with a non-profit feminist organization.

Section 1

Introduction

In completion of the Masters of Gender Studies program at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I completed an internship with the St. John's Status of Women Council (SJSWC) during the Summer 2016 semester. In this internship I held the role of Coordinator, working with the FemFest Newfoundland and Labrador Organizing committee. My internship happened in St. John's, where I worked primarily out of the St. John's Status of Women Council workplace at 170 Cashin Avenue Extension. I had been working with the St. John's Status of Women Council and the FemFest NL Organizing committee during the months leading up to my internship, both to develop and solidify the role I would hold during my internship and to be involved with the work of the FemFest NL Organizing committee as it happened. Officially, my internship with the St. John's Status of Women Council as FemFest NL Coordinator took place from the end of May through to the end of August, 2016. FemFest NL, a community feminist festival, took place from Thursday August 25th through to Sunday August 28th, 2016.

The St. John's Status of Women Council is a non-profit feminist organization that has been working since 1972 to achieve equality and justice through political activism, community collaboration and the creation of a safe and inclusive space for all women in the St. John's area¹. The St. John's Status of Women Council is an umbrella organization that houses the St. John's Women's Centre, Marguerite's Place, and Safe Harbour Outreach Project. My role during my internship with the St. John's Status of Women Council was pertinent to their mandate and

¹ See Appendix A for more from the St. John's Status of Women Council's website

priorities, which include supporting women, advocating for gender equity, and de-colonizing feminism both in their organization and in our community. Similarly, my internship goals and work plan were based on safety, accessibility, inclusion (formerly intersectionality, since modified), and representation.²

I chose to seek an internship with the St. John's Status of Women Council because I've been consistently impressed by and excited about the sociopolitical and advocacy work they have done and continue to do in our local feminist community. Additionally, I've had the opportunity to work with them for short-term contracts over the past several years, and have had first-hand experience working with their team. Based on my work experience, the St. John's Status of Women Council fosters a welcoming and supportive feminist learning environment for students and volunteers to grow and develop skills while contributing to important work in a hands-on way, which is an aspect of interning that I truly value. As I had suspected, having an already established understanding of and connection with the organization, and a solid professional relationship with the core staff, proved to be essential in interning efficiently within a short time period.

I believe when looking at grassroots feminism and community organizing, there is significant value in learning about it through actually doing the work. I also recognized in developing my proposal for this internship, that there are significant methodological and theoretical ties to interning and working with non-profit feminist organizations. I think there are aspects of working with non-profit organizations and doing grassroots work that are intrinsically tied to the methodological underpinnings of interning, particularly so in feminist contexts. The

² See Appendix B for my full internship goals and workplan

underpinnings of interning are based on unpaid/underpaid work, frontline work, hands-on work, critically engaged work, and community building work. The work that made FemFest NL happen was built upon these aspects of interning. This collaborative community organizing work was literally embodied both through my internship, and through the work of the organizing committee as a whole, and all those who were involved on all levels of development and contribution. The validity of learning about grassroots feminist work through an internship is considerable, and this method of learning is one that I value and one that I find to be incredibly beneficial based on my own lived experience.

FemFest NL

FemFest NL was a four-day community feminist festival that happened from Thursday August 25th through to Sunday August 28th 2016, in downtown St. John's. Our events happened at The Wonderbolt Space, Eastern Edge Gallery, and the Fifth Ticket Piano Bar. As previously mentioned, FemFest NL was a brainchild of Jenny Wright who was inspired by FemFest Ireland. Saturday and Sunday of FemFest NL were designated conference events, and were bookended by arts and performance based events, which happened Thursday, Friday, and Sunday evening. The content of our events focus on topics ranging from midwifery, sex work, sexism in our culture, micro-aggressions in the workplace, Indigenous feminism and leadership, feminist science and technology, women in politics and leadership, intergenerational feminism, empowering deaf women, and much more. The mediums through which participants performed and presented included slam poetry, music, monologues, conference-style presentations, Powerpoint presentations, panel discussions, American Sign Language, and art exhibits. There

were over 65 presenters and performers directly involved in FemFest NL events.³

All festival events were designed to provide a platform for feminist issues in Newfoundland and Labrador. The content of the festival was women-centered. By this, we meant that submissions were welcome from all women (trans, intersex and cis), all those who experience gendered oppression (including non-binary and gender non-conforming people) and all those who identify as women for the purpose of political organizing. We had one event closing the festival that was open for women-identified only attendees, the Closing Night at Fifth Ticket Piano Bar⁴. The committee spent hours discussing the decision to host a women's only event during FemFest NL, which in turn elicited some controversial community-based responses. The rationale of the committee for this closing event was to work to provide space in a downtown bar that would feel safer for women who have experienced gendered violence, and who otherwise do not feel safe engaging in similar evening/bar-space events. I will discuss more about my personal reaction to this decision and the respective responses in Section 6:

Conclusion. That being said, the conference events, and all other festival events, were open to everyone. These parameters and definitions were developed by the organizing committee, and were ones that we spent lots of time discussing and reflecting upon in the months leading up to, and after FemFest NL. While we had FemFest NL All Access Passes for sale in advance (which granted entrance to all four days of events), otherwise all events were Pay What You Can by donation at the door. In our call for submissions⁵ and promotional material we were intentional in

³ See Appendix D for the full FemFest NL Schedule of Events

⁴ See Appendix D for the full FemFest NL Schedule of Events

⁵ See Appendix C for FemFest NL Call for Submissions

using non-academic language to appeal to and to be relevant for our community at large. We held events in downtown spaces, outside of campuses and away from hotel boardrooms where many conferences and events tend to be held traditionally.

The committee's drive and vision for FemFest NL was to create an opportunity for all folks in our community to gather and hear about the incredible feminist work happening in the province, particularly that which is so often overlooked by mainstream media or under-celebrated at public events. Our aim for FemFest NL was to be a kind of check in for feminist communities, and certainly we wanted FemFest NL to be a feminist celebration. Many of the committee members called it a reclamation of feminism in the province. Personally, I saw FemFest NL as an act of taking up feminist space, and as such, an act of feminist resistance to gender and social inequality in and of itself. Specifically, the organizing of FemFest NL happened in the midst of our provincial government's release of an austerity budget. In this context, taking up space is an act of resistance when we know space for marginalized people is being threatened or decreased in many ways.

FemFest NL Coordinator Role

My role during my internship with the St. John's Status of Women Council was as FemFest NL Coordinator, working with the FemFest NL Organizing Committee. This role pertained to the general coordination and development of conference and festival events, leading up to FemFest NL. My duties and responsibilities were broad. They included administrative tasks, such as managing the FemFest NL e-mail account, social media management, creating and

regularly updating the FemFest NL schedule of events, and managing, receiving, and responding to the call for submissions. My work involved community networking and seeking contributions from those who had professional and lived experience with safety, accessibility, inclusion and representation, and event organizing. I recruited, organized, and sought training for the FemFest NL Volunteer Team.

I was responsible for seeking (albeit not always successfully) various kinds of funding and donations. This included donated goods from local businesses for over 65 swag bags to give to all participants and performers in recognizing their time, expertise, and energy. I spent a lot of time looking at and working to improve the venue spaces; not only based on primary accessibility priorities, but also in terms of setting up lighting, seating, supplies for washrooms, and all other essential supports (outlined in Accessibility Plan). I explored opportunities to have a local food truck at FemFest NL events, assisted with the design and ordering of promotional materials and FemFest NL swag, and participated in media interviews about FemFest NL. Additionally, I wrote the Safer Spaces Policy and Accessibility Plan, with significant collaboration and contributions from Kathy Hawkins and Taylor Stocks, which I will detail in Sections three and four. Furthermore, I was responsible for the day-to-day trouble shooting, coordination, communicating, organizing, and setting up and taking down of materials during the events of FemFest NL.

FemFest NL Organizing Committee

The organizing committee behind FemFest NL was made up of community members, local

non-profit organization staff members, activists, and students. The organizing committee gathered after an initial call in to the community, initiated by Jenny Wright; the Executive Director of the St. John's Status of Women Council and my workplace internship supervisor. Jenny was inspired by FemFest Ireland, which was a feminist festival hosted by the National Women's Council of Ireland, and she thought that Newfoundland and Labrador might need a FemFest of their own. Through the various media platforms on which the St. John's Status of Women Council is present, Jenny invited all community organizations, and any people from across the province who were interested in generating a local FemFest to come to the table for an initial organizing committee meeting.

The primary organizations on board who held longstanding roles on the committee were the St. John's Status of Women Council, Safe Harbour Outreach Project, Smash Patriarchy: An Action Team, and the St. John's Native Friendship Centre. It is important to recognize that the committee work was broad and fluid and expanded beyond these groups. Students and community members who weren't representing larger entities played a huge role on the organizing committee and held longstanding roles. Moreover, some community organizations contributed in ways when they had the capacity to and for various periods of time, including Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador and the St. John's International Women's Film Festival. In many ways, I attribute the fluidity of our committee work to the under-funded, under-resourced nature of non-profit organizations, and the fact that many people doing feminist community work are so often students, or are simultaneously working other jobs, and often volunteering their time and energy to other committees.

It's also very important that I mention a lot of work on FemFest NL happened by

community collaboration, and that the work done by people who did not sit on the organizing committee was crucial to the success of our events. Our community partners were varied, and include Newfoundland Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, who were on our Volunteer Team and who shaped our Safe Crew. Kathy Hawkins of Inclusion NL for Everyone, and Taylor Stocks - who is a current director on the Trans Needs committee, and an active member of the City of St. John's Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee - worked diligently with me on the Safer Spaces Policy. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind of Newfoundland and Labrador provided education and support for clearing paths and delivered free Sighted Guide training for FemFest NL organizers and volunteers. The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association of Newfoundland and Labrador lent us a listening device for all four days of FemFest NL events. Perfect Day Design Studio in St. John's designed the FemFest NL feminist pledges for free, and Pink Eye Press printed them to be sold at FemFest NL events. As I stated previously, the hands on, collaborative, community work that happened behind FemFest NL reflects non-profit work, feminist organizing, and interning in a larger context.

Section 2

Literature Review

In this brief literature review, I will highlight some of the key pieces of literature that informed my work during my internship. To begin, I look to literature on interning and internships within a broader context of gender studies internships in Canada. I also utilize the term grassroots associations in order to define the FemFest NL Organizing Committee and how the committee functioned. Lastly, I review work that outlines non-profit feminist organizations, in understanding the role of the St. John's Status of Women Council in my internship.

Internships

In situating the role of internships from a socio-historical perspective, I look to Vicki Smith. Smith asserts that internships emerged in the early 19th century in the United States, responding to the increase of professional degree programs and the corresponding need to prepare students for their designated workforce. Smith illustrates that within the contemporary workforce, internships in small businesses and non-profits are relatively new. Furthermore, Smith articulates that statistics show, in all fields, young women are most likely to occupy internship positions (909).

In "Unpaid and Critically Engaged: Feminist Interns in the Nonprofit Industrial Complex", Nan Alamilla Boyd and Jillian Sandell offer that feminist internships are an opportunity to bridge the gap between academia and the surrounding community (251). This piece reflects on how university students in undergraduate and graduate Gender Studies programs have completed internships in their local non-profit community organizations in attempts to blend feminist theory

and practice. The positive outcome of interning is identified as students having the opportunity to embody and put into practice many of the conceptual theories they have studied in their academic work on campus. This article is incredibly pertinent to my role as intern in this program, as I would argue that my internship worked to fulfill this opportunity as well. Boyd and Sandell's work situates interns within the un-paid labour sector of the broader community, while holding membership in the academic community. Boyd and Sandell's theories are relevant; both in situating me and my internship within the larger context of feminist internships, and reinforcing how internships do in fact embody the work being done to blend theory and practice.

Similarly, in "Feminist Theory/Practice Pedagogies in a Shifting Political Climate" Karen Tice presents the multifaceted benefits of student internships in Gender Studies programs. Tice articulates how opportunities for students to engage in grassroots projects and feminist organizations are integral to supporting their roles as community citizens and activists; and as such serve both the students and their communities (207). Tice's stance supports the work I have mentioned in that interning embodies both feminist theoretical ideologies and feminist practices of work and activism in community-based initiatives, in feminist workplaces, and in non-profit organizations.

Immersing theoretical constructs from an academic lens with the day-to-day practices of interning in a non-profit feminist organization is not always straight forward. Often, resources - funding, staffing, time - are limited, and therefore utilized strategically to accomplish as much as possible. In many cases, this creates parameters for the work we might have planned or hoped to do. Certainly, for me these parameters manifested as realistic perspectives about doing hands-on work in community organizing in non-profit organizations. However, interning in the hard-

working, supportive, and create environment of a feminist organization, employing concepts such as safety, inclusion, and accessibility in concrete and meaningful ways was entirely possible. Being both cognizant of the reality of resources and access, and efficient in how I navigated them, is a way in which I worked to blend theory and practice in my internship. I will expand upon these challenges and constraints throughout my report, and specifically in the Conclusion chapter.

Non-profit Feminist Organizations

Prior to my internship, I evaluated what has been said about feminist non-profit organizations, the work that they do, and their struggles. J. Felicio, Helena Goncalves, and Vitor Goncalves define non-profit social organizations (NPSOs) as small and medium sized organizations predominantly existing in urban centres that work to address societal issues (2139). NPSOs usually operate under highly constrictive financial constraints; they operate based on government grants and funding, public and private donations, and volunteer work (Felicio, Goncalves and Goncalves 2140). Additionally, Patricia Yancey Martin defines feminist organizations as pro-woman, political, socially transformational, and enduring groups of people who are working towards collectively structured goals (184-185).

Drawing on these definitions, I understand feminist non-profit organizations as under-funded collectives of people who are working under a specific feminist mandate to support women's rights and working to create social change. Under this definition, the St. John's Status of Women Council's mandate represents them as an NPSO. Arguably, so too does the work that

I've done with them on the FemFest NL organizing committee. It is worth noting that while a review of the literature about non-profit organizations is valuable, based on my internship experience I argue that it is most valuable and comprehensive to learn about an organization, their working philosophies, missions, and struggles through actually working with them.

Grassroots Associations

I have referred to the FemFest NL organizing committee as a Grassroots Association (GA) based on David Horton-Smith's theory of GA organizations, which recognizes the role committees such as this so often occupy in political and activist work, and the impacts they can have on their social surroundings. Horton-Smith's theory holds that GAs are locally based autonomous groups, which are composed of volunteers and, sometimes, nonprofit group members; GAs are entirely not-for-profit and run by a committed and structured group of volunteers. It is important to note that members of GAs are often staff of paid non-profit organizations, but much of the work involved with their GA goes beyond their roles and schedules in their non-profit jobs (Horton-Smith 273). It is also worth noting that GAs are often less hierarchical than some non-profit organizations, as members tend to be committed to the association and share duties based on their interests and capabilities, rather than based on a job title or salary (Horton-Smith 274).

Echoing Horton-Smith's theory, and as outlined in Section 1, the FemFest NL organizing committee was made up of volunteers, and non-profit organization staff members. Also, students and community members who weren't representing a larger entity played a huge role on the committee, and some non-profit community organizations contributed in ways when they had the

capacity to, and for different periods of time. I attribute the fluidity of our committee work largely to the under-funded, under-resourced nature of non-profit organizations that Horton-Smith discusses. What's more, I believe that many people doing feminist community work are often students, or are working other jobs, and volunteering their time and energy to other committees as grassroots associations like the FemFest NL organizing committee. As such, I've used Horton-Smith's working definition of grassroots associations to situate the work of the FemFest NL organizing committee within community feminist organizing.

I believe recognizing my position as an intern in the wider contexts and histories of internships and student work with feminist non-profit organizations was integral to understanding my role and my work with the St. John's Status of Women Council. Even more, in doing internship and non-profit feminist work, I think it's crucial to be cognizant of how our work contributes to our social community and how it contributes to political activism work.

Section 3

Safety

As one of the pillars of my Internship Goals and Workplan, the concept of safety and safer spaces guided much of my workload and responsibilities on the FemFest NL organizing committee. The FemFest NL Safer Spaces Policy was created as a means to prioritize and designate FemFest NL events as safer spaces, and particularly to communicate these priorities in an accessible manner. Additionally, as part of our volunteer team, a Safe Crew was recruited and designated specifically as a resource for people at all FemFest NL events to seek support or assistance if they needed it. Much like all FemFest NL work and coordination, the Safer Spaces Policy and Safe Crew happened through collaborative efforts.

Safer Spaces Policy

The Safer Spaces Policy was one piece of work that was integral to my role and one of my internship goals, which was to work to make FemFest NL events safer spaces for participants, attendees, organizers, and volunteers⁶. The policy was drafted as an adaptation of the Black Futures Now Toronto's Safer Spaces Policy for one of their recent conference events⁷. This model was relevant to FemFest NL's events because it prioritized marginalized voices and experiences, encouraged community engagement and interaction, and overall echoed the FemFest NL mandate. Upon adapting this policy to fit the mandate and parameters of FemFest NL, I asked Taylor Stocks to assess the draft. Taylor is a current director on the Trans Needs

⁶ See Appendix E for the FemFest NL Safer Spaces Policy

⁷ See Appendix F for the Black Futures Now Toronto Safer Spaces Policy

committee, and an active member of the City of St. John’s Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee, and is an inclusion activist with experience working on policy and programming. I am incredibly grateful for the significant contributions Taylor offered to the development of FemFest NL’s Safer Spaces Policy. After receiving Taylor’s feedback, I brought the latest draft to the organizing committee, who also had lots of important suggestions.

The Oxford English Dictionary offers that a safe space is “a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other physical or emotional harm”. Similarly, we as the FemFest NL organizing committee used The Safe Space Network’s definition of safe spaces to inform this policy. Their definition explains that:

A Safe Space is a place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age or physical or mental ability.

The Safe Space Network

This definition is thorough, inclusive, and representative of the significance of safety for community-based events. However, we also recognized the significance in what The Safe Space Network goes on to say, that “no space is entirely safe or free of oppression” (TSSN). To honour that the work to create safety is continual, that no space is ever undoubtedly safe, and that safety looks different for everyone, we opted to purposefully use the term ‘safer’ in reference to the safety of spaces, echoing the language of the Black Futures Now Toronto policy.⁸ In recognizing that we were not the experts on safety, and that being safe looks and feels different for everyone, we could only work towards creating *safer* spaces with input from as many people as possible.

⁸ See Appendix F for the Black Futures Now Toronto Safer Spaces Policy

With that in mind, it was very important to all people involved that this policy be a continual work in progress. To embody this priority, we had several large blank sheets of paper hung throughout the venues where we asked people to write about what makes spaces feel safer for them. Many people did share what they value in safer spaces, such as having washrooms closer to the main rooms, being able to see exits more clearly and at all times, and having pronoun tags available for people in attendance. The larger ideas about venue safety were important and noted for future reference, and happily, we were able to pick up pronoun tags for the remaining three days of FemFest NL events upon reading the posters at the end of day one.

We wanted to communicate in our Safer Spaces Policy that compassion is essential in helping others feel safe. Similarly, that working to be understanding of one another is crucial in creating spaces for voices and experiences of those who are often marginalized, and that this means sharing space in ways that might feel different for some people. Most of all, the goal of the Safer Spaces Policy was to create a welcoming environment for anyone in the community who wished to attend any or all FemFest NL events, or who were involved in any capacity. We reiterated again through this means that the work we did was a learning process, and we wanted to invite people to learn with us. We shared the Safer Spaces Policy on all of our social media platforms, and had copies available in various print sizes and at different locations within the FemFest NL venues throughout the festival.

Safe Crew

An essential part of our volunteer team was the Safe Crew. Our Safe Crew were available and onsite during all FemFest NL events, and were identifiable by their large nametags, and also as they identified themselves to the crowd at the beginning of each event. The volunteers who were on the Safe Crew were staff members, or volunteers of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre (NLSACPC), who had done thorough training. Many of the Safe Crew volunteers also had experience holding roles of Safe Crew members at other community events in the past. Primarily, their role was to be onsite and available during events for anyone who identified or showed signs of needing assistance, or support. Many Safe Crew members told me or other committee members after FemFest NL events that they had supported people in various ways when they asked for support, and did frequent check-ins with people who they thought might need assistance. The NLSACPC is an organization that did not sit on the organizing committee, but offered invaluable resources and expertise to the success of FemFest NL events, primarily in form of the Safe Crew volunteers.

Section 4

Accessibility

Another major pillar guiding the coordination of FemFest NL, both as a feminist festival and as a series of community-based events, was accessibility. While accessibility is often a concept used to understand and evaluate the credibility or intersectionality of feminist practices, my work on accessibility quickly became a tangible lens for viewing social and physical spaces. This aspect of coordination was arguably one of the most important experiences for me. Working to increase accessibility highlighted many challenges for my work, and provided very real insight to the barriers that exists for so many people navigating essential services in our community. However, it was also very exciting to create and share an Accessibility Plan for FemFest NL. I believe Accessibility Plans should be mandatory to communicate clearly both the supports and barriers that exist pertaining to any event or location. In this sense, although this piece was disheartening, it was also somewhat groundbreaking and worth highlighting.

Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan⁹ for FemFest NL was created as a resource to share essential information to the community about the location of FemFest NL events, the physical layout and structure of the venues, alternate formats, and additional supports that would be available during events. This includes outlining exact information pertaining to the entrance ways, washroom size and maneuverability, floor positioning, and parking. We included several photos in our

⁹ See Appendix G for the FemFest NL Accessibility Plan

Accessibility Plan to better depict some of the major physical barriers at the venues. What's more, the Accessibility Plan includes detailed description of the availability of: informal American Sign Language interpretive services, water bowls for service animals, the hearing amplification device, one-on-one closed captioning, our Safe Crew and Inclusion Crew, and food and drink during events. The committee published the Accessibility Plan prior to the kick-off of FemFest NL on the St. John's Status of Women Council website. We then shared this link on all of our social media platforms, and posted printed copies of the Accessibility Plan throughout the venues for viewing during FemFest NL events.

The Accessibility Plan was created in collaboration with Inclusion NL Manager, Kathy Hawkins. Kathy provided major contributions to shaping the content and layout of the Accessibility Plan, and with her valuable knowledge and experience, the Accessibility Plan became a thorough and credible resource. Additionally, Kathy's team at Inclusion NL provided alternate formats of the FemFest NL schedule of events, including a copy in braille, and a recorded mp3 version, which were available in weeks leading up to and during events. Furthermore, based on the suggestion of Inclusion NL, I created a copy of the schedule of events in large print to have available during events. The FemFest NL committee is incredibly grateful for Inclusion NL's significant support of FemFest NL.

Challenges

In spite of the pride I have connected to the FemFest NL Accessibility Plan, and the gratitude I have for Inclusion NL's crucial collaboration in its creation, it is important to recognize how the Accessibility Plan is reflective of the barriers that FemFest NL presented as a

public community event, and the lack of services available in general. For example, in beautiful, old cities like St. John's, downtown buildings prove to be incredibly difficult and often unsafe to navigate when considering varying levels of mobility and movement. Additionally, it was astonishing to discover that in a primary downtown parking lot that held approximately one hundred parking spaces, there were zero designated blue zone accessible parking spots.

Most of all, seeking funding to support essential services was the most problematic challenge in my work on accessibility. The funding to support non-profit organizations of community groups to arrange essential services, such as American Sign Language interpretive services, is limited, and in my experience, was not available. In the process of seeking funding to support the accessibility of FemFest NL events, I learned that it was naive to attempt, within four months, to apply for, or be granted, several thousands of dollars to arrange essential services. I am hopeful that securing funding to support such services would be possible if working within a larger time-frame. Essentially, this piece of work in my internship was a case of how employing theory in a hands-on way isn't always achievable.

In discussions of feminist accessibility politics, Nancy J Hirschmann states that gender and disability injustices are deeply and systemically tied (397). As such, Hirschmann goes on to say that in a public social context, some bodies are facilitated, and other bodies are disabled (398). These processes of facilitating and disabling persist predominantly through the frameworks of systemically normalized ways of access; to social services, social spaces, language, employment, etc. Similarly, Jenny Morris points out that as a result of dominating white feminism, white, middle-class, able-bodied people are prioritized as the social norm - and when people and their needs fall outside of this limited identity, they are subjected as separate from the general public

(58). These theories outline and reinforce the systemic difficulties of navigating accessibility and inclusion in community spaces.

In understanding this approach and my work around accessibility, the challenges experienced during my internship ring true. The theories that I have outlined surrounding feminism, community organizing, and abilities have accurately portrayed the rooted challenges of making FemFest NL events fully and widely accessible. The theoretical underpinnings of accessibility weren't fully realized in FemFest NL events and the work leading up to it, largely due to practical barriers of doing community based, feminist work, and the barriers of ablest policies in built environments. Nonetheless, this exemplifies how the practice of feminist work and theories that drive it can work to mutually inform one another. Moreover, the struggles that arise from putting theory to work can emphasize major flaws in our systems, and in the lack of resources available to those doing grassroots, community work in concrete ways.

Section 5

Inclusion and Representation

Alongside safety and accessibility, inclusion and representation were important theoretical and practical pieces of work that shaped my internship. In some ways, inclusion and representation went hand-in-hand during the planning, organizing and curating of events within FemFest NL as a feminist festival in St. John's. Our deliberate efforts to be engaged with what subjects, voices, and opportunities we could offer and create a platform for during FemFest NL guided the organizing committee's work in planning the festival events. Being both inclusive and representational of our community and province were essential elements in selecting submissions, building an Inclusion Crew, and our community collaborations. As such, inclusion and representation informed my work and that of the organizing committee leading up to FemFest NL.

Inclusion Crew

Within our volunteer team, the Inclusion Crew played a significant role in the success of FemFest NL events, and reinforcing accessibility to the supports we had available. The Inclusion Crew were available and responsible to assist with navigation or mobility of festival attendees who may have needed support getting to washrooms, exits, or making their way down some of the longer, winding hallways. Inclusion Crew volunteers also offered closed captioning services and alternate formats of the event schedule and information to those who needed it, they offered pronoun and name tags to attendees, and provided water and food bowls to service animals. The

idea to create a specific subsection of our volunteer team to be the Inclusion Crew was suggested and shaped by Kathy Hawkins of Inclusion NL.

Another community organization that wasn't on the organizing committee but that lent huge support to FemFest organizers was Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). Early in the event planning stages for FemFest NL events, I sought input and feedback from Duane Morgan of CNIB. Duane offered invaluable advice about clearing paths in public spaces, and referred me to informative resources¹⁰ to help make communal spaces more inclusive in this sense. Later in August, when our volunteer team was established and had chosen roles to fill during events, Susan Tobin of CNIB provided free Sighted Guide training to committee members and volunteers. This training was inherently valuable to educating us all around support and awareness for those who need assistance in navigating community spaces. The collaborative input offered by CNIB was integral to the work and success of the Inclusion Crew at FemFest NL, and contributed significantly to our efforts pertaining to inclusion and representation.

Submission Selection

The committee was cognizant of who we largely wouldn't be able to include and represent adequately, by hosting FemFest NL in St. John's on the Avalon peninsula – namely Labrador, many rural regions across province such as Central Newfoundland, the West Coast, Fogo Island, etc. Due to the vast and disperse geography of Newfoundland and Labrador, the costs and resources that would associated with making FemFest NL accessible outside of the urban capital wouldn't be feasible. Again, this struggle harkens back to the challenges of blending theory and

¹⁰<http://www.clearingourpath.ca/>

practice in the midst of realistic constraints. With this in mind, we wanted to be as inclusive and representational as we could with our limited resources; particularly time and funding. We were thoughtful about representation especially with the submission selection, because that was something we felt we could manage well in spite of limited resources. The committee was overwhelmed with a multitude of submissions; from folks across the province, of diverse content, in various mediums of presentation. The committee accepted almost all submissions, for a total of over sixty-five presenters during FemFest NL.

We were thrilled to be able to offer a platform for such a wide array of presentations and events. The organizing committee worked both conceptually and practically with representation to purposefully make space for people whose spaces are often threatened and marginalized to talk about their lived experience. This priority is alluded to in our preliminary Call for Submissions,¹¹ and similarly in our Safer Spaces Policy.¹² Our events included hearing from and about sex workers, deaf women, intergenerational feminism, women who were at the time incarcerated in the Clarenville Correctional Facility for Women, science and technology, politics and leadership, Indigenous women, women from Labrador, musicians, performance art, midwifery, gender experiences, and more. Presenters throughout FemFest NL were aged from seventeen to seventy years. Events contents were developed and based around academic research, political work, experiential knowledge through work, authorship, incarceration, social media, homelessness, sexual harassment and assault, gender oppression, leadership, and living as feminists. Mediums through which presenters conveyed their event content included powerpoint

¹¹ See Appendix C for the FemFest NL Call for Submissions

¹² See Appendix E for the FemFest NL Safer Spaces Policy

slides, slam poetry, film and video, American Sign Language, dance, art exhibitions, and song.

This process of working to employ representation and inclusion through the submission selection, and therefore the content of FemFest NL, was again very much a practice of blending theory and practice. As such, intersectional theory must be noted in discussions of representation as well. Intersectional theory at its core denotes that systems of power cannot be isolated in understanding oppressions and inequality, and considers multiple and various categories of identity in understanding oppression and privilege (Bright et al. 62). In a practical sense, Devon Carbado, Kimberle Crenshaw, Vicki Mays and Barbara Tomlison say that no applications of intersectionality can ever really grasp how systemic power plagues our social world, but that a mutual acknowledgement of differences and oppression are essential in recognizing how struggles are linked (305-306). In turn, Carbado et. al denote that practically engaging intersectionality is a work in progress because it is fluid, on-going, and the work to recognize and work to support our varying levels of oppression and access is never finished.

Reflecting on these aspects of my internship work, I feel as though working through inclusion and representation was predominantly an effective theory and practice conjunction. Especially, echoing the voices of Carbado et. al, as an intersectionality - *intern*-sectionality? - work in progress, my work on inclusion and representation was rooted in intersectional feminism. It felt incredibly validating to be able to employ my theoretical understandings of intersectionality and representation in a meaningful, public way. The goal to do this in my internship was driven by my interest in integrating academia and community work. With that said, the ability to make this happen in my internship is owed to my incredible coworkers and the

team at the St. John's Status of Women Council and St. John's Women's Centre, the strong community partners I relied on and worked with, the support of the Gender Studies Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and finally the creative and diverse presenters who responded to our initial call for submissions.

Section 6

Conclusion

This report has outlined the work I did interning with the St. John's Status of Women Council, in my role as Coordinator working with the FemFest NL Organizing Committee. FemFest NL was four-day community feminist festival, celebrating and highlighting feminisms in Newfoundland and Labrador in late August of 2016. The organizing committee worked for months with community organizations and programs, individuals, and with a full volunteer team to collaboratively create and facilitate the events of FemFest NL. Our aim was to build a low-barrier, inclusive, community feminist festival which prioritized and centred the voices of women and people who experience gender oppression. FemFest NL was a celebration of feminism in Newfoundland and Labrador - an opportunity to take up space, and most of all, a significant learning opportunity for feminist communities.

My work ultimately centred around safety, accessibility, inclusion and representation and encompassed many tasks and duties as my internship unfolded. The connections I fostered with community contributors were invaluable; these collaborations fuelled my coordination work and were crucial to the success of FemFest NL. In this conclusion I will outline some of my core reflections post-FemFest NL, including my perspective on the major challenges and major successes in my internship work.

Challenges

Working with a committee proved to be challenging in some regards. Particularly, when it came to collective decision making with a diverse group of passionate people, where tension can often grow. Even small pieces of work - such as selecting the image for a button, or a font choice for a banner - can highlight creative differences. What I found to be interesting is that in these small conflicts, the power dynamics of the committee seemed to be more visible. Ultimately, the committee members and organizations that consistently showed up and engaged with the work, and the organizations who had resources invested in the work, held more power and tended to have a more significant impact on decisions. Reflecting on this aspect of committee work highlights some of the internal struggles of Grassroots Associations (Horton-Smith), and the FemFest NL organizing committee as a GA.

Another significant challenge for me, and for the rest of the committee, was accepting and responding to important critical feedback from our communities post FemFest NL events. Specifically, we learned that folks felt unwelcomed by the gendering of our closing event - the women's only space at the Fifth Ticket piano bar. In the early stages of planning and organizing, the committee spent hours thoughtfully and heatedly discussing the idea of women's-only spaces in our community, particularly in downtown night life events, and how and if they fit with our visioning for FemFest NL. Because our committee had different backgrounds, opinions and experiences as they related to gendered spaces, we eventually decided to create as many barrier-free, open to the public events, as possible. Our only exception to this, was the closing event at a downtown piano bar, which took place in the evening and where there was both music and

alcohol present. Many folks who are non-binary, and not women-identified, felt that this was an unfair barrier, and an anti-feminist decision on behalf of the FemFest NL organizing committee.

Initially this criticism felt hurtful in some ways, namely because the committee as a whole had worked tirelessly to create what we had hoped would be an exhaustively inclusive and welcoming feminist space that felt as safe for our community. However, I believe that listening and accepting *all* feedback from folks in our community is important; it reinforces the need for events like FemFest NL - because we all still have work to do. Through this process I have learned that to engage in community work, it is very much a practice in being grounded and listening, recognizing that we are not all-knowing, and never done learning from each other. As a result of working through this challenge as a committee, and individually, I feel more than ever that we must value the collective input of all voices in our feminist community. Moreover, to do so productively I believe we must continue to work through openness, respectful communication, and prioritizing a willingness to work together.

Successes

Additionally, one of the major successes of my internship work that stands out to me is the work we did to spend time with, create with, and represent the voices of incarcerated women in Newfoundland and Labrador. For all four days of FemFest NL, the Rogue Gallery (within Eastern Edge Gallery in St. John's) displayed a collection of artwork made by women who were incarcerated in the Clarenville Correctional Centre for Women (CCCW). This collection of pieces was made through Safe Harbour Outreach Project (S.H.O.P) and The Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre's (NLSACPC) in-reach programming

work with incarcerated women. Staff from S.H.O.P. and NLSACPC assisted in the curation of this gallery, with the consent of and input from incarcerated women who made the art pieces. In preparation for this exhibition, I travelled with staff from Safe Harbour Outreach Project and the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre to CCCW for the day, and participated in art-making programming with women. On this day we spent time talking about what feminism means to us all, what womanhood means, what are things we want for our future - both collectively as women, and individually.

Being able to talk about what we had been working on leading up to FemFest NL with incarcerated women, have their input and feedback, and explain how their artwork would be featured in a gallery in downtown St. John's was a very meaningful experience. While it was difficult to share plans about FemFest NL and knowing that many of these women would not or could not attend, it was powerful to have these kinds of tough and inspiring conversations; and of course, to finally see the fruition of this day through a beautiful exhibit at the Rogue gallery that was viewed by the public. This aspect of putting theory into practice, and employing ideas of representation and inclusion in very real ways felt like an important success.

Finally, the overwhelming number of people who attended FemFest NL, the verbal and written feedback from participants, volunteers, and attendees counted as a significant success. Many folks identified their feelings of excitement, inspiration, motivation, and a collective sense of unity and peer support during and after FemFest NL events. In that sense, many of the initial goals and aspirations that drove FemFest NL were realized. While there are countless logistical aspects of event coordination, fund-seeking, and collaborative efforts that I would encourage to

be done differently in the future - the positive feedback from those who were involved and attended FemFest NL events is worth noting and celebrating!

Final Reflections

Working with the St. John's Status of Women Council throughout my internship as Coordinator with the FemFest NL organizing committee has been a productive and rewarding exercise in community collaboration. The process of committee work, community networking, and seeking input and knowledge from those who are experts in their field of professional and personal lived experience has been deeply informative, and rooted in grassroots feminist community work.

Through my internship work I have grown to have a better understanding of and deep respect for non-profit community work, and the creativity and tenacity of chronically under-funded feminist organizations. My work allowed me to develop a richer lens around accessibility and inclusion; specifically in recognizing the chronic lack of resources and services for folks in our community with a diverse range of mobility and ability, and how under-funded services and programs have real impacts on people's access to dignity and human rights as community citizens.

Most of all, my internship work with the St. John's Status of Women Council, and the FemFest NL organizing committee, reinforced that feminism can be different, and practiced differently, for all of us. There is significant diversity within feminist communities, and that we need to work diligently to de-colonize our feminisms, and shed light on the diversity there-within. Not only does feminism need diversity - it is worth celebrating. Finally, through a multitude of work during my internship, collectively my experiences solidified that feminism is

hard, but *feminism is necessary*.

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Appendix A: St. John's Status of Women Council Mandate and Information

ACTIVISM + FEMINISM + COMMUNITY

The St. John's Status of Women Council/Women's Centre is a feminist organization that since 1972 is continually working to achieve equality and justice through political activism, community collaboration and the creation of a safe and inclusive space for all women in the St. John's area.



WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT:

FEMINISM
SEX WORKER RIGHTS
ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
WAGE PARITY AND CHILDCARE
INCREASING WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP
COMMUNITY
ACTIVISM

Appendix B: Internship Goals and Work Plan

Internship Goals and Workplan Bridget Clarke

Master of Gender Studies Internship
FemFest NL Conference Coordinator, St. John's Status of Women Council

In fulfilling a requirement of the Master of Gender Studies program at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I will complete an internship during the 2016 summer semester. My internship will be executed through working primarily with the St. John's Status of Women Council, in collaboration with other local organizations which make up the FemFest NL organizing committee. Together, this committee will coordinate the first-ever feminist community conference in Newfoundland and Labrador, FemFest NL, to be held in August of 2016.

The mandate of the conference is to explore feminism(s) within Newfoundland and Labrador. Through this conference, the committee aims to look at how the feminist community in Newfoundland and Labrador can and will move forward; how the feminist community can work and be well, and create change. FemFest NL is a series of five day, feminist based, women-centered, community events. While my administrative and organization duties will pertain to the entire 5 days of FemFest, in my role as Conference Coordinator I will specifically be working on the two-day FemFest NL conference, which will be held on Saturday August 27th and Sunday August 28th.

My internship goals are two-fold: based on my role as conference coordinator, my goals are to facilitate the development of safety and accessibility of events, and work to ensure representation and intersectionality are precedent in content and attendance for the 2-day conference events during FemFest NL. My internship goals are built around coordination and organization of the two-day conference, safety and accessibility of the spaces our events will occupy, representation in participation of people living outside of St. John's, and intersectionality in our invitation and platforming of voices in the conference events. Through my internship goals and workplan, I intend to reflect on issues such as safety and accessibility in feminist organizing, the occupation of community space, and how minimal/non-funded resources affect grassroots and non-profit feminist work as key aspects directly impacting my ability to reach these goals. The duties listed below are those which shape my internship, and that pertain to the realization of my internship goals.

Coordination: Attending FemFest NL committee meetings, taking minutes, contacting speakers, organizing panels, and managing the FemFest NL e-mail account.

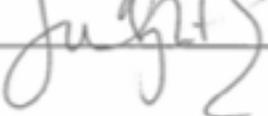
Safety/Accessibility: Evaluate, improve, and make precedent the safety and accessibility of The Space, and other spaces where events take place during the two-day conference. This will include assessing the safety and accessibility of bathrooms, work to determine the possibility of a gender-neutral bathroom, recruit a trained team of Safe People who will be available throughout the days for people needing assistance with triggering content or topics of discussion, ensure that

the events of the two-day conference are as accessible as possible for people of varying mobility, and of various socio-economic background.

Representation: Work towards seeking out funding opportunities for the possibility of offering assistance with transportation fees for people living throughout the province (outside of St. John's) to attend the two-day conference.

Intersectionality: Invite voices, experiences, and input from Feminist groups and organizations in Labrador. Employ a critical lens to shape the invitation and facilitation process, groups, speakers, panels etc.; in recognition of the multi-dimensionality of oppression and power, and how it exists and in feminism(s) in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have read and agree to this internship workplan:

Bridget Clarke  _____
Jenny Wright  _____

Appendix C: FemFest NL Call for Submissions

FemFestNL is a weeklong festival of all things feminist, including concerts, film screenings, readings – to be held at different venues throughout St. John's in August – including a two-day conference at The Space! We are asking you to help shape the festival and conference through a call for submissions!

When: August 25th - 28th 2016

Where: The Space, Harbour Drive, St. John's

Who we are: A committee of feminist organizations, students and activists who are organizing FemFest NL – a feminist festival to take place in St. John's. It will be carried out from Aug 25th – 28th, 2016 throughout the city with a two-day conference (Aug 27th & 28th) with panel discussions and lectures, to happen at The Space. For this festival, we will be accepting proposals for events based around feminist issues related to Newfoundland and Labrador. We welcome submissions from all women (trans, intersex and cis), all those who experience gendered oppression (including non-binary and gender non-conforming people) and all those who identify as women for the purpose of political organizing. The conference events will be open to everyone.

What we would like from you: Your name and/or group/organization with a short two sentence biography, proposed topic, session type (panel, lecture, workshop, roundtable, etc.), length of session, and how many speakers (and their names and short biographies if already planned). We are looking for ideas and topics related to Newfoundland and Labrador feminism to build the conference and festival around and to gauge what our community would like to explore.

Submissions open from **March 30th, 2016 until April 30, 2016.**

Please submit your idea to: **nlfemfest@gmail.com**

Appendix D: FemFest NL Schedule of Events

Thursday August 25th

Opening Night

7:00 p.m. at The Space - **Coopy Down: Feminist Arts and Performance**, hosted by Ruth Lawrence

Eastern Owl

Vagina Monologues: Local Perspective, with VDay St. John's

Connecting Bodies: Music Performance, Femininity, and Body Mapping, with Gabriela Sanchez and Corie Harnett

Slam Poetry, with Emily Carrigan

Friday August 26th

4:00 p.m. at Eastern Edge Gallery - **Feminisms {Re}Framed Opening Reception**, hosted by Zaren Healey-White and Alexandra Fox

5:00 p.m. at Eastern Edge Gallery - **Gendered Spaces: Exploring gender and feminism**, hosted by MUN Gender Studies Society, with Taylor Stocks, TJ Jones, Dane Woodland, Gemma Hickey, Rachel Hewitt, and Sara Pinsent & moderated by Heather Jarvis

7:00 p.m. at The Space - **Women's Writes: Readings and discussion on Feminist Literature**, hosted by Elisabeth de Mariaffi with Sharon Bala, Andreae Callanan, Megan Gail Coles, and Lisa Moore

Saturday August 27th

Weekend Conference begins

11:00 a.m. Doors open at The Space

11:30 a.m. - Social Media and Activism:

Using Social Media for Activism, with Karla Hayward, Mandy Woodland, and Karen Moores

Women Online: Personal Experience Narrative in Online Feminist Activism with Zaren Healey-White

Panel discussion moderated by Jenny Wright

1:15 p.m. - **Sharing Stories of Strength: Celebrating Inuit Women's Leadership in Nunatsiavut**, with Andrea Procter and Tracy Ann Evans-Rice

3:30 p.m. - **Sex Work and Feminism: Tumultuous Bed Fellows**, with local sex workers and sex worker allies & moderated by Safe Harbour Outreach Project

6:00 p.m. at The Space - Networking and Drinks

7:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker: Laura Winters, Program Coordinator of Safe Harbour Outreach Project (SHOP)

"Resistance on the Rock: Feminism and Fight Back in NL"

Sunday August 28th

9:00 a.m. Doors open at The Space

9:30 a.m. - Midwifery and Infant Feeding:

Feminism and Midwifery, with Melissa Pike

Midwifery in Newfoundland and Labrador, with Jillian Ashick-Stinson

Shame and Modesty: The experiences of Newfoundland grandmothers in relation to infant feeding, with Felicie Young

Tongue-tie and the Breastfeeding Dyad: Mothers' and birthing parents' experiences and emotional well-being, with Jillian Waterman

Mother Knows Best: how mothers make the most of their infant feeding experiences, with Christina Doonan

Panel discussion moderated by Dr. Kelly Monaghan

11:30 a.m. - Fem Talks

Casual Sexism, with Elizabeth Tuck

Empowering Deaf Women, with Jennifer Rimmer

1:30 p.m. - **Feminist Science and Technology**, with Max Liboiron and Emily Wells

3:00 p.m. - **Through Broken Glass: Women in Politics and Leadership**, with Lynn Hammond and Sheilagh O'Leary

Sunday concurrent events at Eastern Edge

9:30 a.m. - **Women and Homelessness in NL**, with Amanda Devlin, Amelia Reimer, Ashton Wen, Jenni MacPherson, and Laura Winters, moderated by Abigail Sheppard

11:00 a.m. - **Exploring Indigenous Feminism**, with Amelia Reimer, Odelle Pike, and Susan Onalik, moderated by Jenelle Duval

1:30 p.m. - **Tiny Murders: Micro-Aggressions in the Workplace**, with Connie Pike & Shelby Wright, moderated by Dr. Catherine De Boer

3:00 p.m. - **Intergenerational Feminism**, with Avi Kaur Cheema, Maria Peddle, Jenny Wright, and Joyce Hancock, moderated by Jess Barry

Closing Night Event

6:00 p.m. at Fifth Ticket Piano Bar - featuring Eastern Owl

Venue Locations:

The Space & Eastern Edge Gallery - 72 Harbour Drive, St. John's

The Fifth Ticket - 171 Water Street, St. John's



FEMFESTNL SAFER SPACE POLICY

FemFest NL has made an explicit decision to prioritize voices of people who experience oppression, to challenge oppressive culture, and emphasize the empowerment of margin-alized individuals. FemFest NL events and all affiliated programming is a designated safer space. FemFest NL is dedicated to making all of our events a safer space for all women and anyone who has experienced gender oppression; particularly Indigenous women, women of colour, LGBTQI2S+ folks, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

According to the Safe Space Network, a Safe Space is a place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express themselves, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, physical or mental ability, family status, source of income, real or perceived socioeconomic status, or lived experience. FemFest NL asks us all to be aware of language, behaviour, and to consider if it might be offensive or presumptuous towards others. This is not a space for violence, for touching without consent, for intolerance of religious beliefs or lack thereof. If you experience language or behaviour that perpetuates discrimination, please notify a designated Safe Person or member of the FemFest NL committee. These incidences will be addressed by FemFest NL, and people may be asked to leave.

FemFest NL encourages the expression of different opinions, choices and tactics. This means as a community we must work hard not to silence each other; and also that some voices must be given more of a platform than others. We are asking that we work through these possible conflicts or disconnects as a group in this space of learning. When we disagree, let us do it in a way where we can hear each other, and communicate with care while respecting and considering context. This means also engaging with people outside of academia, non-profit sectors and relating in honest, non-discriminatory, and compassionate ways. As a community, we can work to develop safer spaces for us all.

Things we can all do to create a safer space:

- Respect people's physical and emotional boundaries.
- Be aware that raising your voice or other aggressive body language may be understood as abusive behaviour by others.
- Respect people's differing opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints.
- Be responsible for your own actions. Be aware that your actions do have an effect on others despite what your intentions may be.
- Identify what makes a space safer for you.
- Honour that safety looks different for everyone.

Adapted from Black Futures Now Toronto: Safer Spaces Policy

Safe Space Network: <http://safespacenetwork.tumblr.com/Safespace>

Appendix F: Black Futures Now Toronto Safer Spaces Policy



SAFER SPACES POLICY

As an organization, we are dedicated to making all of our events a safer space for Black and Indigenous two-spirit and trans people, particularly trans women, transfeminine persons and those who were designated male at birth (DMAB). No forms of transphobia, transmisogyny and transantagonism will be tolerated and those who violate this policy will no longer be welcome to our events.

This conference, event, and all affiliated programming is a designated "safer space". We are making an explicit decision to prioritize voices of people who experience anti-Black oppression and misogyny. People attending this conference are asked to be aware of their language and behaviour, and to think about whether it might be offensive to others. This is not a space for violence, for touching without consent, for intolerance of religious beliefs or lack thereof, for racist, sexist, hetero-sexist, transphobic, transmisogynistic, ableist, classist, patriarchal views, or for any other behaviour or language that may perpetuate oppression. We want to encourage the expression of radically different opinions, choices and tactics, which means we must work hard not to silence each other. This means also engaging with people outside of academia, mainstream non-profit sectors and relating in honest and non-discriminatory ways. When we disagree, let us do it in a way where we can hear each other, and communicate with care while respecting and considering context.

By engaging respectfully with each other at BFN TO, we can all do our part to maintain a safe space for everyone. Abuse and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated at this event, nor will targeted harassment, assault, sexism, homophobic, transphobic or racist etc. behaviour.

Things we can all do to create a safer space:

- Respect people's physical and emotional boundaries.
- Always get explicit verbal consent before touching someone.
- Be aware that raising your voice or other aggressive body language may be understood as abusive behaviour by others.
- Respect people's differing opinions, beliefs, and points of view.
- Be responsible for your own actions. Be aware that your actions do have an effect on others despite what your intentions may be.

In attending this event, you are agreeing to behave in a manner that is compliant with the safer spaces policy. Any group or individual violating the policy will not be welcome at BFN TO. The Safer Spaces Policy articulates our stance in challenging an oppressive culture and emphasizing the empowerment of marginalized individuals.

AMENITIES + ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible Washrooms (Women) | TEL 1170A + 1198
Accessible Washrooms (Men) | TEL 1171 + 1199
Single Stall Barrier Free Accessible + Gender Neutral Washrooms | TEL 2178, 2180, 2197, 2182, 2190, 4179, 4190, 5180, 5190, 0161 + 0177

IMAGINING FUTURES FOR BLACK WOMEN, GIRLS, CIS, TRANS, NON-BINARY, AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING FOLKS TODAY

Appendix G: FemFest NL Accessibility Plan

FemFest NL Accessibility Plan



The Space and Eastern Edge Gallery – 72 Harbour Drive

Entrances

Main entrance: 72 Harbour Drive

- External double door is 6 ft wide
- Concrete ramped entrance
- No automated button for opening



Washrooms

Single stall gender neutral washroom located in hallway from Harbour Dr entrance.

- Door width is 30 inches
- Washroom is at least 6 ft x 4 ft for maneuverability

Designated Women's Accessible single stall washroom located down long hallway.

- Door Width is 30 inches
- Stall is at least 6 ft x 4.5 ft for maneuverability
- Grab bars near toilet

Designated Men's Accessible single stall washroom located down long hallway.

- Door Width is 30 inches
- Washroom is at least 6 ft x 4.5 ft for maneuverability
- Grab bars near toilet

Alternate Formats

FemFestNL schedule is available in braille, in large print, and on a prerecorded MP3 file.

Additional Conference Supports

Informal American Sign Language available for Saturday night Keynote Speaker, and for Sunday FemTalks presentations. Certified service animals are welcome – water bowls available for working animals. Hearing Amplification device available on site from CHHA-NL. One on one closed captioning available on site. Additional accessibility information and supports provided by inclusionNL...for Everyone.

Safe Crew onsite and identifiable at all times with completed NLSACPC training. Inclusion Crew onsite and identifiable with Guided Sight Training completed from CNIB. A designated "Quiet space" area available for individuals requiring a short term space.

All FemFest NL events are breastfeeding friendly. There will be nut-free snacks, water, tea, and coffee at all conference events. There will be alcohol served on site.

1