EXPLORING AN ONLINE ADAPTATION OF REFLECTIVE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

by

KATHERINE FITZGERALD GOWER

(Under the Direction of Llewellyn Cornelius)

ABSTRACT

In politically polarized climates, many find it difficult to engage in conversation about important sociopolitical issues. It can be especially challenging to navigate these conversations online. Nowadays more and more of our social interactions are happening online, particularly with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dialogue offers a promising way for people to engage constructively on difficult topics; however, most studies that have explored dialogue interventions have done so in in-person settings. The purpose of this study was to explore an online adaptation of Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD). RSD is a dialogue intervention developed by family therapists that aims to help people build bridges across social and political differences. An adaptation of RSD was implemented through Zoom with students from a masters-level social work course in the southeast United States. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants, post-dialogue. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis. Findings revealed that participants' experiences of the online dialogue were shaped by personal needs, past experiences and struggles. Advantages and challenges of holding the dialogue via video platform were identified, with limitations on nonverbal communication being noted as a significant disadvantage. Implications are discussed relevant to virtual dialogue planning and future research.

INDEX WORDS: Reflective structured dialogue, dialogue intervention, Zoom, video-mediated communication, interpretative phenomenological analysis, social work education

EXPLORING AN ONLINE ADAPTATION OF REFLECTIVE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

by

KATHERINE FITZGERALD GOWER

BA, The University of Vermont, 2011

MSW, Texas State University, 2016

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2022

EXPLORING AN ONLINE ADAPTATION OF REFLECTIVE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

by

KATHERINE FITZGERALD GOWER

Major Professor:	Llewellyn Cornelius
Committee:	Raytheon Rawls Mary Ager Janette Hill

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, and especially to mother, Jessica Sherman Tomaso Gower. In honor of the love and light you have spread in this world. I hope to carry it forward in all that I do.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not be possible without the love and support from my family, friends, colleagues, and mentors. I don't know if I have the words to adequately express, within these pages, the gratitude and appreciation I have for everybody who has helped to support me in this journey. But I will do my best.

Dr. Cornelius, you have been here for me since I first began this journey in 2017 and under your wisdom and guidance, I have grown into the scholar that I am today. Thank you for your time, mentorship, and understanding during times when I had to step back from my work and/or extend timelines further. This dissertation would not have been possible without your support and encouragement, which you gave me while still holding me accountable. I am grateful to have had you as a mentor throughout this journey.

My committee: Raye Rawls, you gave me opportunities for training and hands-on experience with RSD, without which this dissertation would not have been possible. I'm honored and grateful to have benefitted from your mentorship and expertise. Dr. Ager, I have learned so much from you, as your student and teaching mentee. Your support and critical feedback has helped me to become a better scholar. Dr. Hill, your guidance and feedback on my dissertation as well have been invaluable. I am lucky to have a committee that has been so supportive; that has helped me to think critically, improve my skills, and recognize and build on my strengths as a scholar.

Dr. Baldwin-White, you have also been a wonderful mentor to me. I learned so much working with you, assisting with various qualitative projects, and writing one of my first publications with you. You have helped shape who I am as a scholar.

Thank you to the faculty at the UGA School of Social Work who decided to take a chance on me and admit me to the 2017 cohort. To Dr. Choi, Dr. Miller, Dr. Hopps, Dr. Reeves, Dr. Mowbray, Dr. Washington, Dr. Vonk, Dr. Okech: I learned such an incredible amount from your courses during my first and second years, about social work, about research, about myself. You inspired me, excited me, and challenged me beyond what I thought I was capable of. I have had such a wonderful experience as a doctoral student in this program.

Thank you to Dr. Angela Ausbrooks, Dr. Joe McKenna, and Doug Smith, who gave me the inspiration, guidance, and encouragement to apply for doctoral programs, and who wrote the letters of recommendations that helped make this possible. Thank you to the staff at the School of Social Work; especially Kat Farlowe and Kerri Lewis, who helped me about a thousand times with registering, completing paperwork, and all the other administrative tasks that I often forgot and/or procrastinated on. Thank you to Jameelah Jones, who likewise held me accountable for deadlines and the finalizing details of completing this dissertation.

My cohort: Dr. Tatiana Villareal-Otalora, Dr. George Mois, Barbara Arnold. You all inspire me. I am so glad that we had each other through this journey, and I hope we continue to stay in touch. Tatiana, you have been so supportive and a wonderful friend. All of our virtual writing sessions/study dates – they kept me going, kept me motivated. I am also grateful to the ones that came before; the students, now doctors, who were so supportive and ready to share their experiences and guidance. Especially Dr. Abha-Rai Aggarwhal, Dr. Shena Brown, and Dr. Joel Izlar.

My family: Dad. For your love and continual support as I navigated this journey. Uncle Matt, for your encouragement, and sharing your wisdom and experiences in academia. Emily, my big sister; I have always looked up to you, and I can't tell you how much I have been uplifted by your encouragement and your confidence in me. To my brother, Thor, my sister-in-law, Dawn. To my nieces and nephews; Rachel, Eric, Julia, Daniel, and Olivia. You are my foundation, my grounding, and you give me motivation for so much of what I do. I love you all.

Mom. You were my biggest cheerleader throughout all of this, and I wish so much that you could be here to see the end. I would not be here without you. I hope that your spirit knows the things that I don't know how to say. You are in my heart forever.

My friends: Eddie Hernandez and Lisa Dotson. I am lucky to have you in my life. Your friendship has strengthened me in so many ways. Thank you for being there for me throughout this journey, cheering me on, listening to me when I needed to vent, providing much-needed laughter therapy in our group-chat memes and gifs. Eddie – from the beginning, you told me I was going to get through this; that I was going to finish this program. I wasn't always so confident. But you were right.

Margot Popecki, I'm so glad we met, that very first week that I moved to Athens. You have been there with me from the beginning, and you've been a wonderful friend. You inspire me in many ways. I also have to thank you for getting me back into running, which has done so much for my mental health; it was exactly the thing that I didn't know I needed to get me through.

Henry James. Thank you for your love, support, and understanding. For making me laugh; for making dinner, taking care of the cats, and all of the other things that I needed, when I

had to focus and be in work-mode. And for helping me relax and have fun when I needed to *not* be in work-mode.

My participants. Without you, this truly would not have been possible. Thank you for exploring this dialogue with me; for sharing your time, your experiences, and trusting me to hear your voices.

Last but certainly not least, the staff and founders of Essential Partners. For all of the work that you've done, all you have contributed, and how you are changing the world for the better. My hope is that this work honors and supports these efforts, to improve relationships, and build bridges across differences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Figures:

ACRONYM REFERENCE LIST

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication

EP: Essential Partners

IGD: Intergroup Dialogue

IPA: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IRB: Institutional Review Board

MSW: Master of Social Work

PCP: Public Conversations Project

PRC: Pew Research Center

ProSEAD: Addressing the Bases of Power, Oppression, Social Justice, Evidence-Informed Practice, Advocacy, and Diversity

RSD: Reflective Structured Dialogue

SIDE: Social Information/Deindividuation

SIPT: Social Information Processing Theory

TA: Thematic Analysis

UGA: University of Georgia

VMC: Video-Mediated Communication

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, public opinion has grown increasingly divided and polarized on a number of different social and political issues in the United States (Pew Research Center [PRC], 2017). Tensions and hostilities have risen between the most prominent political parties in the US – republicans and democrats – with each side more likely to ascribe negative characteristics to the other, and fewer than half believing that they share values and goals (PRC, 2019b). In addition, conflicts are rising not only between members of different political parties, but within political parties as well, on topics including race relations, immigration, marriage equality, and more (PRC, 2019c). As the partisan gap widens, and divisions grow within parties, our political spectrum becomes increasingly polarized and fragmented.

In such a climate, it can be difficult for those who disagree about important social and political issues to engage in constructive conversations. A recent report from the PRC found that many Americans perceive the tone and nature of modern political debate as being more negative, less respectful, less fact-based, and less substantive. Many also find that talking about politics with people with whom they disagree is stressful, and frustrating (PRC, 2019a). It is not surprising that, in this type of environment, many people often avoid having these stressful political conversations altogether. Hayes et al. (2006) argue that, in a politically polarized climate, people are less likely to express opinions because they fear the potential social repercussions of doing so. This can be a somewhat dangerous effect of polarization. When

groups of like-minded individuals deliberate only amongst themselves, they are likely to become more extreme in their beliefs: an effect that is particularly likely when the group is insulated from the moderating effects of dissenting/outside voices. This creates a dangerous cycle, which can exacerbate polarization, and ultimately lead to extremism (Sunstein, 2009). The internet has furthermore heightened the problem: in the digital age, it is easier than ever to connect with those with whom we agree and disconnect from those with whom we don't. Algorithms on popular sites like Google, Facebook, and YouTube, are further designed to provide us with content that similarly manipulates our worldviews (Shaffer, 2019; Smith, 2019; Sunstein, 2018).

Dialogue offers a promising solution as a means for constructive engagement between people with diverse experiences and perspectives. While many have promoted democratic deliberation and debate as valuable and productive ways of engaging in political discourse (Andersen, 2012; Goi, 2005), the main goals of these types of communications are related to persuasion, or discovery of truth. The goals of dialogue, on the other hand, are oriented towards relationship-building, through achieving mutual understanding, and enhancing empathy. Dialogue does not compel any sort of agreement, nor does it impose shame or guilt on participants if they do not agree or otherwise conform to dominant perspectives of the group (Herzig, 2001). As such, dialogue has greater potential to nurture interpersonal relationships among those who disagree, potentially combating some of the negative effects of polarization.

Existing dialogue interventions have generally been designed for in-person encounters. To date, little scholarly work has examined online dialogue interventions, though such interventions may hold many potential benefits for our increasingly digitalized world. Such is the purpose of the current study. In this chapter, I will a). discuss the differences between dialogue, debate, and deliberation, b). describe the specific dialogic intervention that I implemented online:

Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD), c). discuss the differences between in-person and online contexts, and their implications for the implementation of an online dialogue intervention, and d). review case studies of online dialogic interventions and platforms. Finally, I will articulate a general overview of the study: its purpose, objectives, and research questions.

Understanding Dialogue: Distinguishing it from Debate and Deliberation

At the most basic level, dialogue is defined as a conversation including two or more people. The word itself is derived from words in the Greek language, *dia* and *legein*, with *dia* meaning "through," and *legein*, meaning "to speak." Thus, dialogue can be translated as "through speech" (Bohm, 1996; Woltag, 2019). Although in everyday speech it may be used interchangeably with other terms such as debate and deliberation, it is conceptually distinct from each of these things, and it is worth briefly discussing these important differences.

Debate generally refers to a conversation wherein there are two or more sides, and each side is trying to convince the other of the veracity of their ideas. It is about persuasion. A "successful" debate involves one side emerging as winner, having established the dominance of their position (Chasin et al., 1996; Gurin et al., 2013).

The concept of deliberation has been developed primarily in the realm of political science, largely influenced by the work of Jürgen Habermas (Andersen, 2012; Bohman, 2007). Habermas' conception of deliberation is based in the idea that language is the means through which humans coordinate action plans, and that consensus will be achieved through a series of rational and logical arguments that lead all participants to mutual understanding (Bohman, 2007). Both debate and deliberation, therefore, aim to achieve common agreement regarding the single most legitimate perspective or viewpoint; however, the key distinction lies in the means of

achieving this agreement. Whereas debate focuses on persuasion and rhetoric, deliberation aims to achieve consensus through rationality and understanding.

The concept of dialogue has been developed and applied in different disciplines, including literature, theatre, and more recently, political theory and psychology (Cooper et al., 2013; Woltag, 2019). In psychotherapy, much of the work on dialogue has been inspired by the work of the German-Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber. Buber conceived of dialogue in terms of human relationships, positing that it is through dialogic relationships – through authentic encounters – that one comes to a higher spiritual presence. With his emphasis on understanding the "other," the "thou" in the I-Thou relationship, Buber's understanding of dialogue has informed the work of many existentially and phenomenologically-oriented pyschotherapists and counselors (Buber, 2000; Cooper et al., 2013).

The goals of dialogue are ultimately what set it apart from debate and deliberation. Both debate and deliberation are focused on achieving a specific outcome, wherein all participants agree to the legitimacy of a single perspective. Dialogue, on the other hand, is focused on improving communicative interactions. It is more focused on process, rather than outcome; there is no expectation that anybody will change their position on a given issue or be forced to validate or adhere to a perspective that they may inwardly disagree with (Chasin et al., 1996; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). As Bohm (1996) eloquently summarized, dialogue is not about "making common" certain ideas/understandings that are already known; instead, it is about making new ideas/understandings *in common* (p. 2-3). Dialogue thus can be understood as a dynamic, creative process where participants co-construct new meanings, and new realities.

The theory of democratic deliberation assumes that participants are operating on a set of shared assumptions regarding the legitimacy and validity about particular types of arguments

(Andersen, 2012; Bohman, 2007). Dialogue does not make such assumptions, and in fact it doesn't need to because "arguments" themselves do not have a place in dialogue. The goals of dialogue are not based in persuasion or achieving consensus/agreement, and therefore, there is little need to judge statements according to perceived legitimacy or rationality.

Table 1 provides a summary of conceptual and practical distinctions between debate, deliberation, and dialogue.

Table 1
Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue

	Debate	Deliberation	Dialogue
Goals	To establish the legitimacy and dominance of one perspective	To discover truth	To enhance understanding of opposing perspectives, and explore complexities of one's own perspective
Methods	Persuasion, rhetoric	Appeals to rationality and logic	Expression of beliefs, active listening, and reflection
Characteristics of discourse	Hostile attacks and interruptions are expected; usually permitted by moderators Abstractions and generalized statements are allowed; emphasis on objective 'truths' Participants express firm commitments to their own points of view	Hostile attacks and interruptions are generally *not* welcomed; rationality is valued over rhetoric Abstractions and generalized statements are allowed; emphasis on objective 'truths' Participants express commitment to their views, contingent on rationality and logic	Communication agreements are discussed and agreed upon to cultivate an atmosphere of safety Participants are encouraged to speak from personal experiences Participants express uncertainties and reflect on their own points of view
Outcomes	The perspective that "wins" is legitimized.	The perspective reached through consensus is legitimized.	Multiple views are legitimized through recognition and understanding of differences

The Importance of Dialogue for Social Work

Dialogue supports many of the values and principles of the social work profession. Social workers seek to "promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity," and to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making activities among marginalized persons in order to challenge social injustice (NASW, n.d.). By fostering constructive communication among individuals with varying social identities, dialogue can be an effective tool for promoting sensitivity and knowledge about oppression and diversity. Likewise, when it comes to decision-making activities, dialogue can be used to facilitate conversations among diverse stakeholders in a way that grants legitimacy and representation to all participating. Finally, dialogue provides strong support for the social work value of recognizing the importance of human relationships (NASW, n.d.).

Social work is a profession that seeks to advocate for marginalized people and fight oppression on multiple levels: micro, mezzo, and macro. Marginalized communities tend to be disproportionately affected by many of the topics that people have such trouble talking about. Figuring out constructive ways to discuss these topics can help us, as a society, progress to achieving better solutions. Establishing methods for constructive discussions can also have important implications for many different situations relevant to social workers. It can help social work educators, who may be having difficult discussions in social work classrooms (DeTemple & Sarrouf, 2017; Hansford et al., 2017). It can help those who work in communities experiencing conflict (Stains Jr., 2012). It can also help social work professionals have better conversations with one another as they confront divisions and conflicts that arise within the profession. Finally, dialogue as an online intervention can be a very helpful tool for social workers who may be working with populations that, for whatever reason, tend to be isolated,

geographically and/or socially. As mentioned before, online contexts can serve as a platform for recruitment into extremist groups. It stands to reason that these same contexts can also offer opportunity for constructive healing.

Dialogic Interventions

Dialogue is not exclusively tied to conversations about sociopolitical topics: dialogue, as a form of interaction, can be applied on many different levels, on many different issues (Bohm, 1996; Cooper et al., 2013). Two significant forms of dialogic interventions have emerged that are relevant to RSD: transformative dialogue, and intergroup dialogue. In this section, each of these will be briefly described. Then, RSD will be introduced and described in terms of its origins, development, and defining features.

Transformative Dialogue

Transformative dialogue emerged from the fields of mediation and conflict resolution, inspired by the transformative mediation approach developed by Bush and Folger (Cleven, 2011; Folger & Bush, 1996). The transformative mediation approach differed from traditional mediation in that it placed greater emphasis on process, rather than outcome. The goals of transformative mediation are not to reach agreement, or settlement – though these outcomes are not precluded – but to help parties gain greater clarity on their own positions and goals, and each other's perspectives: to support and strengthen their abilities to analyze their situations and make effective decisions for themselves (Folger & Bush, 1996).

Transformative dialogue shares many of the same principles as transformative mediation. However, it differs in that it is not designed specifically for conflict. While it may be implemented as a tool of conflict resolution, it may also, as often in the case of RSD, serve many other purposes: it may facilitate conversations among those who have different perspectives,

without any active conflict. Gergen et al. (2001) define transformative dialogue as "any form of interchange that succeeds in transforming a relationship between those committed to otherwise separate and antagonistic realities (and their related practices) to one in which common and solidifying realities are under construction" (Gergen et al., 2001, p. 682).

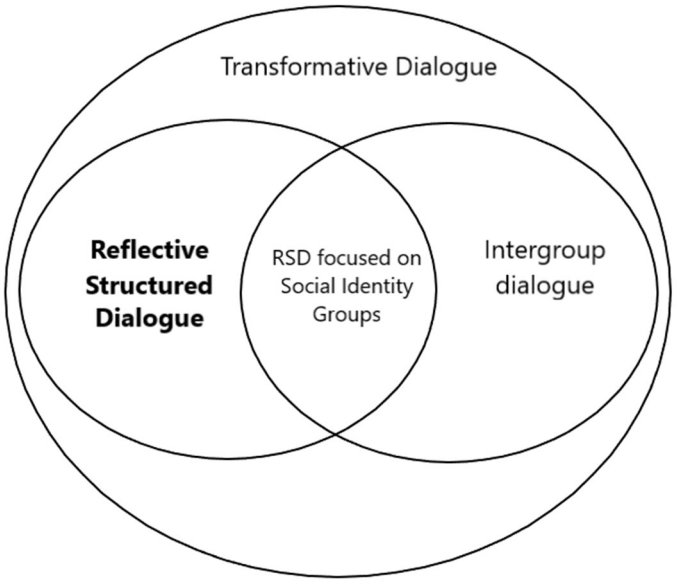
Intergroup Dialogue

Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is a term that refers to an intervention wherein members of different groups engage in facilitated conversations, taking into account different positions, perspectives, and privileges. Whereas transformative dialogue focuses on improving relationships, IGD specifically aims to improve relationships among members of different social identity groups (Gurin et al., 2013). Although the RSD model can and has been used for IGDs (Dessel, 2010), RSD as an intervention is not always IGD, because RSD does not require that each participant be a member of any particular social group.

Many scholars and IGD practitioners understand IGD to have a social justice orientation, with an aim towards achieving some form of social change. Moss et al. (2017) for example list six distinct aims of IGD, which include engaging participants with issues of social identity development, increasing participant understanding of the driving forces behind difference and dominance, and supporting the development of empowered approaches to building alliances and working collaboratively across differences of culture and power. In the critical-dialogic model of IGD put forth by Gurin et al. (2013), action planning and collaboration are included as part of a final stage, wherein participants have the opportunity to "apply learning about dialogue, identity, and inequalities to responsibilities to advance social justice" (p. 69). This is another important feature that distinguishes IGD from RSD, as RSD does not require any equivalent final stage; it has no goals beyond the dialogue itself.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the position of RSD with regards to IGD and TD.

Figure 1
Reflective Structured Dialogue, Transformative Dialogue, and Intergroup Dialogue



Reflective Structured Dialogue

Born in the early 1990s, RSD was developed by a group of family therapists in the United States in response to growing hostility and tensions in political discourse. They noticed that many of the destructive patterns and habits of communication they witnessed in conflicted families were often being enacted in public discourse, particularly when it came to controversial issues such as abortion. They speculated that the tools and techniques they practiced in family therapy could be usefully adapted and applied on a larger scale (Herzig & Chasin, 2006), and thus were inspired to form a nonprofit, which they then called the Public Conversations Project (PCP): today it is known as Essential Partners (EP).

The founders of EP used their clinical experience to create an intervention in which people on different sides of controversial issues could come together and have conversations

with one another. Their work was based on dual assumptions that a). hostility in relationships is perpetuated by toxic communication patterns, and b). positive relationships can be built by introducing more constructive ways of communicating. Their intervention thus aimed to interrupt old, "stuck" conversations, and make room for new, constructive conversations. The goal was not to get participants to agree with one another, but simply to help them form connections and better understand one another. Facilitation, structures, and communication agreements comprised essential components of this intervention, which is now known as RSD (Chasin et al., 1996; Herzig, 2001; Herzig & Chasin, 2006).

RSD practitioners recognize the importance of understanding the context of conflict/difference, and tailoring interventions to the needs of participants (Herzig & Chasin, 2006). This may require extensive planning, especially when the divisions are deep, when there are power differentials/imbalances, and particularly when there is a significant history of conflict and hostility between groups. RSD thus consists of seven phases: exploring the proposed initiative, mapping the situation, developing a professional plan, inviting and engaging with participants, finalizing the meeting design, facilitating the meeting, and eliciting feedback and closure or planning next steps (Herzig & Chasin, 2006).

The first three phases – exploring the initiative, mapping the situation, developing the plan – are essential steps in order to help the organizers of the dialogue become better acquainted with the participants; to better understand their values, what is at stake, and the overall nature of the conflict. These practices are based on the premise that learning about the old conversation, and understanding what people want to do differently, is important to prevent reenactment of the conflict during the dialogue session(s). These practices also underscore the collaborative nature of RSD. They are designed to enhance participant ownership. Importantly, and consistent with

the principle of collaboration, RSD requires informed and voluntary participation (Herzig, 2001; Herzig & Chasin, 2006).

As part of the process of collaborative planning, RSD involves the use of communication agreements: this is one of the major, core practices of RSD. Often, the organizers of the dialogue will present participants with a set of suggested agreements, which the participants are free to modify or add to as they wish. The specifics of these agreements thus may vary among groups. They often involve policies such as not interrupting one another, using respectful language, and requesting individuals to speak only for themselves as opposed to on behalf of any group or organization which they might represent. The purposes of these communication agreements are twofold; to create a respectful, safe environment, and to help prevent participants from falling back into old, "stuck" conversations (Chasin et al., 1996; Herzig & Chasin, 2006).

Another core practice of RSD involves the use of well-crafted questions. During dialogue sessions, facilitators use questions that ask participants to speak personally, as opposed to as a representative of a group; to share stories that connect their views with their life experiences; to express hopes, fears, values, and assumptions; and to discuss uncertainties and complexities (Herzig & Chasin, 2006, p. 24). The practice of speaking for oneself rather than on behalf of a group has the effect of reframing one's perspective to be less abstract, and more specific: reframing the political as personal (Herzig & Chasin, 2006).

During dialogue sessions, discussions are guided by structures and facilitation. The structures employed in RSD are designed to promote reflection, thoughtful speaking, and careful listening. They consist of time periods, each of which are designated for a specific activity: speaking, reflecting, asking questions, or engaging in "unstructured" conversation (Herzig & Chasin, 2006). For example, after the facilitator asks a question to the group, there will be a

pause. The pause is a structure that allows participants time to reflect, and to gather their thoughts before speaking. Then, each participant has the opportunity to either respond to the question, or to pass, in a speaking structure that follows either a "go-round" sequence, with participants given turns in order of their seating arrangements, or a "popcorn" sequence, with participants volunteering as they are ready to speak. Each participant is given the same amount of time to speak. This, along with effective facilitation, ensures that all have equal opportunities to express their views, without allowing any one participant to take over, or monopolize, the conversation (Chasin et al., 1996; Herzig & Chasin, 2006).

Dialogues vary in terms of time and duration. Depending on the needs and/or the schedules of participants, they might involve multiple sessions over a number of consecutive days, weeks, or months. They may also be confined to as little as one two-hour long session (Haydon & Elliott, 2004; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Dialogues have been held in a wide variety of settings in time and place, on a range of different topics, with diverse groups of participants. In the following section, I will summarize the existing academic literature on RSD.

RSD in the Academic Literature

The articles included for this literature review were found using the University of Georgia (UGA) Library's Multi-Search. The articles comprising the current research on RSD can roughly be divided into three groups: conceptual pieces on RSD, empirical work on RSD, and conceptual/empirical work on interventions that were in some way influenced or inspired by RSD. This literature review will focus primarily on the first two categories, as they are the most relevant for the purposes of the current study. At the end of this section, the literature will be summarized, as will the gaps in research, and implications for the current study.

It should be noted that, although EP has been conducting dialogues using the same general protocol from the beginning, the use of the term "Reflective Structured Dialogue" is a relatively recent development. Prior to this, these dialogues were not referred to under any one, specific name. As such, the authors of the articles included in this review did not always use the same terminology. Dessel et al. (2006) for example referred to the dialogue in their article as "intergroup dialogue." However, the research article itself was titled "An evaluation of the Public Conversations Project's Dialogues: A pilot study and survey development," and the authors state, explicitly, that this dialogue followed the protocol developed by the PCP (Dessel et al., 2006, p. 8). For simplicity and consistency, I will refer to the interventions discussed in this literature review as RSD.

Conceptual Work

Many of the articles that fall into this category have been written by staff and scholars affiliated with EP/PCP. In general, these articles serve to detail the methodology of RSD, its goals, and relevance or relationship to particular disciplines including mediation, education, and community building. Dialogue has been proposed as a constructive pre-mediation process, a way of managing conversations and issues in higher education classrooms, and as a way of healing divisions and conflict within communities (Chasin et al., 1996; DeTemple & Sarrouf, 2017; Stains Jr., 2014). These conceptual pieces also discuss the theoretical foundations of RSD, and consider how certain processes – such as self-reflection – serve to achieve the goals of dialogue (Chakraverti, 2009; Stains Jr., 2012). Often, they will highlight examples of RSD. The most often referenced example is the original abortion dialogue that took place in Boston. Other dialogues that have been mentioned include one that took place in Burundi, one that took place

in the northern forests of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, and the Maine forest biodiversity dialogue (Chakraverti, 2009; Herzig, 2001).

Other conceptual work on RSD has been done by scholars specializing in particular forms of dialogue or public discourse. Gergen et al. (2001) discuss RSD as a form of transformative dialogue. Goi (2005) highlights RSD as an example of a "modified agonal space," wherein participants are not pressured to achieve consensus or agreement, but are, to an extent, encouraged to recognize differences. Each of these articles refers specifically to the original abortion dialogue. While these articles discuss RSD, the major focus is not necessarily on evaluating/discussing the intervention itself so much as it is using the intervention to illustrate important concepts relevant to the ideas they are articulating.

Empirical Work

To date, there is little research that has examined and empirically evaluated RSD. The strongest examples come from the work of Adrienne Dessel, who sought to evaluate RSD, and to use RSD as a form of intergroup dialogue, in two different contexts: at a conference on domestic violence, marriage, and fatherhood, and in a public school setting discussing teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and feelings towards LGB students and parents (Dessel et al., 2006; Dessel, 2010).

The conference dialogue was discussed in a mixed-methods study that sought to examine and evaluate RSD as an intervention. The hypotheses put forth were that participation in RSD would facilitate participants' abilities to reflect on their own views, as well as the views of others; that participants would be able to increase understanding, communication, and identification of common ground; and that they would experience shifts in their perceptions of stereotypes regarding the other group. These hypotheses were tested through pre- and post-intervention surveys designed to examine constructs including reflection and collaboration. The

results were supportive, showing that participants increased self-reflection, understanding, communication, and identification of common ground. They also experienced shifts in perceptions of stereotypes. In addition, structures, facilitation, ground rules, flexibility of facilitators, and opportunity for different modes with which to communicate and develop relationships were identified as factors that contributed to positive outcomes. Finally, participants also identified areas of difficulty within the dialogue; suggesting there was too much structure, difficulty managing time and adhering to ground rules, not enough clarification on the dialogue process, and not enough time for group discussions (Dessel et al., 2006).

The school dialogue was examined using an experimental mixed-methods research design. The research questions that guided the study focused on a). changes in attitudes, feelings, and intended or actual supportive behaviors among heterosexual public school teachers, b). changes in levels of critical self-reflection and perspective-taking, and c). what might have led to these changes, if observed. These questions were examined through pre- and post-intervention surveys, complemented with post-dialogue qualitative interviews among a convenience sample of participants. Findings indicated that participants who took part in the intergroup dialogues had a statistically significant positive change on variables including feelings about gay men and lesbians, civil rights, perspective-taking, and behavior. Teachers reported feeling more acceptance and connection towards LGB students and parents, and feeling more informed about the issues that they face. They felt more compassion, empathy, and concern. Critical self-reflection and perspective-taking were identified as factors in these changes, and the dialogue protocol was credited with influencing these factors. Regarding the design of the dialogue, teachers reported wanting less structure and more time, and more diversity in gender and perspectives (Dessel, 2010).

The two studies described above comprise the most rigorous evaluations done on RSD to date that I am aware of, as of this writing. For this literature review, I am also including a brief discussion of four other studies that examined and/or utilized RSD/dialogic interventions closely following the RSD protocol. These dialogues took place in diverse settings including a workplace consultation in the UK, a dialogue about healthcare in Brazil, a dialogue about homosexuality in the workplace, and a dialogue on abortion which took place over email. The first three examples will be described below, while the dialogue on abortion will be described in greater detail in the section on online dialogues.

RSD for Workplace Consultancy

Haydon and Elliott (2004) facilitated a dialogue for healthcare clinicians and managers working with a woman with complex emotional and behavioral difficulties. This dialogue very closely followed the protocol of RSD: the facilitators engaged in extensive pre-planning in collaboration with participants, and during the dialogue, they asked core questions such as "What is at the heart of the matter for you?", while encouraging participants to reflect on their own positions and ask one another questions of genuine curiosity. The researchers recorded their impressions of the event, noting that participants in general responded carefully and thoughtfully to the questions, as well as to one another, and that they were surprised at the amount of common ground that emerged. They suggested that positioning participants as "listeners" in the dialogue helped to invite new conversations and narratives that had not been expressed before, and that asking about doubts and uncertainties helped allow participants to let go of the tendency to present their own ideas as the only reality. Finally, they noted that participants seemed to be the "most satisfied" with how the dialogue allowed them to listen to one another, while some were "least satisfied" with the lack of an action plan, post-dialogue (p. 104).

This research appeared to follow a general qualitative research design, informed by a social constructionist theoretical framework. While the authors included plenty of details with regards to the dialogue itself, details regarding the research methodology are lacking to the point that I debated as to whether this would better fit in the "conceptual piece" category. For example, the authors discuss feedback from the participants, but they do not discuss how this feedback was obtained: whether it was through a discussion at the end of the dialogue, or post-dialogue interviews. They do not describe any measures taken to ensure trustworthiness of the findings, and the findings themselves are discussed briefly, without any quotes from participants to substantiate them. Thus, although this article constitutes an important addition to the literature on RSD, it is clearly lacking in methodological rigor.

RSD for LGBT Healthcare in Brazil

Moscheta et al. (2016) held dialogues using a protocol "inspired by" the PCP, with the aim of improving healthcare services and resources for LGBT patients in Brazil. This study followed a qualitative research design. The aim was ultimately to understand the construction of meaning about resources to encourage healthcare provision. Therefore, the themes discussed in the findings were more relevant to healthcare service provision than they were to assessing, or better understanding, the nature of RSD.

The authors however did make several observations relevant to RSD. They noted that RSD (or, as they sometimes refer to it, the PCP "strategy") allowed participants to experience the fruits of the dialogue "in loco" (p. 376): that it allowed participants to better understand one another. They suggested that RSD might be helpful in promoting training initiatives that are focused on building relationships between professionals and service users. They also drew attention to how the RSD inverts the traditional power structure found between professionals and

service-users, and how this can help achieve greater social inclusion and sensitivity to diversity, as well as confront social inequalities. They concluded that RSD can be a valuable tool for use in multidisciplinary groups (Moscheta et al., 2016).

RSD for a Work-Group Consultation

Sallyann Roth, one of the founders of PCP/EP, wrote a chapter for a book on family therapy in which she recounts a dialogue which she organized at a mental health center in 1990. The topic was homosexuality and homophobia. In this chapter, Roth writes extensively about the different processes involved in this particular dialogue, which was an early form of RSD. This dialogue incorporated many of the core practices of RSD, such as pre-meeting planning, and structures for speaking and listening; additionally, it included other components that are not typical of current RSD, such as the passing along of a "ceremonial object" as each participant spoke. None of these differences however appeared to make significant changes to the nature of the dialogue; ultimately the core goals and practices remained the same (Roth, 1993).

Post-dialogue interviews revealed that participants viewed the dialogue positively as an opportunity for them to better understand one another, engage in self-reflection, and form stronger connections with one another. There was a movement "from silence to openness," as participants felt able to express ideas that they had been holding back. The dialogue was also credited for "catalyzing" further development of productive ways of handling difference and complexity among relationships (Roth, 1993).

Similar to the article by Haydon and Elliott (2004), this chapter is told in the form of a narrative, with the author recounting her first-hand experience. This chapter however presents a stronger example of qualitative research. Roth describes the dialogue in much greater detail and supports and enhances her impressions and interpretations with the inclusion of quotes from the

participants themselves, from pre-meeting communications, and then from post-dialogue interviews (Roth, 1993).

Implications for Current Study

The current literature on RSD tends to be dominated by conceptual pieces that describe the promises and benefits of dialogue, portraying RSD as a way to improve relationships, heal divisions, and promote constructive conversations that enhance mutual understanding and engagement. Although empirical work has provided some support for these claims, the literature is sorely lacking in current research informed by rigorous methodology. The two mixed-methods studies by Adrienne Dessel were performed over ten years ago, and while the research by Moscheta et al. (2016) appeared to follow a methodologically sound qualitative design, the focus was more on the content of dialogue rather than the form. In addition, all of the aforementioned studies took place in face-to-face settings; to date, there has only been one study examining RSD online (Freedman et al., 1997). The current study provides the first in-depth, qualitative examination of RSD, with RSD itself comprising the primary object of interest, in order to provide a better understanding of RSD, and how it, and the processes that comprise it, work to transform the feelings, actions, and behaviors of participants. The first goal of this study is to enhance the current knowledge and understanding of RSD, using qualitative methods that emphasize the experiences of participants. The second goal is to explore dialogue in an online context.

Online Contexts

The internet offers considerable advantages for conducting dialogues. One of the greatest advantages is that it allows individuals to connect with one another across geographical and/or cultural barriers, thus providing dialogues with greater opportunities for diversity, accessibility,

and inclusion. An online dialogue between individuals in different countries, for example, or even on different continents, would be much more feasible and cost effective to organize than would an in-person dialogue. Moreover, for cultures in conflict, the internet can provide a safe, neutral space that might not otherwise be available. The internet can also offer access for those who might not otherwise have it, such as those who do not happen to live in a place where there are trained facilitators or organizers. Finally, the internet offers the opportunity for distanced social interaction; a benefit of considerable importance if the dialogue is occurring during a global pandemic.

Thus far, RSD has primarily been applied in in-person settings. To date, there has only been one study examining RSD in an online setting, and this took place in the mid-1990s. (Freedman et al., 1997). Our computer technology has undergone considerable changes since then, particularly when it comes to communication. The second part of this literature review will consider the differences between online and in-person environments, the advantages of video-mediated forms of online communication, and then examine case studies of online dialogues.

Online vs. In-person Environments

It is well-established that online and in-person environments tend to generate different types of communicative interactions. In traditional in-person environments, for example, communication occurs through a number of different channels, verbal and nonverbal, including the words that are uttered, the tone of voice, eye contact, facial expressions, body postures, and more. These nonverbal cues are used to convey emotional expression. In online environments, however, people often do not have access to all of these different communication channels. In many contexts, such as e-mail, communication may only happen through text. Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) holds that relationships are built upon communicative

interactions, and that when nonverbal communication channels are muted, this influences relationships such that they develop at a slower pace (Walther, 1992). SIPT also assumes that individuals are motivated to form relationships with one another, and that they will use whatever resources are available within the given medium to communicate. Thus, when nonverbal communication is restricted – as is the case with text-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) – individuals may use verbal strategies for emotional expression. These assumptions have received some empirical support (Walther, 2005).

Another important feature of CMC that differentiates it from in-person interaction is that of identity. When I communicate with somebody in-person, I can perceive, and infer, many things about that person's identity. In online contexts, often, there is less information available: there is more potential for anonymity. In the early years of CMC, many worried that this encouraged hostile, antisocial behavior. If individuals could not be identified, they could not be held accountable for their actions. The theory of deindividuation, which existed long before the advent of CMC, holds that anonymity contributes to loss in self-awareness, which reduces inhibitions and increases the likelihood in anti-social behavior (Spear & Postmes, 2015). Indeed, some research has linked online anonymity with increased aggression in online contexts (Zimmerman & Ybarra, 2016).

Other research, however, suggests a more complex, nuanced situation. Proponents of the social identity/deindividuation (SIDE) model consider that hostile and aggressive behavior witnessed online may not necessarily be the result of deindividuation and disinhibition, but instead the result of increased regulation according to group norms. The assumption is that when individuality is reduced, actions and behaviors are more likely to be influenced by salient group norms. If the group is aggressive towards the outgroup, then the individual likewise becomes

more aggressive towards the outgroup, but the opposite may also hold true; individuals are also likely to adhere to more positive and constructive group norms (Spear & Postmes, 2015).

While theories such as SIDE and SIPT offer different perspectives and explanations for online behaviors, it is generally agreed that online contexts transform the ways that we connect with one another. In some respects, this can offer significant advantages for online dialogue. It may also confer significant disadvantages. However, the nature of its influence with regards to dialogue has not yet been studied.

Video-Mediated Communication

Up until recently, most CMC was text-based: often, when people interacted online, it was through e-mails, instant messages, discussion forums, and so on. Naturally, much of the extant literature on CMC, and subsequent theory development, focuses on text-based CMC. Video-mediated communication (VMC) is a more recent development, and there is much less literature on it, though it is an area of emerging interest as social platforms such as Skype, FaceTime and Zoom have been increasing in popularity. This is particularly true with the advent of the pandemic: with more people working from home, and many classes being converted to online formats, the use of video-mediated platforms has exploded in recent months (Sherman, 2020; Walt, 2020), providing much greater incentive to explore the social and interpersonal dynamics of communicating via VMC.

VMC is generally considered to be a more "information-rich" medium than text-based CMC, though not as "rich" as in-person communications (Bohannon et al., 2013). VMC allows for more nonverbal communication than text-based CMC, though it is still somewhat limited compared to in-person environments: while VMC allows us to see facial expressions, hand gestures, and tone of voice, for example, it often does not allow for eye contact, or casual touch,

as in a touch on the arm (Bohannon et al., 2013; Croes et al., 2019; Enrico, 2011). Following the propositions of SIPT, this would suggest that VMC would allow individuals to build relationships more quickly than they would via text-based CMC, though not as quickly as they might in in-person interactions. Consistently, some research supports the idea that, when it comes to building relationships, VMC is more efficient than text-based CMC, though not as efficient as in-person interactions (Bohannon et al., 2013; Ruppel et al., 2017; Walther, 2011). Furthermore, despite the nonverbal limitations, some research suggests that interactions in VMC settings are just as effective as those in in-person settings in building attraction and affinity. Croes et al. (2019) compared participants in VMC and in-person contexts to examine the role that differences in nonverbal behavior play in building attraction and affiliation. Their findings showed that there were some differences in nonverbal expression; participants in VMC settings smiled more animatedly and talked more loudly, whereas participants in in-person settings displayed more facial touching and pitch variation. However, these differences did not correspond to major differences in attraction levels between participants who were first meeting via VMC, vs. in-person settings. Thus, although the current literature on VMC is limited, it does not appear that VMC poses any significant disadvantage when it comes to forming positive impressions, compared to in-person settings.

Implications for Current Study

VMC offered advantages over text-based CMC important for the purposes of my study. The dialogue that I held lasted approximately an hour and a half. Therefore, it made sense to use a medium that was more information-rich and efficient, allowing for faster relationship growth. Second, although text-based CMC may offer some advantages in cultivating positive impressions and relationships, in that it represses some differences in group identity membership and allows

for selective self-presentation, highlighting positive personal characteristics (Turkle, 1999; Walther et al., 2015), literature suggests that these advantages do not hold when participants already know certain characteristics about each other through interactions outside of the text-based CMC environment (Antheunis et al., 2019). Some of the students in the course already had video-mediated interactions with one another. Finally, it is important to consider levels of attention and engagement. When we communicate via text-based CMC, we may be doing other activities at the same time, such as listening to the radio, or watching TV. These distractions can interfere with our ability to engage with the people with whom we are communicating. Although VMC doesn't preclude all forms of distraction – participants may, for example, have other browsers open for checking social media – it can prevent participants from engaging in more disruptive forms of distraction. In short, when it comes to listening and engagement – important components of dialogue – VMC is more capable than text-based CMC for holding participants accountable.

In the following section, different online contexts for dialogue will be explored using case examples, including an online adaptation of RSD, and intergroup dialogue. All of these contexts involve text-based CMC. As of this writing, I am not aware of any empirical literature examining dialogue via VMC.

Case Examples

RSD adaptation: E-mail

In 1996, RSD founder Laura Chasin facilitated a dialogue between Jill Freedman, a pro-choice advocate, and Mary Ellen Lester, a pro-life advocate, on the topic of abortion. This dialogue was conducted over e-mail. The planning for this dialogue for was done through e-mail, and over a conference call (Freedman et al., 1997, p. 92). The dialogue took place over the

course of four weeks; however, this time was interrupted, due to one participant having to travel for a personal matter. This resulted in the dialogue being split, happening for two weeks in July, and two weeks in November of that same year. The length of time between dialogues was also exacerbated by technical issues and scheduling constraints. The dialogue thus took place, as the authors put it, in "very discontinuous circumstances" (p. 92).

Freedman et al. (1997) do not provide many details as to the specific mechanics and logistics of this dialogue. For example, it is mentioned that the chronology of the dialogue was ignored, to give the readers more of a sense of continuity (p. 92), however, it is not clear how exactly the chronology was altered; if for example questions were presented in a different sequence. Chasin also commented that time pressures, created by postponements and mismatching schedules, resulted in questions or answers "often arriving in clusters, usually without notice, sometimes crossing mid-wire" (p. 109). There is no mention of any measures that were taken to ensure that participants had equal speaking opportunities – if, for example, there were any character limits on the e-mail responses, or if participants were prohibited from submitting more than one consecutive answer, that is, without waiting for the other participant to respond. Finally, readers are not given any specific details of the communication agreements that were used to guide this dialogue.

Although the traditional practices of RSD had to be modified for the e-mail format, and though there are details that we, as readers, do not know, overall it appears that the authors generally tried to stick to the basic principles guiding RSD. Communication agreements were established. Chasin asked questions which were clearly designed to encourage participants to talk about their views from a personal standpoint, to share stories, to express hopes, fears, and values, and to discuss the complexities of their views. There was time given for "unstructured

dialogue," to allow participants to ask each other questions out of their own curiosity. As I will discuss further, in Chapter 3, these are all elements which I made use of in my adaptation of RSD: communication agreements, carefully designed questions, and time for unstructured dialogue.

Finally, the last question asked participants to reflect on the process by identifying "fruits" and "frustrations" that they experienced during the dialogue (Freedman et al., 1997). In response to this last question, all three authors voiced some amount of discontent with using e-mail as a medium. Freedman in particular wrote about the dissatisfaction she felt with interactions being confined to words on the screen; she would have preferred to be able to communicate through other nonverbal means such as facial expressions. Lester wrote that the biggest frustration for her was the interruption that resulted in the first and last two weeks of the dialogue being separated by months in between. Chasin wrote that she struggled with finding ways to facilitate in the online context (Freedman et al., p. 109). These responses were instructive with regards to planning the current study, supporting the decision to implement an online adaptation via VMC. VMC a). allows for greater nonverbal communication, b). is unlikely to contain such large interruptions, as it will unfold over a much shorter timeframe, in a synchronous format, and c). provides more direct opportunities for the facilitator to engage.

Intergroup Dialogue Adaptations

Scholars have recently been exploring intergroup dialogues in online settings among cultural groups with historical conflict. In one particularly notable example, Selvanathan et al. (2019) recently conducted an intergroup dialogue intervention online between Bosniaks and Serbs, on various aspects of the post-conflict context of Yugoslavia. The purpose of this study was to explore how intergroup dialogue may promote harmony, and/or discourse around justice.

Although this study did not specifically use the RSD protocol, it offers an instructive demonstration as to how dialogue may unfold in an online context.

The dialogue was conducted using a newly developed platform, WeDialog.net, and took place over the course of four weeks. Fifty-four Bosnians and 41 Serbians participated, for a total of 95 participants. The researchers created 26 discussion topics, based on past research on intergroup dialogue and conflict intervention strategies. These topics were designed to either promote harmony- or justice-oriented outcomes (Selvanathan et al., 2019); however, beyond this, the topics are not described clearly enough in the article for any substantive determination as to how much they did or did not reflect the principles of RSD. We do not know, for example, the extent to which they invoked personal experiences, exploring complexities and uncertainties, or the sharing of stories.

True to the principle of collaboration, the dialogue was designed such that participants had input on the topics discussed; in addition to the 26 topics created by the researchers, participants generated an additional 40 topics, for a total of 66 topics all in all. Participants were invited to contribute posts to any topic of interest, and, as with RSD, there was no participation requirement. They were allowed to contribute as little, or as much as they desired. Over the course of the four weeks, each contributed at least 25 posts, with an average of 40 posts per person. Importantly, these discussions were not moderated or facilitated. The article also did not make any mention of communication agreements, or specific ground rules for the dialogue (Selvanathan et al., 2019).

Quantitative pre- and post-dialogue surveys were used to measure psychological outcomes which, the researchers suggested, may have important consequences for fostering harmony or justice (Selvanathan et al., 2019, p. 2). These psychological outcomes included in-

group attachment and glorification, demands for both retributive and restorative justice, preferences for the goals of dialogue i.e. improving relationships and structural change, and prioritization of discussing different topics i.e. intergroup commonality and justice. In addition, exploratory analyses were conducted on the content of the dialogue in order to better understand participants' attitudes (Selvanathan et al., 2019).

The findings from this study suggest that the dialogue may have encouraged justice-oriented discourse, bringing up stronger ingroup identification and greater demands for justice. There was less support for building relationships. These results may well have been impacted by the absence of a moderator or facilitator. In the discussion, the authors state that the results from their study suggest that "groups interacting online, in the absence of a predetermined structure, may develop their own discourse around the conflict" (Selvanathan et al., 2019, p. 8). For online dialogues that seek to build and enhance relationships, then, structure and facilitation may be particularly important.

Implications for the Current Study

The case examples described in this section illustrate attempts to achieve dialogic interactions in text-based online contexts, through specific dialogic interventions. These examples were evaluated in terms of their similarities and differences to RSD, and their ability to achieve dialogic outcomes. This literature informed the online implementation of RSD. The findings of this review are promising, suggesting that an online adaptation of RSD can be successful in achieving its dialogic goals. The current study sought to explore this idea.

Purpose of the Study

In the preceding literature reviews, I have identified important gaps in the research on RSD, and online dialogues. The current research addresses these gaps and contributes to our understanding of interactions in online spaces. The specific objectives of my research were:

1. To enhance the current knowledge and understanding of the RSD process using qualitative methods that emphasize the experiences of participants
2. To understand how dialogue in an online context may shape participants' relationships and connections with one another
3. To explore how the online context shapes participants' experiences of dialogue
4. To increase our understanding of how dialogic interventions can unfold in an online context.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do participants experience RSD in an online context?
2. How do participants experience relationships in an online adaptation of RSD?
3. What aspects of dialogue are translatable to online contexts?
4. What barriers/challenges does an online context create for achieving dialogue?
5. What advantages does an online context create for achieving dialogue?

Table 2 maps each research question onto the purpose(s) which it addresses.

Table 2
Research Questions and Purposes

Research Question	Purpose
1. How do participants experience RSD in an online context?	1, 3, 4

2. How do participants experience relationships in an online adaptation of RSD?	1, 2
3. What aspects of dialogue are translatable to online contexts?	4
4. What barriers/challenges does an online context create for achieving dialogue?	3, 4
5. What advantages does an online context create for achieving dialogue?	3, 4

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have described, in detail, the topic that I plan to study for my dissertation: RSD. I have distinguished it from other related forms of communication, and I described its importance, its relevance, and the potential significance of creating a successful online adaptation. I reviewed the differences between online and in-person contexts, and highlighted examples of online dialogues. Finally, I presented an outline of my proposed study, including the purpose of the study, objectives, and research questions. In the second chapter, I will dive deeper into the theoretical framework guiding my proposed study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction/Rationale for Selection

Social work scholar Malcolm Payne (2016) defines theory as "a generalized set of ideas that describes and explains our knowledge of the world around us in an organized way." A social work theory, furthermore, is one that specifically "helps us to do or to understand social work" (p. 5). Although theory is distinguished from knowledge and practice, its value and utility tends to be measured in relation to each of these things: how well it explains, and informs, what we know, and how we practice.

Dialogue can, and has been, explored through a variety of different theoretical frameworks (Cooper et al., 2013). In research, the rationale for selection of these frameworks is often based on the purposes of the research, and objects of interest. Moscheta et al. (2016) for example were interested in exploring the construction of meaning of healthcare resources, in order to improve the provision of healthcare for LGBT populations in Brazil. Appropriately, they chose to examine dialogue through the lens of social constructionism. As discussed in Chapter 1, my research aims to explore the experience of Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD), and how it operates in an online context. Phenomenology is an appropriate framework through which to pursue these questions. Phenomenology is both a philosophy and scientific method (Giorgi, 2010). In the next chapter, I will discuss phenomenology as a scientific practice. In this chapter, I will introduce its theoretical foundation, and the branch of phenomenology which will guide my research.

The Origins of Phenomenological Psychology

Phenomenology as a philosophical movement originated with the work of Edmund Husserl, in the early twentieth century. Husserl did not believe that the logical positivist forms of science could be capable of understanding everything there was to know about nature and the human mind (Fouche, 1993; Ungvarsky, 2019). He argued that the proclivity of human scientists to adhere to natural scientific methods was ultimately detrimental, and obstructive to the full development of human science. True science, he believed, had to conform itself to the object, or phenomena, of study. A logical positivist perspective – a perspective which devalued and excluded subjectivity – had limited utility when it came to contributing to the understanding of human consciousness, the matters of which were, by nature, subjective (Fouche, 1993). His work, thus, focused on developing the philosophy of phenomenology, which, he believed, would serve as a better foundation for both human and natural sciences. He also developed phenomenological psychology, which was closely aligned with phenomenological philosophy, to serve as a theoretical foundation for human sciences (Fouche, 1993).

Husserl's epistemological conviction was that in order to understand reality, to see things truly "as they are," we need to acknowledge, and separate, our own subjectivity; the associations, meanings, and unconscious ideas that we automatically ascribe to the objects which we perceive. The suspension of these associations and presuppositions is sometimes called "bracketing" (Fouche, 1993; Ungvarsky, 2019). Bracketing, or epoché, is the first step in the process of phenomenological reduction. It allows us to disconnect from the natural attitude of acceptance, with which we often, unconsciously, perceive the larger external world. Under epoché, we consider the world without the assumption that it exists independently and objectively outside of us: instead, we consider it only as it appears to us (Fouche, 1993). We attempt to put aside all of

the knowledge derived from sources outside of what is directly in front of us (Giorgi et al., 2017). There is an assumption that human consciousness itself cannot be bracketed, and thus, by subtracting ascribed meanings and understandings, we are left with objects simply as they appear, as they exist, in our consciousnesses; the true nature, or "essence" of the objects. Phenomenological reduction also leads to the understanding of the elements, or structures, which comprise the nature of these essences; what the object essentially is, and is not (Fouche, 1993).

Intentionality is a critical component of Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl understood consciousness as an intentional act, in and of itself; to be conscious was to be conscious of. Intentionality guides the direction of consciousness and allows us to synthesize and interpret the information we receive from our perceptions; it does this at both conscious and pre-conscious levels (Fouche, 1993; Giorgi et al., 2017).

Scholars have sought to apply the principles and practices of Husserl's phenomenological psychology in a range of different settings in different fields. Naturally, this has encouraged the evolution and development of different forms of phenomenological science – most notably, existential and interpretative phenomenology. In the following sections, I will describe existential and interpretative phenomenology, and the reasons for which I considered interpretative phenomenology to be most relevant to the current research.

Existential Phenomenology

One of the assumptions of Husserl's phenomenology is that consciousness, or the ego, would be the "transcendental residue" that would remain after phenomenological reduction had been completed (Fouche, 1993). The consciousness, or ego, is something that exists in all humans; a universal feature that we all share. However, as scholars have noted, this presents the "problem of the other person" (Merleau-Ponty & Bannan, 1956). Fouche (1993) suggests this

transcendental perspective can result in solipsism, for "…if the consciousness of my own subjectivity precedes and underlies my consciousness of the world and of other subjects, and I have immediate access only to my own consciousness, how do I know that there are other minds?" (p. 118). Merleau-Ponty and Bannan (1956) argue that the fact of one's existence should not be determined solely by one's own consciousness of existence; it also is determined by the consciousness that can be had of it by others; "hence my incarnation in a nature and the possibility at least of a historic situation" (p. 63). In other words, our existence is not established only through our own perceptions of ourselves, but also through our positions in larger social contexts.

Existential phenomenologists reject the assumption that consciousness cannot be bracketed, arguing that instead it is the world of the natural attitude, also referred to as the "life-world," which cannot be bracketed (Fouche, 1993). The natural attitude exists in all individuals; it is an attitude of acceptance, which takes for granted that the world exists as it is presented to us. The world of the natural attitude, the life-world, is a world of subjectivity which forms the basis, the foundation, of all human activity and behavior. Merleau-Ponty argued that humans are situated in the world and in a constant, dialectical engagement, and thus, there could be meaningful separation between inner- and outer-world. Building on the assumption that consciousness is always 'consciousness of,' he argued that consciousness cannot be a closed-circle, inaccessible to all but the individual; instead, it is always turned towards the 'outer-world.' Thus, it is possible to observe and describe the consciousness of another human being (Fouche, 1993; Merleau-Ponty & Bannan, 1956).

Interpretative Phenomenology

The roots of interpretative phenomenology can be traced to the work of Heidegger. Heidegger was a student of Husserl, and while he supported most of the tenets of Husserl's phenomenology, in his writings, he expounded on particular ideas that varied from popular interpretations of Husserl's writings. For example, Heidegger considered intentionality to be an unconscious process; he questioned the Western tendency to prioritize thought, which he perceived as a secondary component – dependent on intentionality, which was inherent in human consciousness (Larkin et al., 2006). Heidegger shared the existential phenomenological skepticism that the interior world, or ego, could be truly separated from that of the outside world. In his work, he emphasized the importance of contexts; social, cultural, and historical. Thus, interpretation was, in his view, the true phenomenological method (Frechette et al., 2020). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) rests on the assumption that it is through interpretation that we are able to access participants' lived experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

Researchers employing IPA methods have two general goals: to understand, and describe, the inner world of the participant, and then to develop an interpretative analysis that considers the larger social, cultural, and theoretical contexts (Larkin et al., 2006). It is this second goal which primarily distinguishes it from descriptive existential phenomenology. Additionally, IPA places heightened importance on the individual experiencing the phenomena: the phenomena is understood in the context of the participant's "lived experience" (Larkin et al., 2006). The aim is to understand how participants make sense of their experiences; the meanings which they ascribe to them (Smith, 2004).

These points of distinction also illuminate the ways in which interpretative phenomenology is suitable for the current study. Most importantly, it considers context. It does

not take for granted that what an individual says or understands represents any absolute, static truth, either about the phenomena in question, nor about the person's experience of the phenomena; as Larkin et al. (2006) describe, phenomenological accounts can be used "to reveal something about a person, but only that person's current positioning in relation to the world of objects / the bodies and bodies-of-knowledge / which have come to constitute love [the phenomena] in their experience, culture and locale" (p. 109). This type of approach is appropriate for the current study, which considers not only the phenomenon of dialogue, but also how it may exist in the context of an online space.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have described phenomenology, and its relevance and implications for the research that I conducted. Phenomenology explores phenomena as lived experiences, acknowledging the importance of the contexts in which they occur. This is well-suited for the qualitative forms of research methods I chose to pursue for my study – particularly interpretative phenomenology, which flows directly from phenomenology. In the next chapter, this will be described and discussed in further detail.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In chapters 1 and 2, I introduced my topic of study, and the theoretical framework that guided my research. In this chapter, I discuss my methodology. For this study, I utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and thematic analysis (TA). My study unfolded in two phases, with phase one involving the implementation and observation of the dialogue, and phase two consisting of follow-up semi-structured interviews. In the following sections, I will describe the principles and practices involved in IPA and TA, the rationale for selection, and how these methods served the goals of my research. Then, I will then go into the specific details of my study, describing the virtual model I implemented, site and participant selection, recruitment, methods of data collection, analyses, ethical considerations, and strategies for ensuring research quality.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Phenomenology can refer to both a philosophy and a practice, with the latter based on the former (Van Manen, 1997). In chapter 2, I discussed the philosophical basis of phenomenology, and its key assumptions. In this chapter, I will discuss phenomenology as a practice, focusing specifically on IPA.

Phenomenology aims to explicate a particular 'phenomenon.' It focuses on the concrete, capturing "rich description" of the phenomena and its settings (Groenewald, 2004). IPA focuses on personal lived experiences, and making sense of these experiences (Smith, 2004). As such, it

was well-suited to explore the first two research questions in this study: a). How do participants experience Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD) in an online context? and b). How do participants experience relationships in an online adaptation of RSD?

Phenomenology aims to understand phenomena in its own terms. It requires the researcher to maintain a stance of openness towards the phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). Hycner (1999) observes that it has been difficult to come up with a specific phenomenological methodology, because any method that is put forth is at risk of being reified, or codified, thus detracting from the ideal "openness" of phenomenology. Consistently, interpretative phenomenological researchers argue that IPA is not strictly confined to any one prescriptive set of instructions for data collection and analysis. Ideally, these methodological decisions should be chosen based on the phenomenon (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2009).

However, every methodology requires some guidelines; if there are none whatsoever, it can hardly function as an established methodology. Some researchers, most notably Jonathan Smith, have worked to develop guidelines, or suggestions, for IPA, aiming to balance the core principles of IPA with the need for structure (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009). Their guidelines served as the basis for the development of the methodology for the current study.

Thematic Analysis

TA is a qualitative method that is useful for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns and themes within data. As it emphasizes core skills and practices often utilized in qualitative research, such as coding, and finding and interpreting themes, it is considered a foundational qualitative method. TA is known for its flexibility: it can be performed with different forms of data, including interview transcripts and observation memos, and it is compatible with a variety

of theoretical and epistemological orientations, including essentialist and constructionist (Braun & Clark, 2006).

In this study, I used TA primarily to explore the research questions focusing on the online context, and how it serves and/or challenges the goals of dialogue. I followed the guidelines for conducting TA, as laid out by Braun and Clark (2006). Thematic analysis is commonly understood to be independent of theoretical and epistemological assumptions, and this allows it to be flexible and adapted to a variety of qualitative approaches. It is important, however, that the researcher be transparent regarding the theoretical/epistemological context in which they use TA (Braun & Clark, 2006). As I discussed in Chapter 2, my research is guided by an interpretative phenomenological framework: a framework which understands reality as constructed and pursues knowledge through the interpretation of lived experiences (Frechette et al., 2020). This approach combines elements of constructionism and essentialism, recognizing and validating a distinct reality (that of the participant), while at the same time considering contextual influences. Thus, I engaged in TA in a contextualist framework.

RSD: The Virtual Model

Originally, I had planned to develop a virtual model of RSD from scratch, based on the literature discussed in the review, as well as other literature on online interactions. However, these plans, like many others, changed with the advent of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. During this time, the staff at Essential Partners (EP) came together and decided to implement and host a free, virtual public dialogue to discuss the pandemic. Although this dialogue was slightly different from traditional RSD, in that it was designed to help people connect under a time of stress, it utilized core elements of RSD including communication agreements, facilitation, carefully designed questions, and structures for speaking and reflecting

(Herzig & Chason, 2006). Three dialogues were held, each spaced a week apart from each other. I attended the first two dialogues, but was unable to attend the third due to a scheduling conflict. During the dialogues in which I was in attendance, I took notes on what I observed, and experienced, as a participant.

After attending the dialogues, I decided that I would not develop my own, original model of RSD completely from scratch. Instead, I adapted the model developed by EP for the COVID-19 dialogues. My adaptation was based on a). my observations from the pandemic dialogues, as captured in my notes b). resources utilized for the dialogue, which were freely distributed afterwards, and c). the literature I had collected and reviewed regarding online video-mediated communication (VMC). I then implemented this adapted model at the University of Georgia (UGA), in the School of Social Work, with participants recruited from an online master's level social work course.

The dialogue took place during the fall semester of 2020. Early in the semester, I introduced the dialogue model, and provided consent forms (Appendix A). As the class was asynchronous, the introduction was recorded via video, and the consent forms attached as electronic handouts. I was included in the course as a co-instructor. Students who signed and returned their consent forms (n=7) were then provided with a link to a pre-dialogue survey, which contained demographic questions and an open-ended question asking them to indicate the top three controversial topics which they would most like to talk about (Appendix B). Six students completed the survey. The topic was to be chosen based on responses to this survey, determined by frequency. However, given the small number of participants, it was difficult to determine a clear frontrunner: two topics were mentioned three times, and some overlapped. Table 3 displays the various topics that were suggested.

Table 3
Dialogue Topics

Topic	**Frequency**
General/anything	1
Race and ethnicity	2
Intersectionality	1
LGBT discrimination, transgender issues	3
Victim blaming in domestic/sexual violence	1
Political parties	1
Immigrant rights	3
Police brutality	2
Healthcare access	1
Reproductive rights	1
Gender pay gap	1

As Table 3 shows, in terms of frequency, both immigrant rights and LGBT discrimination were tied, each having been suggested by three students. Rather than pose additional burden on participants by asking them to vote again between these two options, I made the decision that the topic would be LGBT discrimination. I made this decision based on a). the conversation on the topic which had taken place earlier in the course, via the class discussion forums, and b). the guidance of my major professor, who was also the course instructor. The posts and comments that I reviewed on the class discussion forum suggested to me that LGBT discrimination might be a more controversial topic than immigrant rights, due to at least a couple of participants having discussed diverse experiences and religious beliefs. As soon as I finalized this decision, I informed participants via email. This was a little over a week prior to the dialogue. To schedule the dialogue, I set up a poll via Doodle.com, and invited participants to indicate their availability. The date and time that was agreed upon was 7pm Monday evening, November 9th, 2020.

The dialogue consisted of one live, synchronous session, lasting for approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. Four days prior to the dialogue, I sent out emails to the students,

thanking them for their willingness to participate, and noting a few details about the dialogue to help them prepare (Appendix C). In this email, I prompted them to think about their ideas and perspectives relevant to the dialogue. I invited them to consider and reflect on what would help them participate fully. I also provided links to Zoom and Zoom tutorials, so they had time to become familiar with the software. Finally, I included a list of proposed communication agreements. A copy of the pre-dialogue email can be found in Appendix C. A copy of the communication agreements may be found in Appendix D. Although I had initially planned to provide an article, video, or resource on the topic for participants to view prior to the dialogue, I ultimately decided against this: having reviewed the course material on the topic, which they had already completed, I was confident that each participant had at least a basic understanding of issues around LGBT discrimination, and I considered that providing additional material might a). unnecessarily restrict the conversation to a specific LGBT issue, which not all participants may have an interest in, and b). pose additional burden for students, some of whom were juggling jobs and caretaking in addition to school responsibilities.

The structure of the dialogue itself, based on the pandemic dialogues, consisted of three phases: introduction, discussion, and conclusion. These phases, and their associated tasks, are summarized in Table 4 below:

Table 4
Dialogue Structure

Phase	Tasks
1: Introductions	Facilitator introduces the dialogue, Goes over communication agreements, and Explains how the conversation will function

2: Discussion	Participants respond to an initial icebreaker question, followed by Dialogue Question 1, and Dialogue Question 2 Then, participants have the opportunity to ask each other, and respond to, questions of genuine curiosity
3: Conclusion	Participants respond to a closing question Facilitator reviews confidentiality agreement, and closes the dialogue

For the two dialogue questions, participants responded using the "go-round" structure (see Chapter 1, p. 16). Each dialogue question was preceded by a two-minute period of reflection, where I encouraged participants to write down their thoughts. When the two minutes passed, I invited one participant to go first, and then, I called on participants according to their spatial position on my screen, following a clockwise pattern, alerting the next two participants each time (e.g., "Kristin, would you like to go first? Followed by Isabella, and then Eve…"). Each participant was allowed two minutes to voice their response. I kept track of time, and at the 90-second mark, I waved my hand to signal students that they had 30 seconds left to wrap up their response. When two minutes were up, the timer would sound. In between each speaker, participants were instructed to take a deep breath.

Following the two dialogue questions, participants were encouraged to ask and respond to questions of genuine curiosity. This portion of the dialogue was somewhat unstructured: participants were not given time limits for their questions or answers. This portion of the

dialogue lasted approximately 15 minutes. Finally, the closing round of the dialogue followed a "popcorn" format, where participants either raised their hands, or simply unmuted themselves, and I called on them to respond. For the closing question, they were each given thirty seconds to respond. A copy of the facilitator script may be found in Appendix E.

Serving as host for the Zoom session allowed me to moderate the dialogues most effectively. As the host, I had the power to mute participants when it was not their turn to speak. I planned to use this option only if participants did not adhere to the communication agreement that states that they will not interrupt one another (see Appendix D), and if they did not respect additional requests to remain silent while others are speaking. Otherwise, I would simply ask participants to mute themselves when they were not speaking. Fortunately, all participants self-muted, and I did not need to mute anyone at any point during the dialogue.

In addition to muting audio, Zoom offered participants the option to turn off their computer cameras. If participants turned off their cameras, they could still participate via audio. At the beginning of the dialogue, I informed participants that they may turn off their cameras if they wished. However, all participants elected to keep their camera on.

At the end of the dialogue, I reminded participants of the confidentiality agreement, which was included as part of the communication agreements. This agreement requests that participants not share any personally identifiable information with anybody outside of the dialogue. This agreement was intended to help ensure that privacy would be respected.

Research Design

Site Selection

My study took place at UGA, in the department of social work. UGA is located in Athens, Georgia, with a student population estimated at around 38,000 students (University of

Georgia, 2020). In 2019, 557 students were enrolled in the School of Social Work, with 411 of these students pursuing graduate degrees (UGA Fact Book, 2019).

There are benefits to selecting a 'familiar' site for one's research, as Padgett (2016) writes, such as increased knowledge, easier access, and easier establishment of rapport with participants. I chose the school of social work as the setting for my study mainly for these reasons: as a student in the Ph.D. program, I was familiar with much of the student curriculum, course matter, and I had strong connections among the faculty. In addition, I considered that, if this online adaptation was successful, it could be implemented in similar settings: in disciplines in which controversial sociopolitical topics come up in classroom conversations. This dialogue took take place within the context of an online master's-level course: Addressing the Bases of Power, Oppression, Social Justice, Evidence-Informed Practice, Advocacy, and Diversity (ProSEAD). This is a required course for all students in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program (School of Social Work, n.d.). The syllabus for this course may be found in Appendix H.

Participant Selection

My research relied on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is common in qualitative research. It involves selecting participants based on their ability to provide relevant information (Padgett, 2016). This is particularly appropriate for phenomenological research, where the question guiding participant selection is, as Englander (2012) articulates, "Do you have the experience I am looking for?" (p. 19).

Participants were recruited from students enrolled in the online version of the ProSEAD course, in the online MSW program beginning in fall semester of 2020. Participation in the dialogue was not required: those who did not wish to participate instead were responsible for

reading and discussing material on engaging in dialogues around difficult issues. There were two sections of the course, each capped at 25 students, for a total of 50 students. Initially, I only extended the invitation to participate to students from one section of the course. Having received little response, I extended the invitation to both sections. Fortunately, neither TA nor IPA require a large sample; in fact, phenomenological studies can work well with as few as 3-5 cases (Englander, 2012; Smith et al., 2009). In total, seven students expressed interest in participating in the study and returned their consent forms. Out of these seven, six attended the actual dialogue, and all six dialogue participants subsequently agreed to complete follow-up interviews.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited from a master's-level social work class. I introduced my study to the course during the second week of September 2020 by uploading an "introduction" video to the course page. In this video, I introduced myself, and my research. I explained that, for my dissertation, I would be facilitating and observing dialogues. Although all students would have the opportunity to participate in a dialogue, as part of the course, they would not be required to. To ensure non-coercion, students would not be given any extra credit or any course-related benefit for participating in the dialogue. Amazon gift cards, each worth $15, would be awarded to the first 15 students who completed the post-dialogue interviews.

I had planned to distribute consent forms at the same time as the introduction video was published. However, this was delayed as I waited for approval from the UGA Institutional Review Board (IRB). I received approval on September 21st, and consent forms were then distributed.

Screening and Consent Procedures

The only requirement for participation was that participants were students at UGA. As I only recruited from a master's-level course, all participants who signed and returned the consent form fulfilled this criterium. Participants who did not sign and return the form did not participate in the dialogue and were not included in the study.

Consent to be audio-recorded was a prerequisite for participation. In addition to signed consent forms, I asked students for verbal consent to record each dialogue and interview. All provided consent.

Methods of Data Collection

Multiple forms of data can help to improve research quality (Frechette, 2020; Padgett, 2016). For my study, I collected data from observations and semi-structured qualitative interviews. In the following sections, I will describe in detail each of my methods for collecting data. My study unfolded in two phases: phase one was the implementation and observation of the dialogue, while phase two consisted of follow-up semi-structured interviews.

Interviews. I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 6 participants after the conclusion of the dialogue. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants the opportunity to provide rich, detailed, first-person accounts of their experiences. They allow for the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue, wherein the researcher can modify questions according to participant responses and explore/follow up on areas of interest as they may arise (Smith et al., 2009).

Interviews took place over Zoom. I offered a series of available time slots, following the dialogue, where students could sign up to participate in the interview. Six students signed up for interviews, and the timing of these interviews ranged from 35 to 50 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, I focused on developing rapport with the participant, addressing any concerns or

questions they may have had, and obtaining verbal consent for participation in the interviews. I used Zoom to record these interviews. After I recorded the interviews, they were saved on the computer used for storage and analysis. Backup copies were saved in the Zoom cloud, and on an external hard drive. I also wrote research memos to record my observations and impressions of the interview, to capture immediate perceptions/understandings which would inform the data analysis later on.

An interview guide was developed and used to assist with the interview (see Appendix F). The purpose of the guide was not to dictate a rigidly structured interview: instead, it was to provide a "virtual map" for the interview, which I could draw upon if the conversation became difficult, or stuck (Smith et al., 2009). The first questions (questions 1-4) in this guide were designed to direct the conversation to participants' experiences of the dialogue, their thoughts, and their feelings. These questions were open-ended, and I often probed participants for additional information based on the responses they gave. The second part of the interview (questions 5-6) was designed to explore the third, fourth and fifth research questions, regarding the challenges and benefits of RSD in an online context.

Qualitative interviewing is a dynamic process that calls for openness and flexibility. Although I had developed questions to guide the interview, the questions were open-ended, and I sometimes modified and added to them based on participant responses. Changes were made both within and across interviews. For example, upon reviewing the dialogue video, I noticed that one participant discussed her desire to advocate for the LGBT community as a motivation for participating in the dialogue. This inspired me to ask her, during the follow-up interview, to discuss her motivations more in-depth. Receiving what I perceived to be a valuable, information-rich response, I then added this question to subsequent interviews with other participants.

Each participant was interviewed only once; though I left the option open to schedule additional interviews, if it seemed appropriate/needed, I did not end up doing this with any participants. While multiple interviews may be ideal for phenomenological research, since they allow for continued interaction between researcher and participant and validation of interpretations (Frechette, 2020; Padgett, 2016), I had planned for only one per participant, in anticipation of participants' scheduling constraints: these interviews were happening during the latter half of the fall semester; a time which can be stressful for many students due to exams and project deadlines.

Prior to the implementation of this study, I sought feedback from colleagues and mentors to improve the interview guide. I also pilot-tested the guide among friends and colleagues. This process provided valuable feedback, and additionally, it allowed me to practice asking the questions, helping me become more comfortable and natural when I interviewed participants. Later in this chapter, I will describe in greater detail additional strategies which I used to ensure integrity of my research methods (see Strategies for Ensuring Research Quality, p. 80). I also distributed copies of the main questions to participants at least one week in advance of the interviews (see Appendix F). I did this in order to give them time to think about and reflect on the questions, allowing them to provide more in-depth, thoughtful responses.

Observations. I observed and recorded the dialogue as it unfolded over Zoom. Zoom has a feature allowing the host to automatically record and transcribe each meeting: I used this for both the dialogue and the interviews. After the transcript was available, I read and reviewed it thoroughly, correcting any mistakes that I saw. I also wrote notes and memos to record impressions.

I served as the facilitator for this dialogue. Any level of participation by the researcher carries some level of risk, such as losing sight of the researcher role: the act of participating may detract from the researcher's ability to observe (Padgett, 2016). Recording the dialogue, however, helped to reduce this risk, in effect allowing me to separate these roles. During the dialogue, I was able to inhabit my role as facilitator, knowing that later on I would be able to review the recording as an observer. I also wrote down notes immediately after the dialogue, to record any observations that happened during the dialogue.

In my field notes and memos, I recorded both concrete and specific details observed, as well as my perceptions, ideas, and inferences (Appendix G). In line with phenomenological inquiry, I also recorded my own personal thoughts and feelings in order to identify and manage my own personal biases and preconceptions (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Frechette, 2020). These field notes and memos, added to the dialogue transcript, comprised the observation data to be analyzed for the study. They also informed the finalized interview guide. It should be noted that the notes that I took as I observed the COVID-19 dialogues were not included as part of this data: they were not analyzed for this study. Their purpose was exclusively to inform the development of the model.

Analyses

My study involved the use of two analytical approaches: TA and IPA. The application of multiple qualitative methods to the same data set is sometimes referred to as analytical pluralism (Clarke et al., 2015). Analytical pluralism can enhance research by providing a multidimensional understanding of the phenomena (Clarke et al., 2015; Spiers & Riley, 2019). When combining methods, however, it is important to ensure that they are compatible: that they do not adhere to contradicting or dissonant ontological and epistemological paradigms. As discussed before, TA

is flexible and can be applied within essentialist and constructivist paradigms. It is therefore compatible with many other qualitative research methods, including IPA (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This study was not the first to combine TA and IPA approaches. Spiers and Riley (2019) for example combined TA and IPA to explore sources of distress and barriers/facilitators for help-seeking behaviors among general practitioners. In their study, each analytical approach was utilized with different aims in mind. TA was used to identify barriers and facilitators for help-seeking behaviors, while IPA was used to explore the more idiographic and existential details of the experiences of a subset of participants. Similarly, in the current study, IPA was used to interrogate the experiences of participants, while TA was used to identify challenges and benefits of the online context, and to supplement findings from the IPA.

I had two forms of data which I analyzed: interviews, and observations. The interviews were analyzed using a combination of IPA and TA techniques. The observations were analyzed mainly through TA. In this section, I will describe the specific analytical steps and procedures which I implemented. It should be noted, however, that although the steps discussed here may represent a seemingly linear process, the actual process of data analysis was highly iterative and cyclical, with some steps performed and then returned to later on, and some steps being performed at the same time. The cyclical iterative nature of this analysis is generally characteristic of qualitative research, particularly IPA (Padgett, 2016; Smith et al., 2009).

IPA is an approach which does not adhere to any rigid, prescribed set of analytic procedures, though it may be characterized by a common set of processes and principles. The processes include moving from the particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to interpretative. The principles require a commitment to understanding the participant's point of

view, and a focus on meaning-making in the given context (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2009). The first two research questions, which addressed the lived experiences of RSD and relationships, were explored through participant interviews, and mainly analyzed with an IPA approach, supplemented with findings from the TA.

TA involves steps and processes which may also be utilized with IPA; with TA, however, there is no specific goal of understanding the participant's "lived experience." TA can be interpretative, but it does not need to focus specifically on the sensemaking processes of participant and researcher: it does not require the "double hermeneutic" of IPA, wherein the object of interest is pursued through the researcher's efforts to make sense of participants' social worlds (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009). The TA was used primarily to explore research questions 3-5, which were less participant-oriented, regarding the benefits and drawbacks of online contexts for dialogue. These research questions were addressed through interviews and observations.

Since IPA involves a deeper, more sustained engagement with the data, I chose to perform the TA first. In the following three sections, I will describe the specific steps I undertook to perform each analysis.

Preparing the data. Data analysis in qualitative research is an iterative process that often begins while the research is being carried out. For my research, this process began as soon as I completed the dialogue. As discussed in earlier sections, the dialogue, and each subsequent interview, was recorded and transcribed by Zoom. Although some suggest that the researcher should perform the transcription, letting this activity serve as the first level of interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith et al., 2009), having Zoom do the transcription saved a significant amount of time. After the transcription of the dialogue was completed, I copied and pasted the

text into a Word document. I then reviewed the data, while watching the recording of the dialogue at the same time, to correct for any errors in transcription. I also added notes to convey important aspects of the dialogue, which the electronic transcription did not capture – such as, particular facial expressions, tones of voice, or other contextual factors that seemed to influence the meaning of the statements. As I reviewed and modified the dialogue transcript, I also recorded observations, using the template developed beforehand (see Appendix G). The dialogue transcription, observations, and memos together comprised the complete observation dataset. I then uploaded the dataset to NVivo to engage in further analysis; to begin coding and generating themes.

I engaged in the same analytical first steps for each of the subsequent interviews. After each interview had been recorded and transcribed, I reviewed the videos, while editing the transcriptions for accuracy. I also jotted down some initial notes and impressions about the data, recording anything that struck me as interesting or particularly meaningful (Braun & Clark, 2006). This activity served as the first level of interpretation. Once I had finished reviewing and modifying each transcript, I uploaded them to NVivo for further analysis.

Thematic analysis. To begin the TA, I re-familiarized myself with the entire data corpus, reviewing the dialogue video and transcript, the observation notes, and then each interview and corresponding transcript in turn. This is a step recommended by Braun and Clark (2006) as a means of immersing oneself in the data and getting a sense of the "whole." I then revisited some of the literature on dialogue to generate an initial set of codes, which I recorded in a codebook. Codebooks are valued in qualitative research as a way of maintaining integrity, research, and transparency (Decuir-Gunby et al., 2011). They can be used for both inductive and deductive coding. In my codebook, I recorded the code label, the definition, the research question that I

thought the code might be most relevant to, and an example quote that demonstrated the essence of the code. A brief excerpt from my codebook may be found in the table below.

Table 5
Codebook Excerpt

Code	**Definition**	**Example**
Expressing personal perspective	Stating personal value, belief, position, understanding, opinion	"I feel like if they're happy, and they're not hurting anyone and they love someone, and they love – you know, who they are, you know, the body that they're in. And that's all that matters."
Reference to something specific that another participant said	Participant explicitly states something that another participant said, and then asks a question, or makes an observation, based on that information	"I know you said that you're, you're a religious teacher and these issues do come up and like you said, with the whole school, um, issue... how, more or less, would you say that you're able to address this to others when they try to use religion as a basis for not accepting, or discriminating against those that fall into the LGBT community?"

I coded the dialogue transcript first, using the deductive codes that I had generated from prior literature and my own knowledge and experience with dialogue. As I went through the transcript, I generated additional inductive codes based on the data. It was not long before these inductive codes easily outnumbered the deductive. After I coded the dialogue, I coded my observation data. Finally, I coded each of the six interviews, one by one. Following recommendations from Braun and Clark (2006), I assigned codes for as much of the data as possible.

Once I had completed my first round of coding, I embarked on a second round. The second round was important for two reasons. First, it allowed me to reconsider my first application of codes, and make changes, if needed. Second, it allowed me to apply codes which I might have missed during the first round – particularly those that were conceptualized after I had coded the transcript the first time. For example, the code "Apprehension" was conceptualized when I coded Alice's transcript. That transcript, however, was the third transcript coded. Thus,

the code had not been applied to Isabella's or Kristin's transcripts, which I had coded prior. During the second round of coding, I was able to consider their data with this code in mind.

After I had completed this second round of coding, I reviewed and refined my codebook. I went through each code individually, and read through the excerpts included, to make sure that I was being consistent in code application. Sometimes this led to adding or deleting certain excerpts; sometimes it led to a revision of the code definition. I also compared codes, focusing in particular on those that seemed very similar. Sometimes I judged that they were too similar – redundant – and in that case, I would either merge the codes, or simply delete one.

It was also during this phase that I began to develop themes, noticing connections and relationships between different codes, grouping them together accordingly, and assigning tentative labels. I created visual code maps to assist with this phase of the analysis; to process, understand, and illustrate the connections between various codes. I did this by hand, as well as through NVivo. Once I had a preliminary list of themes, I then went through each theme and read the excerpts of the various codes that comprised it, to ensure that the theme was consistent and coherent. I made a number of revisions during this process and deleted some themes when I judged that they were either too similar to other themes, and/or they did not contribute anything meaningful to the analysis.

I then explored the relationships between these themes; how they fit together. The goal of this phase was to begin to produce a cohesive structure, to reveal the most important aspects of the data relevant to the given research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I incorporated a variety of strategies in pursuit of this; I typed out the themes and organized them in Excel; I plotted them out using NVivo's Project Map application; and I wrote the themes down by hand, cut them up into pieces, spread them around, and organized them in piles. In utilizing these different

strategies, I enhanced the interpretative process by facilitating the activation of different mental and sensory processes with multiple forms of visual and tactile engagement. I also began to draft summaries of each theme; attempting to define their "essences." These summaries served as initial drafts of the findings revealed in Chapter 4.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In the process of rereading and analyzing the transcripts for the TA, there were two interviews which immediately stood out as strong candidates for IPA: the interviews with Alice and Kristin. These two participants had, it seemed to me, engaged deeply with the dialogue. Their interviews yielded data that was rich with insight and reflection – Alice's interview, in particular. I decided to begin the IPA with an analysis of her transcript.

I initially considered that I might perform the IPA using only Alice's and Kristin's data. While many methodological designs require large sample sizes, the depth of engagement and analysis required for IPA makes it appropriate for very small sample sizes. The importance is the quality, not the quantity, of the data (Smith et al., 2009). However, as I was analyzing Kristin's interview, and beginning to develop connections with Alice's interview, it occurred to me that some of the themes that I was noticing were also present in my interview with Isabella. I considered that the inclusion of her interview might provide a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the findings, thus enhancing and strengthening them. Upon finishing the Kristin's transcript, I decided to reread Isabella's transcript. I then decided to include it in the IPA. Thus, the final sample size for the IPA was 3.

The first step was to refamiliarize, by rereading the transcript and listening to the audio. Although I had done this, before, for the TA, doing it specifically for the IPA – with different research questions in mind – allowed me to see the interview through a different lens. I copied

the transcript into an Excel spreadsheet, dividing it into chunks; often, but not always, delineated by the start and end of a question response. I then went through the transcript again, making exploratory notes, which I jotted down in the column adjacent to the transcript column.

Writing exploratory notes in IPA is a process that requires sustained engagement, attention, and the ability to look at the data from multiple angles. To engage with the data in this way, I utilized a variety of strategies including rereading sections of the data both as discrete chunks, and as interconnected pieces of the larger interview; replaying the audio in the same manner; free-writing; and asking questions of the data, such as: Does this statement mean what I think it means? What else might it mean? What is the significance of the use of this word, phrase, vocal tone, inflection? These strategies helped me engage in reflection and analytical dialogue with the text, allowing me to develop a deeper, and more conceptual understanding of the data. As I dived more deeply into the analysis, I often found new meanings and patterns emerging, which I had not seen during the initial TA. I noted these meanings and patterns in another sheet within the Excel file, and from these I began to generate a list of tentative themes.

In IPA, themes are developed not only from the transcript data – which comprise the central foundation – but the exploratory notes that were taken in the prior stage of analysis. This synergistic process of description and interpretation yields themes that reflect understandings grounded in both the abstract and concrete, the particular and the whole (Smith et al., 2009). Once I had gone through and annotated the first transcript in its entirety, I uploaded the transcript and annotations to NVivo. I then went through the dataset again, assigning inductive codes to excerpts of data, which I then organized into themes. I utilized multiple organizational strategies, including abstraction, polarization, and contextualization (Smith et al., 2009). With abstraction, themes are organized and clustered based on similarities, allowing the emergence of "super-

ordinate" themes. Polarization is a strategy which allows us to identify connections between themes, based on opposition. Contextualization encourages the analysis of themes based on their positions and relevance to narrative elements (p. 96-97).

The next step was to explore the relationships between each of these themes, to form a thematic structure. I used similar strategies for organizing the themes that I had for the codes. I also used NVivo to visually engage with the themes by creating project maps. I then repeated these steps for the Kristin and Isabella's transcripts. After I had analyzed each individual transcript, I began the process of searching for patterns across the data. Essentially, I replicated the processes of developing themes for each interview on a larger scale; organizing and finding connections between themes among, rather than within, the individual interviews. Visual presentations, such as maps, charts, and tables assisted this process. Many of the themes that I developed for the individual interviews were clustered together, to create overarching themes. At the end of this process, I had a total of four overarching themes.

At this point, I decided to reverse direction, so to speak; to go back to the individual codes, the data excerpts, that made up each theme. This is a strategy recommended by Smith et al. (2009) to enhance the interpretation and defining of each theme. The idea is that, after developing an organizational structure, we might examine the data extracts with new eyes: certain passages might stick out to us, with certain meanings and/or connections made more salient. Indeed, I found this to be the case. It was also during this stage that I began to sketch out preliminary summaries of the IPA; summaries which were drawn upon and incorporated into the final write-up of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

Padgett (2016) identifies deception, consent, confidentiality/privacy, emotional distress/harm, and incentives/payback as some of the most important ethical issues to consider in qualitative research. In this section, I address these issues as they pertained to the current study. I also discuss the strategies that I used to ensure that my research was carried out in an ethically responsible manner, to the greatest extent possible.

Consent

As discussed in earlier sections, I provided consent forms to students at the very beginning of the study. The consent form summarized the research in terms of its purpose, procedures, and anticipated benefits or risks (see Appendix A). In addition to the consent form, I recorded and uploaded a video where I introduced myself and briefly discussed my research. I also let students know that I would be available, if they had any questions or concerns. My aim was to be as transparent as possible, so that all consent that was obtained was truly informed. At the beginning of each dialogue, and each interview, I also obtained verbal consent from all students to record the dialogue/interview. If a student did not consent to be audio-recorded during the dialogue, they would have been asked to leave the dialogue. If they did not consent to be audio-recorded during the interview, the interview could still proceed, and I would have collected the data with extensive notes. If a student withdrew consent after signing the consent form, but before participating in the dialogue, their data would have been discarded. If a student wished to withdraw consent either during or after having participated in a dialogue, the recording of the dialogue which they participated in would still be retained, but their individual data would not be included in the analysis. This information was included in the consent form (see Appendix A).

It was also important that students' decision to participate was made independently and free from coercion. As I described in earlier sections, while students had the option to participate in dialogue as a course activity, they were not mandated to do so. Students who decided that they did not wish to participate completed another course activity. I emphasized that there would be no penalty, should they make this choice.

Confidentiality

I took measures to protect participants' confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Zoom provided several security features to support this aim (Security at Zoom, n.d.). Meetings were secured with password protection and encryption: they were also restricted such that only users within a given email domain could join. As the host, I was able to set up the meeting such that other participants would not be able to record the meeting.

The recordings of the dialogues and interviews, and the transcripts, were stored both in the Zoom cloud, and backed up on an external hard drive, which only I had access to. The recordings and transcripts on the Zoom cloud were encrypted.

Finally, the reporting of findings can present significant risk to confidentiality in qualitative research. The questions that I developed for my interview protocol were not designed to elicit a lot of personal, identifying information, so I did not anticipate that this would be a major risk. At the same time, I took measures to protect confidentiality, including the use of pseudonyms, alteration of personal details that may have been identifying, and the use of shorter quotes and data excerpts wherever possible (Padgett, 2016). One of my participants was particularly concerned with confidentiality, given some of the information that she shared. I altered details about her information and story so as to protect her and those whom she discussed.

Distress and Emotional Harm

This was a significant concern, given that my research requires that participants engage in difficult discussion regarding a controversial sociopolitical topic. Participation in the dialogue had the potential to evoke uncomfortable feelings, and it was possible that students would feel vulnerable because they might be sharing feelings with classmates, with members of their cohort – people whom they almost certainly would interact with in other settings outside of the dialogue. This was a risk that was both significant and unavoidable, given the nature of this research. The dialogue protocol however was designed precisely to help participants navigate uncomfortable conversations, and much of the extant research suggests that participants experience more positive than negative outcomes (Chasin et al., 1996; Herzig, 2001; Morey, 2013). I took measures, furthermore, to mitigate these potentially negative effects. I provided students with access to resources including the UGA counseling center. I made sure that contact information was available by copy/pasting it in the chat box at the start of each dialogue and interview. I also made sure that students were informed of this risk from the beginning, when I introduced the study and provided the consent form.

Incentives/Payback

Incentives can be a positive way to encourage participation, and to compensate participants for their time. I did not offer any financial incentives for participation in the dialogue alone. All who participated in the dialogue, regardless of whether they elected to participate in interviews, were indirectly compensated in the form of academic credit. I did offer financial incentives for those who participated in the one-on-one interviews, in the form of a $15 Amazon gift card. I believed that this amount would be enough to serve as an adequate compensation for an interview, which was estimated to last for approximately one hour: this is a rate which

exceeded both state and federal minimum wage (Georgia Department of Labor, 2020; U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). At the same time, although the use of incentives can sometimes appear to be coercive (Padgett, 2016), I did not believe that the amount of $15 would be enough to warrant such concern among students.

Additional Procedures

Prior to beginning this research, I obtained permission and approval from the IRB at UGA.

Strategies for Ensuring Research Quality

There are no universal standards or criteria for evaluating what constitutes rigorous, high-quality qualitative research. This is to be expected given the highly varied epistemological approaches and methods that fall under the umbrella of qualitative research. Different approaches tend to require different standards to establish quality: the standards for a grounded theory study, for example, may not apply as well to a discourse analysis. The criteria by which any qualitative study is evaluated should be consistent with the epistemological and theoretical orientations of the given study (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2008). With this in mind, I chose the following strategies to ensure research quality for my study.

Triangulation

Triangulation can be a powerful way to strengthen qualitative research. The term triangulation was borrowed from navigational science, and originally referred to the process of "using two or more sources to achieve a comprehensive picture of a fixed point of reference" (Padgett, 2016, p. 215). In qualitative research, triangulation can occur at multiple levels, and serve multiple purposes. Often, triangulation is used as a means of enhancing trustworthiness: the logic being that, if the phenomenon is presented in the same way, from multiple angles, then

that presentation is more likely to be 'true' (Yardley, 2008). This is inconsistent, however, with the epistemological and theoretical underpinnings of the current study, which considers that different angles/perspectives may reveal different accounts of a phenomenon, but that all of these accounts are valid. For this study, the value of triangulation laid in revelation of differences in perspectives: these differences enrich our understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, triangulation did not establish trustworthiness, but it did provide a more comprehensive picture (Yardley, 2008). In this study, triangulation operated at multiple levels: data (observation and interview), and methodology (IPA and TA).

Disconfirming Instances

The themes and patterns identified in the process of analysis may be influenced by personal ideas and assumptions, e.g. researcher bias. One way that I countered this was by searching for "disconfirming instances;" instances where the theme or pattern I observe did apply, or was even contradicted. Such instances provided valuable information regarding the limitations of my findings, and/or steps for future research (Yardley, 2008). Disconfirming instances that I found were noted and included in the analysis for full transparency.

Audit Trail

Another key practice to safeguard the trustworthiness of my research was creating an audit trail. Throughout the study, I kept a "research diary," where I documented my activities, and the rationales/justifications for important analytical decisions. The audit trail also included raw, de-identified transcripts, as well as initial lists of codes, and drafts of thematic maps/visual data organization. In addition to holding me accountable, keeping and organizing an audit trail also assisted me in the research process, as it helped to inform analytical decisions.

Member Checking

Member checking involves presenting the analysis and interpretations to respondents and then seeking their feedback. This is a particularly valuable strategy for approaches that consider the data to be co-constructed by both researcher and participant (Smith et al., 2009). After I had completed a draft of the findings, I began the process of member checking by emailing copies of selected findings to each participant, focusing on and highlighting sections in which they were individually featured – for example, a section where I included and discussed a quote from their interview. I invited them to share any comments or feedback. I received feedback from four out of six participants, all of whom affirmed my interpretations. Three did not request any changes. One requested that I alter additional minor details in order to protect her confidentiality, which I subsequently did.

Since some time had elapsed between the implementation of the dialogue and the completion of the write-up, I was not surprised that I did not receive responses from all participants. It is very possible that some graduated and were no longer regularly checking or even using their school email. Unfortunately, I did not have any other means of contacting them.

Demonstrating Research Validity

Yardley (2008) lays out a framework for evaluating qualitative research that includes principles which can broadly be applied to different qualitative approaches. These principles are sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, coherence and transparency, and impact and importance. In the table below, I show how my study met the specific criteria under each dimension:

Table 6
Criteria for Evaluation

Dimensions/Criteria	**Actions**
Sensitivity to context	

Relevant theoretical and empirical literature	The study described what is known/what work has been done on RSD, particularly in online settings Described connections and relevance of specific aspects of phenomenology
Socio-cultural setting	Included relevant details about setting in higher education, in a masters-level social work program in the southeast US
Participants' perspectives	Participants were able to choose topic of interest for the dialogue Used open-ended questions to encourage participants to talk freely about what is important to them Participants were able to turn off camera during dialogue/interview if desired, to make participation more comfortable
Commitment and rigor	
Depth/breadth of analysis	Followed guidelines for interpretative phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis; involved multiple levels of coding and thematic refinement.
Methodological competence/skill	Researcher had training in qualitative methods and experience with thematic analysis
In-depth engagement with topic	Researcher had three years of experience with reflective structured dialogue, and has received training with analyzing online data
Coherence and transparency	
Clarity and power of argument	Arguments/claims were carefully constructed based on data, and supported with examples from data and relevant literature Arguments/claims were supported by consistency of research questions, theory, and methodology
Fit between theory and method	Methodology flowed directly from phenomenology
Transparent methods and data presentation	Substantial details were included regarding data collection, analysis, and findings; findings were supported with excerpts from transcripts/data wherever possible
Reflexivity	Researcher took reflective notes throughout the research process to maintain self-awareness and note possible impacts of biases/assumptions and personal perceptions. Important reflections were included in write-up of research.
Impact and importance	
Practical/Applied	Research aimed to increase understanding of a dialogic intervention which may be applied in higher education and community contexts Increased understanding of the potential of online contexts for facilitating dialogue

Theoretical	Study enhanced understanding of dialogic processes
Socio-cultural	Research provided important contribution to the literature on an intervention that seeks to build connections and relationships among groups with diverse opinions and experiences

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I described the methodology used to explore a virtual implementation of RSD. I discussed in detail the practices and principles of TA and IPA, followed by a description of the context of the study, and methods for participant recruitment. I then described how I implemented the dialogue, conducted follow-up interviews with participants, and collected data from these activities: data which was then analyzed through TA and IPA. Finally, I discussed ethical considerations, and strategies for ensuring research quality. In the next chapter, I will share the findings from this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

My study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do participants experience RSD in an online context?
2. How do participants experience relationships in an online adaptation of RSD?
3. What aspects of dialogue are translatable to online contexts?
4. What barriers/challenges does an online context create for achieving dialogue?
5. What advantages does an online context create for achieving dialogue?

To explore these questions, I implemented a virtual version of Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD), and afterwards conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant. The dialogue and interviews were all conducted, recorded, and transcribed via Zoom. I took notes directly after the dialogue and each interview. Once the transcriptions were available, I reviewed them carefully, while listening to recordings to ensure accuracy, as well as to record details that had not been captured, such as vocal inflections, facial expressions, and hand gestures. I uploaded the revised documents to NVivo, where I proceeded with each of the analyses; first the thematic analysis (TA), followed by the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

In this chapter, I will present the findings from each of these analyses. First, I will summarize the information gathered in the pre-dialogue survey. Then, I will present findings from the TA, followed by the IPA. In Chapter 5, I will situate the findings in the context of the research questions as well as existing literature to discuss implications and recommendations for social work and future research.

Pre-Dialogue Survey

Prior to the dialogue, participants completed a survey which gathered demographic information. The data from this survey is summarized in the table below. It should be noted that, originally, seven participants had signed up to participate in the dialogue, and one of the participants who completed the survey did not attend the dialogue. Likewise, one of the participants who attended the dialogues did not complete the pre-dialogue survey. Unfortunately, I was not able to determine what data from the survey belonged to the participant who did not attend; thus I could not exclude it. Therefore, although six participants completed the survey, the information is not entirely representative of the six participants who attended the dialogue.

Table 7
Pre-Dialogue Survey Data

Survey Responses	Frequency
Gender	
Female	6
Total	6
Race/Ethnicity	
Black or African American	2
Hispanic or Latinx	2
White	3
Total	6
Approximate Age	
18-24	1
30-40	2
40-50	3
Total	6
Political Views	
Extremely Liberal	1
Moderate	3
Slightly Conservative	1
Don't Know/Prefer Not to Disclose	1
Total	6
Have you ever participated in a dialogue, or other form of public discussion such as	

a town hall or public debate?	
No	6
Total	6

As Table 7 shows, six participants identified as female. There was racial and ethnic diversity, with two African Americans, three Whites, and one Hispanic/Latinx participant. There was variation in terms of political views, with one participant identifying themselves as "extremely liberal," three as "moderate," one as "slightly conservative," and one unknown. Five participants were over the age of 30, while one was between 18 and 24 years old.

Thematic Analysis Findings

The findings from the TA are summarized in eleven themes: dialogue climate, tone, feeling; dialogue structure; a different kind of conversation; building trust, connections; disclosing uncertainty, gray areas; reservations; self-expression; changes observed post-dialogue; pandemic context; computer-mediated communication (CMC) as restrictive; and CMC as conducive to dialogue. These themes were grouped into four categories: dialogue themes, interpersonal themes, personal themes, and medium themes. These groupings are depicted in the table below.

Table 8
Thematic Analysis Categories, Themes

Category	Theme
Dialogue themes	Dialogue climate, tone, feeling Dialogue structure A different kind of conversation
Interpersonal themes	Building trust, connections Disclosing uncertainty, gray areas Reservations
Personal themes	Self-expression Changes observed post-dialogue
Medium themes	Pandemic context CMC as restrictive CMC as conducive to dialogue

These themes are summarized below in their basic form, sorted by group. In the next chapter, they will be situated in the context of their corresponding research questions, as well as existing literature.

Dialogue Themes

Each of the themes described below focuses on participants' perceptions of different aspects of the dialogue itself. Participants shared their observations, reflections, and appraisals of the dialogue. Their discussions of the dialogue fall into three general themes: dialogue climate, tone, feeling; dialogue structure; and dialogue as a different kind of conversation. Overall, participants perceived the tone and climate of the dialogue to be respectful, civil, and safe. The structures, while at times constricting, were recognized as valuable components of the respectful environment. Most participants enjoyed participating in the dialogue because it provided an opportunity to engage in a new kind of conversation both with each other, in a technological sense, and compared to those in their everyday lives in a more qualitative sense.

Dialogue Climate, Tone, Feeling

Participants described the dialogue as a space where they felt like they were able to express and reflect on their own perspectives. "It really gave people permission to explore spaces that felt like they could have been, you know, like we struggle to articulate, or this might not sit well." They perceived the tone of the dialogue to be respectful, and civil: "as the conversation went on...like towards like the end of it, I felt really comfortable with it. I felt like, okay, everybody is respecting each other, giving them time to speak and say what they want to say." As Eve described,

> Once each individual person started opening up and talking about the topic, you can tell that everybody was at ease. And it was like, okay, nobody's going to judge me, like it's a judgment free zone. We were free to speak about the topic.

The perceived respect and lack of judgment allowed participants to engage in a more open conversation. Additionally, the structures of the dialogue were recognized as contributing to the respectful tone and sense of safety in the dialogue. As Alice observed:

> I teach in small groups, and it takes six weeks for a small group to demonstrate signs of safety, where they kind of negotiate that...And so it was really insightful that offering some structure to a conversation can generate that sense of safety pretty quickly

Participants' perceptions of the dialogue structures will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

During the dialogue, many participants voiced similar views on LGBT discrimination. When invited to share their conflicts or dilemmas, however, Kristin expressed what she perceived to be a potentially controversial perspective on transgender participation in sports. When reflecting on this later on, in our one-on-one interview, she described how she felt nervous about sharing her opinion, but ultimately decided to speak her mind anyway. The perceived tone and climate of the dialogue helped motivate her decision to speak her mind: "I mean, like we're in this environment where nobody can come back and be like, and say negative things, you know. They can ask questions. So I was like, Fine, whatever. I'm just going to do it."

This particular part of the dialogue was discussed in interviews with other participants as well. For Alice, Kristin's actions demonstrated the "safety" of the dialogue: "I thought that's like, you know, for somebody to be able to take the risk of saying something that might have been perceived as negative...affirmed the safety of this structure, this structured conversation." Other

participants' reactions and reflections will be discussed in greater detail in later portions of this chapter.

Dialogue structure

In post-dialogue interviews, participants discussed how the structures of the dialogue encouraged them to open up, and to speak their mind. The speech structure was identified as being particularly helpful: "It gives you that opportunity to be able to finish without being interrupted if somebody does feel differently than you." Felicia especially appreciated having everybody speak in a designated order and knowing when it would be their turn to speak: "I feel like for introverted people, it's more easy to know when your time is coming, so you can already have your things prepared of what you want to say...it gave you that space because you knew...when your time was coming."

The emphasis on questions of curiosity was also highlighted as an important aspect of the dialogue: "I appreciated you *really* making that clear [asking questions of curiosity] because, um, some of us might think we're asking curious questions and, it just may not sound that way." Several participants also identified the pauses and deep breaths between responses as helpful: "I could see the reason behind the taking a breath because sometimes people need a breather in between those." As Kristin observed,

> I thought that that was kind of cool because you kind of went into it going, "Okay, I'm going to have to take a break in between each." And when you do that, it really does cut off kind of any type of hot-headed emotion that might come out or, you know, strong opinions. When you're forced to take that break…it's a calming mechanism.

Participants also enjoyed having time at the end of the dialogue to ask questions directly to each other: "I think that was very helpful because...you do get curious about certain things and

you want to know what those people that have different experiences in those areas and what their thoughts are and how they handle those situations." Isabella expressed a desire to have had "more time to ask questions."

While participants generally discussed the structures and format of the dialogue in positive terms, they also felt somewhat restricted, by the structures, and the short duration: "while the structure drives me a little crazy, it *feels so* constricting, it's also incredibly productive." Several participants expressed the desire to have had more time to talk, and to ask each other questions: as Isabella said, "The only thing that I dislike was not having more time to talk!" Daniela also recommended having more time to "ask different questions." Meanwhile, Kristin suggested that having multiple sessions of dialogue over a longer period of time would help participants build trust with one another: "I think that these dialogues would be really great, especially...if they were on a regular basis where you could talk about things with people so that you build trust with each other."

A different kind of conversation

For participants, the dialogue presented an opportunity for a new kind of conversation, and this was true in several different ways. First, as discussed before, participants had mostly interacted with one another in a text-based, asynchronous format. The dialogue offered them a chance to have a discussion face-to-face, in a live setting. As Felicia said, "I thought it was cool, because, being in an online program. I don't really get to see everybody often, so I like getting to see who's in my cohort." Although this option was available for them in class, during a weekly office hours session hosted by the instructor, as one participant said, not everybody attended the office hours: "We sometimes get together in [professor's] class. Maybe a couple times, because

most of them don't attend." Alice described how the dialogue felt like a good "extension" of the conversations they were having in class:

> Learning to have these conversations is part of what we've been doing, so it felt very consistent with that. A lot of our work has been, because we're in an online class, has been through writing. And writing gives you plenty of time to really kind of clean up and edit what you're saying. Again, when you have 30 seconds to prepare your thoughts to speak them out loud, it's a little different process. So, um, I think...some of the work we've done certainly prepared for that. It felt like a good extension, or it felt like an extension of what we've been doing.

Kristin particularly appreciated the opportunity for a live conversation with her classmates. As will be described in the IPA portion of this chapter, she struggled with the asynchronous format of online classes. For her, the dialogue was helpful because it allowed her to learn more about her classmates: "I realized that that wasn't the point to help out like, this online class, but that it *did* help...to be able to discuss things, you know, a real topic with real people."

Second, for some participants, the dialogue offered an opportunity to discuss LGBT-related issues in a way that wasn't typically available to them in their everyday lives: "I really did enjoy, [it was] a little bit different, out of the norm and I had never done it before;" "knowing the point was to actually be able to speak and not debate...it was different, because I had not actually had a conversation like that before." Alice particularly noticed the difference when she was questioned about her experience, as a religious figure: "[it] felt supportive, which, some spaces where I'm in where I get asked theological questions, it's not a supportive space."

Daniela reflected on the challenges of having conversations where people may disagree, and how these conversations often don't happen at all because people may worry about saying "the wrong thing."

> I think a lot of the time...we won't have conversations, especially if they're those type of conversations where they can get a little bit, where – where people could have different opinions about it. Just because we don't want to say the wrong thing. We don't want to have people get upset or say something that's different than your own thoughts about things. And so those are the conversations that I feel like people don't normally have and it's very hard to have those conversations with a lot of people

The dialogue offered her a chance to engage in a kind of conversation that she felt like she wouldn't normally be able to have. Overall, the dialogue gave participants the chance to express their opinions and hear from others in a way that they felt was constructive: as Isabella said, "I really never had the opportunity to hear about the experience from others in a positive, and a constructive way. So I think that was very important."

On the other hand, Felicia did not feel that this dialogue was much different, substantively, from other conversations she had engaged in before:

> I don't think it was that different, because I am – I feel like I'm always having just conversations about these type of things, whether it be the LGBTQ+ community or it be race issues or immigration issues or, um, poverty issues and things like that. I always feel like it's important to listen and include myself when I can. So, the dialogue itself, I would – I don't feel like was different, but I think maybe like the way that it was set up was different for me.

For Felicia, the content of the dialogue did not appear to be very different from other conversations that she typically had; however, she noted that "the way that it was set up" was different. While she did not explicitly clarify what about the setup was different, it would be reasonable to infer that she was referring to the structure and format of the dialogue: the speech structures, pause structures, questions, etc.

Interpersonal Themes

The themes in this category focus on participants' interactions with one another, and how they connected, or did not connect, during the dialogue. Their interactions, and reflections on their interactions, fell into three themes: building trust, connections; disclosing uncertainty, gray areas; and reservations. Participants engaged in actions throughout the dialogue that demonstrated engagement and interest in one another; actions which may have helped to build trust and connections – or at least indicated a desire to build trust and connection. They disclosed areas of uncertainties, some of which were very similar, revealing common ground between them. One participant shared an area of uncertainty on a controversial topic. This made a significant impression on others and was often brought up in post-dialogue interviews. Participants also described the fear and apprehension they felt about participating in the dialogue; fears which generally focused on how others would react and respond to their opinions.

Building Trust, Connections

During the dialogue, participants would often anchor their comments or questions to one another by directly referencing what the other participant had said. For example, during the question-and-answer portion of the dialogue, Alice began her question to Kristin by making a direct reference to her response to the first dialogue question: "Did – the men in your family that you mentioned in the first question, did everybody in the family, were they accepting or did, was

there anybody in your family that kind of resisted their relationship?" Direct references may have helped to build connection because they demonstrated that the participant had listened to and was responding to something specific that another participant said: they demonstrated engagement.

Likewise, participants sometimes demonstrated engagement by relating what others had shared to their own experiences. For example, during the question-and-answer portion of the dialogue, Isabella posed a question to Daniela thus:

> When you were living in the foster care, did you ever have any conflict between the girls, because the condition of LGBTQ? My question is because last year...it was difficult. I had a transgender girl and, it was so difficult for me to observe how the group bully her.

Participants also engaged verbal behaviors that demonstrated sensitivity and respect to one another. For example, when Kristin was disclosing her opinion on transgender participation in sports, she began by saying "I know this is a really sensitive topic. And I'm not trying to be rude at all, but my problem is..." Likewise, when Alice seemed uncertain about responding to a question that Daniela had posed to her, Daniela was quick to affirm "It's perfectly fine. If you can't [respond]." In posing a question to Kristin, Felicia added, "I can understand your thinking and where you're coming from." During the question-and-answer portion of the dialogue, participants often thanked each other for responding to their questions. These verbal behaviors implicitly suggested a desire to make each other feel more comfortable or mitigate others' potential discomfort.

Disclosing Uncertainty, Gray Areas

Throughout the dialogue, participants discussed uncertainties and conflicts regarding LGBT issues. To an extent, this was a built-in feature of the dialogue: the second question was specifically designed to encourage participants to talk about their personal "gray areas."

However, there was one area of uncertainty that emerged prior to this question, one which most participants seemed to share: how to engage with others who were not supportive of LGBT rights or the LGBT community. This came up in responses to the first question, as participants described their experiences with LGBT discrimination: “I have seen the bias or – not the bias, the prejudice or the judgment of [the LGBT] community, in like Christian settings, in African American settings, and it's really something that I've never really understood;” “...so I have never been able to understand discrimination against the LGBTQ group because of [gay friends of her family]. I grew up with them. It's hard to understand discrimination against somebody that is part of your family and that you love.” In these excerpts, participants expressed that they felt they did not understand those who discriminated against LGBT people.

This area of uncertainty was explored more deeply by two participants in response to the second question, as they considered how to engage with people who discriminated. Alice reflected on her experience as a cousin to a transgender person whose parents were not supportive: “the parents have a different understanding [of LGBT] and I love them and I, my value is, I don't want to hurt them. I also want to support my cousin.” Isabella discussed her challenges advocating for LGBT clients at work: “it’s hard for me to know, I mean, to figure out what to do sometimes.” Additionally, it came up in the question-and-answer portion of the dialogue, as Daniela inquired how Alice engaged with other members of the church who were not accepting of LGBT people. Alice in turn posed the same question to Felicia, who had also mentioned witnessing discrimination among Christians. The fact that this area of uncertainty was shared among participants, as was the apparent desire to better understand how to navigate discrimination, may have helped participants to connect with each other, as they recognized common ground.

When participants were invited to explore their personal gray areas during the second round of the dialogue, Felicia, the first participant to respond, described a conflict which she observed between Christians and LGBT people, but clarified that she herself, while a Christian, did not have any personal conflicts with LGBT people:

> I feel like the only thing that people use to negate their experiences is Christianity – and I'm a Christian, and I still don't feel like their feelings or their choices should be invalidated and I still support the community just the same...I don't feel like it conflicts with any of my beliefs of what they should be doing

This perspective was echoed by Daniela: "I don't necessarily have any value conflicts, but I think that there is a value conflict with religion and LGBT community." Eve stated, likewise, that she did not have "any dilemmas or value conflicts, as it relates to the LGBT community."

It was after these participants had spoken that Kristin decided to voice her opinion on transgender participation in sports: a perspective that she perceived may be controversial. The fact that, thus far, none of the other participants had disclosed controversial opinions caused her some anxiety, as she later discussed in our interview, and as will be described in further detail later in the IPA portion of the chapter. Her words however proved to have a powerful effect on the other participants. Almost every participant independently brought it up in the post-dialogue one-on-one interviews. Alice, as mentioned before, thought the fact that she was able to voice her opinion affirmed the safety of the structure of the dialogue. It also provided her with some insight into her own perspectives: "[it] highlighted the fact that this is a really complex issue, and my desire for people to be supportive and compassionate with each other, doesn't address some of the complexities of that issue." Other participants voiced similarly positive reactions:

> I thought about it [transgender participation in sports] as well. How it may, to some, might not seem like it's um, an equal type of situation for them. So I like [Kristin's] thought processes as it relates to that, and how she even put that into perspective for us, how she felt and we were able to kind of engage in conversation with her

> I was thinking about that, in my mind. And I understood that she had experience in doing sports. Well, I think it's fair. And I never talk about that possibility…I love soccer, tennis...and it was sticking in my mind, maybe, I don't know, maybe she's right, instead to disqualify.

> that was something like I've thought about that before, but I've never sat and like genuinely reflected on it. So it was interesting to hear her concern...it was also just interesting to hear how other people may approach certain aspects of identity and how it impacts them.

While participants may not have necessarily agreed with Kristin's view, it was clear that all of them appreciated the fact that she brought it up and gave them the chance to talk about and reflect on the topic. Kristin's decision to disclose her uncertainty thus had a powerful influence on the dialogue, inspiring within participants a deeper, more thoughtful engagement.

Reservations

In post-dialogue interviews, participants described some initial feelings of apprehension and nervousness about participating in the dialogue. RSD was new to them: none of them had ever participated in an RSD session before. Although I had distributed material beforehand to

introduce them to RSD, participants still felt like they did not really know what to expect. As Eve described:

> I was nervous, just because of the unknown. I'm a planner and I organize things, so...not knowing exactly what it is I need to know, be talking about, not being able to prep for it... coming in and just not knowing anybody like, Okay, what are we going to be asked, what are we going to discuss? You know – you know, how many people are going to be involved? It's just the unknown...That had the nervousness going at first. But, that kind of went away pretty quickly.

Participants experienced some anxiety about interacting others whom they did not know very well, even if they were colleagues from the same cohort: "at the beginning it felt like a challenge because, you never know how a strange – not a stranger, but yeah, basically, are going to react." The dialogue questions, furthermore, were designed to get participants to share personal information, and for Daniela, this added more anxiety:

> the very first question...it's like, what in *your* life, it was a little bit like, okay, like we have to share something personal to us. So that's a little bit intimidating, makes you a little bit anxious just, you know, because of what you're going to say personal to you that other people, what they might think, how they might take what you say.

These feelings of apprehension and nervousness may have limited participants in their willingness and ability to share details of their personal thoughts and experiences. Although Eve had described her nervousness as fading away pretty quickly, she later reflected that she did not feel that she was really "engaged" in the dialogue, because the dialogue was new to her, and she just wasn't sure how things were going to go: "I feel like I could have been more engaged,

maybe gave more feedback...And I think it was just, um, trying to see how everyone will respond when we first initially open up and tell how we actually felt about the topic."

For Daniela, the fear of how others might respond or react was mitigated by the fact that they were all social work students:

> It felt a little bit different than it would have say if we were just having this conversation with just random individuals. Because even – and I understand that we all have our biases, but we're all going for, you know, social work. And so, to a degree, we all understand that, um, everyone should be treated equal...I think if it would have been like with other people that weren't in this specific class, if it was maybe from different, from different degree programs?...I would have probably felt a little bit more anxious just because, they might have very, very different thoughts on the situation and, um, may feel extremely differently. And some people are *very* strong in their beliefs....it felt a little bit, just a *little* bit intimidating, but not to the full extent that I probably would have felt if it was a different group.

In this passage, Daniela expresses belief in the assumption that, because they were all social work students, they shared similar ideas and attitudes on people being treated equally. Other participants echoed similar beliefs; "as social workers, you know...for the most part, a lot of people have very similar points of view." It is worth noting that, in general, for the dialogue, this assumption bore out: participants did voice fairly similar perspectives. Kristin was the only participant who voiced a potentially controversial perspective, at least on one issue, and she also felt a good deal of reservation when it came to speaking her mind: as she said, she had an "internal debate" as to whether or not she would say what she thought. In our post-dialogue interview, she also shared some questions that she had for other participants; questions that she

did not feel comfortable sharing, because she worried about being "offensive." This will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Personal Themes

During the dialogue, participants shared their personal experiences and perspectives on LGBT discrimination. They expressed their observations and reflections in stories and detailed accounts that provided others with understandings of their backgrounds, describing their upbringings, and relationships with members of the LGBT community. In post-dialogue interviews, they revealed ways in which the dialogue had impacted them, shifting their perceptions, and helping them move forward with personal conflicts. The themes in this category are self-expression, and changes observed post-dialogue

Self-Expression

Participants expressed their personal opinions and experiences around LGBT discrimination. In general, they expressed attitudes that were accepting and supportive of LGBT people: "I don't have any negative feelings for this community. For the contrary, I embrace them, and I respect them;" "As [I] always tell people, you can't help who you love. You know, you love who you love and you're going to be who you want to be and that's your choice. And that's...between you and that person." They described experiences where they had encountered discrimination against LGBT people. For example, in response to the first question, Alice shared the following:

> My first intense experience was when my children were in a private Christian school and a lesbian couple applied to have their children admitted to the school, which I didn't think anything about but the community erupted, in...an incredibly painful way. And so there were meetings where the number of parents were trying to, to bar admission of these

> children. And ultimately, a number of parents left the school. We stayed. I didn't understand why the parents would take the position against the children.

Other participants voiced experiences in a similar vein: they shared how they witnessed or observed discrimination, and they struggled with understanding why it was happening. This passage is also representative of the general way in which participants shared these experiences: as stories, focused on themselves and what they felt, nested in contextual details.

The contextual details that they shared helped to situate their experiences and perspectives. For example, Isabella shared that she did have any LGBT friends as a child, because she "grew up in a very Catholic family and community and, and frankly, they're very prejudice about being homosexual, gay, being part of the LGBT [community]." Kristin, on the other hand, had close friends of the family who were gay while she was growing up who were "like brothers" to her, and because of that, she had "never been able to understand discrimination against the LGBTQ group." Participants described relationships with members of the LGBT community, and these varied in nature and levels of closeness, including friendships, close friendships, and professional relationships. For the most part, participants generally kept their responses focused on themselves, and their specific, concrete experiences.

Changes Observed Post-Dialogue

In post-dialogue interviews, participants revealed the ways in which the dialogue had impacted them. Although no participants had completely changed their mind, most experienced some sort of shift in their perspective. For example, as discussed in an earlier section, many brought up the topic of transgender participation in sports and how Kristin's opinion on that topic inspired them to think and/or learn more. Additionally, several participants talked about how they were surprised to hear Alice, a religious teacher, express an attitude that was

supportive of LGBT people: “[It] was interesting to see that there was a religious figure present that was for LGBTQ+ rights, because a lot of times, they either don't speak on it or speak against it. So, I thought that was a cool perspective to hear.” As Kristin described,

> Like to hear any of this stuff coming from a religious teacher was like awesome, because I felt like – I feel like there's so much stigma coming from people in reli- or how we think of people in religion, and religious backgrounds, and we just think that they're terrible people and they're not! You know, not everybody falls into that and just the generalization that we do...it was just nice like seeing things from her perspective

For these participants, hearing Alice’s perspective helped to dispel the stigma, the generalization that all religious authority figures are anti-LGBT. Alice, meanwhile, observed the prevalence of religion in other participants stories, and considered the role in which the church could play in shifting “some of the narratives” around LGBTQ people:

> it's like almost all of the threads, somehow, they bumped into an understanding of religion, or had to express their perspective in a religious context and...it affirmed for me why it's going to– you know, the importance of, you know, how we handle this issue in the church if we're going to help shift some of the narratives around embracing LGBTQ people

Felicia discussed how the dialogue made her realize that she did not have very many close friends in the LGBT community: “I just want to...make sure that I'm surrounding myself at least occasionally with a diverse group of people. So I think it was significant for me to acknowledge that I don't have that many people that group around my immediate inner circle.” She felt that the dialogue encouraged her to “have more exposure to people of different identities.”

The dialogue also helped some participants move forward in personal conflicts or struggles that they were confronting related to LGBT discrimination. In our post-dialogue interview, Isabella shared how the dialogue helped her feel more confident in her ability to talk about LGBT matters. Alice described how the dialogue helped be less "stuck," in her situation with the transgender child. These will be described in greater detail in the IPA portion of this chapter.

Medium Themes

Participants had positive and negative feelings about having the dialogue through Zoom. To an extent, some of these feelings were influenced by the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants expressed preference for a live, in-person dialogue; however, they also saw Zoom as preferable to text-based communication. A significant drawback of using Zoom was the limitations it imposed on nonverbal communications. On the other hand, some participants appreciated the benefits of being able to participate while still being in their own space, as well as being able to communicate with others across geographic distance. The three themes in this category are: pandemic context, CMC as restrictive, and CMC as conducive to dialogue.

Pandemic Context

In every post-dialogue interview, the COVID-19 pandemic came up, though it was never specifically asked about. Often, it came up when participants were describing their experience with Zoom. Some voiced appreciation for Zoom, for allowing people to be more connected during the pandemic: "I feel like with COVID-19, [Zoom has] given us a little bit of a, of a better way to communicate with one another." As Isabella described,

> This year has been *[pause]* I mean different, definitely, but also offering us several opportunities. And [being able to use Zoom] was one of those. So I think it's great

> because, like I said we need to feel comfortable, I mean, confident in talking face-to-face, even with the distance. I think it was a great opportunity...[to] have the ability to, like in this moment having this conversation with you. I think that that's amazing.

Alice meanwhile described how, because of the pandemic, she's gotten much more comfortable with using Zoom:

> Because of the shutdown, I've had to live on Zoom for meetings and groups, and so I'm used to it at this point. Yeah. If we had done this back in March, I was terrified of the technology. I mean just, I remember the first Zoom meeting I launched, it was like, [I was] afraid that it would fail...but now it's become a little bit more normal, looking at people in boxes on my screen

Others voiced similar sentiments, describing video communication as being a "new norm." Kristin, meanwhile, was feeling tired and frustrated with having to use Zoom all of the time.

> I've been having to live like this since March. And so, you know, I'm to the point where I'm like, all right, I'm frustrated like, I'm just over it, you know? I would rather get in a group of people and see them, and you know what I mean, do that kind of thing. So other than just my own personal general like, fed-up-with-it, there's nothing wrong with it.

CMC as Restrictive

Most participants expressed a preference for in-person communication: "I would like to have [another dialogue] in a non-COVID, in-person environment. Because I feel like that would be cool." They described talking in person as more "natural," or easier for them. Talking through Zoom was more difficult due to the limits imposed on nonverbal communication: as Daniela said, "typically when you try to have like broad conversations like that, that go like, deep into certain controversial topics, they're in person. And sometimes I feel like in person, you can kind

of sense someone's emotions, a little bit more." Several participants specifically cited the inability to read body language as a challenge. As Felicia described, she felt this made it harder to form a deep connection:

> I feel like the connection maybe would have been more deep if it was in person. Because when you're in person, you can read body language a little bit more....I feel like you can kind of tell somebody's, you know, how they're feeling based off the energy that they're giving off in person. So it was kind of harder to do that over camera.

Kristin echoed this perspective. In addition, having limited access to body language made her feel uncomfortable with asking certain questions that were on her mind: she felt that she couldn't "read" others, and she worried about offending them. This will be discussed in greater detail in the IPA section of the chapter.

Overall, there were no major technical issues that interrupted or significantly interfered with the dialogue. All participants had access to stable internet, and all were able to keep their videos on throughout the dialogue without any problems. Eve experienced some trouble with her microphone in the beginning of the dialogue, but she was able to resolve the issue before the first question was asked, and in the meantime used the chat box to communicate. The other issue worth noting is that two participants had their cameras positioned such that their faces were not completely visible throughout the dialogue; for one, her chin was cut off, for the other, the lower half of her face was cut off. It appears that, for both of them, the face concealment was unintentional. One had called in on her phone, and had to hold it at an angle, while the other one let me know, in the post-dialogue interview, that her computer was "wobbly," leading her camera to flop down. Although this did not appear to cause any issues during the dialogue, in our post-dialogue interview, one participant expressed some uneasiness in relation to this; she

interpreted the lack of visibility to mean that these participants may not have been paying attention, or fully engaged.

Finally, a couple of participants discussed fatigue in relation to Zoom. Alice suggested that, although the time allotted for the session may have felt short, it was appropriate because "the other thing that's real on Zoom is, it's fatiguing after a period of time." Meanwhile, as described in the previous section, Kristin was feeling tired and frustrated with having to use Zoom in general, as she had been "living this way" since the early shutdowns during the pandemic.

CMC as Conducive to Dialogue

Although some participants preferred in-person communication over computer-mediated, in general, they saw video-mediated as better than text-based: "Zoom doesn't compare to live and in person, but, it's a better substitute to me than going straight to writing. It's kind of an intermediary spot." Kristin described how she felt that Zoom allowed for a more "authentic" conversation, as compared to text-based:

> I feel like people can actually, when they can just talk, I feel like it's so much more authentic. I know some people feel like they can just write things in a discussion type of scenario and they're fine. I don't. So real conversation with real people...it just is more impactful because it's something that's coming straight from them. You know, you have the time to sit there and write a discussion, or respond to a question on a discussion. You have a lot more time to think. You have a lot more time to like kind of do some research and maybe possibly change your opinion, and you have a lot more time to kind of consider what other people are thinking and try and maybe mold it so that you're not going to get blasted later on.

She perceived live, face-to-face conversations as being more honest; conversations with "real people" being more impactful. The language used here is interesting; it suggests a certain feeling of dehumanization associated with text-based communication, a feeling that those one communicates with through text are not quite "real people."

While some participants were frustrated by the communicative limitations of Zoom, others saw this as an advantage. They felt that it allowed them space. Daniela, for example, appreciated the fact that they had time to write down their thoughts before speaking. Although this allotted time would still be present, in an in-person dialogue, she did not think she would feel comfortable writing her thoughts with other people around: "if we're in person, it's kind of like you – you don't feel like you can really, you know, be writing while everybody's right there." Other participants liked that they were able to engage while being in their own spaces.

> one of the good things about it being on Zoom is that we're not in the same space...it's like you know, sometimes when you talk to people, you have to talk to them where they are, where they feel more comfortable. So I think that was one of the plus sides to doing it on Zoom. Because you're in your own space, your own bubble.

Felicia echoed this perspective, describing in more detail how being in one's own space may make people more comfortable:

> I think it's a little, probably less nerve wracking to just say how you feel, because you're not in the same room, if that makes sense. So like, maybe even people who aren't as comfortable speaking up were more comfortable. Because one, they are in an environment where they get to control the space and two...if things *were*, like tension based, it'd be easier to deal with tension when you're not in the same room. So, I think for more difficult discussions...if there was more opposing views and more anger, I think that

> may have been easier for some people to do behind the screen because some people, it's easier for them to speak freely when they're behind the screen as opposed to in person.

Felicia believed that Zoom would be particularly advantageous in conversations where things became heated, because it would be difficult to deal with tension with everybody in the same room; people would feel more comfortable being "behind the screen."

In a similar vein, some participants reflected on how Zoom may have helped to support and maintain some of the structure of the dialogue: "it's helpful because you can, you know, you can make sure that everybody is quiet with the mute. You can make sure that everybody has their chance to fully say what they need to say." Alice considered how it might have been more difficult to enforce time limits, in an in-person environment:

> My gut sense is it would have been harder to keep the structure...because, I know a couple of our participants kind of bubbled up right next to that time limit. And there's something about being in person, where I will flow through time limits, a little bit more easily, then, you know if you're in this environment. It's like something about, oh, and the buzzer goes off, and I need to stop talking.

In this passage, Alice portrays the in-person environment as being somewhat more energetic than the virtual environment, imagining that it would have been harder to stop in order to adhere to time limits. In Zoom, however, it was easy to stop when the buzzer went off. In a sense, Zoom may have had an inherently neutralizing influence on the conversation. This idea was voiced by Kristin: "I really do feel like zoom kind of neutralizes of things just naturally, because you don't want to, like, I mean, you know, someone can mute you."

Finally, Isabella highlighted how Zoom allowed them to engage in conversation with others even though they were physically far away from each other. For her, the value of having

the opportunity to communicate with people whom she might not otherwise encounter was a major benefit of using Zoom: "having this opportunity to use Zoom, we are able to reach more people from different places, different backgrounds...The opportunities are endless to reach people from everywhere. And I think that is a plus, using this."

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Findings

The IPA findings are presented below, organized by theme. As discussed in chapter three, I included three participants in the IPA: Alice, Isabella, and Kristin. Each of their interviews had struck me as being particularly rich and insightful. Four overarching themes were constructed from this analysis. The themes are: needs and expectations, past experience/struggle, learning, and muted connection.

Needs and Expectations

Each participant's experience was informed by their individual needs, uniquely shaped by their personal contexts outside of the dialogue. All three desired to engage in a type of conversation that they felt was lacking in their professional and social environments. For Alice, her needs were informed by her position as a teacher in a religious school. Isabella's were shaped by her position as a community worker at a family organization, and a member of a conservative religious community. Kristin's needs were shaped by her position as a student, and as a person of relative privilege.

Alice

As a figure of authority in an area where there can be high controversy around LGBT matters, Alice was interested in both experiencing the dialogue and learning about how the dialogue worked. As she told me, at the very beginning of the interview,

> Part of why I wanted to participate in this, is just my situation in the church and the fact that we're not having these conversations. So I wanted to see what it was like to, to be a participant, and also have access to a structure that can move us forward with having some, some challenging conversation.

Alice saw the dialogue as an opportunity to participate in a discussion about a topic which she felt was important and needed to be talked about; yet was not being addressed in the church. Her desires, to see "what it was like" to be a participant in the dialogue, and to have access to a structure that could "move us forward" speak to her position and experience as a figure of authority; she saw this dialogue as something that she might be able to utilize with her students and colleagues, something that might help to navigate difficult conversations. This interest informed much of her sense-making processes, as she considered how the structure of the dialogue, and specific components thereof, shaped the conversation. For example, during the dialogue, when Kristin disclosed her opinion on transgender participation in sports, Alice thought that her disclosure attested to the "safety" of the structured conversation.

Alice also observed how the emphasis on questions of curiosity encouraged listening: "I appreciated the way you clarified curious questions. You know, the, the questions are so that we can learn more. So we can understand better." She understood the speech structure as providing participants with a space to explore perspectives that might be difficult for them to articulate; a space in which they would not have to guard against interruption, or hostile attacks:

> …we had our, our time where you kind of don't have to worry about somebody jumping in, or finishing your sentence. It really gave people permission to explore spaces that felt like they could have been, you know, like we struggle to articulate, or this might not sit well, but this is, you know, it's like, this is a challenge for me. So it gave freedom to say

> the hard things. Because the structure allowed the participants, not to be af– kind of afraid of the blowback…And so that felt like a real promising part of this structured dialogue.

The way that she describes the structure as having "allowed" the participants to not be afraid of the blowback reveals the power that she perceives within the structure. It is also worth noting how she described the structure as giving "freedom to say the hard things." Alice observes a paradox in the structures of the dialogue; to her, they are both restrictive, and freeing. She brings this up early on in the interview:

> I've participated in a structured dialogue before, you know, following the Gottman model for resolving a conflict. And while the structure drives me a little crazy, it *feels so* constricting, it's also incredibly productive…I am fascinated by the, the structure really allowing freedom

It is worth noting here the repetition of the word "allow" in regard to the structure; this again speaks to the significance, or the power, that she perceives within it.

The passages in this section illustrate how Alice's need to be able to have constructive discussions on LGBT discrimination in her religious contexts informed the lens with which she understood the dialogue. It provided her with questions and interest, priming her to pay attention to specific things within the dialogue – often focused on the workings of the dialogue; how different components of the dialogue led to observed outcomes, especially the outcome of a sense of safety, and importantly, "freedom to say the hard things."

Isabella

Similar to Alice, Isabella felt frustrated with the nature, and lack, of conversation on LGBT issues in her community: "I grew up in a religious family, Catholic and [inaudible]

Christian family and they just simply deny this group, this community." The dialogue was an opportunity for her to engage in new kind of discussion on a topic that was important for her. She saw it as an opportunity to voice her perspective and learn from others. She wanted to hear from people with different opinions, and from different backgrounds; she appreciated the diversity that was represented by participants in our dialogue: "It was great to have an open conversation from people from different backgrounds, from different ages…different places."

She would have liked the chance to discuss LGBT issues with people representing more diversity. When asked if she would have preferred for anything about our dialogue to have been done differently, she responded, "Well, I [would] probably invite males and females to *[pause]* I think maybe that was missing, to having the male figure in the discussion. And maybe to have people from other backgrounds, not just social workers."

Isabella saw the ability to discuss LGBT issues as an important tool of advocacy:

> I think the more we approach this topic with just, the more natural way? The same way we talk about, I don't know, soccer, about like, fashion, about – I mean, I think it's important, because the more you address, the more easy will be to talk and – to advocate for all other people.

Advocacy came up often in our post-dialogue interview. She spoke of wanting to "do better," as an advocate and community educator. She often encountered members of the LGBT community as clients, and she thought they were being underserved by the current system. As she described, she and her colleagues had never had any sort of training on working with LGBT+ clients:

> in 10 years we never have a training that gave us tools to approach this community and um, I walk into rehabilitation centers....and in that rehabilitation centers, I always find somebody in the LGBTQ. And I think it helped me – my sociology classes that I took at

> [former university] actually, these masters [classes] that I'm taking, what will happen with my other peers that don't have these same opportunities that we have? So, I think, we in many ways overlook this community. And I think it's unfair. My biggest reason that I took this discussion with you was, was down to get more tools and, and to hear more about how to do a better job with this community.

A major part of her interest in this dialogue came from her desire to be more educated; to have better knowledge, skills, understanding of how to work with members of the LGBT community. She references classes that she had taken before, as an undergraduate student: she believes they helped her with regard to understanding and working with the LGBT population. Yet she recognized that her peers may not have had those same opportunities. She attributes the underserving of LGBT clients to this potential lack of education among her peers. Education, for Isabella, is an important tool of advocacy and professionalism.

> We cannot educate anybody, if we don't educate ourselves about how to behave in a professional way about how, I mean don't mistreat it, this, I mean people next to us because our lack of knowledge and sensibility

Isabella had observed the exclusion and repression of LGBT people in both professional and cultural contexts. In her positions in these contexts, she found her ability to discuss and learn about LGBT matters constrained. Hence, Isabella experienced the dialogue as an opportunity to meet her needs with regards to having discussion about these matters and learning how to be a better advocate.

Kristin

Kristin's experience was shaped by her needs as a student, and as a person of relative privilege. Conscious of the limits of her own understanding, she wanted to hear outside

perspectives to better understand what she was being taught in the classroom. While Alice's experience of the dialogue was informed by an interest that was oriented towards the structure of the dialogue, Kristin's experience was more akin to Isabella's in that it was informed by an interest in the content of the dialogue; she saw the dialogue as a means to enrich her own perspective by exploring and better understanding those of others.

> One of the things that I've really felt that I've struggled with in the program is being able to have real conversations with people who are in marginalized groups. So as a white female, I don't feel like I'm a marginalized group. Even being female. I mean, like, you know, so I've [been] coming at it at a different place. And I've got so many, like I want to have conversations with people, even if they get angry with me because I feel like to really understand the depth of everything that we're learning, like real people with real stories and real experiences are, like just they enrich that so much more than just like all of these studies

For Kristin, the dialogue was a great opportunity to learn by having conversations with "real people." She was conscious of her own perspective as being that of a white female, in a position of relative privilege: she did not feel that she was in a marginalized group. The fact that she wanted to engage in discussions with marginalized people, "even if they get angry with me" demonstrates this privilege, reflecting an implicit assumption that many persons of marginalized groups may not share – that another person getting angry in this situation would likely not present a serious danger to her.

During our interview, she talked about how she would love the chance, the opportunity, to talk to somebody with a different background; to ask them questions.

> I would love to be able to talk to somebody who has a different background than me and be able to ask them questions, and them to be able to respond or be able to explain, you know, different concepts and things like that that we're learning about in class from their perspective, because I've got mine. And so for me to learn from somebody else, I feel like having real conversations with real people with real experiences just makes such a bigger impact so, to me, this conversation was kind of an opportunity to hear from other people about one topic which, that totally enriches the experience, and I know not everybody has that.

In this passage, she portrays herself in the role of learner, with the other person in the role of educator or teacher, explaining different concepts to her from their perspective. Her desire to hear other perspectives also demonstrates a critical self-awareness; she knows what she thinks ("I've got mine") and she's also aware that her perspectives aren't complete, that the way that she sees things isn't necessarily the way things are objectively. She wanted to broaden her horizons. The dialogue, for Kristin, was an opportunity to meet this need.

Past experience/Struggle

Each participant's experience was shaped by past experiences and struggles that they had been experiencing relevant to conversations on LGBT matters. These struggles influenced their experiences in several important ways. They informed their hopes for the dialogue, how they reacted to certain events within the dialogue, and what they took away from the dialogue.

Alice

As a religious figure, and a supporter of LGBT rights, Alice had two major struggles that impacted her dialogue experience in different ways. As discussed in the prior section, she was frustrated by the current discourse in her church on LGBT matters: "The LGBTQ issue is just

front and center. And the conversations feel like they're just opposed…I don't experience listening on either perspective of the issue or any perspective of the issue." Alice's frustration with the current state of discourse on LGBT matters in her church sparked her interest in dialogue and was a major motivation for her participation. As she told me, at the beginning of our interview, "…I'm very interested in a structured dialogue that will encourage listening."

Her experiences with these "opposed" conversations also affected the way that she engaged in the dialogue; specifically, how she reacted when another participant asked her a question. During the question-and-answer portion of the dialogue, Daniela had asked Alice how she responded to those in church who used religion as a way of discriminating against, or not accepting, members of the LGBT community. Alice wasn't sure how to respond at first and had to ask Daniela to repeat the question. Later, in the post-dialogue interview, she reflected on the experience.

> When they wanted to ask me, about you know like how do you… how do you respond to that, it's like I got caught in the weeds so fast, because I'm like kind of more going toward a defense of – but then having the ability to say, Okay, can you ask that again, and, um, and being able to rehear the question and having the other participants be kind and rephrase…it was helpful that we were all trying, you know, we're all seeking greater understanding. So it wasn't like, yeah, I was on point for being the, the *[hand gestures]*. I didn't have to defend a religious perspective, it was more of just, how do you speak into the space. And so I appreciated the ability to be in interactive dialogue where, you know, somebody could, could rephrase and kind of help me out a little bit. That felt supportive which, some spaces where I'm in where I get asked theological questions, it's not a supportive space.

As Alice described in this passage, upon hearing the question, her immediate instinct was to defend her position; she got "caught in the weeds." However, instead of acting on that instinct, she had the space to slow down and ask Daniela to repeat her question. Then she was able to hear the question in a different way. She attributes this ability to "rehear" the question to the fact that the purpose of the dialogue was to seek greater understanding. With this purpose in mind, she realized that – possibly unlike previous conversations – she was not being put on the spot and having to defend her own religious perspective.

The second struggle Alice was experiencing involved a difficult family situation. As she described in the dialogue, she had a cousin who identified as transgender, and not all members of her family were supportive. "And so I'm kind of in the, in the struggle loving people who don't understand, and loving people who, for whom their identity is transgender and so I'm kind of stuck in the middle. And it's a hard place to be." Alice shared this information early on in the dialogue, in response to the first question. Later, in response to the second question, she explored her conflict more deeply.

> the parents have a different understanding and I love them and I, my value is, I don't want to hurt them. I also want to support my cousin. And I feel like I'm not doing that adequately because I'm not willing to kind of take a position with the parents and it's, it's causing my cousin not to be able to live as she feels is authentic to her in her family system and so I feel like, like in trying to be neutral I'm, I'm really choosing the parents and, and that, that doesn't feel very good.

In this passage, she considers the nature of her conflict: the underlying values, and the implications of her actions with regard to the family – the fact that by not taking action, she is not in fact "neutral," but tacitly accepting the position of the parents.

Her family struggle clearly had a direct influence on the dialogue for her in that it comprised part of what she shared with other participants. It was a way that she, personally, connected with the LGBT community. It followed that this was also the area in which she experienced significant change as a result of the dialogue. As she described afterwards, during our interview:

> …through our conversation it just really highlighted that, you know, because we live in a heteronormative world and that broader family system I'm referring to is, functions pretty heteronormatively, that the child is still on the margin. So, by me – you know, it's like I'm challenged to try to figure out a way to be a better ally to the child as an expression of love, because I kind of work through that I can, I can love the child by being a safe space. And that's a good first start, but it also doesn't change the family system and the dynamic and, and that person's ability to be who they are, engaged in the family system. So that's kind of where that stuckness and, there wasn't resolution as much, but I feel like I have things to think about that feel real. Um, and feel like there are things that I need to be wrestling about

Alice did not feel that she found any resolution for this struggle, as a result of the dialogue, but she felt that it gave her more to think and "wrestle" about. It should be noted that none of the things that she brought up, in this passage, were things that were directly talked about or told to her. These were all insights that she herself came to understand through the process of sharing her experiences and being asked questions by other participants.

Isabella

Isabella's struggle came from her prior experiences trying to talk about and advocate for LGBT matters, in both cultural and professional environments that were generally hostile to

LGBT people. As described under the previous theme, Isabella was raised in a conservative religious culture, where they did not talk about LGBT matters. The town in which she currently lives is also, as she describes it, "traditional." In the post-dialogue interview, Isabella described her experience of moving to her current town, and discovering, to her surprise, that it was more traditional than where she came from:

> I grew up in a different community. So when I come over here and I was thinking it was all, everybody was open mind that everybody had the freedom, and that was my perception from outside it. And when I came here to [current town], I discover that in many ways people are more traditional that in my own city. Um, so I feel, what! I was surprised. Because…The perception that you see for this country in the TV, in your movies is ah, completely different than when you come over here and encounter any old town in the south, with traditional families. That was, that was complicated at the beginning.

As she describes in this passage, adjusting to her current town, which was more traditional than where she came from, was complicated for her. She also observed that, for a long time after she moved to her current town, she did not see nor encounter any LGBT people. However, she later found out that one of her relatives, who had lived in that same town, had a son who was gay. But they had left because they were "unwelcome." She describes her reaction: "I was like, what! Because many people do things but never talk about those things. And that is something that really opened my eye, about, well, how racist, how we discriminate."

As a community worker, Isabella had experience working with LGBT+ families and she was dissatisfied by the ways in which she perceived they had been underserved by her organization. For example, in our interview, she described how some of the forms that their

clients have to fill out are not inclusive of LGBT+ orientations/identities. “They do not feel comfortable with the way they had to fill out the exit form or enrollment form because, um, it is no place for them to sign or to identify. They [her colleagues] just don't even consider that possibility.” She had tried to address this a couple of times, during meetings, but without success. Another reason why Isabella signed up for the dialogue was because she wanted to learn how to be a better advocate. “I really need more skills, knowledge, how to work better with this LGBT community.”

In the dialogue, Isabella described an experience where she was excluded for voicing support for LGBT parents:

> our group of friends was talking about how difficult it, or how hard would be to, for the LGBT group to adopt children and I say, well, I think if they have the rights, I think they have, I think it would be great. People see so many kids in the foster that will be a great [inaudible]. I was dismissed from that table, frankly, I just had to, I mean, literally shut up.

She brought this up again during the interview. It clearly made a significant impression on her. As she reflected in the interview, “it’s a bad reaction when you’re trying to make a point and somebody, even a person that you know, even a close person to you, don't even allow you to say something, um, positive, or, or simply just avoid the topic.”

Isabella’s experiences being shut out and silenced on LGBT issues strengthened her desire, her need, to be able to discuss this topic in a constructive manner: “I was dismissed couple times just trying to say something positive about that interaction. So I really never had the, the opportunity to hear about the experience from others in a positive, constructive way. So I think that was very important.” The desire for constructive conversation was part of what

motivated her to join the dialogue: it was an opportunity to do something that had before been denied to her.

These experiences may have also contributed to some sense of nervousness, or anxiety, at the beginning of the dialogue. At the same time, she saw it as "a great opportunity to feel confident." In this way, Isabella's struggles also informed what she took away from the dialogue: the experience of talking with like-minded people, in a constructive manner – an experience which she had not had before, with regards to this topic – gave her a sense of validation and confidence. "It definitely gave me confidence to start talking more about, I mean to advocate more, to – to at least do better when I'm trying to advocate for this community and especially at work."

Kristin

Kristin's struggles were related to her position as a student, as well as her opinions regarding a specific LGBT issue. As a student, she felt that her learning needs were not being met in the classroom. This was discussed under the previous theme. Her motivation for signing up for the dialogue came from an awareness of her learning style, her needs as a student, and how these needs were not being met in the virtual format of the MSW program. She felt that she learned best from conversations and stories, as opposed to academic articles and textbooks:

> The textbooks are great, you know, but they're textbooks…All the different studies and different articles and things that were reading have been really, really great. But again, some of them are so academic…sometimes the academic stuff is like, while I understand [it], it's not like I don't understand it – it doesn't make quite the impact as a story would.

While she clarifies that she is able to understand the material, on one level, the way that she describes it as being "so academic" suggests a certain feeling of distance and abstraction. Stories

and conversations make more of an impact for her because they present concepts in a more tangible way.

This struggle informed how Kristin made sense of the dialogue, and what she took away from it; she appreciated it as an opportunity to have the kind of conversation with her classmates that she felt she was missing. Her desire for a learning/enrichment sort of experience led to some frustration when she perceived other participants as not being forthcoming.

> This could have been a topic where we could have all seen, seen so differently. But – and I think, if you got down to the nitty gritty, we probably all do see differently. So I feel like, you know, part of it was a lot of, "oh, I don't have any issues." But, you know, they all really do if they thought about it in some way, shape, or form.

On the other hand, she appreciated when participants were willing to share more about their experiences: "…like, I felt like I got a lot out of it, because not only did I learn more about those people, but to see it from a different perspective, really was really great." She was able to learn more about her classmates. She felt that this dialogue was "fantastic" because it gave her the opportunity to access their stories.

Kristin also experienced a value dilemma on a topic relevant to the LGBT community, which she shared in response to the second question posed to the group; the question which invited participants to share their dilemmas, conflicts, or problems relating to the topic. Kristin's dilemma was that, while she was generally supportive of LGBT rights, she did not believe that it was fair for transgender women who retained biologically male characteristics to compete among cisgender women in sports. The first few participants to respond to the second question in the dialogue, however, stated that they did not have any dilemmas or conflicts. As Kristin listened to

other students, she realized that her perspective likely put her in the minority. This caused her some discomfort. She wondered whether she ought to say anything at all.

> I was like the second to last person to go and everybody before me was like, "Oh, I don't have an issue. Oh, I don't have an issue." And so I knew immediately where I stood on that one. So when, to hear everybody else be like, "oh, I don't have one. I don't have one," as it led up to my turn, I did get more and more nervous because I was kind of like "Wait a second. Like nobody has any issues with anything that we're talking about?" Like, to me, I was kind of like, am I completely in left field here? You know what I mean, like, am I the one that's weird? Should I not even say anything?

She ultimately decided to voice her opinion, and as she described in the interview, "I was really nervous and then afterwards, I was fine." Even though she felt fine afterwards, this struggle had a powerful effect on her experience of the dialogue. As shown in the passage above, it inspired her to ask questions. It motivated her to consider other participants' perspectives; whether or not they really did not have any issues, and if they did, why they did not share them. Kristin believed that the other participants likely did have dilemmas – "I don't believe that anyone ever doesn't have an opinion – I really think that all of us if we think about it, have an opinion about something having to do with this, you know?" – and considered that they either didn't realize that they did, because they weren't thinking about it deeply enough, or they just chose not to speak about them because they did not feel comfortable doing so. She considered that participants perhaps just did not trust each other enough to have a really deep conversation, and that future dialogues might benefit from a more sustained engagement, with multiple sessions taking place over a longer period of time.

> I think that these dialogues would be really great, especially if you had – if they were on a regular basis where you could talk about things with people so that you build trust with each other so that you could be honest with each other…That would be so fantastic. You know, to like sit there and be like, Oh, we're going to have one of these structured things. And all it does is, as the weeks go by, with everyone, you find you have built more and more trust, and by the end of like some cycle, you know you're hearing way more truth than you would have at the beginning

This passage reflects her sense-making about the dialogue, implicitly suggesting a belief that participants may need to spend more time with each other to feel truly comfortable, and that there is a limit to how much truth they were willing to share during a single dialogue session.

Learning

Learning took place for all participants, on multiple levels. On the personal level, participants gained better understanding of their personal experiences. On an interpersonal level, they learned more about each other. Finally, they felt that they learned more about communication processes, and about LGBT issues. The learning about LGBT issues took place in the form of expansion and recognition of complexity and nuance in certain issues.

Alice

Alice found the dialogue expansive: it helped her see things more clearly in the context of her struggles as a religious figure and LGBT supporter. As she described, she had been feeling "stuck" in her position, held in place by two seemingly opposing forces. The dialogue, for her, felt "productive."

> I would say productive is the word that came to mind, because part of my frustration with the topic, just in general is a feeling of being stuck. It's, you know, feeling strongly the

> way I feel, but being stuck in my ability, as either an advocate, or especially in the family spaces that I work in…and so, um it felt productive and somewhat encouraging that, you know, having a, a space where, or at least a skill set where I can listen. And also for me personally, it kind of highlighted the fact that, by staying in my stuckness, the one who really suffers is the one on the margin. *[pause]* And so that's something that I've kind of continued to wrestle with.

The dialogue gave her insight into the implications of her "stuckness," and how the one who suffers – both in her family situation, as well as in the larger discourse – is the one on the margin. When probed about her feelings of stuckness, she elaborated, "I think the feelings have been there, um, just certainly a function of the ProSEAD class, and starting to look at different viewpoints bubbled it up to the forefront." The phrase "bubbled it up to the forefront" suggests a metaphor of water rising to the surface, but not yet spilling over, highlighting the tension that she was feeling, and the propelling force of seeing different viewpoints.

> I think what the dialogue did for me is establish some clarity around…The difference between identity and then, you know, thinking about the family system and what is it, what does it look like to be loving to the one on the margin and how might that be different to being loving to the ones who have the power in the family system. Um, so it just gave me some clarity on the issue that I'm really dealing with.

The dialogue gave her clarity about what it looks like to love somebody on the margin, while also loving someone in a position of power. In this way, it transformed how she understood her conflict, helping her to feel less stuck. There are still things that she has to "wrestle" with, but she feels that she is able to see the issues she is dealing with more clearly.

Alice observed that almost all the other participants in the dialogue brought up religion, in some way. “The thing …that struck me as most significant is the way religion plays into, it's like almost all of the threads, somehow, they bumped into an understanding of religion, or had to express their perspective in a religious context.” This demonstrated, for her, the significance of the church’s role in the treatment of LGBT people. Although, as she said, she wanted people to be “supportive and compassionate” towards each other, the dialogue helped her see that some LGBT issues can be complex, and that her desire for people to get along didn’t always address those complexities.

> As far as my perspective changing its, it caused me to broaden a little bit, to try to embrace the complexity and not just look for simple answers. Which means a commitment to being able to talk through some of the complexities. Which might upset people. Yeah, it's like that's, it's that balance between you really want people to get along. And then there's some really hard things we're going to have to talk about.

In this passage she brought up the need to embrace complexity as opposed to looking for simple answers. The way that she phrases this – “and not just look” – reveals how she perceives simple answers to be easier, and possibly more attractive than complexity. She recognizes that she wants people to get along, and that a commitment to talking through complexities might put this ability to get along at risk; it may be hard to maintain relationships while talking about certain issues.

Isabella

As discussed under earlier themes, Isabella was interested in this dialogue because she felt that she needed more skills, knowledge, and understanding to work with members of the LGBT community: to “be more professional.” She saw this dialogue as an opportunity to learn.

This conversation for her was "completely different" from earlier conversations she'd had on the topic, in that it allowed her to share and learn about others' experiences with the LGBT community. Learning for Isabella happened on two levels: both personal and interpersonal.

On a personal level, Isabella learned to be more confident in her perspectives and opinions on LGBT issues. She learned this by hearing from like-minded participants: "they're very open your mind and give you that confidence, you're not crazy. There's other people that think, that probably share your ideas." While she may have known this on an abstract level, the experience of the dialogue helped her understand this on a deeper level: in a way that allowed her to feel validated. It was a positive experience that contrasted with, and perhaps countered, some of her previous experiences, where she had been silenced, or dismissed, for voicing support for LGBT people; experiences where she had learned to keep quiet.

At the interpersonal level, Isabella's perspective broadened and expanded, as she learned about other participants' opinions and experiences. Kristin made a particularly strong impression on her, with her discussion of transgender participation in sports. Although Isabella did not speak directly to her about it during the dialogue, she reflected on it during our interview:

> it caught my attention...the thing that she mentioned that it will be unfair, if a transgender female participate with the females and…I was thinking about that, in my mind. And I understood that she has experience in doing sports. Well, I think it's fair. And I don't talk about that possibility or [inaudible] watch the Olympics, and see, I love soccer, tennis, I really love sports and, I was thinking in my mind, maybe, I don't know, maybe she's right instead to disqualify...So, things like that I never talk about.

Isabella may have initially disagreed with Kristin, but as this passage shows this did not lead to a rejection of her ideas. Instead, she listened, and considered her perspective, going as far as to say

"maybe she's right." Opening her mind to an alternative opinion allowed her own view on the issue to become deeper and more complex. As she described, this was something that she never talked about.

Alice's experiences also made a significant impression on Isabella. Early in the dialogue, Alice described how a lesbian couple had applied to have their child admitted to a private Christian school, and the controversy that followed in the community. This resonated with Isabella, who grew up in a Catholic community. She was thinking about it after the dialogue.

> that was another thing that filled my mind, thinking about how these parents feel…Because I grew up in this community, we never have a conversation about that. I was wondering how many of my peers, or my friends from church, were gay, and we just dismissed them. Or they were there, but, invisible...I was still thinking about that, how those parents, and these kids would feel in this case, and I think it would be fair to talk more about that. And to, at least to open these conversations, this kind of conversation at the schools.

Isabella considered what Alice had shared in light of her own experience growing up Catholic. In her community, LGBT issues were silenced, and generally not confronted. Isabella believes the ability to discuss LGBT issues is very important and saw Alice's experience as a testament to the need for more open discussion.

Isabella signed up for the dialogue because she wanted to engage in conversation with people who had different opinions. Although many participants voiced similar perspectives and attitudes towards LGBT people, her view was expanded and deepened by hearing about participants' specific experiences. The biggest change that seemed to have occurred, for her, was

her own self-confidence: her confidence in her ability to speak up and be an advocate. She described how, after the dialogue, she was inspired to initiate a conversation with her husband:

> After this dialogue, I tried to talk to my husband. My husband has a military background and I was trying to introduce, to be able to have that conversation and, and it worked and, and I'm going to practice this with other people definitely to see the reactions, and to see if I be able to handle it

Isabella felt motivated to have a conversation with her husband, and to "practice" talking about this with other people as well. This demonstrates the confidence that she gained from participating in the dialogue; a confidence that was needed, given her past struggles with discussing LGBT matters.

Kristin

As discussed in earlier themes, Kristin was very aware of her own learning style and needs as a student. She wanted to participate in the dialogue because she saw it as an opportunity to better understand concepts that she was learning in the classroom. She thought that the dialogue would help, as an "enrichment" sort of activity.

Her learning mostly took place on the interpersonal level, centering on her interactions with her classmates. She enjoyed getting to learn more about her them; how Daniela grew up in foster care, and Alice's opinions on LGBT matters, from a religious perspective. These "little tidbits," as she referred to them, helped her form a more holistic picture of the people she was talking to. They widened her perspective: to hear about them was "eye-opening." Alice in particular made an impression on her.

> I feel like there's so much stigma coming from people in reli- or how we think of people in religion, and religious backgrounds, and we just think that they're terrible people and they're not! You know, not everybody falls into that.

This passage reveals certain assumptions Kristin may have held, or at the very least, was conscious of regarding people in religion. The way that she pauses and rephrases when she says "stigma coming from people in reli – or how we think of people in religion" is significant, possibly indicating a change in perspective; a recognition that those assumptions may be based on things other than the people whom they are about, and that how the ways in which people in religion are thought of doesn't necessarily represent how they actually are.

Learning also took place for Kristin as she sought to make sense of other participants' actions, and as she considered how the dialogue worked. As described under the "struggle" theme, Kristin wondered why some of her classmates may not have felt comfortable sharing any potentially controversial thoughts or opinions they may have held – opinions which she believed they must have held. She considered that things might have happened differently, had the dialogue been structured differently: if it had lasted over a longer period of time, this may have allowed participants to build trust and to feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts.

She reflected on other aspects of the dialogue structure and how they worked, such as how taking a breath between speakers operated as a sort of "calming mechanism." She described how, at first, she found some of these practices to be "kind of weird." But it made more sense to her, afterwards: "When I sat there and like kind of dissected it in my own brain, afterwards, I was like, okay. I get the point...It all fell into place afterwards...I think it was just something that was new, you know?" The last part of that quote is significant: the dialogue was new to her.

Although I had discussed the purpose of the dialogue prior, it didn't sink in for her until afterwards, when she watched the video later on in class that discussed RSD in depth.

> What I liked the most actually was Dr. C afterwards sent out your little video. So I did watch that and I felt like it did a really great job explaining what the whole point was, is about, um – And you said this, during the interview, so it's not like you didn't, but it was just a more expanded of how it was actually a way to share information between people, and points of view between people, and not have a debate and so after watching that it like even made more sense. The reason why we did it the way we did it. So I thought that was, um, was really good. And I know you did say that, but I guess I just, it was like maybe in one ear out the other

The purpose of the dialogue may not have stuck to her initially because I did not explain it well enough. It is also possible that she simply wasn't as curious about it as she was after the dialogue – that the experience of participating in the dialogue itself inspired her to ask more questions about it, and to learn more about how it worked.

Muted connections

All of the students who participated in this dialogue had had limited contact with one another, either through the ProSEAD course, or other social work courses. There were two sections of this course. Five of the six participants came from the same section, with Isabella the only participant representing the other section. However, as she said, she had had contact with at least two of the other participants through other social work courses, or through the ProSEAD office hours. Therefore, she was not engaging in a dialogue with people who were completely new to her.

Building relationships is one of the main goals of RSD. As discussed in the TA findings, the virtual environment posed unique advantages and challenges as far as this was concerned. While participants mostly discussed one another in positive terms and described the atmosphere/environment as "calm," accepting, friendly etc., they also discussed the ways in which they felt their connections were muted; constrained, or limited, both by the structures of RSD and the digital environment.

Alice

Alice saw the dialogue as an extension of what she and her classmates had been doing in class: having conversations about difficult topics. However, most of the conversations in the ProSEAD class took place in written format, whereas the dialogue was live and face-to-face. As she observed, this created a different experience: while writing, there is time to "clean up and edit" what you're saying, but "when you have 30 seconds to prepare your thoughts to speak them out loud, it's a little different process." In general, Alice preferred modes of communication that allowed access for more communication channels. While she saw video-based as better than text-based communication, she preferred in-person communication overall.

> I much prefer if we're going to have a conversation like this for it to be fluid, so you can get some, I guess less-structured feedback or at least less-structured questioning...Still, Zoom doesn't compare to live and in person, but, it's a better substitute to me than going straight to writing. It's kind of an intermediary spot.

Later in the interview, I asked her how she thought the conversation may have gone differently, if it had been held in-person. She responded that she thought that it may have been harder to adhere to the rules of the conversation in-person:

> it just feels like that, if you're live and in person, you've got some of that energy going between people, um, that we don't have on Zoom. I can, you know, I can see people and I can see your expressions. But there's something about in person energy where, you know, if you're afraid or you're excited or you're something, I'm going to pick up on that, and it's going to be really, really hard for me not to interject, whereas it's a little bit easier *[makes slicing motion with hand]* with technology kind of keeping that break between the interpersonal energy that flows in a room.

The terms that she uses in these passages, when describing in-person communication – "energy," "flow," "fluid," "less-structured" – create an image of a conversation that is dynamic and active, in comparison to the more structured, technology-mediated conversation. Communication was narrowed in the video platform: even though she could see others' facial expressions, it was harder to "pick up on" others' feelings, and she observed that it was easier for her to refrain from interjecting, whereas, had it been in person, she might not have been able to contain that impulse. The "interpersonal energy" was flattened, muted, in the online setting.

Isabella

The main limitation of the dialogue that Isabella recognized came more from the structure of the dialogue itself than from the nature of the technological medium. "The only thing that I dislike was not having more time to talk! Yes – but I was, I mean, comfortable talking through Zoom." Indeed, she appreciated the advantages that Zoom offered, in terms of it allowing her to connect with people whom she may not have access to in-person. While both Alice and Kristin discussed shortcomings in video-mediated communication (VMC), in terms of its ability to facilitate nonverbal forms of communications/interactions, Isabella did not experience this as a major issue.

Isabella simply would have liked to have a deeper discussion. She thought that this could be achieved with a longer discussion, or with a less structured discussion. When asked how she felt about the structures of the dialogue, she responded,

> I think when you're handling a group, while we had to have that kind of rule…That way we give the opportunity for others to talk, and also to be more concise. But of course having this conversation naturally, then you are able to probably use more time and to talk about the details, it would be great.

She recognized the value of the speech structure; how the limited time allowed everybody the opportunity to speak, and also encouraged them to be more "concise" with their responses. However, she also thought that, if allowed to engage more "naturally," there may have been opportunity for people to share more details, which she would have been interested in hearing. She was particularly interested in the experiences that Kristin and Alice shared. She would have liked the opportunity to hear more.

> I wish we had more time to ask questions. So to hear more from my colleagues about their own experiences, in church, for instance, or in a, with a group of clients at the school, in a Catholic school or in their – they mentioned different environments. So I think it's interesting when we hear about others experiences in, in different setups. And so I found that interesting talking about or listening about somebody who had a background in sports and other, my other colleague that was talking about what happened with a group of clients, and finally, relatives that she planning to support more instead of support the parents. I think that was positive.

In spite of the time and structure limitations, Isabella felt that she was able to connect with her classmates in a constructive way through the dialogue: "I think I have felt connected with

everybody. I listen, and hear from them, and um, and I think it was very important. That we knew, it was brave, but it was [inaudible], it was good, it was important."

Kristin

Kristin felt that holding the dialogue via video as opposed to in-person created significant disadvantages when it came to communicating and connecting with other participants. Although, like Alice, she noted that the video medium may have been somewhat beneficial for the dialogue, in that it enforced dialogue structures – "with Zoom, because it's not like everyone can jump in and scream at once, because, you know, it cuts out...and everybody knows that at this point, so, you kind of wait for your turn, especially when people are on mute" – ultimately, for her, the negative impacts of limited nonverbal communication outweighed the positive attributes of the video-mediated experience.

> I think that's my big takeaway of all of this, the written discussions and then also social media, or trying to connect with people like that, um, it just doesn't mean the same, because, you can do whatever you want. When you're not seeing somebody, you can just totally lie, you can BS, you could do whatever you want and, you know, when you've got a face right there, and you're having a conversation with somebody you're learning about them...I feel like more of the true self comes through, because you can't hide the expressions on your face as well.

This passage demonstrates Kristin's preference to be able to see people whom she communicates with. The last sentence is particularly telling, when she states that she feels that more of the "true self" comes through in face-to-face communication. This is consistent with language used throughout the interview, as she described face-to-face communication being more "authentic," and having conversations with "real people" as opposed to through text. When

she can see another participant's face, she is better able to read them. This generates more of a feeling of trust. When she can't see them, she can't read them as well, and she can't be sure that they are truly engaged in the conversation.

> I just really feel like with Zoom, it's so easy for you to…like right now, I'm talking to you, obviously I'm not on my phone, but like in a group conversation, it's so easy to kind of like be on your phone at the same time *[mimics holding a phone to the side, beneath the camera]*, you know what I mean, and not really paying attention or things like that

Her limited ability to see other participants and interpret their body language also led to her questioning whether she should say certain things or ask certain questions.

> I feel like you have to really read the person, and their body language, and how engaged they are, and how open you feel to them...but when you're looking at somebody like this *[demonstrates by altering camera, so that it shows the ceiling and only the upper half of her face]* you can't...It just makes it so that you're like okay, well I really can't read you at all. Um, and so...I didn't [ask the question], because I just, there was no way for me to know...how to ask it, or if they were willing to talk about something like that and those types of things. Now, had we been in person, and you've seen their whole body and you're seeing them whether or not they're actually engaged or if they're on their phone or, you know what I mean like all of those different things that you can hide when you're on a Zoom, um, I might have asked it, especially because they could have then also seen me, and I would have put myself in a position too, where I wasn't trying to be offensive

Her uncertainty prevented her from asking questions; questions which may have generated a deeper dialogue. Kristin also worried about the fact that others could not fully read her body language, and thus may misinterpret what she wanted to say. As she told me in our interview –

and as is reflected in the prior passage – she did not want to offend anybody, and sometimes withheld questions for fear of offending other participants. During the dialogue, another participant described LGBT people being "just like everybody else is, just choose to do things and identify differently." Kristin wanted to ask the participant if she believes that being LGBT is itself a choice, but she did not feel comfortable asking the participant that question:

> And then I was like, But wait, is it a choice or is it not a choice? ...That would have been a question I would have wanted to have asked, but could have definitely have come across as offensive, which I would not have meant it to be. I just wanted to kind of clarify, like how you feel about that type of thing.

Like Isabella, Kristin also felt that the conversation did not go as deeply as she would have liked it to. Although much of this may have been attributable to the impacts of limited nonverbal communication, the structure of this particular dialogue may also have played a role. When asked if her perspective on the topic had changed at all, as a result of the dialogue, she responded that it hadn't. She believed that some participants may not have been as engaged as others. As she described in an earlier passage, she considered that a longer dialogue might have allowed participants to build more trust with one another and engage in a deeper conversation than was allowed by a singular, hour-long dialogue. Kristin's experience of connecting with other participants was muted thus not just by the technological format of the dialogue, but by the structure of the dialogue itself.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented findings from the TA and IPA. Eleven themes were constructed from the TA. These themes were grouped into four categories, examining participants' perceptions of the dialogue, their interpersonal interactions, personal expressions

and changes, and their experience of engaging in the dialogue through VMC. In addition, four themes were constructed from the IPA. These themes focused on participants' experience of the dialogue, as it was shaped by their personal contexts in terms of their needs; past experiences and struggles; what participants learned from the dialogue; and how participants experienced interpersonal connections. In the next chapter, I will discuss these findings and how they inform the research questions and existing literature.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the implications of the findings detailed in Chapter 4. I will discuss implications for the field of social work as well as future research. Finally, I will also share reflections on the role of the researcher and address limitations of this study.

The purpose of this study was to explore Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD) in an online context. The specific objectives of my study were to a). enhance the current knowledge and understanding of the RSD process using qualitative methods that emphasize the experiences of participants, b). understand how dialogue in an online context may shape participants' relationships and connections with one another, c). explore how the online context shapes participants' experiences of dialogue, and d). increase our understanding of how dialogic interventions can unfold in an online context

To that end, the research questions guiding this study were: 1). How do participants experience RSD in an online context? 2). How do participants experience relationships in an online adaptation of RSD? 3). What aspects of dialogue are translatable to online contexts? 4). What barriers/challenges does an online context create for achieving dialogue? 5). What advantages does an online context create for achieving dialogue?

Although I had hoped to implement and collect data from multiple dialogues, my recruitment efforts yielded a low response rate. There were six participants total, which was enough to hold one dialogue. The topic of this dialogue, as voted on by participants and ultimately decided by me, was LGBT discrimination. All six participants who attended this

dialogue signed up afterwards to engage in post-dialogue semi-structured interviews. Data was collected from observations and dialogue and interview transcripts, then analyzed using a combination of qualitative thematic analysis (TA) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Summary of Findings

Eleven themes were constructed through the TA. These were: dialogue climate, tone, feeling; dialogue structure; a different kind of conversation; building trust, connections; disclosing uncertainty, gray areas; reservations; self-expression; changes observed post-dialogue; pandemic context; computer-mediated communication (CMC) as restrictive; and CMC as conducive to dialogue. These themes were grouped into four categories: dialogue themes, interpersonal themes, personal themes, and medium themes. Additionally, four more themes were constructed from the IPA. These were: needs, struggle/past experiences, learning, and muted connection. In the following sections, I will discuss these themes in the context of the research questions and how they inform the larger literature on dialogue and CMC.

Discussion

RQ1: How do participants experience RSD in an online context?

As the IPA revealed, participants' experiences of RSD in an online context were, to a large extent, informed by needs which were shaped by their professional and social contexts. Alice, Kristin, and Isabella each wanted to engage in discussion about LGBT discrimination in a manner that was not available to them in these contexts. Alice was motivated by a desire to have access to a constructive method for discussing LGBT issues which could potentially be applied to her colleagues and students in church: she felt frustrated with the way conversations currently were, and were not, happening around this topic in that setting. Isabella was motivated by a need

to express her own perspective, and better understand what others felt, because she was often restricted both by her workplace and her cultural community. In addition, she wanted to learn how to be a better advocate for the LGBT community. Kristin was motivated by a need to better understand what she was being taught in the classroom, and a desire to expand her own perspective. They saw this dialogue as an opportunity for them to fulfill these needs. These needs and motivations for participating in dialogue are not new: similar have been voiced by others and noted in literature (Freedman et al., 1997; Herzig & Chasin, 2006), however to my knowledge this is the first study on RSD that dives into the specifics of these motivations, how they were shaped by personal contexts, and their influence on participant experiences.

Participants' experiences were also informed by struggles and past experiences related to discussions about LGBT matters. Alice described a personal conflict that she was experiencing regarding her cousin, who identified as transgender, and the response from their parents. In addition, both Alice and Isabella each had prior experiences with discussions on LGBT issues that did not go well, in different ways. During the dialogue, and in the post-dialogue interview, Isabella described her experience where she was dismissed for her opinions. Alice alluded to "opposed" conversations where she felt that she had to be more defensive about her perspective. The impacts of these experiences were carried with them into the dialogue; Isabella felt some intimidation at the beginning, and nervousness about sharing her opinion, while Alice found herself almost automatically responding to another participant's question with some defensiveness – though in the dialogue, she found that she was able to pause, reflect, and have the question reframed. This might be considered an example of dialogue how can interrupt old, stuck conversations, and encourage new kinds of conversations (Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Kristin, meanwhile, did not describe any particularly negative experiences with conversations

about LGBT matters but, like Alice and Isabella, she had struggled with not being able to have the kind of conversation that she thought she needed to have about the topic. She wanted to have a deep conversation, and she got frustrated with others when they stated that they didn't have any issues or personal conflicts on LGBT matters.

Participants' needs, struggles and past experiences shaped what they learned and ultimately took away from the dialogue. Alice gained insight into her struggle with navigating the situation with her transgender cousin, and a better understanding of the role that church has to play in shaping the discourse on LGBT discrimination. Isabella learned confidence in talking about LGBT issues. For Kristin, learning took place on the level of interpersonal interactions, as she sought to make sense of other participants' actions, and as she considered how the dialogue worked.

Participants in this dialogue expressed fairly similar beliefs and attitudes regarding LGBT discrimination, and for some participants this was disappointing. Isabella would have liked to have had more diversity in the dialogues: more representation from different backgrounds and viewpoints. The desire to have engaged with more varied perspectives and viewpoints is consistent with findings from Dessel's (2010) study, in which teachers, who were participants in a dialogue on their feelings, attitudes, and behaviors towards LGB students and parents, provided feedback that they would have liked more gender diversity and diversity in perspectives; teachers who were "less affirming," and LGB participants who "challenged them more" (p. 575). These findings suggest that those who participate in RSD have a desire, and/or expectation, to be confronted with diverse, even challenging, perspectives.

In general, participants perceived the dialogue as an opportunity for a new kind of conversation in terms of content and style, and sometimes both. Participants saw the dialogue as

an opportunity for a more constructive kind of conversation. For Felicia, the type of conversation that happened within the dialogue was not new to her in terms of content or substance, but the "way it was set up" was new. Other participants likewise noted specific features of the dialogue format that were new to them – taking deep breaths, for example, or having timed speeches. These features were seen as both restrictive, and helpful: participants identified them as contributing to a sense of safety and respect within the dialogue, while Alice also described them as feeling "constricting," and several participants wished that there had been more time to talk. These findings are consistent with earlier studies, where participants have identified structures as helpful, and also expressed wishes for less structure and more time, especially for group discussions (Dessel et al., 2006; Dessel, 2010).

The dialogue also allowed participants to have a new type of discussion in that it utilized a synchronous, face-to-face format, whereas much of their classroom interaction had taken place in an asynchronous, text-based format. In general, participants appreciated the opportunity to speak face-to-face. This is an area however where context may have played an especially important role in shaping participants' perceptions. As noted, this dialogue took place in November of 2020, approximately 7 months after the first lockdowns from the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person social activities, for many people, were greatly reduced (Katella, 2021). While there was no data collected regarding the specific social activities of participants in this study, it is possible that for some of them, Zoom and other forms of VMC facilitated most of or even all of their social interactions with persons outside of their household. Their attitudes may have been more favorable towards Zoom than they would have been in other contexts because it allowed for social activities which otherwise wouldn't be available to them. They may also have been favorable because they had become more familiar with the platform. Alice described how,

when she first began using Zoom, she was "terrified," but over time she got used to using it. On the other hand, Kristin clearly expressed that she was tired of using Zoom; she was, in her words, "over it." Others expressed preference for in-person communication over VMC, suggesting that they may have shared Kristin's feelings. Thus, although the pandemic context had a definite influence on participants' experience of the virtual dialogue, it is not clear whether this ultimately made it a more positive or negative experience than it might have been in other circumstances.

RQ2: How do participants experience relationships in an online adaptation of RSD?

The students who participated in this dialogue represented both sections of the ProSEAD course, with five from one section, and Isabella representing the other section. All had had some limited contact with one another, either through the ProSEAD course, or other social work courses. Most of this contact appeared to be through text-based discussions. Although several mentioned attending the office hours for ProSEAD, which were held over Zoom, for others, the dialogue was the first time they had seen their classmates face-to-face. Alice described the dialogue as being a good "extension" of the types of discussions that they were having in class.

The virtual dialogue posed unique advantages and challenges when it came to building relationships among participants. While they mostly discussed one another in positive terms, and perceived the overall environment as "respectful," they also described ways in which they felt their connections were muted, constrained, or limited, by both the dialogue itself and the digital environment. As described before, some felt constrained by the structures of the dialogue; they would have liked more time to talk, and to ask questions. Kristin speculated that having the dialogue over an extended period of time would have allowed participants to build more trust with one another, and to have a more authentic conversation. Considering the tenets of Social

Information Processing Theory (SIPT), which posits that more time is needed to build relationships when communicative channels are reduced (Walther, 1992), it may be that having a longer dialogue would have been helpful for building relationships in an online setting, particularly compared to an in-person setting. Future virtual dialogue planners might take this into consideration.

Participants in this dialogue, in general, shared fairly similar perspectives on LGBT discrimination. All voiced acceptance or support for LGBT people, and almost all described having trouble understanding those who discriminated. This, in addition to the fact that all participants were social work students, and identified as female, may have created a sense of unity or shared group identity (Hogg & Rinella, 2018). Indeed, some participants alluded to these shared characteristics as a basis for comfort and trust. At the same time, having similar attitudes meant that there wasn't a lot of disagreement or diversity in perspectives, which, for at least some participants, was disappointing. It also may have in itself in some ways discouraged opposition. Kristin described feeling anxious when she voiced her opinion on transgender participation in sports, to the extent that she questioned whether or not she should say anything at all. Much of her anxiety came from hearing participants before her expressing similar ideas to one another and knowing that she was going to be saying something different.

RSD and Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) practitioners recommend planning dialogues such that there is equal representation on each side, so that nobody feels like they are being targeted, or singled out (Gurin et al., 2013; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Given limitations of the current dialogue with regards to planning and participant recruitment, it was not possible to arrange the dialogue in this way. However, the findings of this study raise questions that future research can consider. Kristin felt nervous about voicing her opinion, but afterwards, as she said, "I was

fine...it was all fine." There were no raised voices, no evidence that anybody felt offended or reacted in negative ways; in fact, most participants appreciated that she broached the topic. By all accounts, it went well. This finding supports the understanding of dialogue as a means of engaging constructively with difference. It also poses questions, as to what exactly made this part of the dialogue go so well. Social identity theory posits that people are biased towards members of their "in-group" (Islam, 2014). Perhaps the fact that Kristin was part of the in-group, as a female social work student who had previously voiced support for LGBT people, allowed others to be more receptive to her ideas. Or perhaps it was a testament to the safety of the structure, like Alice believed. It may also have been because, as some participants felt, emotions were somewhat "neutralized" due to the online setting. The relative power and relationships between these different variables – in-group status, the dialogue structure, and the online setting – would be interesting for future research in dialogue and online communication to explore.

Participants voiced the belief that the conversation may have gone differently, had it happened in person. They speculated that it may have gotten deeper. They felt limited by the fact that they could not fully read one another's body language. SIPT holds that when communicative channels are reduced, we continue to build relationships with one another by increasing focus and sometimes altering behaviors in the communicative channels that are available to us (Walther, 1992; Walther et al., 2005). During the dialogue, participants sometimes used verbal indicators that demonstrated respect and engagement, such as by often saying "thank you," making specific references to other participants' comments, and using disclaimers, e.g. "I know this is a really sensitive topic. And I'm not trying to be rude at all, but..." It is possible that these verbal indicators were invoked to compensate for the reduced nonverbal/body language. This would be consistent with other SIPT-supporting research suggesting that CMC users employ

verbal communicative behaviors in ways that aim to achieve a level of relational communication that would be comparable to that achieved in an in-person setting (Walther, 2018; Walther et al., 2005). The research design of this study precludes any claim that participants were in fact using verbal behaviors in this way; however, this may be explored in future studies on virtual dialogue.

RQ3. What aspects of dialogue are translatable to online contexts?

In Chapter 1, I discussed dialogue in-depth: what it means, and how it is different from deliberation and debate. In short, dialogue is focused on improving communicative interactions: focused on process, rather than outcome, without expectation of persuasion or consensus. It is a dynamic process wherein participants co-construct new meanings and realities. The founders of RSD use dialogue to refer to a conversation where "people who have different beliefs and perspectives seek to develop mutual understanding" (Herzig & Chasin, 2006, p. 4). In this section, I discuss what the findings revealed about how aspects of RSD were translated to the virtual environment, specifically: planning and preparation, communication agreements, well-crafted questions, dialogue structures, and dialogue goals.

Planning and Preparation

RSD typically involves extensive collaborative planning between dialogue conveners and participants, in order to conduct a dialogue that is well grounded in the context of existing divisions/challenges and tailored to meet participant needs. It is also important to ensure that participants understand the nature and goals of the dialogue. I described the dialogue planning process in Chapter 3: in short, it included email invitations, a video to introduce the dialogue, surveys to determine dialogue topic, date, and time, and a pre-dialogue email to help participants prepare. However, as the findings revealed, participants still felt a certain sense of anxiety when starting the dialogue. Several described feelings of apprehension and nervousness. None had

participated in an RSD session before, and they were not sure how it was going to go. Eve reflected that this uncertainty may have prevented her from engaging as fully as she might have liked to. This has implications for future dialogues and research; it suggests room for improvement in preparation activities. Although I believe I was comprehensive in the information that I provided through video and email, I cannot be sure that all participants paid attention to the video or read all of my emails. Future online dialogue planners might consider arranging pre-dialogue activities that would engage participants in a more active manner.

Communication Agreements and Well-Crafted Questions

The communication agreements, which were distributed prior to the dialogue and discussed briefly at the very beginning of the session, were adhered to throughout the dialogue. They included policies that participants would not interrupt one another, would honor time limits, and speak only for themselves as opposed to any group they might represent (see Appendix D for a complete list). Communication agreements are meant to cultivate a respectful and safe environment, and to prevent participants from falling back into old, "stuck" conversations (Chasin et al., 1996; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Consistently, participants often described the overall tone and feeling of the dialogue as being respectful, and safe.

The use of well-crafted questions, another core practice of RSD, was also fairly easy to implement. The questions were designed to encourage participants to speak personally, as opposed to as a representative of a group; to share stories that connect their views with their life experiences; to express hopes, fears, values, and assumptions; and to discuss uncertainties and complexities. In response to these questions, participants expressed their perspectives on LGBT discrimination by describing their experiences and general attitudes and beliefs. The attitudes and beliefs that they expressed – often, that LGBT people should not be discriminated against –

were situated in details of their personal experiences. Participants for the most part focused on the concrete details of their own experiences and beliefs and stayed away from making abstract or argumentative claims. Overall, the ways in which they expressed their perspectives were consistent with the dialogic goals of building mutual understanding.

While almost all participants at some point described uncertainty as far as how to engage with persons who were discriminatory against LGBT people, some were not able – or possibly chose not – to share personal uncertainties/gray areas in response to the second question, stating instead that they did not have any issues. They may have been responding truthfully, or it may be that they did not feel comfortable enough to disclose their uncertainties/gray areas. Either way holds important implications for dialogue. If the latter were the case, if participants didn't feel comfortable enough to share their uncertainties or gray areas, this goes further to support the idea that participants in an online setting may have needed more time to build trust with one another. If the former were the case, this may speak to a flaw in the design of this particular dialogue; specifically, the chosen topic.

The second question was designed to help participants explore the complexities of their own views, based on the assumption that most of the time, people are not completely, 100 percent decided in their views. Yet the topic of LGBT discrimination can be a broad and somewhat abstract concept, especially for those who do not actively have to engage with it in their everyday lives. Indeed, one of the participants who had responded that she didn't have any issues later reflected that she didn't have any close friends who were members of the LGBT community. It may be that participants did not believe they had any personal uncertainties or gray areas with regards to LGBT discrimination, not necessarily because they truly, absolutely had none, but because they hadn't encountered any and simply couldn't imagine that type of

situation. This idea is supported by the fact that some participants later reflected on Kristin's perspective, on transgender participation in sports, and realized that they were not sure what their opinions were on that topic. Although I had purposely chosen a broad topic with the thought that it would be more accessible to more participants, it may be that in fact the topic was simply too broad to be conceptualized in a way they could engage with deeply. Additionally, although LGBT discrimination was chosen based on frequency of votes from participants, the fact is that only about half of them voted for it; the other half may not have been strongly invested in the topic. Future dialogue planners may take this into consideration when choosing and defining their dialogue topic.

Dialogue Structures

The structures of RSD required some modification to translate to the online environment, but this did not present any major complications. As described in Chapter 1, the structures of RSD consist of time periods designated for specific activities including speaking, reflecting, asking questions, or engaging in "unstructured" conversation. These structures are designed to promote reflection, thoughtful speaking, and careful listening. The speaking structure usually involves a "go-round" or "popcorn" sequence. In a traditional in-person environment, participants would be seated in a circle, facing one another, and a "go-round" would simply involve participants speaking in the order in which they are seated around the circle (Herzig & Chasin, 2006). This was not possible in the Zoom format, where participants are shown in boxes that are ordered differently on each screen: I might see Participant A, B, and C in the top row on my screen, whereas someone else might see Participants D, E, and F in their top row. For the online dialogue, I invited participants to speak in the order in which they appeared on my screen, and I would gave participants some forewarning by naming the speaker, and then the next two

participants to follow, e.g., “Okay next, Participant A will speak, followed by B, and C.” Participants B and C then had some time to prepare their thoughts, though it was not as much time as they might have had in an in-person setting. Regardless, no participants complained of not having enough time to collect their thoughts. Felicia expressed appreciation for having at least some advanced warning.

With the speaking structure, each participant was given the same amount of time to speak. All had equal opportunities to express their views, and no participants at any point “took over,” or monopolized the conversation. In post-dialogue interviews, this structure was discussed in positive terms; participants appreciated being able to speak without having to worry about interruption. The pause structure, and the deep breaths between speakers, were recognized as calming mechanisms. Some participants observed that Zoom may have made some of the structures easier to enforce, because it allowed participants to be muted when it was not their turn to talk. As Alice and Kristin observed, Zoom may have had a “neutralizing” effect that made participants less likely to ignore the structures/agreements. This would be interesting to explore with future research.

Towards the end of the dialogue, participants were invited to ask each other questions of curiosity. Prior to beginning that portion of the dialogue, I encouraged participants to be intentional about their questions; to ask questions that come from a place of curiosity, and invite others to share more, think more deeply, and/or see things in new ways. Almost every participant asked a question, and all of the questions that were asked appeared to come from a place of curiosity. None were perceived or reacted to as being hostile, or judgmental. Alice felt a little defensive when Daniela posed a question to her, but she was able to pause, and to ask her to rephrase the question; after Daniela rephrased the question, Alice heard it differently. As she

described in the post-dialogue interview, she found the emphasis on questions of curiosity to be very helpful.

Achieving Dialogic Goals

The goal of dialogue is not to persuade or convince, but to help people with different perspectives better understand one another and develop mutual understanding (Chakraverti, 2009; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). Although participants in this dialogue shared similar attitudes and beliefs, they came from different backgrounds and experiences, and all participants experienced shifts and/or expansions in their perspectives based on what they learned from one another. Alice's perspectives and experiences as a religious figure, and Kristin's perspective on transgender participation in sports, each drew a significant amount of attention: participants frequently brought these up in post-dialogue interviews and discussed their reactions and reflections – how Kristin's perspective inspired them to think, and to learn more, and how Alice's perspectives went against what they may have expected from a religious figure. Felicia also gained insight into the fact that she did not have any close friends in the LGBT community; an insight which inspired a desire to gain more exposure to people of different identities. These findings are consistent with the goals of dialogue, and support prior studies on RSD, in which dialogue participants increased self-reflection, understanding, and communication, as well as experienced shifts in perceptions of stereotypes (Chakraverti, 2009; DeTemple & Sarrouf, 2017; Dessel et al., 2006, Moscheta et al., 2016; Roth, 1993). This study, however, is the first to dive into and describe the specifics of what these changes look like and how they manifested differently among participants.

RQ4. What barriers/challenges does an online context create for achieving dialogue?

Most participants in this study expressed a preference for in-person communication. Communicating through Zoom was recognized as being more difficult, due to the limits imposed on nonverbal communication, particularly body language. This echoes the discontent voiced by Freedman et al. (1997) with regards to an email adaptation of RSD. Although VMC clearly allowed for more nonverbal communication compared to the email format, even the partial absence of nonverbal cues had significant consequences for the dialogue. Participants in this dialogue felt that it may have prevented the dialogue from going deeper. In our post-dialogue interview, Kristin shared how she withheld some of her questions and thoughts, because she was worried about offending others: without being able to read body language, she felt that she didn't have a strong sense of what others might be feeling, or how they might react. Interestingly, some research suggests that, when it comes to communicating and interpreting emotional states of others, we tend to rely on body language more than facial expressions, when the emotional state is one of anger or fear (Meeren et al. 2005). If body language is perceived as a more reliable source of information regarding others' emotional states, it makes sense that being cut off from this while participating in a discussion with people who potentially disagree would cause some level of discomfort or anxiety. On the other hand, Shin et al. (2017) suggest that the absence of certain emotional cues can actually be beneficial in conflict situations, by reducing emotional arousal and leading to better relational outcomes. This would be interesting to explore with future research.

As described earlier, SIPT holds that when communicative channels are reduced, it takes a longer amount of time for people to build relationships with one another (Walther, 1992). It may be that more time is needed in order for a virtual dialogue to cultivate the same depth of relationships that an in-person dialogue would. On the other hand, as Alice observed, Zoom can

be fatiguing after a certain amount of time. Alice was referring to what has come to be known as "Zoom fatigue," a phenomenon which may be defined as "somatic and cognitive exhaustion that is caused by the intensive and/or inappropriate use of videoconferencing tools" (Reidl, 2021, p. 5). Zoom fatigue often manifests in symptoms such as tiredness, worry, anxiety, burnout, discomfort, and stress; it may also manifest in bodily symptoms such as headaches and backaches (Reidl, 2021). Future research on virtual dialogues might explore different time lengths and dialogue arrangements to balance the needs of building relationships, while minimizing Zoom fatigue.

Finally, it is worth noting that there were no major technical issues during the course of our dialogue. All participants had access to stable internet, and all were able to keep their videos on without any problems. There were some minor troubles: in the beginning of the dialogue, one participant was having trouble with her microphone, but she was able to get it to work before the first question was asked. Additionally, two participants had their cameras positioned such that their faces were only partially visible. In the first chapter of this dissertation, I had justified my decision to use VMC for the dialogue, as opposed to text-based CMC, based on the idea that VMC would hold participants more accountable for listening to each other and staying engaged, among other things. I had not considered that VMC had the potential to create the impression that others might not be engaged, or fully paying attention; however, this is precisely what happened, as one participant suspected that the other two participants may not have been entirely engaged. Although only one participant expressed this opinion, it is possible that it was shared by others. Future dialogue facilitators might include time at the beginning of the dialogue to check in with participants so that, if participants are experiencing any trouble with their camera,

they have the opportunity to either correct the issue, or to describe what is going on and thus mitigate any assumptions that others might make.

RQ5. What advantages does an online context create for achieving dialogue?

Participants considered the video-mediated platform to be better than text-based; it was seen as allowing for a more "authentic" conversation. Although some were frustrated by the communicative limitations of Zoom, others appreciated the breathing room, so to speak, that it allowed. Some found comfort in being able to participate while being in their own spaces at the same time. Felicia noted that this might be particularly advantageous in dialogues where there might be a lot of tension. It may be easier for participants to calm down, in their own spaces, and there may be some comfort in the fact that they could easily disengage by signing off. Additionally, as some participants observed, Zoom may have made some of the structures easier to enforce, because it allowed participants to be muted when it was not their turn to talk. It is worth noting that for this dialogue, participants always self-muted and there was never a need for me, as the facilitator, to mute anybody else. Alice and Kristin considered that Zoom may have had a "neutralizing" effect that made participants less likely to ignore the structures/agreements. Indeed some research suggests that participants experience less emotional arousal in video-mediated conflict, as opposed to in-person (Shin et al., 2017). This would be interesting to explore with future studies comparing relative levels of emotional intensity between virtual and in-person dialogues.

Finally, as described in Chapter 1, one of the benefits the internet offers is the potential to reach diverse groups of people; people who may not have access to one another in in-person settings. However, as this study demonstrates with its relatively homogeneous sample, realizing that potential will to some extent depend on other factors, such as recruitment. The diversity of

the sample for this study was limited by the sampling frame, which were students in the ProSEAD course.

Implications

The findings from this study reveal implications relevant to social workers and other professionals or community members who may be interested in holding virtual dialogues in their communities and/or organizations. In this section, these implications will be discussed in detail, focusing on dialogue format and planning. In addition, the findings suggest implications for social work educators who may be interested in utilizing RSD in their classrooms. These are also discussed.

Dialogue planning

The importance of participants' needs and earlier experiences underscores the value of pre-dialogue planning. As described in the first chapter, in the initial planning phases, dialogue planners explore with participants the history of the conflict, experiences of prior conversations, and hopes and expectations for the dialogue. This helps the organizers of the dialogue better understand participant values, what is at stake, and the overall nature of the conflict (Herzig & Chasin, 2006). The context and circumstances of this particular dialogue required a somewhat abbreviated version of this process. Due to low response rate, I had extended my recruitment period, allowing students to return their consent forms as late as October 16th. This left a very limited amount of time to determine, much less dive into the topic before the dialogue took place. The shortened planning phase may have resulted in some anxiety for participants who reported feeling apprehension about the dialogue, in part because they felt that they did not know what to expect. Although I made efforts to communicate with participants and inform them about the dialogue, its purpose, and what it entails through emails and a video, future dialogue planners

might consider engaging in more interactive planning activities with participants. These might include a live video Q and A session, for example, one-on-one calls with individual participants, or even a mini, 'practice' dialogue rehearsal.

Additionally, the findings from this study suggest that, even in situations like these, where planning may be limited, participants can still gain meaningful experiences from the dialogue. Participants in this dialogue learned from one another, expanding their perspectives, and deepening their understanding of LGBT discrimination and what it can look like in different contexts. This holds promise for other dialogues where planning is limited, such as, for example, an open dialogue where attendance may not be known beforehand.

The topic of the dialogue was chosen based on participants' responses to the pre-dialogue survey, where I had asked them to indicate topics that they might be interested in discussing. LGBT discrimination and immigrant rights were tied with the highest number of votes; however, as noted earlier, they each still received votes from only half of the participants. This meant that half of the participants had not indicated any interest in the topic prior to the dialogue. Some may have felt disengaged from this topic. I had wanted to give participants the freedom to decide the dialogue topic because this seemed more consistent with the collaborative planning process articulated by the founders (Chasin et al., 2006): it allowed participants to take ownership and decide what was most important to them. However, had I instead chosen the topic ahead of time, things may have played out differently, in a way that may possibly have been more advantageous. I might have, for example, chosen to have a dialogue about racism, and then attracted more participants, who perhaps were not interested in dialogue by itself, but were motivated to talk about racism. Thus, I may have had participants who were more invested in the topic. Some participants may well have been deterred from signing up precisely because they did

not know what the dialogue would be about. This seems increasingly likely considering the anxiety participants reported about the newness of the dialogue, and uncertainty as to how it would go.

This has implications for dialogue planners. The process of choosing the dialogue topic should be tailored to each situation. When there is a clear conflict or source of division happening within a given context, it makes sense to base that dialogue on a topic related to that division. However, in other circumstances, where there may be no obvious source of division, and/or participants do not have a clear consensus as to what to talk about, it may be best for the dialogue planners to decide the topic themselves beforehand. These circumstances might include, for example, a classroom setting where the educator wants to teach students about engaging in difficult conversations, or a community that is divided on multiple issues that participants deem to be equally important.

Finally, participants in this study were already familiar with Zoom, due to having used it in class and likely other contexts because of the pandemic. It is not clear what the post-COVID-19 future will look like, or how much our society, as a whole, will continue to rely on video-mediated communication (VMC), though there is reason to believe that virtual meetings are here to stay, at least in the workplace and likely in other contexts as well (Arif, 2021; Zitron, 2021). Regardless, even if Zoom and other video platforms continue to play a major role in many people's everyday lives, there will likely still be populations who are less familiar with VMC, and may have different reactions to it, and thus different experiences of a video-based virtual dialogue. These considerations should be taken into account by future virtual dialogue planners. Additional support – perhaps in the form of more extensive tutorials or educational resources – might be needed for participants who may be less familiar with Zoom.

Dialogue Format

As the findings from this study suggest, participants may have needed more time to really feel comfortable with one another for the virtual dialogue. They may not have trusted one another enough to disclose their gray areas/uncertainties. With this in mind, dialogue planners may want to allow for longer time for the dialogue. On the other hand, Zoom fatigue should also be considered. To compensate, dialogue planners may want to consider including a ten-minute break per each hour of dialogue, or having the dialogue occur in multiple shorter sessions over a longer period of time (Reidl, 2021).

Felicia appreciated having advanced warning as to when she would be called on to speak. Virtual facilitators might consider ways in which they may provide participants with even greater advanced warning. For example, perhaps the facilitator could write a full list of the order and post it in the chat. They might simply state that they will go in alphabetical order. These methods might help the virtual dialogue settings more closely match in-person settings, at least with regards to allowing some participants more time to collect their thoughts.

Finally, some participants were not able to fully display their face, and this caused some discomfort to at least one other participant. Considering participants' preference for having more access to nonverbal communication, it is possible that other participants may have felt similarly, though they did not speak of it. Dialogue facilitators might propose keeping cameras on and faces fully visible as a possible addition to communication agreements for virtual dialogues.

Social Work Education

As a profession that values social justice, social work often deals with topics that can be politically controversial. Conversations about these topics often arise in social work classrooms. These conversations can be difficult, especially in politically polarized climates. Existing

literature has documented some of the challenges social work educators face in facilitating and managing these discussions, such as students' perceptions of discrimination (Hansford et al., 2017). RSD has been proposed as a useful framework for managing these types of difficult discussions (DeTemple & Sarrouf, 2017), and the findings from this study support this. Participants in the virtual dialogue considered the dialogue environment to be respectful, and "safe," taking comfort in the structures of the dialogue, and the fact that the goal was not to debate one another, but to better understand. These findings further support earlier research on pedagogical RSD, which found that students in classrooms that employed a "dialogic approach" and engaged in dialogues at least three times throughout the semester were engaged in course content, felt a strong sense of belonging in class settings, and an increased willingness to speak in class, across differences, and about controversial topics (DeTemple, 2019). The findings from this study demonstrate that some of the benefits of dialogue can be achieved even when the dialogue is held in a virtual environment, which is something that many universities have increasingly had to contend with as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and likely will continue to navigate in the post-pandemic world (Miroshnikov, 2021).

Dialogue practitioners generally recommend planning dialogues such that there is equal representation on each side of the given issue (Gurin et al., 2013; Herzig & Chasin, 2006). This is not always possible to achieve in classroom settings, where the composition of students depends on many outside factors. In this way, the relative homogeneity of participants in the current study, while acknowledged as a limitation, also serves as a strength. Although participants shared similar attitudes regarding LGBT discrimination, they learned from each others' experiences, expanding, deepening, and sometimes questioning their own perspectives as

a result. This suggests that, even with possibly disproportionate representations of perspectives, dialogue can facilitate meaningful and enriching experiences for students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Throughout the discussion I identified a number of areas to explore for future research. These topics could and should be addressed through a variety of different research designs, including both qualitative and quantitative. In this section, these topics will be described in greater detail.

The findings from the IPA suggest that the needs and motivations of participants can have a powerful impact on their experience of the dialogue. It would be interesting to explore this in greater depth. Qualitative research studies could examine what types of needs and motivations are most salient for dialogue participants. Quantitative studies could look at different types of motivations, and their associations with participant outcomes. Does motivation have an effect, for example, on participants' change in attitudes post-dialogue? Do motivations have any effect on whether a participant has a positive or negative experience of the dialogue, and if so, what kinds of motivations are associated with which type of experience? The implications from this research could further inform dialogue planning efforts.

In general, there is more research needed to look at inter- and intra-group dynamics in video-mediated online settings. Social identity/deindividuation theory (SIDE) has explored group relations in CMC, but their focus has been on text-based CMC (Spear & Postmes, 2015). As discussed in the literature review, VMC can influence communicative interactions in different ways compared to both text-based CMC and in-person settings (Antheunis et al., 2019; Bohannon, 2013; Croes et al., 2019; Enrico, 2014). How does this affect inter-/intra-group relationships? Does it take longer for group relationships to build, as SIPT might suggest? What

effects might that have on in-group bonding, bias, and treatment of the out-group? There are many questions that could be explored, through qualitative and quantitative means.

While this study began to explore the ways in which an online setting can shape dialogue, more quantitative studies are needed to establish direct effects. The findings from this research point to some variables that might be tested. For example, some participants described Zoom as having a "neutralizing" effect on the conversation. Does VMC in fact lead to less emotional intensity in dialogue? Some research hints that it may, due to reduced nonverbal cues (Shin, 2017) but to my knowledge there haven't been any studies looking specifically at emotion levels in structured conversations facilitated through VMC. This would be fascinating to explore. Such a study could have implications not only for dialogues, but in other contexts as well, such as online courses, or virtual town hall meetings.

It would also be interesting to see what sort of role, if any, the virtual environment played with overall feelings of apprehension and anxiety. Findings from this research point to two potential possibilities; it may exacerbate anxiety, by inhibiting participants' ability to "read" each other and connect, or it may reduce anxiety by allowing participants to engage from their own respective spaces. These questions could be explored with an experimental research study design, comparing anxiety among participants in a virtual dialogue with those in an in-person dialogue. Researchers could also explore how these effects may play out in different types of dialogues, with different levels of divisions and emotional involvement.

Additionally, it would be interesting to see how relative comfort levels in VMC may differ among people with different personality types, social dispositions, and/or levels of neurodivergence. In this study, Kristin felt less comfortable because she couldn't read others' body language; at times she didn't say what she wanted to say because she didn't know how it

would be received, or how others would react. On the other hand, Felicia thought that people being in their own space, behind a screen, might make them more comfortable to speak their mind. Are there certain personality/social types (such as, for example, introverts or extroverts) that feel more comfortable with communicating through VMC? If so, what types? Conversely, what types are less comfortable with VMC? Investigating what types of personal, social, and cognitive dispositions may work well with or be disadvantaged by VMC can have important implications in a world where more of our social contact is happening through VMC than ever before.

Lastly, the findings from the study suggest that the dialogue may have benefitted from allowing participants more time to build relationships and trust with one another. Future researchers might investigate whether, consistent with SIPT, participants in virtual settings need more time to build relationships than they might in an in-person setting. This might be explored through an experimental design, comparing levels of trust, affinity, and other relational components, and how they vary over time, between a virtual dialogue group and an in-person dialogue group.

Reflections on the Role of the Researcher

I first learned about RSD as a first-year doctoral student in the University of Georgia School of Social Work, working as a graduate assistant with my major professor, Dr. Cornelius, and experienced RSD practitioner, Ms. Raytheon Rawls. Prior to this, I had had little training or practice with any type of group intervention. Under their mentorship, I studied and attended RSD trainings, where I observed dialogues and gained hands-on experience with facilitation. The online dialogue was the first time that I facilitated a dialogue entirely on my own, and I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that I was nervous. I had done my best to prepare beforehand by

reviewing the guide, practicing the script, and checking and double-checking to make sure that all the Zoom settings were as they needed to be. The ability to record the dialogue was paramount; I do not think that I could have adequately observed the dialogue while facilitating at the same time. Having the recordings, however, allowed me to focus and more fully inhabit the role of the facilitator.

In many ways, the relationship between participants and researcher is very similar to that between dialogue participants and facilitator, especially in qualitative research. Both require a certain amount of trust on part of the participants: participants need to be able to trust that they will be heard as they wish to be heard, that the facilitator/researcher can set aside their own biases in order to facilitate/analyze fairly, and that they are sensitive enough to understand subtleties and nuances; how seemingly innocuous comments may carry significant meanings (Herzig & Chasin, 2006; Padgett, 2016). Whether and to what extent this trust was present between myself and the participants in this study is not something that I can say for absolute certain. I did take measures to encourage this trust, by portraying myself as knowledgeable about RSD, explaining the goals of dialogue as well as my goals as a researcher, and making myself available for questions and concerns prior to and after the dialogue. During the dialogue, and in the post-dialogue interviews, I took care to keep my facial expressions and comments as neutral as possible. I also let participants know that I would be writing notes during interviews. I did this mainly so that if they saw me looking away while they were talking, they would know it was not because I wasn't paying attention; I think this also demonstrated my care and intention to capture what they were saying in the most comprehensive and accurate manner possible. Finally, the fact that I was also a female social work student may have generated some baseline trust, as well as the fact that I was working under the guidance of their course instructor.

Still, as I noted before, this was my first experience facilitating a dialogue by myself. While there were no major issues that resulted from my inexperience, participants may have picked up on my anxiety, and it is possible that this made them feel slightly less confident in my capabilities. Additionally, several participants were somewhat older than me, and this also may have been a factor in their assessments of me. There were no clear or explicit signs that participants had any doubts in my abilities as a facilitator, but this doesn't mean that they weren't there, and that possibility should be acknowledged.

I designed this study to be exploratory. On that level, I wasn't attached to any particular outcome; I wasn't testing whether online dialogue accomplishes Effect A or B etc. However, I did have some preconceived ideas of what would happen during and as a result of this dialogue, based on my experiences and what I read in the literature. I also had some hopes for what this dialogue might accomplish. I tried my best to not let my analysis be led by these hopes and expectations. To this end, I engaged in self-reflection throughout the dialogue, questioning myself often, and journaling my thoughts. I reread the transcripts and observation data multiple times and referenced it constantly throughout my analysis to keep the analysis grounded. When I questioned my interpretations of certain quotes, phrases, or 'data chunks,' my first step would often be to revisit the transcript and review the data in the larger context of the conversation/dialogue. It took me a long time to have my data fully analyzed, despite the relatively small quantity. This was because I was often questioning my interpretations, and how I saw things.

Relatedly, I will also acknowledge that this was my first time performing an IPA, and I was somewhat intimidated by this process. This led me to reread things and question myself, prolonging the process more than it might have been under a more experienced researcher. I also

spent a considerable amount of time reading and reviewing texts on IPA. Although my limited experience in dialogue facilitation and IPA research may be seen as a limitation, I believe it was also a strength because it motivated me to spend extra time and energy going over small details. I applied considerable thought and care to each and every step of the research process.

Limitations

The first and possibly most significant implication that should be acknowledged is the fact that this study had a small sample size. While IPA does not require a large sample, the findings from the TA likely would have been stronger had they emerged from a larger number of participants. As a qualitative study, however, this study should not be judged by its generalizability, but its transferability (Padgett, 2016). On that note, this dialogue took place in a very specific setting: in a course in a social work master's program. While the implications of this study's findings may be used to inform dialogues in other contexts, they are most relevant for dialogues and studies planned in similar higher education contexts.

There may have been some social desirability bias. I perceived that participants reacted to me positively, and this may have affected how answered my interview questions. They may have described the dialogue more positively, for example, or they may not have been as forthcoming on any negative feelings they may have had. Additionally, knowing that I worked with their course instructor may have impacted their responses. I tried to mitigate this with assurances that their participation in the dialogue and interviews was not going to negatively affect their grades in anyway whatsoever.

Additionally, all participants in this sample were relatively homogeneous; they were female social work students in a master's level course, and all self-described as pro-LGBT. Their experiences of the dialogue may not represent those that might be had by those who identify as

other genders, students in other disciplines, or non-students. The fact that they all had similar opinions also meant there was not a high amount of diversity/disagreement within the dialogue. Had there been more diversity/disagreement, the findings from this study would likely have had stronger implications regarding the value of dialogue in a politically polarized climate.

Finally, there was a technological limitation, in that when I recorded the dialogue, it defaulted to a speaker-view recording. I didn't realize that this would happen. This meant that, when reviewing the video, the only person visible was the person who was speaking at any given time. I could not view other participants to see how they were reacting, and paying or not paying attention. I therefore did not have access to nonverbal information which may have been important, and further enhanced the analysis.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to enhance current knowledge and understandings of RSD, and to explore dialogue in an online context. This study addressed important gaps in the literature on RSD, by providing an in-depth, qualitative examination that explored participants' experiences of the dialogue. Findings from this study revealed how participants' experiences were shaped by personal contexts, particularly their needs, past experiences, and how the structures of RSD and the online environment both nurtured and constrained their abilities to connect with and learn from one another. The fact that many participants held similar attitudes to one another limited the study's ability to examine how well dialogue can navigate hostile tensions or polarized conflicts; however, it showed that even when participants hold relatively similar views, they can still have meaningful, enriching experiences, learning from one another's experiences and backgrounds. In addition, when a potential difference arose on the topic of transgender participation in sports, the reactions were positive, providing support for the idea

that dialogue provides a constructive means of engaging with difference. These findings have important implications for dialogue planners and facilitators, particularly in higher education settings.

As this study revealed, there are many opportunities for future research to explore, both on the topic of RSD, and VMC. These are topics that need to be better understood as social and political tensions rise and VMC continues to play a major role in many people's lives. Finding better ways to engage with each other, and to better understand each other, is essential if we hope to address the most important social and political issues of our time.

References

Andersen, D. (2012). From Deliberation to Dialogue: The Role of the I-Thou in Democratic Experience. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon]. Scholars' Bank.

Antheunis, M. L., Schouten, A. P., & Walther, J. B. (2019). The hyperpersonal effect in online dating: effects of text-based CMC vs. videoconferencing before meeting face-to-face. *Media Psychology*, 1-20.

Arif, R. (2021, February 26). In the post COVID-19 world, Zoom is here to stay. *Forbes.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/raufarif/2021/02/26/in-the-post-covid-19-world-zoom-is-here-to-stay/

Bohannon, L. S., Herbert, A. M., Pelz, J. B., & Rantanen, E. M. (2013). Eye contact and video-mediated communication: A review. *Displays, 34*(2), 177–185.

Bohm, D. (1996). *On Dialogue* (L. Nichol, Ed.). Routledge.

Bohman, J., & Rehg, W. (2007). Jürgen Habermas. In *Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.* https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/

Biggerstaff, D., & Thompson, A. R. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A qualitative methodology of choice in healthcare research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 5*(3), 214-224.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Buber, M. (2000). *I and Thou* (R. G. Smith, Trans.) Scribner Classics. (Original work published 1937)

Chakraverti, M. (2009). Deliberate dialogue. In J. de Rivera (Ed.), *Handbook on building cultures of peace*. (pp. 259–272). Springer Science + Business Media.

Chasin, R., Herzig, M., Roth, S., Chasin, L., Becker, C., & Stains Jr., R. R. (1996). From diatribe to dialogue on divisive public issues: Approaches drawn from family therapy. *Mediation Quarterly, 13*(4), 323-344

Clarke, N. J., Willis, M. E. H., Barnes, J. S., Caddick, N., Cromby, J., McDermott, H., & Wiltshire, G. (2015). Analytical pluralism in qualitative research: A meta-study. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 12*(2), 182–201. https://doi-org.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/10.1080/14780887.2014.948980

Cleven, E. (2011). *Who needs to talk to whom about what and how?: Transformative dialogue in settings of ethnopolitical conflict* [PDF file]. Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation. Available at http://mediacjatransformatywna.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Transformative-dialogue_ethnopolitical-conflict.pdf

Cooper, M., Chak, A., Cornish, F., & Gillespie, A. (2013). Dialogue: Bridging personal, community, and social transformation. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 53*(1), 70-93.

Croes, E. A. J., Antheunis, M. L., Schouten, A. P., & Krahmer, E. J. (2019). Social attraction in video-mediated communication: The role of nonverbal affiliative behavior. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 36*(4), 1210-1232.

DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Marshall, P. L., & McCulloch, A. W. (2011). Developing and using a codebook for the analysis of interview data: An example from a professional development research project. *Field Methods, 23*(2), 136-155.

Dessel, A., Rogge, M., & Joseph, D. (2006). An evaluation of the Public Conversations Project's dialogues: A pilot study and survey development. Manuscript in preparation.

Dessel, A. B. (2010). Effects of intergroup dialogue: Public school teachers and sexual orientation prejudice. *Small Group Research, 41*(5), 556-592.

DeTemple, J. (2019). The spaces we make: Dialogic classrooms and social transformation. *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution, 35*(5), 753-780.

DeTemple, J., & Sarrouf, J. (2017). Disruption, dialogue, and swerve: Reflective structured dialogue in religious studies classrooms. *Teaching Theology & Religion, 20*(3), 283–292.

Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 43*(1), 13–35.

Enrico, P., Bitti, R., & Garotti, P. L. (2011). Nonverbal communication and cultural differences: issues for face-to-face communication over the internet. In Kappas, A. & Krämer, N. C. (Eds), *Face-to-Face communication over the internet* (pp. 81–99). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Folger, J. P., & Bush, R. A. B. (1996). Transformative mediation and third-party intervention: Ten hallmarks of a transformative approach to practice. *Mediation Quarterly, 13*(4), 263–278. https://doi-org.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/10.1002/crq.3900130403

Fouche, F. (1993). Phenomenological theory of human science. *Conceptions of social inquiry, 31*, 111-144.

Frechette, J., Bitzas, V., Aubry, M., Kilpatrick, K., & Lavoie-Tremblay, M. (2020). Capturing lived experience: Methodological considerations for interpretive phenomenological inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19*, 1-12.

Freedman, J., Lester, M. E., & Chasin, L. (1997). Beyond polarization: A dialogue about abortion. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 9*(1), 91-110.

Goi, S. (2005). Agonism, deliberation, and the politics of abortion. *Polity, 37*(1), 54-81.

Georgia Department of Labor (2020). Minimum wage. Retrieved from: https://dol.georgia.gov/minimum-wage

Gergen, K. J., McNamee, S., & Barrett, F. J. (2001). Toward transformative dialogue. *International Journal of Public Administration, 24*(7/8), 679-708.

Giorgi, A. (2010). Phenomenology and the practice of science. *Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis, 21*(1).

Giorgi, A. P., & Giorgi, B. M. (2012). The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 43*, 3-12.

Groenewald, T. (2004). *A phenomenological research design illustrated. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3*(1), 42-55.

Gurin, P., Zúñiga, X., & Nagda, B. A. (2013). *Dialogue Across Difference: Practice, Theory, and Research on Intergroup Dialogue* [eBook edition]. Russell Sage Foundation.

Hansford, C., Ely, G. E., Flaherty, C., & Meyer-Adams, N. (2017). "Social work is a profession, not an ideology": A qualitative analysis of student perceptions of social justice discussions in the classroom. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 37*(3), 199-217.

Haydon, M., & Elliott, N. (2004). Internal consultancy and the public conversations project: A dialogic consultation. *Journal of Systemic Therapies, 23*(3), 91-106.

Hayes, A. F., Scheufele, D. A., & Huge, M. E. (2006). Nonparticipation as self-censorship: Publicly observable political activity in a polarized opinion climate. *Political Behavior, 28*(3), 259-283.

Herzig, M. (2001). Moving from polarized polemic to constructive conversation–A report from the Public Conversations Project. *Interact: The Journal of Public Participation, 7*, 1-11.

Herzig, M., & Chasin, L. (2006). Fostering dialogue across divides: A nuts and bolts guide from Essential Partners [PDF file]. Cambridge, MA: Essential Partners. Available: https://whatisessential.org/sites/default/files/FDAD_Color%E2%84%A2%202017-11-22.pdf

Hogg, M. A., & Rinella, M. J. (2018). Social identities and shared realities. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 23,* 6-10.

Hycner, R. H. (1985). Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. *Human studies, 8*(3), 279-303.

Islam, G. (2014). Social identity theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*, 741-763.

Katella, K. (2021, March 9). Our pandemic year – A COVID-19 timeline. *Yale Medicine.* https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/covid-timeline

Konrad, A. (2020). Zoom kaboom! *Forbes, 203*(2), 76–85.

Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative research in psychology, 3*(2), 102-120.

Meeren, H. K., van Heijnsbergen, C. C., & de Gelder, B. (2005). Rapid perceptual integration of facial expression and emotional body language. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 102*(45), 16518-16523.

Merleau-Ponty, M., & Bannan, J. F. (1956). What is phenomenology?. *CrossCurrents, 6*(1), 59-70.

Miroshnikov, G. (2021, July 21). Education's hybrid future: What we know from research. *Campus Technology.* https://campustechnology.com/articles/2021/07/21/educations-hybrid-future-what-we-know-from-research.aspx

Morey, J. (2013). Not changing minds but softening hearts. *Creative Nursing, 19*(4), 210-213.

Moscheta, M. S., Souza, L. V., & Santos, M. A. (2016). Health care provision in Brazil: A dialogue between health professionals and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender service users. *Journal of Health Psychology, 21*(3), 369-378.

Moss, L. J., Pennamon, R. E., Springer, S. I., & Singh, A. A. (2017). Intergroup dialogue and social justice group work: A call for increased research attention. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 42*(3), 231-242.

NASW (n.d.) *Read the code of ethics.* Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

Noor, E. (2020, Jan. 29). Sharing space: Tech and terrorism. Retrieved from https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sharing-space-tech-terrorism-60862/

Padgett, D. K. (2016). *Qualitative methods in social work research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Palupi, P. (2019). Selective self-presentation on video-mediated communication: A study of hyperpersonal communication. *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi, 12*(1), 102-112.

Payne, M. (2016). *Modern social work theory* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Pew Research Center. (2017, October 5). *The partisan divide on political values grows even wider.* Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider/

Pew Research Center. (2019a, June 19). *Public highly critical of state of political discourse in the U.S.* Retrieved from https://www.people-press.org/2019/06/19/public-highly-critical-of-state-of-political-discourse-in-the-u-s/

Pew Research Center. (2019b, October 10). *Partisan antipathy: More intense, more personal.* Retrieved from https://www.people-press.org/2019/10/10/partisan-antipathy-more-intense-more-personal/

Pew Research Center. (2019c, December 17). *In a politically polarized era, sharp divides in both partisan coalitions.* Retrieved from https://www.people-press.org/2019/12/17/in-a-politically-polarized-era-sharp-divides-in-both-partisan-coalitions/

Reidl, R. (2021). On the stress potential of videoconferencing: Definition and root causes of Zoom fatigue. *Electronic Markets,* 1-25.

Roth, S. (1993). Speaking the unspoken: a work-group consultation to reopen dialogue. In E. Imber-Black (Ed.), *Secrets in Families and Family Therapy* (pp. 268-291). New York: W.W. Norton.

Ruppel, E. K., Gross, C., Stoll, A., Peck, B. S., Allen, M., & Kim, S. Y. (2017). Reflecting on connecting: Meta-analysis of differences between computer-mediated and face-to-face self-disclosure. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 22*(1), 18-34.

School of Social Work. (n.d.). Programs of study. Retrieved June 20, 2020, from https://ssw.uga.edu/academics/master-social-work/programs-of-study/

Security at Zoom. (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2020, from https://zoom.us/security

Selvanathan, H. P., Leidner, B., Petrovic, N., Prelic, N., Ivanek, I., Krugel, J., & Bjekic, J. (2019). Wedialog.net: A quantitative field test of the effects of online intergroup dialogue in promoting justice- versus harmony-oriented outcomes in Bosnia and Serbia. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology.* Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pac0000395

Shaffer, Kris. (2019, August 26). How algorithms amplify our own biases and shape what we see online. Published in TPM, Talking Points Memo. Retrieved from https://talkingpointsmemo.com/cafe/algorithms-bias-internet

Sherman, Natalie. (2020, June 2). Zoom sees sales boom amid pandemic. *BBC News.* Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.com/news/business-52884782

Shin, S. Y., Jang, J. W., & Bente, G. (2017). The benefits of distance and mediation: How people react to conflicts in video chat vs. FTF. *Computers in Human Behavior, 73,* 1-8.

Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 1*(1), 39–54

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Sage Publications.

Smith, Robert Elliott. (2019, September 2). My social media feed looks different from yours and it's driving political polarization. *USA Today*. Retrieved from https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2019/09/02/social-media-election-bias-algorithms-diversity-column/2121233001/

Spiers, J., & Riley, R. (2019). Analysing one dataset with two qualitative methods: The distress of general practitioners, a thematic and interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 16*(2), 276–290. https://doi-org.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/10.1080/14780887.2018.1543099

Spears, R., & Postmes, T. (2015). Group identity, social influence, and collective action online: Extensions and applications of the SIDE model. In S. S. Sundar (Ed.), *The handbook of psychology and communication technology* (pp. 23-46). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Stains Jr, R. R. (2012). Reflection for connection: Deepening dialogue through reflective processes. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly, 30*(1), 33-51.

Stains Jr, R. R. (2014). Repairing the breach: The power of dialogue to heal relationships and communities. *Journal of Public Deliberation, 10*(1), 7.

Sunstein, C. R. (2009). *Going to extremes: How like minds unite and divide.* Oxford University Press.

Sunstein, C. R. (2018). Is social media good or bad for democracy. *Sur - International Journal on Human Rights, 27*, 83–90.

Turkle, S. (1999). Cyberspace and identity. *Contemporary sociology, 28*(6), 643-648.

UGA Fact Book [PDF file]. (2019). Retrieved from https://oir.uga.edu/_resources/files/factbook/pages/UGAFactBook_p22-24.pdf

Ungvarsky, J. (2019). Phenomenology. Salem Press Encyclopedia.

University of Georgia. (2020). *U.S. News & World Report.* Retrieved from https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/university-of-georgia-1598

U.S. Department of Labor. (2020). Minimum wage. Retrieved from: https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/wages/minimumwage

Van Manen, M. (1997). Phenomenological pedagogy and the question of meaning. In D. Vandenberg (Ed.), *Phenomenology & education discourse* (pp. 41-68). Johannesburg, South Africa: Heinemann

Yardley, L. (2008). Demonstrating validity in qualitative psychology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to methods* (2nd ed.). London: Sage. pp. 235-251.

Walt, Vivienne. (2020, March 18). 'Nobody wants to be alone.' Video chat is having a moment as millions are isolated. *Time.* Retrieved from: https://time.com/5805510/covid-19-coronavirus-video-chat/

Walther, J. B. (1992). Interpersonal effects in computer-mediated interaction: A relational perspective. *Communication Research, 19*(1), 52-90.

Walther, J. B. (2005). Let me count the ways: The interchange of verbal and nonverbal cues in computer-mediated and face-to-face affinity. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 24*(1), 36-65.

Walther, J. B. (2011). Visual cues in computer-mediated communication: sometimes less is more. In Kappas, A. & Krämer, N. C. (Eds), *Face-to-Face communication over the internet* (pp. 81–99). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walther, J. B. (2018). The emergence, convergence, and resurgence of intergroup communication theory in computer-mediated communication. *Atlantic Journal of Communication, 26*(2), 86–97

Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Ramirez, Jr., A., Burgoon, J. K., & Peña, J. (2015). Interpersonal and hyperpersonal aspects of computer-mediated communication. In S. S. Sundar (Ed.), *The handbook of psychology and communication technology* (pp. 3–22). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell

Weimann, G. (2009). Terror on Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube. *Brown Journal of World Affairs, 16*(2), 45–54.

Woltag, L. M. (2019). Dialogue (literary device). Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=98402271&site=eds-live

Zimmerman, A. G., & Ybarra, G. J. (2016). Online aggression: The influences of anonymity and social modeling. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture, 5*(2), 181–193.

Zitron, E. (2021, October 13). Do we really need to meet in person? *The Atlantic.* https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/10/post-pandemic-meeting-remote-work/620363/

Appendix A: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
CONSENT FORM
INVESTIGATING ONLINE DIALOGUE

Researcher's Statement

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important that you understand a). why the research is being done, and b). what it will involve. The purpose of this consent form is to provide you with this information, so that you can make an informed decision. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. If anything is not clear, or if you would like more information, please contact the researcher. You may decide whether or not to participate once all of your questions have been answered. Please save a copy of this form for your own personal records.

Principal Investigators: *Katherine Gower, MSW*
School of Social Work
kfg21114@uga.edu

Llewellyn Cornelius, Ph.D., LCSW
School of Social Work
lcornel@uga.edu

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experience, challenges, and advantages of participating in an online adaptation of Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD). You are being asked to participate because you are enrolled in SOWK 7118E: Addressing the Bases of Power, Oppression, Social Justice, Evidence-Informed Practice, Advocacy, and Diversity (ProSEAD), and participating in an online dialogue is a course requirement. The information obtained during this study will be used for academic research, and potentially publication. All information obtained will be treated confidentially.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will take part in an online dialogue lasting approximately 75 minutes, on a topic to be decided based on student interests. This dialogue will be conducted over Zoom, and will be audio- and video-recorded, though you will have the option to keep your video turned off if that is your preference. After the dialogue has concluded, I will invite you to participate in an interview. This interview will likewise be conducted and recorded through Zoom. By participating in this study, you are providing an important contribution to research on an adaptation of an intervention that is designed to build relationships and cultivate social connections among those with different perspectives.

If you decline to participate, you will still be required to take part in an online dialogue; however, this dialogue will *not* be recorded, and your data will not be collected or used for research purposes.

Risks and discomforts
We do not anticipate that participation in this research will result in significant risk to most participants. Given that the dialogue involves the discussion of controversial sociopolitical topics, it is possible that you may experience discomfort or strong emotional reactions while participating in the dialogue, and/or during the follow-up interview. If you experience any discomfort or emotional distress, you may leave the dialogue, or request that the interview be stopped at any time. In addition, at the beginning of the dialogue, and at the beginning of the interview, I will provide you with a list of resources that you may access for help if you experience emotional distress.

Benefits
Participants who complete *both* the dialogue and follow-up interview will receive a $15 Amazon gift card. In addition, there will be benefits based on the fact that this study will contribute to knowledge regarding an intervention that is designed to build relationships and foster positive interactions between individuals with different, and even opposing, perspectives on controversial sociopolitical topics. The knowledge generated from this study will help in the process of adapting a dialogic intervention to an online context, allowing it to reach populations that may not have had access to it before.

Video and Audio Recording
The dialogues and subsequent interviews will be audio- and video-recorded. You may choose to leave your video camera off, if you do not want to be visually recorded. Audio-recordings however will be necessary in order for the researchers to analyze the data. Only the researchers will have access to these recordings. These recordings (and/or transcriptions of these recordings) may be used in the future to present findings at research conferences, for publication. Because of this, all material from the dialogue and your interview will be retained.

Any material used from the recordings will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms of participants will be used so that identifying characteristics are left out of findings. Additionally, these recordings will be archived electronically in locations with security measures including password protection and encryption.

Please provide initials below if you agree to be audio-recorded during the dialogue, or not.

_____ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the dialogue.

_____ I am willing to be audio-recorded during the dialogue.

If you do not want to be video-recorded, you have the option to turn off your video camera while participating in the dialogue. However, if you agree to be audio-recorded, and if you do not turn off your video, that will be interpreted as consent to be video-recorded during the dialogue.

Please provide your initials below if you agree to allow the researchers to use the recordings (or transcriptions of the recordings) of your interview for presentation at conferences, and/or publication. You may still participate in this study even if you do not want the researchers to use this information in these additional settings.

_____ I do not want to have these recordings used for publication, or conference presentations.

_____ I am willing to have these recordings used for publication, or conference presentations.

Privacy/Confidentiality
All information obtained during this research project will be treated confidentially. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your real name. When reporting findings, the researchers will take care to alter or exclude any details that may identify you as a participant.

The researchers may be required to disclose identifying information in federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative or other proceedings, if, for example, there is a court subpoena. As mandated reporters, the researchers are legally required to report information to state or local authorities regarding harm to self or others.

Participation in this study will involve the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

Taking part is voluntary
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time, should you become uncomfortable with it. There will be no penalty or negative repercussions from your withdrawal from the study.

If you have questions
The researchers conducting this study are Katherine Gower, doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia, and Llewellyn Cornelius, professor at the university of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Katherine Gower at kfg21114@uga.edu or at (404) 532-9281 or Llewellyn Cornelius at lcornel@uga.edu or at 706-542-0244. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706-542-3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, and that you have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please return this copy to the researcher via email at kfg21114@uga.edu

Appendix B: Pre-Dialogue Survey

Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. For this study, you are being asked to participate in an online dialogue on a controversial sociopolitical issue. The purposes of this pre-dialogue survey are to a). determine the topic of the dialogue, and b). collect basic demographic information. As a reminder, your responses will be kept confidential.

Part 1: Dialogue Topic

For the purposes of this assignment, we use the term "dialogue" to refer to a structured conversation designed to achieve better understandings among people with different perspectives. The purpose of dialogue is not to debate or persuade, but to foster better connections and understandings among people with diverse opinions.

Please indicate 1-3 sociopolitical topics that you would like to discuss in a dialogue. Sociopolitical topics may include, but are not limited to, issues regarding race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, ability status, and more. Some examples might include: police violence, reproductive rights, LGBT discrimination, welfare policy, immigrant rights, gun violence, and more.

1.

2.

3.

Part 2: Demographic Information

Please indicate the following

1. Your gender identity. You may select more than one choice.
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Non-binary

   d. Transgender
   e. Cisgender
   f. Prefer not to disclose
   g. Other (please specify)

2. Your race/ethnicity. You may select more than one choice.
   a. Hispanic or Latinx
   b. Native American
   c. Asian
   d. Black or African American
   e. White
   f. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   g. Bi- or multiracial
   h. Prefer not to disclose
   i. Other (please specify)

3. Your approximate age
   a. 18-24
   b. 25-30
   c. 30-40
   d. 40-50
   e. Prefer not to disclose

4. Where would you place yourself on this spectrum of political views?
   a. Extremely liberal
   b. Liberal
   c. Slightly liberal
   d. Moderate
   e. Slightly conservative
   f. Conservative
   g. Extremely conservative
   h. Don't know/prefer not to disclose.

5. Have you ever participated in a dialogue, or other form of public discussion such as a town hall or public debate?
   a. Yes
   b. No

   5a. If yes, please describe briefly.

Appendix C: Pre-Dialogue Email

Adapted from Essential Partners Pre-Dialogue Email

Dear Student,

I am excited to be with you [day, month] from [start time – end time] Eastern Time for our virtual dialogue. Please be sure to join on time.

Preparation is an important part of Reflective Structured Dialogue, so I wanted to send you something to help you prepare. I have attached to this email a list of suggested communication agreements. The purpose of these agreements is to create a space that encourages open, honest, and respectful communication among all participants. Please review these agreements, and if you have any questions, or would like to suggest any modifications or additions, please let me know.

Our dialogue will be about [selected topic]. In preparation for our dialogue, please reflect on the following questions:

- What is at the heart of this matter for you?
- What are the personal experiences that have shaped your views on this matter?
- What sort of doubt, or uncertainty, have you experienced in your views around this matter?

And these questions as well:

- What will help you have an openhearted conversation with your classmates/people you don't know very well?
- Where is a good place for you to set up for this conversation, so as to stay grounded?
- What part of yourself would you like to leave behind for this time so you can be fully present? What part will you bring forward?

You might also:

- Bring something to write with
- Have a warm cup of something to hold on to

I look forward to connecting with you next week at [date, time]!

Sincerely,

Katherine Gower, MSW, PhD Candidate
University of Georgia
School of Social Work
Kfg21114@uga.edu

How to Join the Dialogue Using Zoom

Sign up for a free Zoom account and then download the application onto your computer or mobile device.

Please visit the Zoom website's help section to refresh yourself on the platform. Some of the features we will use include the chat box, and the "raise hand" button.

Ready? Click here to join the dialogue! [link]

Appendix D: Communication Agreements

One of the core practices of Reflective Structured Dialogue is the use of communication agreements. These create a shared sense of expectations and norms. Here are the agreements proposed for our dialogue:

- "Pass" or "pass for now" if you are not ready, or don't wish, to respond
- Speak for yourself and from your own experience
- Remain muted unless you are speaking
- Honor time limits to ensure everyone has a chance to participate
- Respect any requests for confidentiality
- Speak one at a time, and take two breaths in between speakers

If you have any questions or concerns about these agreements, please contact the researcher at kfg21114@uga.edu. Likewise, if you would like to suggest any additional communication agreements, or modifications to the proposed agreements, please feel free to do so.

I look forward to connecting with you next week.

Sincerely,

Katherine Gower, MSW, PhD Candidate
University of Georgia
School of Social Work
Kfg21114@uga.edu

Appendix E: Facilitator Script

Virtual Dialogue Facilitator Script

Timing is based on a 75-minute dialogue, with six participants, and a facilitator keeping track of the timed speaking in each section. Timing may vary depending on the number of participants. Adapted from Essential Partners Virtual Dialogue.

0:00: Introduce the dialogue

Welcome. The purpose of today's dialogue is to discuss [topic]. We hope you can hear from those who may have different experiences and perspectives regarding this topic, and that we can build connections across distance. It is about listening deeply to understand rather than to persuade others, solve each other's problems, or find points of agreement.

As a reminder, your participation in this research is completely voluntary. All of you have signed consent forms, but you are free to withdraw your consent at any time. In addition, in the chatbox, I have sent you contact information for resources that you might access, in case this dialogue brings up feelings of discomfort or emotional distress. *(send resource contact info)*

Do I have everybody's permission to record this dialogue?

A final reminder – if you do not wish for your video to be recorded, you may turn off your webcam.

Introduce the communication agreements

To help your conversation run smoothly, we'll use some communication agreements that we ask you all to agree to and try to maintain throughout the dialogue. I will paste them into the chat box so people can see them as well. It will be my job to remind you of these if need be.

Communication Agreements

These are the communication agreements that we propose for our dialogue today:

- You may "Pass" or "pass for now" if you're not ready or don't wish to respond
- Speak for yourself and from your own experience
- Remain muted unless you're speaking
- Honor time limits to ensure everyone has a chance to participate
- Respect any requests for confidentiality
- Speak one at a time, and take a breath between speakers
- Use the chat function to let (insert name of tech person) know if you need anything

Does anyone have any questions about those agreements before I continue? Please raise your hand/thumbs up/nod your head if you agree to adhere to these agreements for today's dialogue. This also gives me permission to step in and help the group stick to those agreements if need be.

Explain how the conversation will function

Our conversation will have three parts:

- First, I will offer two dialogue questions, then
- We will have an interactive portion where you'll be able to ask each other questions, and
- Finally, I'll offer a closing question.

We will use a "go-around" structure where I ask a dialogue question and then give you two full minutes to silently reflect on your answer. Please utilize those moments to write down your thoughts. After reflecting for two minutes, each of you will have two minutes to answer the question. I will keep track of time for you.

(Online facilitator note: People will need you to prompt them as to when it is their turn because they are not all in the same order on their screen. To make this go smoothly, tell people who will go three at a time so people can prepare. "Nadiya, can you go first, and then Malcolm, and then Pilar." Then after Nadiya takes her turn, announce the next three: "Malcolm, then Pilar, then Ahn." And so on.)

Please stick to the time limits to make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate fully. Additionally, we will take two breaths between speakers to acknowledge what has been said, and to prepare for the next person to begin speaking. Lastly, I will not participate in the dialogue. My role as a facilitator is to hold the space for dialogue by guiding the conversation, holding the group accountable to the communication agreements and making sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate. Are there any questions before we begin?

0:10 Introductions

As a way of hearing from everybody and making an initial connection, we want to have a quick icebreaker go-around.

Intro Question: I'd like for everybody to share your name, and something about yourself that is unrelated to the topic at hand. This could be a hobby, passion, or interest – anything. To keep this brief, please keep your sharing to the span of one breath. Again, your name and one thing about you that is unrelated to the current topic.

I will start: My name is [name], and I….

Who would like to go next?

Okay [Volunteer] can go – and then, [student2], why don't you go afterwards. *(proceeding in go-around structure)*

0:15 Dialogue Question 1 (up to 2 minutes each)

Now we will start with the first dialogue question.

1. Please share something about your life experience that you think may have shaped your general perspectives about [the issue]. *(Repeat the question then give people two minutes to reflect.)*

After 2 minutes:

During the go-arounds, feel free to write down any questions you have for each other. After everyone answers the two opening questions, you will have an opportunity to ask questions of each other in the next portion of the dialogue. Please hold your questions until this time. You will each have up to two minutes to respond. I will keep time and signal you when two minutes is up. Please, then, finish up your statement, if necessary, not your paragraph. Remember that you have the option to pass or pass for now. Also, I'll remind you to take a breath between speakers. Would you be willing to start us off, [student1]? And then [student2], and then [student3].

After everyone has gone,

We're going to have a chance to ask questions and make connections after a second go-around, and so you don't lose your curiosity about what you heard now - take 30 seconds to write down a question or connection for someone in the group so you have it when we get there. *Pause for about 30 seconds.*

0:30 Dialogue Question 2

Now we're ready to move on to the second question. You will have up to 2 minutes again to answer the following question:

2. Many people have, within their general approach to the issue, some dilemmas, mixed feelings, uncertainties, or gray areas. Some people find that in their thinking about the issue, an important value related to [the issue] bumps up against another value that they hold dear. Within your thinking about the issue, are there any dilemmas, value conflicts, or gray areas that you'd be willing to share? *(Repeat the question, then give people two minutes to reflect.)*

After 2 minutes:

You will each have two minutes to respond. Remember that you have the option to pass or pass for now and feel free to write down any questions that come to you while others are speaking. I remind you again to take a breath between speakers. Would you be willing to start us off, [student1]?

After everyone has finished:

Again, before we go into the next section which is more open and free-form, take a moment to write down any questions you have for one another based on what's been said in the dialogue so far. I will give you about 30 seconds.

0:45 Questions of Genuine Curiosity

Now that we've had an opportunity to hear from everyone, this is the time to deepen your understanding of each other and learn from one another, to make connections between what you heard and what you are curious about. This portion of the dialogue will have less structure and it will not follow a go-around. During this time, we hope that everyone will have a chance to either ask OR answer a question of genuine interest.

It is not mandatory to keep it in the form of a question. But leading with curiosity is the best path to better understanding, so we encourage you to try it. When you ask each other questions, we invite you to be intentional about your question – to ask questions that might make connections between what others have said, or to understand something someone said in new ways. We've all had experiences being asked questions that feel like statements, like judgments, or like thinly veiled advice – but we've also had experiences being asked questions where we feel invited to share more, to think more deeply, or to see things in new ways.

Finally, as a reminder, all of the communication agreements are still in effect during this session, including the "pass" rule.

So, if you're asked a question you don't feel equipped to respond to, or wish not to respond to, you don't have to – and you don't have to explain why. Try to make space for everybody to be heard. You will have until about [time] and I will let you know when you have about 2 minutes left. Who would like to start us off? Is there something someone said that you are curious about and would like to better understand?

Remember to track who has asked and who has answered so that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

At [time], tell people something like the following:

There's never a perfect time to end this section, but we want to be respectful of the time that you have committed to be here and so we're going to move to our closing.

1:05 Closing (in two breaths)

The purpose of this section is to bring your dialogue to a conclusion. You will have up to thirty seconds to respond to the following question in a go-around structure: What is one idea, feeling, or promising question that you are taking with you from this dialogue? *(Repeat and give people 30 seconds to think)*

[Student], would you like to start us off? Remember, we're asking you to respond in thirty seconds - about 2 breaths.

1:10 Confidentiality Review and Wrap Up

We have one final piece of business and that is to review the confidentiality agreement that you made at the beginning of this dialogue. You have all agreed to honor confidentiality upon request. Does everybody feel comfortable with this level of confidentiality? Does anybody want to make any special requests for confidentiality here?

Facilitator note: If helpful, you can also take a few minutes to talk about what came up in that group during the dialogue, but you don't have to.

At this time, we'll bring the dialogue to a formal close, but I hope the conversation itself and the connections you've made remain with you. I will be contacting you soon with an invitation to participate in a follow-up interview with me. It will be a one-on-one interview, conducted over Zoom. If you do participate, you will earn a $15 gift card. You do not have to participate; it is not required for the course; it is completely voluntary. I will include more details in the email. Thank you again for participating in this dialogue, and I hope you all have a great day.

1:15 End

Appendix F: Interview Guide

Date:
Time:
Interviewer:

Introduction:

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview. Before we begin, I want to briefly go over a few things. The purpose of this interview is to discuss the dialogue, from your perspective. I am really interested in hearing about your experience with this dialogue. The questions that I will ask you are broad, and open-ended. I'd like you to be as detailed as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. I encourage you to take your time with your responses; gather your thoughts. Again, please be as detailed as possible.

Finally, as a reminder, your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. In addition, in the chat box, I have sent you contact information for resources that you might access if you do experience emotional distress or discomfort as a result of this interview. *(send resource contact info)*

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Do I have your permission to record this interview?

A final reminder – if you do not wish for your video to be recorded, you may turn off your webcam.

Question 1: Please describe, in as much detail as you can, your experience of the dialogue.

Possible follow-up/probes: a. What did you like about it? b. What did you not like about it?

Question 2: What was it like, to talk about [topic], in this way?

Possible follow-up/probes: a. How was it similar, or different, to conversations that you have had before – either on this topic, or on other controversial topics? b. What was it like to express your opinion on [topic]? c. What was it like to hear others' opinions on [topic]?

Question 3: How, if at all, did your perspective change on [topic] change?

Possible follow-up/probes: a. Did anything change your mind? What and how? b. Do you feel stronger in your perspective, or do you feel more doubt/uncertainty? In what ways? c. How do you feel about the changes that you experienced?

Question 4: How did you like, or not like, the experience of engaging in this type of dialogue online?

Possible follow-up/probes: a. What, specifically, did you like/not like about the online setting? b. Is there anything that you would have changed, to make it better?

Question 5: Do you think the online medium made the conversation easier, or more difficult? In what ways?

Possible follow-up/probes: a. How do you think this conversation might have been different, if it had taken place in a face-to-face setting? b. Do you think another online platform might have worked better – such as, for example, a discussion forum, or a chat room?

Question 6: Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with the online dialogue?

Closing

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your input is very valuable, and I appreciate your time. As a reminder, if you have any questions for me, or if any concerns arise, please feel free to email me. *(insert email address in the chat box)*

Have a great day.

Appendix G

Field Notes Template

Date	**Data Source** (e.g. interview, dialogue)	**Observations, Impressions**	***Concrete Details***	***Inferences***

Appendix H: Course Syllabus

The University of Georgia School of Social Work
Masters of Social Work Program

SOWK 7118E: ONLINE: Power, Oppression, Social Justice and Evidence-informed Practice, Advocacy and Diversity in Social Work (PrOSEAD)

Instructor: Llewellyn Cornelius, MSW, PhD	Class Location: ONLINE
Office Location: Rm. 146 School of Social WORK AND 2nd floor UGA Gwinnett Campus in Lawrenceville GA	Class Time: See discussion of modules below
Office Hours: Mondays 1230-130	Credit Hours: 3
Office Phone: 706-542-0244	Level: Graduate
E-mail: LCornel@uga.edu	Semester: Fall of 2020

MSW CURRICULUM STATEMENT (Appears at top of every syllabus):

Beginning 2017, **t**he UGA SSW faculty has adopted a focus on addressing **power** and **oppression** in society in order to promote **social justice** by using **evidence based practice** and **advocacy** tools and the celebration of **diversity**. This philosophy, under the acronym, **PrOSEAD,** acknowledges that engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities requires an understanding of the historical and contemporary interrelationships in the distribution, exercise, and access to power and resources for different populations. And, that our role is

to promote the well-being of these populations using the best and most appropriate tools across the micro, mezzo and/or macro levels of social work practice. In short, we are committed to:

Addressing **P**ower and **O**ppression,

Promoting **S**ocial justice,

Using **E**vidence-informed practice and **A**dvocacy,

&

Celebrating **D**iversity

a. **Power** - Certain sections of populations are more privileged than others in accessing resources due to historical or contemporary factors related to class, race, gender, etc. Our curriculum will prepare students to: (i) identify and acknowledge privilege issues both in society as well as at the practitioner/client level; (ii)have this understanding inform their practice In order to competently serve clients who experience disenfranchisement and marginalization.
b. **Oppression** - Social work practice across the micro-macro spectrum should work to negate the effects of oppression or acts of oppression locally, nationally and globally. Our curriculum will prepare students to enhance the empowerment of oppressed groups and prevent further oppression among various populations within the contexts of social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental frameworks that exist
c. **Social Justice** - Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Our curriculum will prepare students to engage in policy practice at the local, state, federal, or international levels in order to impact social justice, well-being, service delivery, and access to social services of our clients, communities and organizations.
d. **Evidence Informed Practice –** Social workers understand that the clients' clinical state is affected not only by individual-level factors but also by social, economic, and

political factors. We are also cognizant that research shows varied levels of evidence for practice approaches with various clients or populations. Our curriculum will prepare students to engage in evidence-informed practice. This includes finding and employing the best available evidence to select practice interventions for every client or group of clients, while also incorporating client preferences and actions, clinical state, and circumstances.

e. **Advocacy** – Every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights to freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Our curriculum will prepare students to apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice and their knowledge of effective advocacy and systems change skills to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels
f. **Diversity** - Social workers need to understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. Our curriculum will produce students who are able to engage, embrace, and cherish diversity and difference across all levels of practice

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This required course encapsulates the entire philosophy of our MSW curriculum. It examines the interrelationships between **P**oweR, **O**ppression, **S**ocial justice, **E**vidence informed practice, **A**dvocacy and **D**iversity in social work practice. The overall framework focuses on understanding the barriers to and the enablers of social change (see figure in pg. 2). Students learn about the UGA SSW's initiatives on social justice and human rights. The course will help students to focus on critical self-reflection and the arduous and often painful trajectory to recognize their privileges or power and how it shapes their lives and interactions; how it might be oppressive to others; how diversity in its various forms may be understated; how to advocate at all levels of practice for the under-privileged, and how to base practice on the social work tenets of social justice, human rights, and choosing the most appropriate interventions.

PRE-REQUISITES

None required.

Permission of department is required for other UGA or SSW students before enrollment.

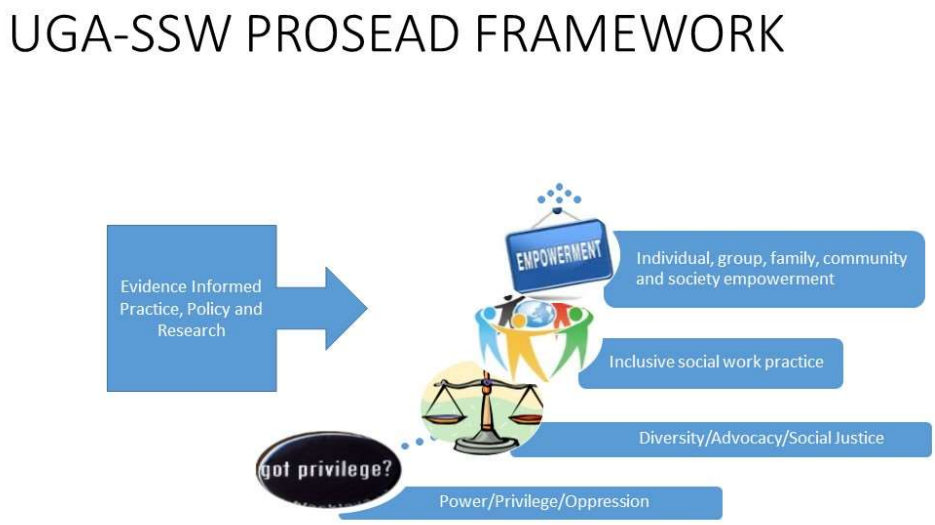
STUDENT OUTCOMES

The overarching objective of this class is to help students move from basic self-awareness to critical consciousness, from practice skill and assessment to intervention and social action in addressing power and oppression, promoting diversity, advocacy, social justice and in basing appropriate interventions in evidence and applying the best available evidence for various groups and problems.

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Understand the historical and contemporary involvements of the SW profession, including the NASW & IFSW, and the UGA SSW in empowerment efforts.
- Develop an understanding for the philosophy and spirit of the MSW curriculum at the UGA SSW
- Develop a level of understanding about social justice and its connection to privilege, power, oppression.
- Deepen their understanding of their personal social and cultural identities and biases, and how these relate to clients diverse clients and communities.
- Understand and articulate concepts of culture, identity, privilege, power, ally behaviors, oppression, social justice, and "differentness" and integrate these concepts into their practice framework (micro or macro). Understand how these concepts operate in a global context and relate to human rights.
- Gain skills in having honest conversations about the intersection of social work and race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, gender, national origin, difference, oppression and privilege.
- Utilize skills to combat social injustice, which is necessary for competent practice in diverse communities, including self-reflection, self-assessment, and consultation, and use these skills to understand and build ally relationships.
- Apply theories of oppression (social injustice) to assess the impact of systemic/institutionalized oppression on clients, develop culturally congruent services to reduce its negative effects, and empower client to challenge existing oppressive conditions by intervening at multiple systems levels.
- Identify and discuss the extent and nature of economic and social inequality, discrimination, self-governance and social capital, especially as it relates to race, gender and sexual orientation, age, religion, disability status, ability to vote, class and ethnicity.

Figure 1



SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

Successful completion of this concentration course implies that the student has achieved competency in the following practice behaviors:

Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior Social workers understand that professional practice is based on a continuous application of ethical principles to empower individuals, groups, families, community and society. Ethical practices may include journaling/self-reflection, critical analysis, peer support, self-care, professional development as well as recognizing and addressing biases, power inequities, micro-aggression, discrimination and other forms of violating human rights civil rights.		
Practice Behavior	**Covered in class through (activity, reading, content, etc.)**	**How Practice Behavior is assessed**

Communicate and understanding of both the NASW(National Association of Social Workers) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) ethical principles as it relates to diversity, oppression, discrimination and inclusion.	Session 1: Orientation to the course Human Rights/Civil Rights/Equity	Allyship Assignment- Part 1 (Session 3) and Part 2 (Session 15) Class discussion of ethics in society Session 1.
Engage in self-reflection and critical analysis regarding how to apply the NASW/IFSW code of ethics principles to practice, policy and research relating to diverse populations.	Session 1: Orientation to the course Human Rights/Civil Rights/Equity	Allyship Assignment Part 1 (Sessions 3) and Part 2 (Session 15) Class discussion and self-reflection essay from the small group engagement activity (Sessions 5 thru 10) Class discussion of ethics in society Session 1.

Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Practice Behavior	**Covered in class through (activity, reading, content, etc.)**	**How Practice Behavior is assessed**
Demonstrate awareness of historical and contemporary forms of privilege, power, oppression, discrimination, and/or marginalization and their impact on clients and constituencies.	-Introductory unit readings regarding America Social Activism History.- Session 2: His/herstorical and Contemporary Activism in the South/The Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. -Module 3-Oppression readings and Steps to completion. -Module 4- Power and Privilege readings and Steps to completion.	Allyship Assignment- Part 1 (Session 3) Class discussions of contemporary human and Civil rights issues- Session 1-15
Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage personal biases and values in working with clients and constituencies to avoid contributing to stereotypes, shaming, and stigmatization	Session 4: Applied Human Rights Issue: Gender/Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity, Human Rights Violations, Human Rights Asylum Seekers Session 5 Discrimination/Stigma Due to Racial/Ethnic Back Ground	Allyship Assignment Parts 1 and 2. (Sessions 3 and 15) Promoting Social Justice Small Group Engagement Activity Assignment and Class Discussion- Session 5-8

	Session 6 Discrimination/Stigma Due to Social Class Session 7 Discrimination/Stigma Due to Disability status Session 8 Discrimination/Stigma Due to Religion Session 9 Conceptual: Power and Privilege	

Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Practice Behavior	**Covered in class through (activity, reading, content, etc.)**	**How Practice Behavior is assessed**
Advocate on behalf of clients and/or constituencies to secure basic human rights, including availability and accessibility of services	Session 9 Conceptual: Power and Privilege Session 10- Conceptual approaches to Empowerment.	Promoting Social Justice Group Presentations and

	Session 11 Applied Anti-Privilege approaches: Social Capital / Social Inclusion/ Advocacy Session 12- Evidence Informed Practices	final assignment- Sessions 13-16.
Apply human rights and social justice frameworks to navigate cultural practices of diverse clients and/or constituencies.	Module 5- Promoting Social Justice, Human and Civil Rights.	Promoting Social Justice Group Presentations and final assignment- Sessions 13-16.

Engage in evidence informed research and evidence informed practice.

Social workers understand that social work practice, police and research involves identifying models, program and interventions that facilitate the attainment of equity and well-being for diverse populations. It also involves the process of using empirical social work science principles to culturally adapt and validate these models, programs and interventions to diverse populations and communities. This includes locating and critiquing qualitative and quantitative data that identify barriers, discrimination, power inequities and injustices as well as assessing whether these models, programs or interventions need to be culturally tailored for a given population,

Practice Behavior	**Covered in class through (activity, reading, content, etc.)**	**How Practice Behavior is assessed**
Demonstrate an appreciation of the importance of	Sessions 12: Evidence Informed Practice, Policy and Research.	Promoting Justice Group Presentations and final assignment- Sessions 13-16.

systematic inquiry in the development of evidenced informed practice, policy and research.	Sessions 13-16 Class presentations.	
Critiquing the appropriateness of models, programs and interventions for diverse populations and communities.	Sessions 12: Evidence Informed Practice, Policy and Research. Sessions 13-16 Class presentations.	Promoting Justice Group Presentations and final assignment- Sessions 13-16.

REQUIRED READING

Adams, M, Blumenfeld, WJ., Castaneda, CR., Hackman, HW, Peters, ML & Ziniga, X (2013) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice.** Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-0-415-89294-0. Note: The majority of these readings are short 2-3 page essays, so it is expected that you have at least read and have taken notes on these readings as we will use a classroom discussion format to talk about these readings.

ORGANIZATION OF MODULES

Instructor Availability

The best way to contact your instructor is via e-mail OUTSIDE OF ELC (LCORNEL@UGA.EDU). When you send an e-mail please place the course number (SOWK 7118) in the subject heading. Please use your UGA email account when corresponding with me about this course. Please keep me informed about any events that may adversely affect your class attendance, performance, or the completion of course requirements.

General comments on course structure: This course is designed as a self-directed course. Please note that units of the course are presented as MODULES. There are 12 module in this course.- Modules 1 thru 4 and 9 thru 12 each will be covered during a calendar week (Sunday through Saturday of that week) (weeks 1-4 of the semester), Modules 5 thru 8 each will be covered during a 2 week cycle to accommodate the time required to complete two of the assignments that require offline field work in order to complete.

Each MODULE begins with an overview of the module. Each overview (handouts and audio file lectures) includes an introduction to the concepts and readings that are central to the module, followed by STEPS TO COMPLETION-- a review of the tasks that are expected to be completed under the self-paced activities. This may include, a series of readings, Powerpoint lecture notes, video and or

audio minI lectures (podcast/screencasts) and short youtube linked that are designed to examine in depth the issues covered in the overview of each module. At the beginning of the semester you will be placed in online discussion groups. The members of the groups you have been assigned to will serve as your informal peers for the purposes of the reporting of the findings of the assignments on the discussion bulletin boards during the self-paced segments of the class. Your ability to succeed in this class will be based on your participation in the online discussions as well as your completion of the self-paced assignments and posting the assignments on the discussion board.

General comments on office hours and feedback to the class during the self- paced activities: As noted above, I am generally available by appointment to talk to you or to meet with you in person regarding the material for this class. While I encourage you to post questions on the discussion board I will only respond to these questions once per week (usually by Friday evenings). In addition, if you talk to me or see me about an issue that I think is relevant for others (e.g. a clarification regarding an assignment) I will post an answer to your question on the bulletin board so that all students can benefit from this information (of course your inquiries will remain anonymous). I expect each of you to post at least two messages per week on the discussion board in response to the discussion question that is listed under the STEPS TO COMPLETION in each module. The first set of messages need to be posted by

Midnight Wednesday to allow time for discussion and feedback, while the remainder of the messages for that week need to be posted by Saturday Midnight. It is safe to assume that I will be evaluating the content of your postings on the bulletin board to compute your class participation grade. Each week I will be recording the following points for comments posted on the discussion board (maximum of 1 point per week under "class participation") (note for Modules 5-8 the mid point time for the positing of the discussions is the end of the 1st of week of the two seek cycle (the Saturday night of the first week).

- 0 points if you do not post anything on the discussion board.
- 0.5 points if you only post one entry on the board and your comments do not reflect any consideration of or respond to comments made by other students in your group.
- 1 point if your comments build on the ideas presented by one or two of your classmates and your comments dig deeper into the assigned question or issue.

Hint: You may want to read what the others say first, reflect on it and then respond. It is better that you have a short, insightful comment than a long lecture

RULES OF INTERNET BASIC Etiquette	
Do's	Don'ts

• Respect other people's privacy • Verify facts before reposting • Check messages and respond promptly	• Name-call or express offensive opinions • Post private or embarrassing images or comments • Exclude people or talk behind their backs

LAST BIT OF GENERAL ADVICE-

- I RECOMMEND YOUR PLAYING THE SHORT SCREENCASTS/PODCASTS (8 TO 12 MINUTE) VIDEO/AUDIO MINI LECTURES FIRST; THEN READING THE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS UNDER THE STEPS FOR COMPLETION FOR EACH MODULE IN ORDER TO GET ORIENTED TO THE KEY ISSUES RELATED TO THAT MODULE
- ALSO NOTE THAT EACH OF THE ASSIGNMENTS ARE LINKED TO DUE DATES IN THE SYLLABUS AND ARE THEREFORE BASED ON YOUR PROGRESSION THROUGH THE MODULES OF THE COURSE.

Assignment Summary- Details for completing the assignments are at the end of the syllabs	**Grading Points or Percentage**	**Due Dates**

• Class Participation- For each of the modules you will be asked to bring to class for discussion an example of a contemporary human and/or civil rights issue (for example a newspaper clipping, a twitter posting, podcast, blog or website). We will use those examples and the readings to draw the connection between the conceptual and applied readings for that module.	15	MODULE 1-12- Sessions 1-16
• ALLYSHIP ETHICS SELF REFLECTION ESSAY-PART1 (3-4 PAGES)	15	MODULE 3-
Letter to the Editor Advocacy Assignment	15	MODULE 7-
• PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT: Group Applied Human Rights Capstone Presentations based on case study • Group Final paper	30	Session 16.-
• ALLYSHIP SELF DEVELOPMENT ETHICS JOURNALING ASSIGNMENT (PART 2)	25	Session 16.-
Total Points	**100**	

Module 1: Title: Orientation to the course Human Rights/Civil Rights/Equity (Session 1)

Module Overview: The focus of this module is on laying the ground work for examining the ways in which we can foster equity and fairness in society. This will occur via examining principles of Human Rights and the Social Work Code of Ethics.

Goals

- Create a context for sharing and discovery
- Introduction to the Social Justice and Human Rights principles that are central to social work.

Objectives

- Place social Justice, Human and Civil Rights within the Context of Social Work- the NASW Code of Ethics-Social Justice and Cultural Competency segments.
- Discuss and agree upon ground rules for class deliberations based on human rights exercises

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that contemporary Human Rights are tied both to early U.S. History (the U.S. Constitution- the Freedoms in the Bill of Rights vs Structural overall rights in the rest of the constitution) and the efforts by the U.S. and the U.K. for setting the stage for the developing of Global Humans Rights (i.e. the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter).
- To understand that the NASW and International Federation of Social Workers code of Ethics flows out of these U.N. Human Rights Declarations (UN declaration readings and the NASW/IFSW Code of Ethics Readings)..
- To explore the notion that Social Justice and Allyship (Advocacy) Both fall along a continuum (Edwards reading and Social Justice Continuum Powerpoint).
- To understand that the principles of social justice can be applied to practice settings (Parker reader).
- To use the materials in this module to formulate your own reflections on where you are on the continuum of Allyship and tie it to the NASW code of ethics (Assignment that is due when we begin module 3).
- Online discussion question: The Module presents that case that the concepts of social justice goes back thousands of years and that there is a social justice continuum that balances freedoms (e.g. the Bill of Rights in the .U.S. Constitution) with structural rights (Amendments 13-27). It also notes that the concepts in the NASW/IFSW Code of Ethics and the U.N declaration of Human Rights are interconnected. Discuss with each other where does individual rights end (e.g. Freedoms in the Bills of Rights) and the rights of the Government to help people begin? (Note it is ok if you disagree widely here- the point is for you to be able to agree to disagree).

Steps to Completion

Logistics

- Syllabus overview
- YOU SHOULD HAVE PURCHASED THE ADAMS, ET AL BOOK BY NOW
- Complete an online profile and picture to share with your group (you are in in small groups for online discussion).
- Start thinking about and doing your Allyship essay part 1 (See assignments at the end of the syllabus)

Exercises:

- Human Rights for a New planet (based on Universal Declaration of Human Rights)- Handouts- exercise and Human Rights Cheat sheet- Combine each group top 10 list into one using Google docs- each group will have one person come up, type and edit the list.
- Class develop ground rules for class discussions (See handout- also how would you incorporate the 10 points by Celeste Headlee into this? Develop a consensus on 5 ground rules for creating a safe space for discussing privilege,

oppression, power and empowerment in this class. We shall use these rules for self governance.

Required Readings (on Elc)

*#-National Association of Social Workers (NSAW). 2017. NASW Code of Ethics- Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp (note how this is referred to in the two Allyship assignments)

*#International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2012). Statement of Ethical Principles. Retrieved from: http://ifsw.org/policies/statement-of-ethical-principles/ (note how this is referred to in the two Allyship assignments)

* Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W.J., Catalano, D.C.J., Dejong K., Hackman, H.W, Hopkins, L.E., Love, B., Peters, M.L., Shlasko, D., & Zuniga, X. (Editors) (2018) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice. Fourth Edition**. Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-1-138-05528-5.

Section 1 Getting started: Core Concepts for Social Justice Education. #6-(Bell) -Theoretical Foundation for Social Justice Education

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner, 1966. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Retrieved from: http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx

*#-Edwards, K.E..(2006). Aspiring Social Justice. Ally Identity Development: A Conceptual Model: NASPA Journal. (note how this is referred to in the two Allyship assignments)- Please also see the Youtube on Allyship and note the handout of Table 1 from the Edwards article.

Primary Materials

Lecture Content

- Principles of Ethics Powerpoint
- Social Justice Continuum Powerpoint

- Screencasts

- Overview of ProSEAD- 4 mins
- Civil and Human Rights Foundation- 10 mins

Secondary Materials

Edwards- Table 1-Aspiring Allyship Development

You tube links

- Human Rights Context 1941- FDR/Churchill and the Atlantic Charter- 12mins- as you watch this video clip- think about the context of America being isolationist, yet FDR and Churchill knew what at stake in the world when then met. Here is one of the darkest times, they set out to promote principles of fairness and justice. Also think about the connection between the four freedoms and the U.S. Constitution.
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSKo4UHX7so

Megan Rapinoe on Allyship: https://youtu.be/8X5ixs8Nsd0

Expected time for completion: One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings**.**

Module 2: Title: His/herstorical and Contemporary Activism in the South/The Civil/Human Rights Movement in Atlanta and Initial discussion of contemporary issues relating to racism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, transgender oppression.

Module Overview: The focus of this module is transitioning from the discussion of Human Rights to examining the social context of Civil and Human Rights **i**n the South.

Goals

- Foster an appreciation of the American narrative from multiple view points.
- Provide an overview of Civil and Human Rights Activities in the South in the 19th and 20th Century.

Objectives

- Examine how the continuum of Social Justice and the Discussion of Allyship connect to historical and contemporary social justice issues.
- Examine the contextual issue of discrimination that may occur because of the intersection of factors – in this case race/ethnicity and income.
- Introduce the concept of intersectionality as a way to examine issues of power and oppression

Steps to Completion

- Discuss the differential oppression within race/ethnicity in the history of Civil Rights in the South during the 20th Century (See MLKs inter the wilderness video).
- Unravel the pre and post integration Civil Rights History in Athens and how the translations into issues relating to current educational and income disparities and well as the continued discrimination of African Americans.
- Looking at the MLK into the Wilderness film- discuss the shift from political rights to economic rights.
- As an example of evidence based practice- lightly scan through the data from the readings relating to 50 years after the Civil Rights movement to wilderness film to discuss civil rights outcomes today.
- Online Discussion Question: The issue of the Slave Remains under Baldwin Hall brings together his/herstorical and contemporary issues relating to Civil and Human Rights in the South. Using the material in the Module and other material you find on the internet, summarize what are the key issues on the University and Community side regarding how the Slave remains were handled.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that contemporary issues of civil and human rights in the south are connected to unresolved civil rights issues before 1964.
- To understand the opposition to Dr. MLK when he shifted from voting rights to economic rights.
- To identify the connection between Civil Rights and Human rights/ Code of Ethics.

Readings (on Elc)

Institute for Policy Studies, 2017. The Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America 50 Years After the Poor People's Campaign Challenged Racism, Poverty, the War Economy/Militarism and Our National Morality. Retrieved from: https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PPC-Audit-Full-410835a.pdf Note- you may want to scan through this document over the next few sessions as we will use this report to examine the achievement of equity for the poor in the Evidence base policy Module at the end of the semester.

Lecture Material

-Atlanta and the Civil Rights Powerpoint

- Screencast/Podcast

-Screencast Civil and Human Rights in the South- 10 mins

Secondary Materials

You tube links

- . Martin Luther King Jr:--Into the Wilderness (PBS)- focuses on 1967-68- The Shift in MLK to issues of economic equality and access and peace- See Minutes 1-9; also if we are "rained out in terms of our campus UGA tour- we will also focus on his speech in Riverside Church 4.4.1967 (starting at minute 1.01- not just the speech but also the reaction…see discussion regarding the Poor Peoples Campaign Marian Wright Edelman and its inclusion of persons of all races and ethnicity to address the issue of poverty..https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eQXD_44Kso

Websites:

Harris, C.M. (2006). The Origin of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta 1880-1910. Retrieved from: https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2006/the-origins-of-the-civil-rights-movement-in-atlanta-1880-1910

Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education (2016).Atlanta in the Civil Rights Movement (1940-1979). Retrieved from:

http://www.atlantahighered.org/civilrights/atlantasstory.asp

African American Slave Experience in Athens- https://digihum.libs.uga.edu/exhibits/show/slavery/labor
Besel (2018). University of Georgia Desegregation riot 1961. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/university-georgia-desegregation-riot-1961/

Expected time for completion: One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings

=

Module 3 Title: : Applied Human Rights Issue: Immigration and Human Rights Violations, Human Rights Asylum Seekers

Goals

- Examination of the range of principle social justice equity principles.
- Examination of the context for the UN Declaration of Human Rights and its relevancy today.

Objectives

- Examine the different between immigration for economic development and asylum seeking to flee from torture/genocide.
- To examine the pipeline of immigration in the U.S. from the 18th century to the present.
- To consider how these issues tie back to the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.

Steps to completion

- Discuss how the contemporary human rights of asylum seekers and refuges are violated by their host countries.

- Examine the connection between global migration trends and the asylum seekers/refugee/immigration.
- Connect this material back to the previous discussions on Civil and Human Rights- what specific rights were violated
- Online Discussion Question: The issues asylum seekers, refuges and immigration brings together many issues about Global resource sharing compassion and colonialism. Using the material from this Module summarize the differences between the terms immigrant, asylum seeker and refugee. Discuss with each other the role that Western Europe and North America should have with immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees from Lower income/Lower-middle income economies (See world Bank Chart for the list of these countries (https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups)

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that with the exception of the British Penal Colonies in the U.S., the U.S. slave trade and contemporary Human Trafficking, all of those who live in the U.S. today descended from immigrations.
- To understand that Self-determination and freedom from violence is a key human rights issue for us all.
- To understand that oppressors have used immigrants as a means of creating conflict between the poor and working class.
- To understand the dynamic between voluntary migration and migrating to seek freedom from oppression and violence.

Readings (on Elc)

Asylum Seeker Resources Center (2013). Annual report, 2013. Retrieved from:

http://www.asrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ASRC-Annual-Report-2013.pdf

Chantler, K. (2012), Gender, Asylum Seekers and Mental Distress: Challenges for Mental Health Social Work, *British Journal of Social Work* , (2012) 42, 318-334

doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcr062

Capps, R. & Fix., M (2015). 10 Facts about U.S. Refugee Resettlement. Retrieved from:

https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/ten-facts-about-us-refugee-

resettlement?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI5Z7V4uLD4wIVV8DICh2QCQ8pEAAYASAAEgLdmfD_BwE

Freedman, J., (2009) Protecting Women Asylum Seekers and Refugees: From International Norms to National Protection? *International Migration* Vol. 48 (1) 2010 doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00549.x

UNHCR. Asylum Trends, 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/statistics/unhcrstats/551128679/asylum-levels-trends-industrialized-countries-2014.html

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

Asylum Seekers and Global Rights Powerpoint- places into perspective the issue of immigration and migration from a global perspective.

- Screencast/Podcast

-Immigration Screen Cast- 14mins

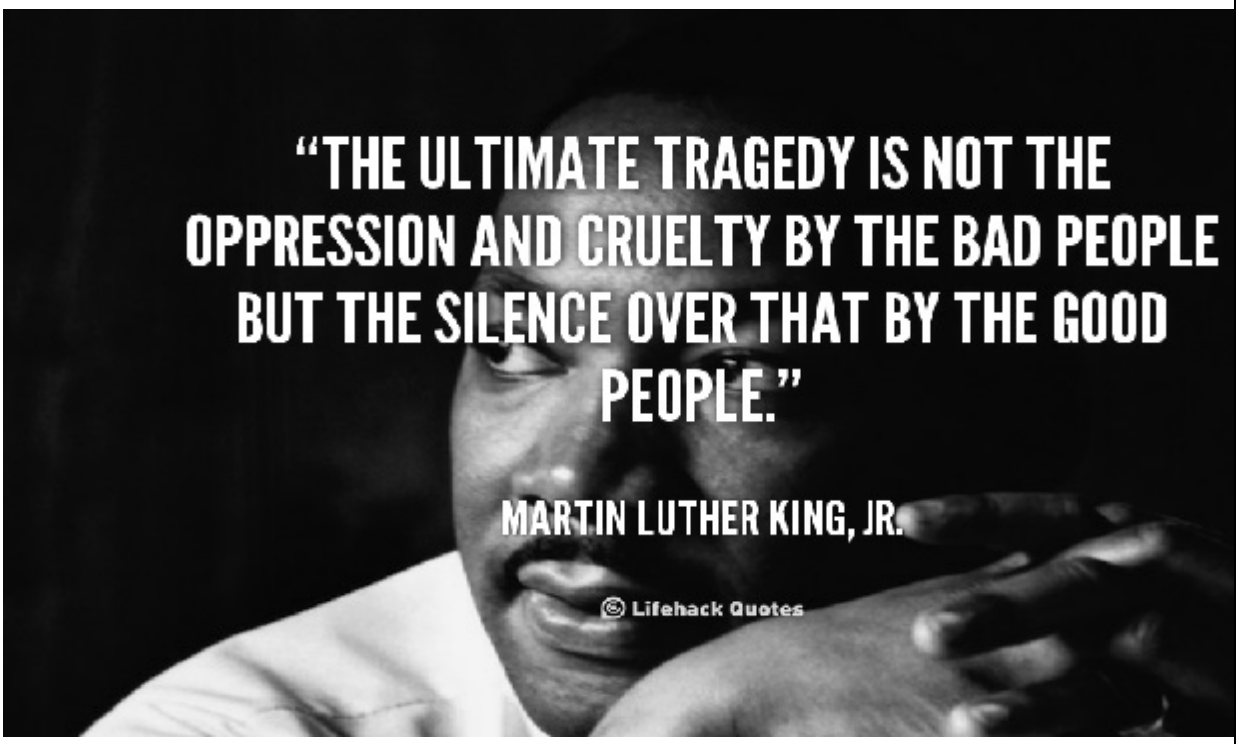
Secondary Materials

You tube links

The Refugee Story" | Amal Azzudin | TEDxUniversityofGlasgow- Focuses on the differences between migrants, refugees and Asylum Seekers. Provides data on the global status of refuges and asylum seekers- Presents examples of a successful advocacy campaign in Glasgow- 12mins- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH8F9m3rFoc

Expected time for completion: One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings

Module 4: Title: Conceptualizing Power, Privilege, and Oppression- Session 4



Goals:

- Place in context the execution of power, privilege and oppression as a means of reinforcing inequality.

Objectives

- Examine the variety of ways in which privilege is reflected and often taken for granted- e.g. Professional/Provider Privilege, Privilege on the basis of an assigned role in the community (e.g. gatekeeper) or privilege based on demographic characteristics.
- Examining the direct relationship between power and oppression/empowerment/liberation.
- Examining how the issues of power, privilege, oppression and intersectional can occur on the interpersonal level (individuals and groups) as well as on the macro level (organizations, community and society)

Steps to completion

- Discuss the intractability of in-equality- why is it so hard for the oppressed to achieve empowerment?
- Use the conceptual frameworks of oppression and micro-aggression to identify both the common elements of aggression/oppression across different populations, and to identify the forms of aggression/oppression that are unique to a given population-
- Use the Adams readings on Microagression, Oppression and intersectionality to examine the dynamics of oppression and power.
- Use the Youtube videos on microagression and provider bias to examine how we can create misunderstandings and harm in social situations.
- Online Discussion Question: Using Sues material on Microaggression and Selection #7 of the Adams et al Book and (Five Faces of Oppression), where Young describes oppression as the result of the "unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols … [of] normal processes of everyday life": Discuss with each other Sue's approach to microaggression might illustrate Young's description of oppression?

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that it is the ways that power is executed that leads to either oppression or empowerment/liberation.
- To understand how oppression has been an effective tool for thousands of years in holding people back.
- To note that it is possible for us all to engage in some form of implicit bias.
- To note that the concept of privilege cuts across many situations.
- To become familiar with how oppression occurs differentially within social groups- hence the need to examine intersectionality.
- To note that the core concepts of power, oppression and bias are constant across will we cover in Modules 5-8.

Readings (on Elc)

*Ramsay, N. (2014). Intersectionality: A Model for Addressing the Complexity of Oppression and Privilege Pastoral Psychology (2014) 63,453–469

*Sue, D W; Capodilupo, C M.; Torino, G C.; Bucceri, J M.; Holder, A.M. B.; Nadal, K L.&; Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions **in** everyday life**:** Implications **for** clinical practice**.** ;American Psychologist, 62, 271-286.

* Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W.J., Catalano, D.C.J., Dejong K., Hackman, H.W, Hopkins, L.E., Love, B., Peters, M.L., Shlasko, D., & Zuniga, X. (Editors) (2018) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice. Fourth Edition**. Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-1-138-05528-5.

#6-(Bell)-Theoretical Foundation for Social Justice Education

-#4 (Sue)-Microagressions, Marginality, and Oppression: An introduction.

-#7- (Young)-Five Faces of Oppression

-#8 (Collins and Bilge) Intersectionality revisited.

Optional readings

Fominaya, C. F., & Wood, L. (2011). Repression and social movements. *Interface: A Journal for & About Social Movements, 3,* 1–11. Retrieved from: http://www.interfacejournal.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Interface-3-1-editorial.pdf.

Lee, J. et al. 2016. Implicit biases it the Child welfare, mental health and educational systems. While this is an optional reading it is a great example of the ways in which provider biases in

the school system, the mental health and the child welfare system can lead to long term negative outcomes for youth. https://youthlatw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Implicit-Bias-in-Child-Welfare-Education-and-Mental-Health-Systems-Literature-Review_061915.pdf

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

- Pedagogy of the Oppressed Power Point- The powerpoint and Podcast is a summary of a classic book by Paulo Friere called the Pedagogy of the Oppressed that identifies the ways that those in power systematically oppresses social groups.

- Micro Aggression Powerpoint - both the Powerpoint and the You tube are designed to provide ways in which behaviorally our biases can led to harming others.

- Screencast/Podcast

Podcast *Cornelius, LJ. (2017). Pedagogy of the Oppressed - Part 1 August 2017
https://kaltura.uga.edu/media/t/1_9uryypvc
Screencast- Oppression- 10 mins

Secondary Materials

- Sue- Tool for Identifying Microagression

You tube links

How to reduce Provider Bias- Dr. David Williams- A mental health researchers reviews the strategies we can engage in to reduce provider bias (4 mins)-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KoTi3LRB

Micro-aggression in the Movies – Presentation by Sure (from our readings) about the types of microagressions and provides examples from Hollywood films(4 mins)- **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjzWENcW6NQ**

Expected time for completion: One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings

---

Module 5: Title: Discrimination/Stigma Due to Ability- Sessions 5 and 6

Goals Review the patterns of stigmatizing and marginalizing of persons based on disability status.

Objectives

- To obtain an orientation to the evolution of polices that focus on ability/disability and why such policies are needed
- To apply the concepts relating to oppression, stigma, power, discrimination and provide to the issue of ability/disability.
- To examine how the visibility of the disability effects how people respond to it.

Steps to completion

- Discuss disability rights movement and the consumer mental health advocacy movement.
- Examine in the YouTube how people react to persons based on their physical ability.
- Online Discussion question (Week 5): First locate online examples with the Disability Rights advocates define in their own terms what is means to be able to participate in

society. Discuss with each other how those definitions and perspectives on "ability" contrast with how persons in this population are seen by others.

- Class activity (Week 6) First jot down a list of 5 of your favor places to go to such as restaurants, shops and theaters. For your top three choices – note the physical qualities of the place- including the locations of their front doors, ease of movement inside them and any special design qualities that might be appealing (like a very cool spiral staircase). List all of the physical characteristics by category. Next note how will a person who is living with a physical disability navigate through these spaces- where are the barriers? Now do the same exercise with for a building on the UGA Campus. Once you have done- talk about the activity with the members of your group- what responsibility should UGA bear for addressing the accessibility issues you have noted?

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that civil and human rights is not just limited to issues of race/ethnicity/gender/sexual orientation, it covers many domains
- Liberation and ability is applicable to us all.
- We need to tune into the related to abilities that are "invisible"
- To think about the long term outcome for discriminating against people based on perceived ability.

Readings (on Elc)

Taub, D.E., McLorg, P.A., & Fanflif, P.L. (2003) Stigma management strategies among women with physical disabilities: Contrasting approaches of downplaying or claiming a disability status, Deviant Behavior, 25, 169-190.

Galvin, R.D. (2005). Researching the disabled identity: Contextualising the identity transformations which accompany the onset of impairment, Sociology of Health and Illness, 27(3), 393-413.

* Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W.J., Catalano, D.C.J., Dejong K., Hackman, H.W, Hopkins, L.E., Love, B., Peters, M.L., Shlasko, D., & Zuniga, X. (Editors) (2018) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice. Fourth Edition**. Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-1-138-05528-5.

#96 (Bryan). Struggles for Freedom: Disability Rights Movements.

#99 (Murphy)- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Leaves Scars "on the insider" Iraq Veteran Says.

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

-Overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the ADA Amendments Act

- Screencast/Podcast

-Ability Screen cast- 7mins

Secondary Materials

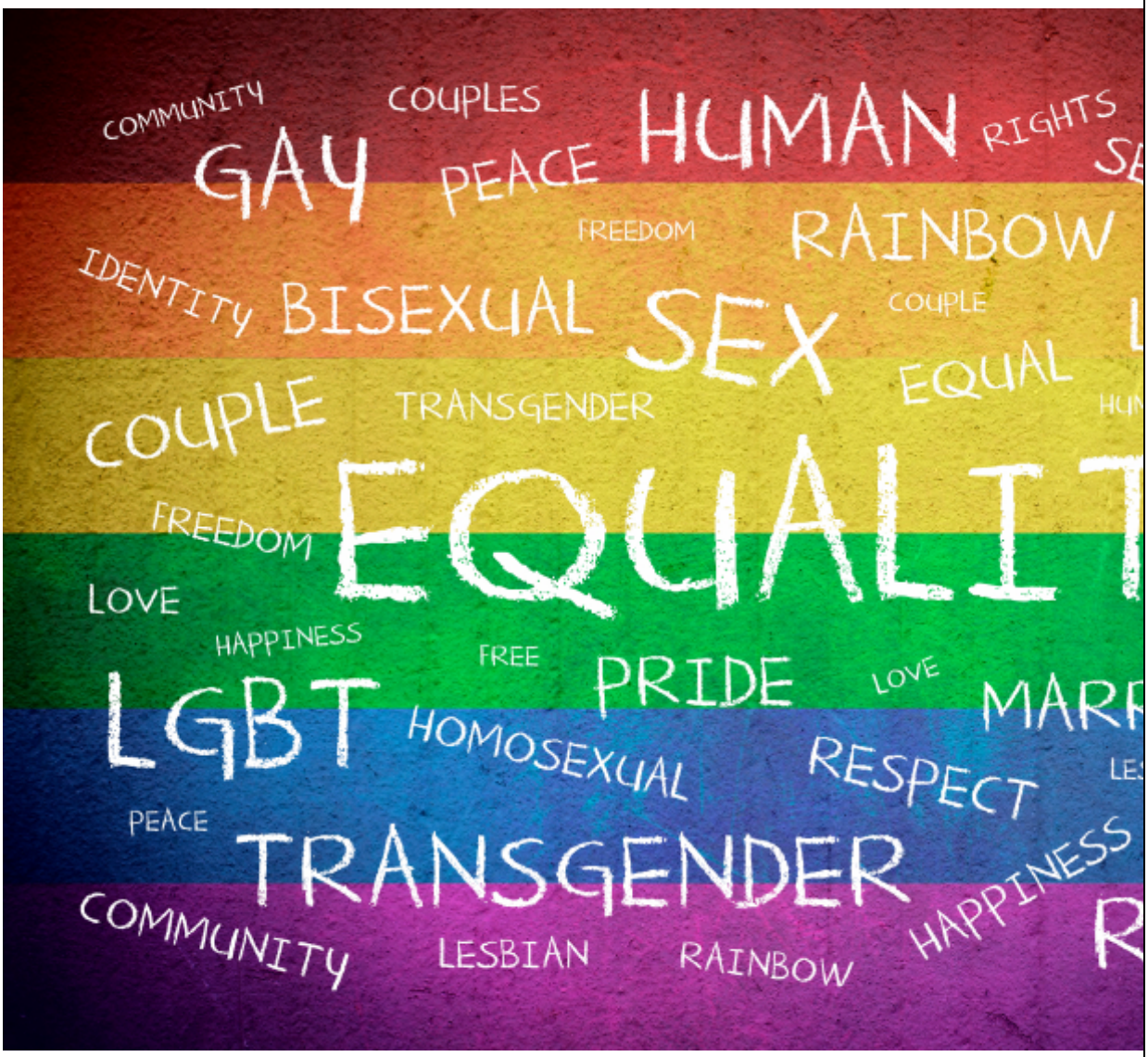
You tube links

Disability Discrimination Experiment-5mins.- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn-I3j2EUn4

Expected time for completion. Two weeks of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings. 4 hours is included offline for completing the Allyship II and Letter to the Editor Assignment's

-

Module 6 Title: Discrimination/Stigma Due to Sexual Orientation, Gender and Gender Identity- Sessions 7 and 8



Goal: Review the patterns of stigmatizing and marginalizing of persons based on sexual orientation, gender and/or gender identity.

Objectives

- Understand the concept issues of fluidity and continuum as it relates to sexual orientation, gender and gender identity.
- Understand the effects of not being allowed to name ones destiny on their lives.
- Examine how intersectionality sets the stage for the idea that there are variations in how oppression is levied based on where someone falls in the continuum of sexual orientation and gender identity**.**

Steps to completion

- Discussion of contemporary activities in the south that limit human rights based on gender, sexual orientation or sexual identity.
- Examine these issues over the 50 year timeline.
- Online discussion question: First (Week 7), using the material in the module and other material online discuss how gender fluidity, sexual orientation and sexual identity is named and defined from segments of this population as well as the ways in which others stigmatize these populations. Also look for and discuss examples of secondary discrimination by gender in the labor force. Second (Week 8),- focus on the issue of intersectionality – in this case differences within the LGBTQIA Continuum- e.g. trans vs Gay and how discrimination may play out in different ways.

Learning Outcomes

- To embrace the notion that self-naming is a critical part of empowerment and liberation
- To understand the variation of issues across this population.

Readings (on Elc)

Bergh, N., & Crisp, C. (2004). Defining culturally competent practice with sexual minorities: Implications for social work education and practice. Journal of Social Work Education, 40(2), 221-38.

Horn, S. S. (2007). Adolescents' Acceptance of Same-Sex Peers Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression. Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 36(3), 363-371.

Hill Collins, Patricia. "Defining Black Feminist Thought". In: Collins, Patricia Hill, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 19-40. Downloaded 7/27/16 from http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/modern/Defining-Black-Feminist-Thought.html

Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W.J., Catalano, D.C.J., Dejong K., Hackman, H.W, Hopkins, L.E., Love, B., Peters, M.L., Shlasko, D., & Zuniga, X. (Editors) (2018) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice. Fourth Edition**. Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-1-138-05528-5.

#68 (Shulman). Generation LGBTQIA

#99 (Meyerowitz)- How sexuality has changed: A history of transsexuality in the United States

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

-LGATQIA Powerpoint Presentation

- Screencast/Podcast

Secondary Materials

Forsey, G. (N.D.). Gender neutral pronouns: What they are and how to use them. Retrieved from: https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/gender-neutral-pronouns

You tube links

Pride: Celebrating 50 Years Since the Stonewall Uprising In New York City | NBC New York- 21mins- Places in context over the last 50 years the LGBTQIA Rights Movement.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-GSbJLWxXQ

Expected time for completion: One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings. 4 hours is included offline for completing the Allyship II and Letter to the Editor Assignment's

Module Title: Module 7: Discrimination/Stigma due to social class- Sessions 9 and 10

Goals: Review the patterns of stigmatizing and marginalizing of persons based on social class.

Objectives

- To examine the pervasiveness of social class.
- To examine the mythology of migration across social classes.
- To examine the intersection between social class issues and other factors- e.g. gender, race, ethnicity.

Steps to completion

-Discuss social stratification theory inequality by social class

-Discuss trends relating to the shrinking middle class

------ Online discussion question: 1 (Week 9). Market based economics such as the U.S. promote the idea what anyone can do better economically. Using the material in this module and other online material discuss whether that contention is true. Also using the material from our earlier Module on Oppression and Intersectionality discuss how infighting has been fostered within race/ethnicity groups or gender to keep poor persons fighting each other. 2. (Week 10) Talk to a friend or family member about the question regarding whether they see the middle class as declining and what they believe that is due do, then talk with each other online about how that "interviees" observations connect to our discussions of intersectionality (that is the potential for conflict within gender and social class, race/ethnicity and social class, etc.).

Learning Outcomes

- To embrace the sobering reality that most of us never leave the social class we are born into.
- To understand that oppression may occur within gender, race, ethnicity by social class.

Readings (on Elc)

Noonan, A.E., Hall, G., & Blustein, D.L. (2007). Urban adolescents' experience of social class in relationships at work, Journal of Vocational Behavior 70, 542-560.

Ostrove, J.M., & Cole, E. R. (2003). Privileging class: Toward a critical psychology of social class in the context of education. Journal of Social Issues, 59(4), 677-692.

*Adams, M, Blumenfeld, WJ., Castaneda, CR., Hackman, HW, Peters, ML & Ziniga, X (2013) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice.** Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-0-415-89294-0.

#40 (van Gelder) How Occupy Wall Street Changes Everything

#41 (Leondar-Wright) Classism from Our mouths and tips from working class activists.

#42 (Pittleman and Resource Generation)- Deep thoughts about class privilege.

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

- None- listen to Screen cast on social class discrimination and see secondary materials

- Screencast/Podcast

- Social Class Discrimination (Social Stratification) Screencast- 8 mins.

Secondary Materials

- Image of the Stephen Rose –Social Stratification Chart
- Stephen Rose Interview- Does America Still Work (regarding his class social stratification poster)

You tube links

Exploring Social Stratification- The presentation provides a conceptual overview of how society is divided by social class as well as the reasons why individuals are stuck in the social class they have entered. The presentation also highlights how power is used to keep people in their social class.-21mins: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TzB2lSS4G0

George Carlin: Philosophy [Part 1] The End of America and Social Stratification – George Carlin talks about the end of the great American Civilization and how power is used to maintain differences. 6 mins)- The Illusion of choice
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzIsg5jZ7lU

Expected time for completion

Two weeks of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings. 4 hours is included offliine for completing the Allyship II and Letter to the Editor Assignment's

Module 8; Title: Discrimination/Stigma Due to Race/Ethnicity- Sessions 11 and 12


IS
HIS LIFE
THIS

Goal: Review the patterns of stigmatizing and marginalizing of persons based on race/ethnicity.

- Highlight the waves of immigrant discrimination in the U.S. over time.
- Highlight the use of laws to systematically discriminate on the basis of race.

Objectives

- To critically examine the concept of assimilation and how it effects the definition of ethnicity for Americans.
- To examine the notion of the presences of others in what became America before the Columbian Expedition.
- To note how race/ethnicity is a source of conflict in the U.S.
- To examine how intersectionality- plays in in the attitudes within racial/ethnicity groups**.**

Steps to completion

- Discuss trends in discrimination against immigrants
- Examine the role of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission in fostering racial healing in Canada.
- Online discussion question: First (Week 11)- discuss with each other the case of the Lakota as well as the removal of first Nations Children in Canada- in what ways were they being oppressed/stigmatized? Second (Week 12). Using the material in this module and other online material- make the argument for or against the need for a national U.S. Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the pervasiveness of racial/ethnicity discrimination
- To understand that there are ways to move forward in addressing this conflict (e.g. Truth and Reconciliation).

Readings (on Elc)

*Adams, M, Blumenfeld, WJ., Castaneda, CR., Hackman, HW, Peters, ML & Ziniga, X (2013) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice.** Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-0-415-89294-0.

#9 (Tatum)- Defining Racism, "Can we talk?"

#10 (Takaki)- A Different Mirror.

#23-(Ayvazian and Tatum) Women Race and Racism: A Dialogue in Black and White.

#25 (Smith) Personal is Political.

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

- Intersectionality relating to 1st Nations and Latinx Powerpoint

-Intersectionality relating to African and European American Powerpoint.

- Screencast/Podcast

Discrimination due to race/ethnicity screen cast- 13 mins.

Secondary Materials

- Examples of Truth and Reconciliation Commission Around the World

You tube links

The focus of all these You tubes is on the Mistreat of First Nations the first one focuses on the Lakota while the remainder talk the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation the displacement of first nations children for more than a century (the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission)

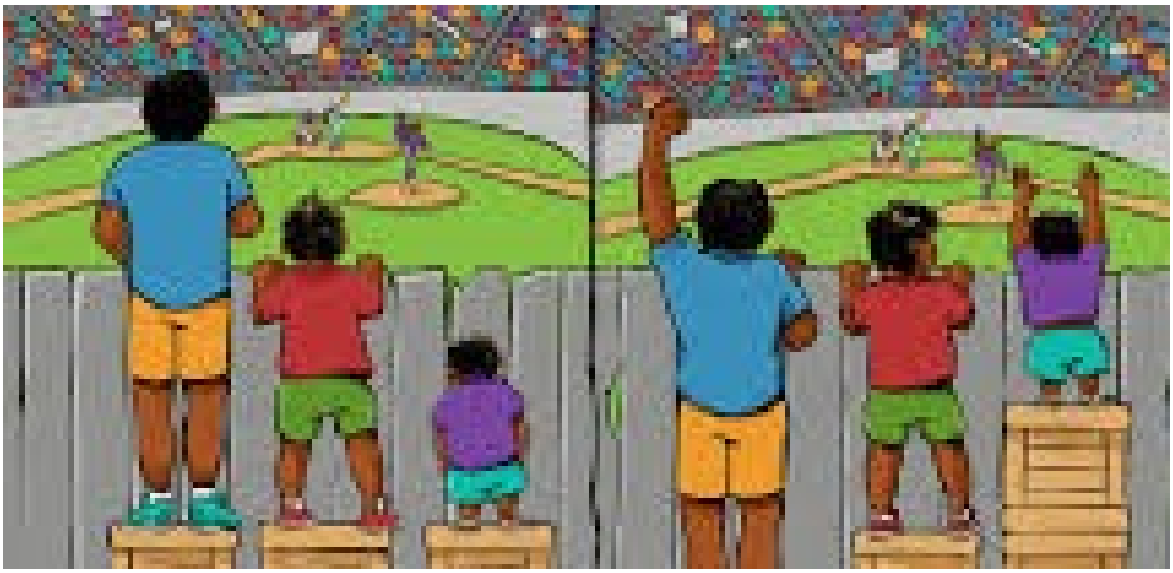
- Lakota- North America -Pine Ridge –Lakota- (16 mins) http://blog.nrcprograms.org/treaties-made-treaties-broken/

- Residential Schools in Canada -3mins- What happened- trauma, physical and sexual abuse.
  http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=513
- Democracy NOW TRC Documentary 21 mins
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dONtV6H5UGc
- The purpose of the Canada TRC- Created by the First Nations Victims of Abuse- 4mins
  http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=513

Expected time for completion

Two weeks of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings. 4 hours is included offline for completing the Allyship II and Letter to the Editor Assignment's

Module 9: Title: Conceptual: Approaches to empowerment Session 13.



Goal. Development of an appreciation of Empowerment practice as a strategy of equalizing inequalities.

Objectives

- To revisit the concept of allyship in the context of empowerment and liberation.
- To revisit the issues of oppression in Module 4-8 in the context of empowerment and liberation.

Steps to completion

- Review the evolution of empowerment theory from the Civil and Human Rights movement.
- Revisit the notion of interpersonal vs structural change to discuss the difference between interpersonal, familial, community and societal empowerment.
- Discuss Paul Freire's Contention that you can't just represent a group- they have to give you permission to speak for or with them.
- Revisit the NASW/IFSW code of ethics from the beginning of the class in light of the reading materials for this unit.
- For each of the topics covered in Module 5-8 ask yourself how would you use the concepts of empowerment and liberation to overcome the challenges you saw for each of those groups.
- Online discussion question: For a long term social workers and other helping professionals have been challenged to determine whether they are "agents of social

control" or "agents of social change." Discuss with each other the differences between advocacy, empowerment and liberation and give examples of each.

-

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that advocacy, empowerment and liberation are on a continuum.
- To understand that these concepts of advocacy. Empowerment and liberation are the core of the social work profession.

Readings (on Elc)

Gutierrez, L.M .(1990). Working with Women of Color: An Empowerment Perspective. Social Work; 35, 149-153.

*Adams, M, Blumenfeld, WJ., Castaneda, CR., Hackman, HW, Peters, ML & Ziniga, X (2013) **Readings for Diversity and Social Justice.** Routledge, New York. ISBN-978-0-415-89294-0.

#130. (Pharr) Reflections on Liberation.

#131 (Love) Developing a Liberatory consciousness

#134 (Harro)- Cycles of Liberation.

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

- - Empowerment Theory Powerpoint.

- Screencast/Podcast

Screencast: Empowerment

Podcast: Cornelius, LJ (2017). Pedagogy of the Oppressed - Part 2.

https://kaltura.uga.edu/media/t/1_dzzv8xsg

Screencast- empowerment- 8 mins.

Secondary Materials

-Cycle of Liberation handout

You tube links

-Not applicable for this unit- see podcast above

Expected time for completion One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings

Module 10: <u>Applied Anti-Privilege approaches: Social Capital / Social Inclusion/ Advocacy</u> – Session 14

Goals

Objectives

Steps to completion

- Review the attempts of liberation/empowerment- the Umbrella movement in the content of empowerment- what hindered their success?
- To review to messy cycle of being dependent on others for aid- e.g. the world bank, international development fund.
- To examine where you are in your allyship/advocacy growth cycle**.**
- Online Discussion question: The concepts social capital and inclusion focus on the ability of citizens to autonomously participate in local decision making. Using the material in this Module discuss whether the protesters in the 2014 Umbrella Movement were able to freely participate in local decision making. Can this happen under the "management" of a centralized government, like the Republic of China**?**

Learning Outcomes

Readings (on Elc)

Hilhorst, D., Jansen, J., (2010) Humanitarian Space as Arena; A Perspective on the Everyday Politics of Aid, *Development and Change* 41 (6) 1117-1139

Heinrich, T., (2013) When is Foreign Aid Selfish, When is it Selfless? The Journal of Politics, Vol. 75, No. 2, April 2013, 422-435 doi:10.1017/S002238161300011X

OECD-(N.D). What is Social Capital?

Primary Materials

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

-Applied anti-privilege PowerPoint

- Screencast/Podcast

Social Inclusion/Social Capital Screencast- 5 mins

Secondary Materials

You tube links

The End of the Umbrella Revolution: Hong Kong Silenced- 25mins- The story of the Social Protest Movement in Hong Kong for Voter Rights in 2014- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wXUulAG5z4

Expected time for completion- One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings

h

Module 11: Evidence Informed Practice, Policy and Research-Session 15

Goals

- Review the role of research in the development of evidence informed practices.
- Examine the adaptation of research findings to programs in the local context.

Objectives

- Gain a perspective regarding the role of data in examining oppression and equity

Steps to completion

- Connect systematic scientific inquiry with the need to measure and document inequities.
- Use the Institute for Policy Studies report to assessment whether there were improvement in access to societal resources for the pool
- To look for external websites like Factcheck.org to check for false data.
- To critique media events using data.
- Online Discussion Question:. We started the class out in Module one by noting from the NASW Codes of Ethics that – "Social workers have a responsibility to challenge negative discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, gender or sex, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin colour, racial or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs."- using the findings from the 2018 Poor People's Campaign Institute for Policy Studies report- discussed whether America has improved the status of the poor over the last 50 years.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand how data can be used to evaluate the extent to which a population has achieved equity I society
- To understand the importance of data in developing a case of advocacy

Readings (on Elc)

Plath, D. (2013). Support for Evidence-Based Practice in a Human Service Organization. *Administration In Social Work*, *37*(1), 25-38. doi:10.1080/03643107.2011.638731

Gray, M., Joy, E., Plath, D., & Webb, S. A. (2013). Implementing Evidence-Based Practice: A Review of the Empirical Research Literature. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *23*(2), 157-166. doi:10.1177/1049731512467072

Cabassa, L.J. (2016). Implementation Science: Why It Matters for the Future of Social Work. Journal of Social Work Education. 52, s38-s50.

Gambrill, E. (2016). Is Social Work Evidence-based? Does Saying So Make It So? Ongoing Challenges in Integrating Research, Practice and Policy. Journal of Social Work Education. 52,s1-s5

Institute for Policy Studies, 2017. The Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America 50 Years After the Poor People's Campaign Challenged Racism, Poverty, the War Economy/Militarism and Our National Morality. Retrieved from: https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PPC-Audit-Full-410835a.pdf

Primary Materials

-Powerpoint Materials

-Evidence Based Practice Powerpoint

- Screencast

Evidence Based Practice- 5 mins.

Secondary Materials

You tube links

Poor People's Campaign asks America to face the injustices keeping millions in poverty- Focuses on the 2018 Poor Peoples' Campaign with Rev. Barber (which uses the Institute for Policy Studies 2017 report to revive the Campaign- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ4Knip-uAo

Expected time for completion- One week of calendar time, including 4 hours time for reading the class materials and one hour online for discussions with your group- two iterative postings

Module 12: Promoting social justice final paper- due- Session 16

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Achievement of student outcomes will be measured through successful completion of the following assignments which are fully described below:

Required Assignments

Student grades will be based on the following assignments:

1. **Part I: Initial Allyship Professional NASW/IFSW Ethics Self-reflection essay (Due Session 3)**

One of the critical components of this course focuses on increasing our awareness of the importance of working alongside of our clients in promoting social justice and human rights. One of the terms is used to describe this process is allyship (See Edwards,, 2006). Using an example from the field of social work or an example from social work practice, select a target groups, outside of your own background, that have been discriminated against, stigmatized or

treated unfairly. Using the continuum of allyship presented in Table 1(Edwards (2006)- aspiring ally for self-interest, aspiring ally for altruism or ally for social justice) write 3-4 double-spaced page essay in 12 point font (excluding cover page and references) discussing where you currently are in your developmental journey in terms of promoting social change for that group. In addition to the Edwards reading, cite at least two other peer review articles that providing information, data, concepts or issues relating to the challenges of that group.

What are the current barriers you believe you are facing now in your efforts to act as an ally for social justice (e.g. fear, lack of social support, lack of awareness of that population, etc.). What are the opportunities you see for growth in developing for allyship skills? Discuss how can the elements of the NASW/IFSW code of ethics inform your journey as a social worker. Finally, describe one concrete action you plan to take to further your process of becoming an ally, DURING THIS COURSE. Including a timetable for doing so, and details as to how you and a self-selected accountability partner (they do not have to be in this class!) plan to hold you accountable.

2 **Advocacy Letter to the Editor Due Session 10 via email to Lcornel@UGA.edu- this would a PDF file of the proof of submission of the letter to the editor (a JPEG of a Screen Capture of the submission will suffice) along with the editorial itself.** Read media outlets for issue related to vulnerable populations. Specifically, you are required to write "Letter to the Editor" for publication consideration. The assignment should follow the outlets recommendations (i.e., word count, your name and phone number has to be attached). Criterion of evaluation: (1) Focus the letter on one vulnerable population/topic of concern, (2) Comply with the word count restrictions, (3) Be clear and concise in your expression, (4) establish your expertise on the matter (i.e., parent, from this community, organizational member, graduate student), (5) Demonstrate your critical understanding of the core issue, (6) Offer a thoughtful solution, and (7) Electronically submitted to the news outlet by the due date. *Special note*: you will turn in a hard copy of the article you responded too and the letter that you submitted.

3. **Part II: Allyship Development NASW/IFSW Ethics self-journaling assignment (Due- Session 15)**

Using the action plan you developed in Part one (see above), develop an electronic journal (to be submitted at the end of the course) which documents the events and activities you engaged in to increase your allyship skills. There should be no less than two dated entrees for the journal. Each entry should include the following:- a narrative description of the event (the who, what, where, why and how question); your reflection the events based on the table 1 Edwards (2006) continuum and what impact, if any did this event have on your becoming an ally for social justice; at least two reference to supporting documentation regarding the issues you are discussing (in this case it can include both peer review literature, local, state or federal reports or published newspaper articles). Looking back on what you wrote regarding your reflections on the NASW/IFSW code of ethics principles (part I) what has changed, if anything, as a result of taking this course?

4. PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT Final Social Justice/Human Rights Issue based on the NASW Code of Ethics[i] Categories / Final paper 30 points

4. **Promoting Social Justice Final paper (Week 16)- 30 points**

- Final paper: **:5-7 page paper** (30 points) (typed in Ms Word, double spaced in 12 point font with a one inch border around all sides of the page- number pages. .As in the case of the presentation, the students should take the lead in developing a final paper on the social justice/human rights issues that served as the basis of the paper.
- The paper needs to include the following:
  - A clear definition the population you are studying as it relates to issues of diversity, discrimination, oppression and power in-equity (that is the NASW populations discussion earlier in the semester).
  - a presentation of the specific social justice/human rights issues you as

studying, with an elaboration of the significance of the problem within the context of social justice, human and civil rights (the discussion of the significance of the problem should include some reference to data an or case examples that represent this issue (along with citations of relevant articles/reports (in this case you can use reports that are published by nonprofit organizations, local, state or federal agencies in addition to peer review literature) DO NOT CITE BLOGS).,

- a review of what has been done in this area (based on a review of published findings). In particular critique clinical or community interventions which have used to address this issue (with citations from the peer review literature)
- a assessment of whether the current efforts to promote equality and fairness have succeeded (based on the on some social equity human rights goals) and a series of recommendations for activities that can promote equity and fairness (these last two points do not require citations).
- Your final paper should adhere to the APA writing style (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition- https://apastyle.apa.org/manual/) and include no less than five citations in the reference section and you must cite the references in the body of the paper as well.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

The numerical score from the formula above is converted to the appropriate letter grade from the chart below to determine the student's final letter grade for the course.

Letter Grade	**Numerical Score**	**Letter Grade**	**Numerical Score**

A	94-100%	C	70-73%
A-	90-93%	C-	67-69%
B+	84-89%	D	60-66%
B	80-83%	F	59 & below
B-	77-79%	I	Incomplete
C+	74-76%	W	Withdrew

Incomplete Grades: A temporary grade of Incomplete may be assigned to a student who, **for a reason beyond the student's control**, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. It is the student's responsibility to request an incomplete grade from the instructor in accordance with UGA rules and regulations. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted. A student may not enroll in a course sequential to one in which he or she has an 'I' or 'F' letter grade. An incomplete not removed by the end of the next semester will be changed to an 'F'.

COURSE FORMAT

The methods of instruction that may be used for class include lectures, class discussions and exercises, invited speakers, student presentations, independent study including use of eLC or other online technologies, videos, and completion of assignments. Participation is an important component of this course (and learning process); therefore, students are expected to attend classes and to be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

In the event of injury, illness or emergencies, the instructor should be notified in advance by email. **The decision to accept an absence as excused is at the discretion of the instructor.** Documentation may be requested. If students have any questions about how to document emergencies or need assistance with a student crisis, they are encouraged to contact the UGA Office of Student Affairs.

Students are still responsible for class content and assignments for any days missed**.** Office appointments will not be used to re-teach course content. Absence from more than two (2) classes or the equivalent of six hours during the semester will result in a reduction in points allocated for

participation. **Only in the case of a documented illness or other unforeseen emergencies will make-up tests be given, the format at the discretion of the instructor.**

This class may also include online discussions that require student participation. If so, students will periodically facilitate a class discussion on the week's topic. Students are expected to post a substantive contribution to the discussion at that time. Students must support their positions or begin a related topic or otherwise add to the discussion when responding to the facilitated discussion. Students are expected to check the discussion frequently and respond appropriately and on topic. These virtual discussions are subject to the same standards set forth in this syllabus for other written assignments (e.g., Academic Honesty, plagiarism, APA style, etc.).

1. Assignments are to be completed and submitted according to the class schedule. All assignments will be expected on the dates announced at the beginning of class. Assignments turned in after class begins will be considered late. Unless approved one (1) week prior to the due date, a late penalty will be applied to assignments turned in late. **Ten (10) points will be deducted for each day the paper/assignment is late, including weekend days.**

   Unless announced by the instructor before the scheduled class, be prepared to submit all assignments to the instructor at the beginning of class. Assignments submitted after the beginning of class will be considered late.

2. All papers must be typed or word-processed in 12 point font, Times New Roman, with one inch margins. Special attention should be given to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Class discussion, oral presentations, and written materials must adhere to professional standards of expression and **conform to the style and format of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition).**

   Students are encouraged to proof read assignments and take the time to edit their written work. The UGA Writing Lab is available to provide one-on-one assistance with writing needs; the Lab is located in 66 Park Hall (the English building). Call 706-542-2119 or visit their website at http://www.english.uga.edu/writingcenter to get more information on services.

3. Each student must have a UGA MyID account and be officially registered for the course. To get this account you must visit http://www.uga.edu/myid. This official MyID will be used for all official correspondence between the student and the instructor.

4. **Social work practitioners respect others.** Therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of the class members will be respected. If a student has a concern regarding class content, he/she is encouraged to schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss the matter.

5. If there is a conflict between a class and your religious holiday, please let me know in advance so that appropriate actions can be taken.

ADA STATEMENT

In accordance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (1990), the University of Georgia, School of Social Work seeks to provide equal access to individuals with disabilities. Students who have a disability and need specific accommodations and support to facilitate full inclusion of all aspects of the course should make an appointment with the instructor during the first week of the term. To register for services, students may contact Disability Services located in Clark Howell Hall (706-542-8719, TTY 706-542-8778, www.dissvcs.uga.edu).

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm

ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The NASW *Code of Ethics* is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. You are expected to be familiar with its contents. The Code can be found online at: http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp

[i] (NASW). 2017. NASW Code of Ethics- Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp