

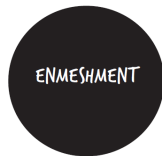
ZONE OF

# FABULOUSNESS

RESISTING BURNOUT & SHOULDERING EACH OTHER UP



The **Zone of Fabulousness** is an alternative way to look at worker burnout. Instead of focussing on the mental health of the worker, it focusses on centering the person we are trying to serve.



Where workers become too close to clients, creating transgressive relationships where workers visualise themselves as heroes or lone wolves.



Where workers move too far away from clients. Disconnection creates isolation, not just in work but in personal life. The disconnected worker exhibits avoidance and numbing, and don't work through the challenges of their work.

The **Zone of Fabulousness** is the balance between these two extremes. It is not something that can be achieved alone. It comes from solidarity with co-workers and positive working relationship, based on collective ethics.

The following workbook is a mechanism for examining our working practice with the aim of discovering where the Zone of Fabulousness is for us.



Vikki Reynolds Website

ZONE OF

# FABULOUSNESS

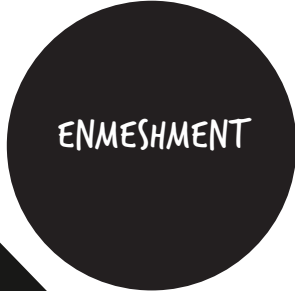
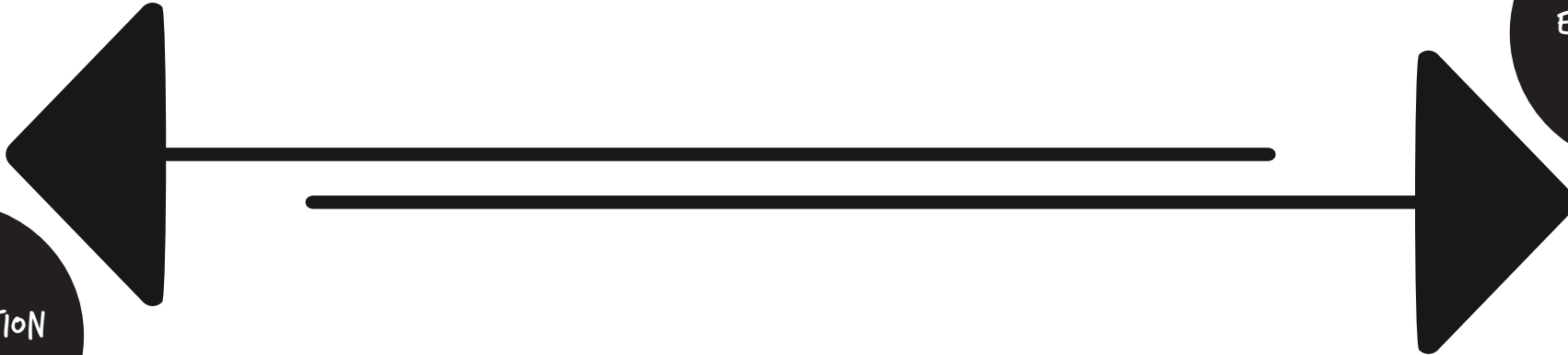
RESISTING BURNOUT & SHOULDERING EACH OTHER UP



WHAT IS AT THE HEART OF YOUR WORK?

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

# WHERE ARE YOU TODAY?



- NEGATIVITY
- CYNICISM
- AVOIDANCE AND NUMBING
- STAFF CENTERED

- HOPELESS "SHOVELLING H2O"
- THE HERO
- BOUNDARY TRANSGRESS
- WORKER CENTERED

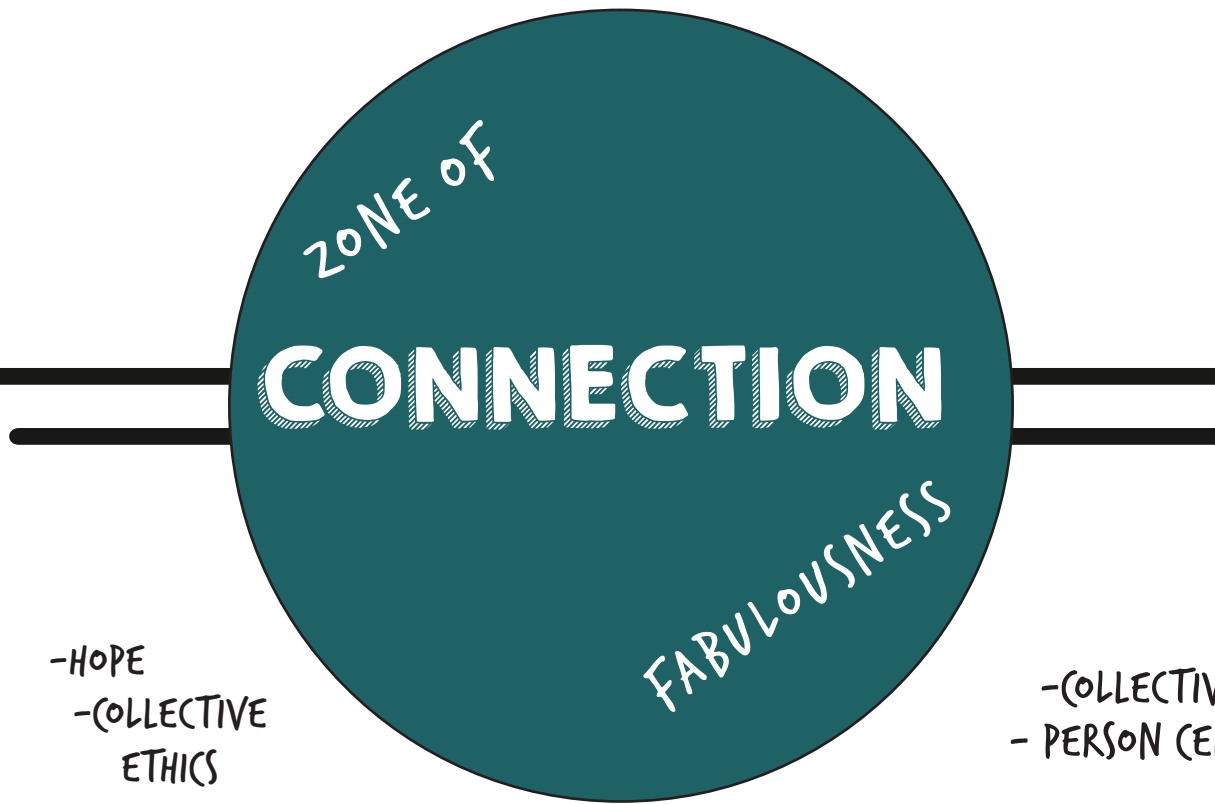
WORKERS USUALLY BURN OUT ONE OF TWO WAYS...

WHAT WAYS DO YOU GET CAUGHT UP THAT TAKE YOU TOO FAR AWAY FROM THE PERSON?

WHAT WAYS DO YOU GET CAUGHT UP THAT TAKE YOU TOO CLOSE TO THE PERSON?

# THE ZONE OF FABULOUSNESS

DISCONNECTION



-HOPE  
-COLLECTIVE ETHICS

-COLLECTIVE CARE  
-PERSON CENTERED

ENMESHMENT



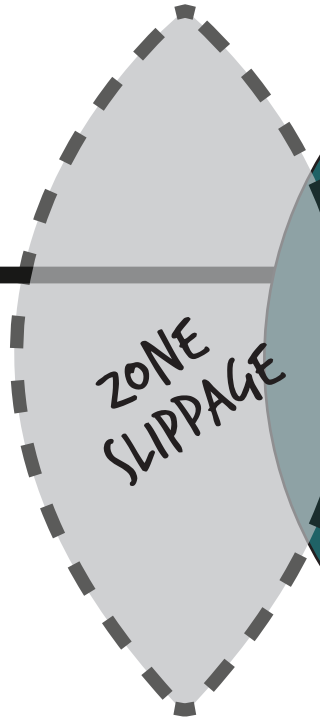
WHEN ARE YOU FABULOUS?

WHEN IS YOUR TEAM FABULOUS?

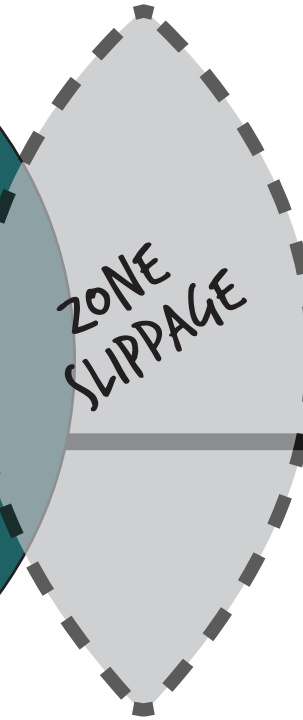
HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN THE ZONE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK, FEEL, SAY & DO THAT LETS YOU KNOW YOU'RE FABULOUS?

SLIPPING OUT OF THE ZONE



CONNECTION



HOW DO YOU SLIP OUT OF THE FABULOUS?

THINK?

ACT?

DO?

FEEL?

DISCONNECTION

THINK?

ACT?

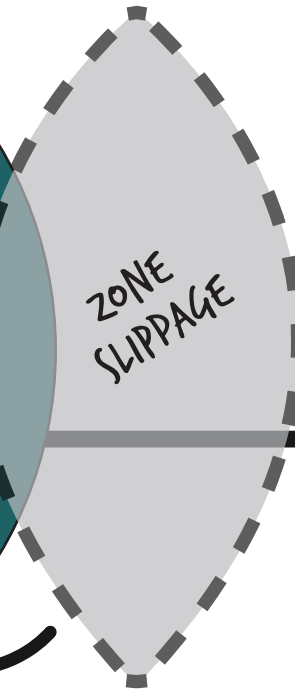
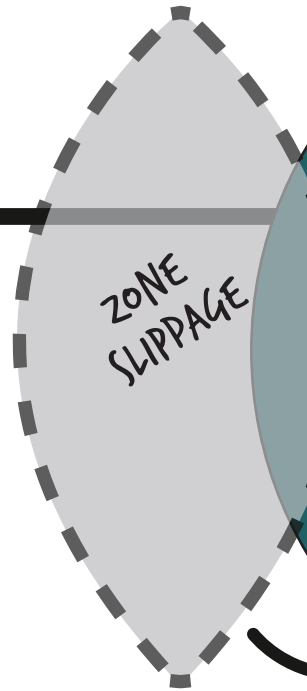
DO?

FEEL?

ENMESHMENT

GETTING BACK IN THE ZONE

COLLECTIVE CARE



YOU CAN'T KEEP YOURSELF FABULOUS!  
BEING FABULOUS REQUIRES CRITIQUE, FEEDBACK, ACCOUNTABILITY

How do you let folks know you're open to critique?

How do you want to give critique?

How do you want to receive critique?

How do you do collective care with & for your team?

How do you keep each other fabulous?

How do we keep people at the centre?

CRITIQUE NEEDS TO BE DIRECT, SOON, NOT GOSSIP, PRIVATE IF IT CAN BE.

GETTING BACK IN  
THE ZONE  
SOLIDARITY TEAMS



SOLIDARITY TEAMS

WHAT SHOULDERS YOU UP IN THE WORK? (PPL, MUSIC, PLACES)

HOW CAN THESE FOLKS BE USEFUL TO YOU?

WHO CAN YOU HOWL AT THE MOON WITH THAT WON'T TELL YOU TO LEAVE THE WORK?

HOW DO YOU HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE TO YOUR SOLIDARITY TEAM?

WHAT MAKES THESE FOLKS SO FABULOUS & USEFUL?

WHO CAN YOU ASK TO BE A PART OF YOUR SOLIDARITY TEAM?

GETTING BACK IN  
THE ZONE  
DISCERNING DEATH




DEATH AS A  
DIGNIFIED, MEANINGFUL  
LIFE TASK

TRAGIC DEATH

WHAT HAS YOUR  
CULTURE, FAMILY OF  
CHOICE, SPIRITUALITY, LIFE  
EXPERIENCE TAUGHT YOU  
ABOUT DEATH AS MEANINGFUL  
AND DIGNIFIED?

HOW IS TRAGIC  
DEATH DIFFERENT FROM  
DEATH AS A MEANINGFUL  
AND DIGNIFIED  
LIFE TASK?

# HOLDING ON WITH LETTING GO

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONVERSATION IS TO HONOUR OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WE HAVE WORKED ALONGSIDE WHO HAVE DISAPPEARED, ARE MISSING OR HAVE DIED. OUR COLLECTIVE INTENTION IS TO HOLD ON TO THAT WHICH HAS BEEN MOST MEANINGFUL IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE, NOT TO MOVE ON, GET OVER IT, OR IN SOME WAY SETTLE OURSELVES OR ACCOMMODATE OURSELVES TO SITUATIONS WHICH LACK SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ARE INTOLERABLE. REMEMBER A PERSON YOU HAVE WORKED ALONGSIDE WHOM YOU HAVE LOST AND WITH WHOM YOU HAD A MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP. WHO IS THIS PERSON? WHAT DO YOU RESPECT, CELEBRATE, HOLD DEAR ABOUT THEM? WHAT IS AT THE  OF YOUR CARE FOR THIS PERSON?

HOW WERE YOU  
USEFUL  
TO THEM?

IF  
THIS PERSON  
WERE HERE NOW  
WHAT WOULD THEY SAY  
ABOUT HOW YOU WERE  
MOST USEFUL TO  
THEM?

WHAT DID THIS  
PERSON TEACH  
YOU?

HOW  
HAS THIS  
PERSON BEEN  
HELPFUL FOR YOU  
IN TERMS OF BEING  
HELPFUL FOR  
OTHERS?

HOW  
HAS THIS  
PERSON BEEN  
HELPFUL FOR YOU  
IN TERMS OF BEING  
HELPFUL TO  
YOURSELF?

HOW  
WILL YOU  
KEEP THIS PERSON AND  
THEIR TEACHINGS ALIVE  
IN YOUR WORK? (RESISTING  
THEIR DISAPPEARANCE OR  
JUST BEING A  
NUMBER)



# RESPONDING TO THE DARKNESS IN OUR WORK

PEACEFUL  
QUIET  
REFLECTIVE



HOWLING  
AT THE  
MOON

WHAT  
GATHERINGS,  
RITUALS,  
CONNECTIONS  
DO YOU  
DO TO SHOULDER  
ONE ANOTHER  
UP?

WHO DO  
YOU  
DO THIS  
WITH?

# DEBRIEFING WITH CONNECTION & CO-REGULATION

## AFTER A CRITICAL INCIDENT...

COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER'S WELLNESS. COMMIT TO MAKING TIME IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INCIDENT TO CHECK IN WITH EACH OTHER.

CONNECTION IS KEY. OUR AIM IS TO CONNECT IN SOLIDARITY & NOT TO GO OVER GRIM DETAILS. OFFER CHOICES IF YOUR PARTNER IS STRUGGLING WITH CONTAINMENT. WHEN FOLKS ARE OVERWHELMED IT'S NOT EASY FOR THEM TO SAY WHAT THEY NEED, BUT HAVING CHOICES OFFERED IS USEFUL.

WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT? SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE, OUR RESPONSES ARE BEING DEVELOPED BY OUR PEERS, IN THE MOMENT. WE WANT TO SHARE THE LEARNING OF WHAT WE DID RIGHT.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO DIFFERENTLY? WE WANT TO BE CAUTIOUS NOT TO SHARE THE GRIM DETAILS, BUT ALSO WANT TO SHARE THINGS THAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW. EACH TIME WE RESPOND WE LEARN SOMETHING NEW, IT'S OK TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE MAY DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME.

WHAT ARE SOME IMMEDIATE, USEFUL THINGS YOU CAN OFFER TO SOMEONE WHO IS OVERWHELMED AND STRUGGLING WITH CONTAINMENT?

HOW CAN YOU SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM A RESPONSE TO STRENGTHEN & SUPPORT YOUR TEAM?

"THE  
DEHUMANIZATION  
RESULTING FROM AN  
UNJUST ORDER IS NOT A  
CAUSE FOR DESPAIR, BUT  
FOR HOPE, LEADING TO THE  
INCESSANT PURSUIT OF  
HUMANITY DENIED BY  
THE INJUSTICE."

-PAULO FREIRE

WHY ARE  
YOU  
STILL HERE?

WHAT KEEPS  
YOUR HOPE  
ALIVE?

WHAT IS YOUR  
PLAN TO BE OF USE  
ACROSS YOUR LIFESPAN  
IN ALL OF YOUR PAID  
& UNPAID WORK?

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and it would be grand if you reference the work.

Reynolds, V. (2019). The Zone of Fabulousness: Resisting vicarious trauma with connection, collective care and justice-doing in ways that centre the people we work alongside. Context. August 2019, Association for Family and Systemic Therapy, UK, 36-39.

Reynolds, V. (2011). Resisting burnout with justice-doing. The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work. (4) 27-45.

Articles chapters and talks available free on Vikki's website:

[www.vikkireynolds.ca](http://www.vikkireynolds.ca)

videos and articles responding to the opioid catastrophe:

<https://vikkireynolds.ca/opioid-epidemic-responses/>

Graphic Design by Chloé Gammon

[www.chloegammon.com](http://www.chloegammon.com)

Gratitude and heartfelt solidarity and respect to the fiercely dedicated and skilled community workers/activists who have contributed so much to this project, and who are shouldering up so many others in responding to this catastrophe of deaths by bad drug policy:  
Videos from Jen Sung & David Ng (of Love Intersections)

Tara Danger Taylor

Lana Fox

Mena Beatch

Prairie Chiu

Stacy Leblanc

Cori Kelly

Allan Lindley

Sacha Médiné