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Master's Project: Creating Conditions for Collective

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MASTER'S PROJECT: CREATING CONDITIONS FOR COLLECTIVE

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by

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ABSTRACT

In this capstone project, I explored how I could serve 350Vermont, the grassroots climate justice organization I work with, in transitioning from a more traditional staff structure to a shared leadership, staff collective model.

The person-centered approach described by Carl Rogers (Rogers, 1977) served as a central framework for the project: practicing unconditional positive regard, empathy, authenticity, and attention to power dynamics and oppression. Methods included various practices to deepen relationships, increase collective awareness of power dynamics, build capacity to communicate and collaborate, center well-being, co-create a shared vision, and develop a shared narrative to empower and support the collective.

From these methods came many capacities being developed in our emergent collective, in interpersonal relationships, and in my leadership practice, such as practices of discussing relationships and power dynamics, the ability to analyze and discuss how white supremacy shows up in our work, a commitment to adopting justice frameworks, incorporating more diverse ways of knowing, and responding to emergence. Evaluation points to the project being a strong beginning of 350VT's move to a staff collective, with value to be found in continuing the practices initiated in the project, as well as in cultivating additional capacities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Part of the root system of many problems we face today that has concerned me for a long time is the pervasive concept of separation: separation between people and nature, between people, between parts of a person. One way that the concept of separation can show up is in individualism, especially in western and industrialized societies. In my own white, upper-middle class, U.S. upbringing, I have been struck by the potency of many internal and external effects of individualism: ecological and social impacts of capitalism-based consumption; the ways that individualism connects to white supremacy thinking (Jones & Okun, 2001) and perpetuates inequality (Collins & O'Hara, 2019); the toll that individualism takes on many people's mental health and overall well-being (Whitley, 2017). This project has grown out of my curiosity about how to move beyond the strong individualistic element in the dominant culture of the U.S., toward ways of being and relating that are rooted in an orientation to the whole or collective.

While I was exploring individualistic and collective ways of being, Maeve McBride—our long-time director of 350Vermont, the grassroots climate justice organization I work with—announced in May that she would be stepping down in September. The board and staff decided to shift to a new, shared leadership model—a staff collective. My research question became, "How can someone in my position serve the 350Vermont staff's move toward collective?"

In July, I joined the organizational development committee tasked with hiring a consultant and moving the transition forward. As one of only two staff on that committee (of five staff total staying through the transition), one of only two full-time staff, and one of the longer-term staff members, I hold a unique position. What I do in this transition, and how I relate to each coworker and the group, significantly affects how things develop. How our team relates as a

collective will affect the 350VT network and the climate justice movement in Vermont and beyond, and we will become an example of people trying an alternative to the dominant system.

Many contexts and areas of ongoing personal practice have informed this project, including facilitation, nonviolent communication, intentional community, earth-based spiritual community, singing community, ecological design, and the climate justice movement. The project most directly builds on insights from humanistic psychology, cooperative organizations, and learnings from the MLS program.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

The project began with reflection on my own experience and reading from various cultural contexts and fields, especially on individualism, holism, collectivism, cooperatives, alternative communities, and on autoethnography, which I anticipated being a primary method.[1] While I searched for a context for practice, one elegantly presented itself with 350VT's decision to move to a staff collective. We knew a consultant would facilitate designing new structures and systems, so I decided to focus on other aspects of creating conditions for a staff collective.

Carl Rogers' person-centered approach became a framework for engaging in this project.[2] The person-centered approach is fitting because Rogers and others (Caspary, 1991; Kirschenbaum, n.d.) have found that it can contribute to the thriving of individuals, relationships, and groups. I have tried to apply the person-centered approach to how I relate to my coworkers, our whole team, and myself, and I have chosen other practices to build on and complement it—creating conditions for collective by making more space for relationships, encouraging awareness of power dynamics, and centering key values, especially well-being and justice. Reflecting on all these practices has been a key part of the process[3]—especially through self-observation, conversation with various partners, and journaling.

The arena in which I have tried the most practices in this project is with our whole staff. I have brought awareness practices into our work to help each person to show up fully and

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[1] Please see the annotated bibliography for these and additional readings throughout the project.
[2] The person-centered approach consists of several relationship practices: unconditional positive regard, perhaps best shortened to "love"; empathy; authenticity; and attention to power dynamics and oppression (Rogers, 1977). Application of this approach began in psychotherapy, then expanded to education, organizations, relationships, conflict resolution, and beyond. The person-centered approach has been used to serve personal growth more than broader social or political transformation (Caspary, 1991), yet it holds profound political implications, and in this project it serves personal, social, and political transformation.
[3] See Appendix B for some of the prompts I used for reflection.

strengthen the group: mindfulness and visualizing practices, ceremony, and working with earth

energies and other allies.[4] Stress and burnout have often characterized our work in the past. To

center well-being, in meetings I have been inviting each person to share about their well-being,

and we have been making specific commitments to each other's well-being, like supporting

scheduling time off, or trading tasks to lighten someone's load. To cultivate deep, authentic

connection, I have been inviting more extensive personal sharing during staff meetings.[5] I have

initiated discussing the power dynamics between us and practicing collective awareness of these

dynamics (Rogers, 1977). During a hiring process (which did not result in a hire), I shared Tema

Okun's framework on white supremacy culture (Jones & Okun, 2001) with my coworkers and

invited everyone to consider those insights during our discussion; they did, and some of the

points became central to our conversation. I have made space to elicit everyone's visions and

start co-creating/discerning a collective vision.[6]

A need has emerged for an empowering, shared, intragroup narrative about our process

and direction. I have advocated for bringing in a facilitator to support us in figuring out the

hardest parts of our new structure, and for incorporating a wider range of collaborations into our

work as a collective—accepting our limitations, embracing the diversity of gifts in the

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[4] These practices have been inspired by experiences in my spiritual community. I see the
practices as aligned with the person-centered approach in sharing the goals of collective,
relational, and individual well-being. However, while humanistic psychology fits easily into the
orientation of my Druid community and its practices, many of the practices I name above are
rooted in earth-based, spiritual ways of knowing, relating, and being in the world, which are not
assumed in humanistic psychology generally or in the person-centered approach specifically.
[5] This is a practice used in my spiritual community and in two music groups I have been part of.
[6] This practice emerged after hearing from Don Jamison, my friend and co-director of the
Vermont Employee Ownership Center, about the importance of a clear, shared vision in
cooperative work.

movement, and recognizing our interdependence within it. Along with multiple coworkers, I have advocated for us to develop a justice framework to use throughout our work.[7]

A key insight from a conversation with Don Jamison, co-director of the Vermont Employee Ownership Center, about VEOC's experience with developing cooperatives, is that especially in smaller organizations, relationships are the primary basis of cooperative organizational models. After hearing this, I prioritized interpersonal practices even more. In relationships within our staff, along with generally practicing the person-centered approach, I have also started checking in with coworkers about our relationships,[8] and discussing the power dynamics between us individually.

Self-organization has been an important practice in this transition. I have intentionally connected regularly with each collective member; important insights and direction emerge from those interactions. We get better acquainted with each other's sovereign logic and our individual and collective needs, hopes, and gifts. We discuss organizational possibilities and growing edges. Our connections deepen; we learn more about how to relate to, collaborate with, and support each other.

Within myself, practicing the person-centered approach has meant redirecting myself from less open ways of responding to things, acknowledging when I fall short, and recognizing my own learning journey. I have been listening to and accepting everyone's visions and perspectives, even when they contradict each other or do not resonate with me, allowing them to change my ideas, and holding curiosity about which differences in perspective collective calls us

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[7] See Appendix C: Notes on a Justice Framework for 350Vermont. While Rogers advocates for attention to dynamics around power and oppression, I see developing a comprehensive framework to realize justice values as going beyond the person-centered approach.
[8] This builds on practices I have encountered rooted in mindfulness and nonviolent communication.

to resolve and which parts can simply coexist in contradiction.[9] I have been observing my own

power in relation to my coworkers',[10] and when I have more, sharing it when possible, for

instance by consulting others and making space for everyone to speak. I have been taking my

own well-being seriously when considering what to take on.

This project primarily addresses the system of the 350Vermont staff, with strong

connections to the systems of the 350VT network and the broader climate justice movement, in

Vermont and potentially beyond. Our move toward collective addresses multiple leverage points:

shifting the location of decision-making; changing information flows; altering rules and goals of

the system; increasing resilience; and supporting emergence.

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[9] My experience with collective so far is affirming what Don Jamison shared from his experience: that while many differences in perspective can coexist, major differences in opinion about organizational priorities must be resolved, or the resulting disagreements and tensions can obstruct effective collaboration.

[10] Some of the factors that contribute to different levels of power and influence among my coworkers—which vary depending on circumstances—are how long each of us has worked at 350VT, whether we work full-time or part-time, our relevant knowledge and experience from outside 350VT, the particular areas of 350VT's work in which we are each involved, and more subtle dynamics like assertiveness, conviction, perceived reliability, and the state of our relationships with each other.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

Building our staff collective is a process that will last many months. As I write this in November, we have begun designing new structures and systems. Much about how we will be and work together as a collective is still unknown.

What has been emerging from my work on this project is that we are building new capacities that will serve us as a collective. We have all begun discussing our relationships in regular check-ins; we have discussed the power dynamics between us in many of those conversations as well as in several collective meetings. We are discussing how white supremacy shows up in our work in many of these conversations, and we have begun developing shared justice frameworks to use throughout our work to disrupt systems of oppression and better benefit the communities most impacted by climate change.[11] Through occasional awareness practices, we have been making more space for diverse ways of knowing to inform our work. We have committed, by allocating money in our new budget, to collaborate with people outside the collective, embracing the view that our collective is whole *and* we need outside connections.

While tending our relationships has been important in this process, there is further to go; not all of the relationships in the collective are yet deep nor rooted in the trust needed, and we can only benefit from knowing each other more deeply, being more attuned to our own internal compasses, and growing more familiar with each other's sovereign logic—processes for which we will need to create space outside of our regular work time. While we have made progress in creating conditions for deeper relationships, needs for more shared practices for relating to each other are emerging. It is also becoming clear that we have brought into our collective a major preexisting difference in perspectives about what our organizational priorities should be, giving

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[11] See Appendix C for more on a justice framework for 350VT.

rise to a level of tension that cannot be sustained indefinitely; we need to make space to establish shared priorities. Though we now have many meetings, check-ins, and other opportunities to hear each other's perspectives much more than we did in our previous structure, it is also becoming clear that it would be helpful to develop a culture of deeper listening.

What I have learned in this transition has been catalyzing changes in my leadership. My instinct is often primarily to observe; in this project I have tried many practices that have involved more direct engagement, but they have been only beginnings, and I am pushing myself to go further. Seeing that when there are tensions and disagreements among group members, people often do not take initiative to resolve them, I am putting more into creating spaces and tools for individuals and the group to work things out. As I observe more specifically how power dynamics can play out, I am trying to contribute mitigating practices, like inviting better listening and reminding the group of decisions that have already been made. As it becomes clearer to me than ever that what we each bring to the collective defines the experience and direction of the group, I am more highly prioritizing coming to the group renewed, clear, and in touch with my own values and inspiration in the work. As immediate needs of the group emerge—on a different timeline than the development of our new collective systems (a more linear timeline that is more comfortable to me)—I am finding it necessary to respond more to emergence.

CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

This project's framework for evaluation has evolved along with its scope. The project has become about laying the groundwork for working in collective at 350VT; now the questions are, how well will this groundwork support what we build upon it? How have relationships been in the process of laying it? How have I been showing up in the process?

Key forms of feedback for evaluating my work in this project are reflection, self-observation, and conversation with various partners. I have been journaling and practicing self-observation throughout the project and have been incorporating evaluation into my writing for the past two months. Classmate Lauren Akin early on and anchor/accountability coach Connor Stedman throughout have helped with direction and deepening. Conversations with coworkers, and with friends who listen well, engage deeply, have experience relevant to the project, and have identities overlapping with and different from mine, have yielded feedback and begun building accountability into our relationships.

The results of this project align well with the values and principles laid out earlier: orienting to relationship and the whole; love; deep, authentic connection; honoring interdependence; awareness of power dynamics; and well-being. The groundwork that this project has focused on laying is broad, with diverse components of group, interpersonal, and individual capacities. What we have been building through these practices will complement a shared leadership structure and support collaboration. The relationships in our group have deepened. I have tried new things, applied older learnings in new ways, built capacities internally and externally, and received valuable suggestions for how to continue this work.

From internal and external feedback, I have identified ways that I want to keep growing. I want to deepen my practice of the person-centered approach. I want to continue tending the

collective. At the same time that I advocate for operationalizing values like justice and well-being, I want to get better at realizing those values in the moment, even before we have clear systems to support them—messy as it may feel. I want to continue inviting vulnerable conversations and cultivating more space for all of us for joy, playfulness, and creativity.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS/NEXT STEPS/KEY LEARNINGS

This project has been a beginning—serving a transition that is underway, building something new, slow, and evolving. Many practices begun in this project will gain value as we carry them further, and I recommend that we do so. See Appendices D and E for a framework for moving to collective, compiling many learnings described in this paper and laying out next steps to further realize them.

A question I have sat with for many months is what the 350VT staff's move to collective might mean more broadly—how might the concept of collective expand to encompass our larger network? In some parts of our network, a collective leadership model would not likely work well right now (like in volunteer groups with high turnover). However, versions of the collective-building practices that we are using on our staff could support our board and volunteer groups to collaborate more effectively, better embody the change we are all working for, and align with our staff. A next step is designing a process to share these practices throughout our network.

In order to be able to develop a meaningful justice framework, we will need to work through some big questions. What is 350VT really trying to do? Whom is our work for? What communities need to be better represented in our base and leadership? I see our current staff and board as being able to grapple with these questions, with engaging frontline allies being part of the process. What emerges will likely call for diversifying our leadership and refocusing our work to better benefit frontline communities and also serve the healing of those doing the work. Additionally, we need to clarify the relationship between our volunteer groups and the organization; if we want alignment throughout our work, we will need to provide not only strategy but also means for continuous learning and self-reflection across 350VT about identity, privilege, power, oppression, and solidarity.

It has been very meaningful for me to serve this move to collective. I am grateful for all that has been possible so far, and I truly look forward to continuing to build on this work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

First Collective Expression of Vision for the 350VT Staff Collective, August 2019

Imagine it's a year from now. The climate justice movement is going strong, and in Vermont a meaningful support for the movement is a thriving staff collective at 350VT. Our collective is well supported by the board, and our work all around is well supported by funders. Our capacity is growing! When you look at the staff collective, what do you see? What does it feel like to be part of this collective? What's possible that hasn't seemed possible in the past?

I see an increasingly diverse group of people bringing even more creativity than we've done in this work before, and finding new ways to realize climate justice in Vermont and beyond. I see us supporting each other stepping up in big new ways. I see deepened relationships with each other and throughout the network. I see the board developing and strengthening in new ways too, taking new levels of leadership in the climate justice movement in Vermont and being in strong relationship with the staff collective.

Being part of this collective feels exciting—we try new things. It's nourishing—we have good relationships that we prioritize tending, we share really fun times together and also laugh together through the ridiculous parts of our work, and we're present and engaged with each other to work through the challenges of all kinds that come up.

It seems possible to be even more responsive to changing conditions than we've been before.

I see new styles and forms of leadership emerge in each of us. I feel us balancing a clear sense of urgency with patience and love and care. As adrienne maree brown has said, I see us

moving at the speed of trust. I see us centering joy while presencing grief. I see us leaning into the collective, which feels both like team and a family.

I see us working together as if we are doing a jigsaw puzzle together, or sewing a quilt. We might each be working on a small section, but we can see how it all fits together—smoothly and coherently—we watch our work come together to form a whole. I see clear communication channels open up where the board and the staff are aware of each other's tasks and responsibilities. I see a lot of growth and courageousness unfold where we support each other in trying new things and encourage professional development. I see a team that is enthusiastic to do this work.

I see bigger, bolder, actions as the movement continues to remove our consent from systems of oppression. I see deeper relationships to our regional allies supporting us in doing that work. I see the fossil fuel industry scrambling to stay afloat (this may take more than a year—I'm dreaming big.)

What excites you about shifting to a staff collective model - for 350VT, for the staff, and for yourself?

The possibility of deeper collaboration. The hope that we'll be able to be even more creative and do even better work together. The prospect of learning so much more about sharing leadership, responsibility, and accountability with other people. Working toward embodying more of the cultural change we need!

This feels like a prime opportunity to be the change I/we want to see in the world!

Deeper connections, more collaboration, room to grow into new roles.

What about the transition brings up anxiety or fear for you?

The possibility of things falling apart. The possibility that the challenges of figuring things out will get in the way of effectively serving the climate justice movement in Vermont.

I'm anxious that the transition will require more time and emotional labor than I feel like I have to give.

In order: 1. Loss of institutional knowledge; I'm anxious about not having someone else who has that depth of knowledge to call on when needed. 2. If new hires aren't a good fit, where do we go from there? 3. Spreading myself/ourselves too thin and not having the time or experience needed to do everything that needs to be done.

What would you like to see in the PROCESS of our transition?

Joy! Deepening relationships. Having fun together. A spirit of curiosity and openness. Discerning and strengthening a common vision. Developing an awesome culture for our collective. Shining light on the diversity in our perspectives, needs, styles, desires, etc., in the name of collaborating as effectively as we can.

Each member of the staff collective lifting each other up, as well as stepping into our individual and collective power.

Building a community and getting to get out of our comfort zones on one hand, and on the other being able to dig deeper into the roles we're best suited for.

Are there any other thoughts you'd like to share right now?

Change isn't easy...but it's inevitable...let's embrace it with curiosity, patience, and love!

Appendix B

Journaling Questions

These were prompts that guided my reflection for a number of weeks during the fall:

- Power dynamics within our staff

- How white supremacy is showing up in our work

- My well-being at work

- A connection between the process at work and a process in nature

- How I'm doing with:

    - Acceptance—of coworkers and myself

    - Empathy—for coworkers and myself

    - Being authentic

        - In my work and relationships

        - In my alignment with the collective

        - In my alignment with my own purpose

- Answer this question about each area above and about serving the move toward our staff

    collective generally: What is something I can do to go further?

    - Lay out how I'll do that in the next week

    - Look back over my answers from previous weeks

        - What did I do about them?

        - How did it work?

        - Are any additional steps called for?

- How have conversations with coworkers been? How are they playing into the process?

    - What does everyone's sharing show about the process?

Appendix C

Notes on a Justice Framework for 350Vermont

Dismantling systems of oppression is a goal and personal commitment that the 350VT staff has held for years. It is easy to see some ways in which it has shown up in our work in the past, like collaborating with POC partners to develop the workshop, What Is the Connection Between Racial Justice and Climate Justice?, and beginning to deliver the workshop around the state. However, in much of our work, it is not as clear that justice has been as genuinely a central goal or that we have gone about the work with practices that do not replicate systems of oppression, and at times I have been struck by how coworkers have explicitly separated their personal commitments to dismantling oppression from the time they spend in their jobs. It is clear that among our staff and throughout our network, there is a lack of shared practices to ensure that what we do contributes to dismantling, not replicating, systems of oppression.

In the process of our transition to a collective, our staff has agreed that we need a shared framework to support realizing our commitment to justice. In fact, we are finding that we need a number of different, new shared frameworks for working together. While in our previous structure, ultimately decisions were made and direction was guided by one person (with input from others, sometimes many), in a collective we are guiding ourselves more fully and we are all guiding each other. Shared frameworks, standards, tools, etc., can offer guidance in ways that the whole group agrees to and does not have to constantly revisit (though any shared frameworks will certainly need to be able to be changed and adapted over time). A framework focused on justice will be able to guide not only our work on the staff, but also the work of volunteer groups throughout our network. Coming up with a shared framework developed in collaboration with partners from frontline communities, and including accountability processes with frontline

partners, will ensure that the framework is not limited to the largely quite privileged perspectives of the current staff and volunteer base of 350VT.

We are at the very beginning of establishing what a justice framework for 350VT will look like. The process of developing it will be collaborative, with multiple 350VT staff members, partners from frontline communities, and possibly 350VT volunteers. Here are some of the points and questions we have in mind as we start the process:

- The framework should support us in making sure that dismantling systems of oppression is one of the central goals in all our practices, projects, and campaigns within the 350VT staff and throughout the 350VT network.

- The framework should center relationships, especially relationships with people from frontline communities.

- We would like to build on the work of other organizations that are going far in embodying practices to dismantle systems of oppression.

- Whom is our work for (Westfield, 2017)? Whom are our collective and network accountable to? Our framework should offer tools for making sure that input is coming from people from the frontline communities most affected by climate change: on what work, and how the work happens, would have the most benefit to their communities; and that that input substantially guides the work. If some of the work is for the healing of people from communities with the most privilege, we should also be clear about that.

- Until now, we have substantially involved our volunteer base, which is currently made up primarily of white, middle-class, older people, in determining what 350VT works on. Our framework should support us in continuing to involve the people supporting and carrying

out the work in determining what they do, while prioritizing frontline communities' leadership, input, and direction.

- The framework should support us in moving toward having more of the people in leadership positions throughout our organization be people from frontline communities.
- The framework should call for ongoing education on privilege, power, and systems of oppression, for people throughout the 350VT network.
- The framework should offer ways of determining whether we are actually doing the things we set out to do, including accountability processes with frontline partners.

Appendix D

Framework for a Move to Collective

Do you suppose that the move to collective will be a sweeping change? That's what I used to think. But for us it hasn't been one big move catalyzed by blazing epiphany; it has been countless small steps, many of them through darkness.

If your journey is like ours has been, sometimes you may think you've traveled a certain distance together, then you discover that someone is still holding on to parts you thought you'd already left behind. The process may hold moments when what you're building feels alien, unrecognizable. In the moments when you can see clearly where you're going, the distance left to travel may feel overwhelming. Sometimes you may discover that you've traveled further together than you'd imagined.

I started this journey looking for a secret—a magical key to open the realm of collective. I still haven't found it. But we've found many seeds. Most of the ones we've planted have started growing into something beautiful. Some valuable seeds have sprouted unbidden. Some we haven't had the chance to plant yet. Here I will share many of these seeds. May they help to grow your collective too.

Seeds for creating conditions for collective

- Tend relationships

- Build deep trust

- Develop or articulate shared values, vison, goals, and priorities as clearly as possible

- Cultivate a shared awareness of power dynamics

- Get to know each other's sovereign logic

- Balance developing the right structure with tending to the people and relationships

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- Expect to move slowly; expect to be deep in the process for a long time

- Continue to encourage people to reorient over time; people's attachment to, sense of control over, or even sense of isolation in an arena that was previously their own can take a long time to reconfigure

- Support each person in cultivating self-awareness

- Honor multiple ways of knowing

- Employ various means of creating connection, both within the collective, and between the collective and the world beyond

- Welcome disagreement and discomfort, and commit to leaning into it in ways that take care of relationships

- In a collective, unresolved conflicts can affect everyone; try to resolve personality conflicts, identify changes to structures or systems that would support the group in relating or collaborating better, and welcome tension that brings important issues to light

- Develop a framework to ensure that all our work embodies our core values, especially justice and dismantling systems of oppression

- Commit to the success of the *whole* work, not only your own part

    Seeds that seem important but that have not yet germinated or been planted

- Understand yourself and the collective as part of a lineage (Breedlove, 2016)

- Support continual learning for members and public education about cooperative endeavors (Gordon Nembhard, 2014)

- Create both shared and private "spaces"; spend plenty of time together; choose new members well (Nelson, 2018)

- Keep in mind that a communal, nonhierarchical structure isn't innately transformative; transformation requires a commitment to what happens within the structure or what the structure is used to serve (Nelson, 2018)

- Other collectives can offer inspiration, and what they've already developed may offer a basis for something in your collective; also, let your guiding documents be expressions of group values (Sylvia Rivera Law Project, n.d.; Sustainable Economies Law Center, 2016)

- Be clear about how what you learn and do can contribute to the healing of your people (Westfield, 2017)

Appendix E

Structure for Applying the Framework for a Move to Collective

The following table details how this framework can be realized at 350VT and in my own

leadership: what is already underway; how the practice or concept will inform my leadership,

and how it will inform our organization. Timelines are included when possible. In some cases,

one or more aspects of how the practice or concept might be applied was not relevant.

For reference, key parts of the new 350VT structure are the full staff collective (five

people); twelve "realms" or areas of work, each co-led by two staff members; the full board; and

three board/staff committees. The realms that I am in that are mentioned in the table are Org Dev

(organizational development), People Support (more traditionally, HR and governance), Justice

& Values, and Communications; I am also on the Organizational Health staff committee. I

mention Claire in a few places—Claire Wheeler, the facilitator/consultant who has been

supporting our transition process since October 2019.

Practice or concept	What is already underway to address it	How it will inform my leadership	How it will inform our organization
Tend relationships	Regular (weekly or biweekly) one-on-one check-ins and sharing in staff meetings. Social time outside of working time.	I'll continue intentionally using one-on-one conversations to tend relationships and encourage others to do the same.	We also need to make a more formal space for people to look at how their relationships are working, part of a larger system for exchanging feedback. When our People Support realm starts to develop a system for feedback, probably in May, I'll bring this to the process.
Build deep trust	Collaboration in diverse configurations; going over collective to-do lists at the beginning of meetings.	I'll continue doing my best to be trustworthy by doing what I say I'll do, asking for help when needed, acknowledging when I drop things and naming impacts, and showing up with love, honesty, awareness, and courage.	The Org Dev realm will soon start to develop a tool to support more detailed accountability within realms. We also need to develop feedback practices; the People Support realm will begin working on this in May.

Practice or concept	What is already underway to address it	How it will inform my leadership	How it will inform our organization
Develop or articulate shared values, vison, goals, and priorities as clearly as possible	Core values statement from 2017 (though no longer sufficient); strategic plan from 2018 (though no longer sufficient); new Organizing board/staff/volunteer committee, which has brought in volunteers who are from frontline communities or who bring a strong justice lens, to help develop updated priorities.	Our staff collective inherited contradictory organizational priorities that have been inhibiting effective collaboration. My advocacy for clarifying priorities has helped to get the current conversations underway. I'll continue that advocacy if needed and push us to engage frontline partners in developing our vision and priorities.	The Justice & Values realm and two board/staff committees are currently in ongoing conversations about how to engage frontline partners in developing organizational vision, and about how we can develop a structure to continue doing that in the future.
Cultivate a shared awareness of power dynamics	Discuss this periodically in one-on-one conversations and in staff retreats.	Continue practicing this myself and encourage others to do the same.	Our Org Dev realm should develop methods for some equalization of power when imbalances get too great, which we could incorporate into staff retreats quarterly or biannually.
Get to know each other's sovereign logic	Continue developing our "personal user manuals"; revisit them biannually. At monthly staff retreats, pose elicitive questions for group sharing and one-on-one sharing. I can lead this.	Try to make my thinking and deeper values visible. Pay attention what others reveal and try to draw on those insights in relating and collaborating.	We should revisit and share our personal user manuals biannually. For monthly staff retreats, our Org Dev realm should pose elicitive questions and invite one-on-one and group sharing.
Balance developing the right structure with tending to the people and relationships	Our work with Claire helps us keep moving forward with structure.	In my role in the Org Dev realm, continue monitoring progress of systems development, group dynamics, and relational and individual well-being; bring attention and support where it's needed.	Continue working with Claire; continue empowering the Org Dev realm to monitor and tend broadly.
Expect to move slowly; expect to be deep in the process for a long time	We've set the expectation that all the parts of our new structure will be up and running by July.	Practice patience, holding uncertainty, pacing myself/ourselves, and encouraging others to do the same.	The Org Dev realm should schedule periodic check-ins about where we are in the process: May, July, then quarterly for awhile.
Continue to encourage people to reorient over time; people's attachment to, sense of control over, or even sense of isolation in an arena that was previously their own can take a long time to reconfigure	Ongoing calls with Claire; sometimes the Org Dev realm can name when these dynamics are taking place.	Name when I observe misalignment with where we're heading, and practice self-observation.	"

Practice or concept	What is already underway to address it	How it will inform my leadership	How it will inform our organization
Support each person in cultivating self-awareness	Recent "personal user manual" development; planned personal leadership plan development (summer); occasional awareness practices.	Share more awareness practices in monthly staff retreats.	We could officially build more awareness practices into quarterly or monthly staff retreats.
Honor multiple ways of knowing	Bringing awareness practices to staff retreats and some meetings; our culture of honoring emotions.	Continue bringing awareness practices and invite others to do the same.	We could build this into quarterly or monthly staff retreats.
Employ various means of creating connection, both within the collective, and between the collective and the world beyond	Collaboration, doing actions together, social time, awareness practices, singing.	Keep making sure we do the things we already do; at monthly retreats, continue and deepen our practice of invoking allies and those we're accountable to.	"
Welcome disagreement and discomfort, and commit to leaning into it in ways that take care of relationships	Organizational culture of caring, compassion, and seeking everyone's input.	Practice tolerating discomfort; practice embracing multiple perspectives; check in with someone if tough stuff is arising; encourage others to do the same.	The People Support realm will facilitate the group in affirming these as shared values and in laying out agreements around what they look like in practice; this could happen in June.
In a collective, unresolved conflicts can affect everyone; try to resolve personality conflicts, identify changes to structures or systems that would support the group in relating or collaborating better, and welcome tension that brings important issues to light	The Org Dev realm has been monitoring group and relational dynamics, proposing relevant structure and process changes, and providing support as needed.	Encourage others to lean into conflict rather than avoid it; sometimes advocate for mediation; practice tolerating discomfort.	The People Support realm should help identify when a mediator/facilitator would help resolve a conflict. The Org Dev realm should continue monitoring generally and propose structure/system changes. The collective should affirm welcoming generative tension as a value and practice.
Develop a framework to ensure that all our work embodies our core values, especially justice and dismantling systems of oppression	Shared values; we've established a Justice & Values realm and a commitment to develop this framework.	I'm bringing my own commitments to relationship, love, and collective liberation. Along with trying to embody those commitments in this process, I'm aware that I'll need to show up in the process with courage, vulnerability, and humility.	After developing a framework (a project that is just starting; timeline unknown), the Justice & Values realm will facilitate a process of integrating the framework into the work of every realm.

Practice or concept	What is already underway to address it	How it will inform my leadership	How it will inform our organization
Commit to the success of the whole work, not only your own part	Restructuring to better integrate the various aspects of our work and keep each other informed: realms; each collective member collaborating with each other member in some way; staff collective meetings; written updates from each realm at the beginning of staff meetings.	Make sure to stay curious about the parts of the work I'm not directly involved in. Take opportunities to learn, trade roles, and invite others to take on new things.	Sometime after our new structure is fully up and running (planned to be July), the Org Dev realm will propose a later date when some trading of roles may happen. In group check-ins about our transition process, we should assess which parts of our work remain siloed and develop strategies for better integration.
Understand yourself and the collective as part of a lineage (Breedlove, 2016)	We've looked at other staff collective structures to help develop ours.	Continue researching and talking with people from 350VT's lineages and encouraging other staff collective members to do the same: collectives, climate justice, racial justice, indigenous sovereignty, feminist, and other allied movements. Continue researching and talking with people from my own additional lineages: permaculture, intentional communities, nonviolent communication, social change-minded music-making, earth-based spiritual communities.	Starting in fall 2020, we could dedicate a portion of a staff meeting once a month for one person to share what they've learned about a part of our lineage; we'd rotate each month. We'd discuss how we fit into that lineage and what it means for us, especially any new practices to try.
Support continual learning for members and public education about cooperative endeavors (Gordon Nembhard, 2014)	So far: Claire helped us explore other staff collective models; we've shared a little bit with our base about what we've developed so far.		The Org Dev realm should build a collective training component into quarterly staff retreats, beginning summer 2020. Our Comms realm should incorporate information about collectives into our comms plan—maybe an "About Collectives" box once every month or two in our weekly e-blast. Our Trainings realm should include a curriculum on collectives in our future leadership trainings, and possibly as a standalone workshop.

Practice or concept	What is already underway to address it	How it will inform my leadership	How it will inform our organization
Create both shared and private "spaces"; spend plenty of time together; choose new members well (Nelson, 2018)	Collective meetings, realm meetings and one-on-one check-ins, individual work; monthly staff retreats and some social time.	When we can start meeting in person again, I'll prioritize organizing more social time.	We need to identify criteria for future collective members; some of this may emerge from contingency planning that we've recently started, and from developing a system for feedback and evaluations, but some of it may not happen until we're ready to grow the collective.
Keep in mind that a communal, nonhierarchical structure isn't innately transformative; transformation requires a commitment to what happens within the structure or what the structure is used to serve (Nelson, 2018)	Value of transformative, radical change in the organization generally.	Self-observation and observation of the collective.	We should continue to affirm transformative change as a shared value; the Justice & Values realm and the Organizing board/staff committee should incorporate this value into their organizational evaluations.
Other collectives can offer inspiration, and what they've already developed may offer a basis for something in your collective; also, let your guiding documents be expressions of group values (Sylvia Rivera Law Project, n.d.; Sustainable Economies Law Center, 2016)	Looking at other staff collective models helped enormously in designing our emerging structure.		When the Organizational Health board/staff committee starts working on a new staff handbook in May 2020, we'll draw inspiration from other examples, and we'll continuously center 350VT's values in developing the new manual.

Appendix F

Annotated Bibliography

Behrens, K. (2010). Exploring African holism with respect to the environment. *Environmental*

Values, 19(4), 465-484. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25764268

Kevin Behrens, a scholar of environmental ethics and bioethics from South Africa,

writes to contest the long-accepted idea in western environmental ethics that African

thought is anthropocentric and therefore has little to offer the field of environmental

ethics. He discusses how among many indigenous peoples in southern Africa, the

interconnectedness of everything is at the core of the worldview, which implies a

rejection of anthropocentrism. A big part of the basis of African morality is valuing

active, harmonious relationships—among humans, and also between different types of

organisms—as if they are familial relationships, expressed through the term *ubuntu*,

often translated, "a person is a person through other persons" (though including other-

than-human beings). I was particularly struck by the idea that interconnectedness calls

for not only harmonious, but active, relationships.

Béteille, A., Ahmed, A. S., Allen, N. J., Carter, A. T., Ingold, T., Lock, G., Srinivas, M. N., &

Varenne, H. (1986). Individualism and equality [and comments and replies]. *Current*

Anthropology, *27*(2), 121–134. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2742970

This article was written by André Béteille, a sociologist in India, with comments from a

number of anthropologists, sociologists, and philosophers, all of whose work has had

some focus on the caste system in India. Béteille discusses how on a society-wide

scale—specifically in India and the U.S.—collective identities have often played into

hierarchical structures and inequality, while equality has more often been connected

with individualistic mentalities; however, these patterns are full of nuances and

contradictions. The comments tease out more of these nuances and contradictions, and

Béteille's final conclusion is largely on the complexity of the topic. While this article

focuses on a much larger scale than my project does, the history of a collective

orientation facilitating inequality seems important.

Breedlove, C. (2016, September 12). *Dove Kent* [Audio podcast episode]. In *Fortification.*

https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/fortification/e/51985198?autoplay=true

In this episode of the *Fortification* podcast, organizer Caitlin Breedlove speaks with

Dove Kent—at the time, the director of Jews for Racial & Economic Justice. Kent

shares about her experiences of community in faith-based organizing. Something that

stuck with me about this conversation was Kent's sharing of something that she sees an

important aspect of moving past individualism: understanding oneself as part of a

movement lineage, one small part of a struggle for social change that has been

happening for generations and will continue for generations. This struck a chord with

me, and in this project I hoped to explore my own relationships to different movement

lineages; I ended up only starting this inquiry, and still look forward to continuing.

Callon, M., & Law, J. (1997). After the individual in society: Lessons on collectivity from

science, technology and society. *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens

de Sociologie*, *22*(2), 165–182. https://doi.org/10.2307/3341747

This article, by French sociologist Michel Callon and English sociologist John Law,

points out that a binary between individual and collective or society is not shared across

all cultures—that, for instance, in Japan, there is more of a continuum rather than a

binary—and that the binary prevalent in the west is problematic. The authors discuss

how everything, including any group of people and even an individual person, is made up of networks of many living and nonliving things; more complex ways of conceiving of "individual" and "collective" action are called for. In relation to my project, the significance of this article is its framework that breaks down the binary between individual and collective, and the possibility it implies to conceive of relationships and groups in complex, multidimensional ways.

Carspecken, L. (2013). Unusual experience as demystification: Ethics and rationality at the green margins. *Counterpoints*, *354*, 75–90. JSTOR. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981164

Ethnographer Lucinda Carspecken discusses an earth-based spiritual community in Indiana. A couple of the themes in the experience of people who are involved in the community are regaining access to lost or suppressed parts of the self and embracing different ways of knowing, including intuition. Carspecken discusses community members' sense of deep connection with other people, the self, and the land—including "intentional re-enchantment"—and a fluid sense of the boundaries of self—all of which are developed or deepened through ceremony. She writes that the community's "paradigm also translated into action—in ecologically sensitive stewardship of the forest and campgrounds, in collective ownership, and in a culture of acceptance." This paper provoked me to reflect on how ceremony has contributed to connection of different types in my experience. It raised questions for me about the possibility of incorporating ceremony into my project, and about other connections between collective and earth-based spirituality.

Caspary, W. (1991). Carl Rogers—Values, persons, and politics: The dialectic of individual and

    community. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *31*(4), 8–31.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167891314002

        Political philosopher and activist William Caspary addresses concerns that Rogers'

        person-centered approach is individualistic and apolitical. He uses Harry Boyte's

        approach to values-based community organizing as a point of comparison for

        examining to what degree collective and political transformation are aligned with or

        called for by Rogers' approach. He finds that, while concerns about humanistic

        psychology generally avoiding politics are legitimate, Rogers' approach is communal

        and social as well as individually focused; Rogers himself spent the later part of his

        career applying the person-centered approach to political situations, aligning the

        approach with the work of Paulo Freire and others. Caspary disagrees with Rogers'

        claims that the person-centered approach tends to lead people to political involvement

        but shares his own experiences of the value of using the person-centered approach in

        educational, political, and other group settings. I appreciated Caspary's analysis of the

        specific question of an individual focus versus a group focus in the person-centered

        approach, as well as his realistic conclusions based on reading Rogers closely and

        examining his own experiences with the approach.

Collins, C., & O'Hara, M. (2019, March 12). *Disrupting narratives that justify inequality and*

    poverty. Institute for Policy Studies. https://ips-dc.org/disrupting-narratives-that-justify-

    inequality-and-poverty/

        Chuck Collins, writer and scholar on inequality, speaks with Mary O'Hara, a journalist

        who grew up in poverty. Collins talks about the narrative that people deserve their

economic fates based on what they have done individually—a narrative that serves

those who do not want to address structural inequality, and that is often propagated by

people blind to, or forgetting, assistance that they themselves have received. This way

in which a paradigm and narrative can perpetuate inequality strikes is an important

aspect of the harm that individualism can cause.

Freilla, O. (2006). Want environmental justice? Fire your boss. *Race, Poverty & the*

   Environment, *13*(1), 75–76. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/41495698

   Environmental justice activist and cooperative organizer Omar Freilla writes about

   worker cooperatives as a solution to de-industrialization, environmental racism, and

   economic inequality, with major benefits to the community: cooperative workers live in

   the communities where they work, are accountable to their communities, and are

   unlikely to pollute. Cooperatives also embody and teach democracy. While the small,

   emerging, nonprofit collective of 350VT is a different situation than a worker co-op

   green business in a city, some of the benefits are the same, and this article offers a

   compelling, concise narrative about the importance of this type of solution.

Gordon Nembhard, J. (2014). *Collective courage: A history of African American cooperative*

   economic thought and practice. The Pennsylvania State University Press.

   Political economist Jessica Gordon Nembhard draws on a wide range of historical

   sources in this book detailing black cooperative endeavors in the U.S., from nineteenth

   century mutual aid societies, and black and integrated intentional communities, to

   contemporary farm cooperatives and more. Gordon Nembhard distills common themes

   and lessons from this history. Twin themes are the adverse conditions that have often

   inspired black cooperatives and the hostility and violence with which they have often

been met. Another theme is solidarity as both a foundational and practical value among

black cooperatives. A third theme is the importance of education for cooperatives—

continual learning for members as well as public education. I was struck by Gordon

Nembhard's highlighting of how common it has been for black people who have been

involved in other aspects of social change to be involved in cooperatives in some way

as well, which affirms my sense that working within these types of structures provides

invaluable collaboration skills that carry over into other contexts. I take the theme of

the need for continual learning as an important message. The need for public education

about cooperatives resonates with my own experience so far interfacing with people

outside of the 350VT staff. Learning some of the history of hostility and violence to

black cooperatives is humbling; it is an enormously important piece of the context of

the movement for cooperation, and it offers perspective about the relative privilege our

staff collective is likely to enjoy.

Hamamura, T. (2012). Are cultures becoming individualistic? A cross-temporal comparison of

individualism–collectivism in the United States and Japan. *Personality and Social*

Psychology Review, *16*(1), 3–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868311411587

Social and cultural psychologist Takeshi Hamamura examines *modernization theory* in

the study of individualism and collectivism—the theory that, across different types of

cultures, individualism increases as modernity indicators rise in a society (e.g., GDP,

urbanization). Most research finds that there is a link between modernization and

individualism. However, some studies argue against conflating modernization and

"Westernization," noting the prevalence of collectivism especially in many Asian

societies. The author's own research finds evidence supporting both theories. This

paper contributes to my sense of the many factors that influence individualism and

collectivism and affirms my sense of the potential profoundness of moving away from

individualism in the context of a modern, Western, largely individualistic society.

Holder, C. L., & Corntassel, J. J. (2002). Indigenous peoples and multicultural citizenship:

Bridging collective and individual rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *24*(1), 126–151.

Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20069591

In this paper, political scientist Jeff J. Corntassel and political philosopher Cindy

Holder explore individually-based and collectively-based models for rights, particularly

as they apply to indigenous people, citing the lack of universally recognized group

rights and the way the western, individually-based concept of rights does not

accommodate the fundamental importance of communal life for some people and

peoples. They describe how for many indigenous peoples, there is an interactive

interdependence between individual and group rights, with a shared, decentralized, and

situational concept of power requiring consensus rather than relying on formal

leadership, and with many aspects of the definition of individuals' lives growing out of

the group. They also point to how for many indigenous peoples, a sense of belonging in

community is defined more spiritually than by a social contract. This last point suggests

how deep the roots of individualism and collectivism can go.

Jones, K., & Okun, T. (2001). *White supremacy culture*. Challenging White Supremacy

Workshop. http://www.cwsworkshop.org/PARC_site_B/dr-culture.html

This piece by racial justice activists Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun—Okun is also an

educational leadership professor—details many of the ways that white supremacy

culture can show up in organizations, such as perfectionism, sense of urgency,

defensiveness, binary thinking, right to comfort, and individualism. It was in this piece that I first encountered the link between white supremacy culture and individualism; that insight, along with many others in the piece, has been instrumental in helping me understand white supremacy culture, see how I replicate it and how it shows up in groups I am part of, and start consciously choosing more inclusive ways of relating and discussing different practices in my groups.

Kirschenbaum, H. (n.d.). *The history of the person-centered approach*. The Association for the Development of the Person Centered Approach. https://www.adpca.org/content/history-0 Counseling & Human Development professor Howard Kirschenbaum lays out a history of the person-centered approach. At the time that Rogers went into psychology, the prevailing approach was Freud-based and highly directive—a counselor's job was largely to assert control over a patient's life in a positive way. Influenced by the progressive education movement and some contemporary psychologists, Rogers gradually developed an approach to therapy rooted in trust in the client's innate ability and tendency to grow. The basis of the approach was the relationship between therapist and client, with the conditions of unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence/transparency. Later, Rogers and others applied this approach in a much wider range of settings, became more fully aware of the relevance of power in relationships, and found that the approach could support conflict resolution, collaboration, creativity, communication, and productivity in groups. Rogers and colleagues taught the person-centered approach around the world, and in 1987, Rogers was posthumously nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The person-centered approach has become a foundational element of counseling in many parts of the world.

Nelson, A. (2018). From sharing a house to eco-cohousing. In *Small is necessary: Shared living on a shared planet* (pp. 101–129). Pluto Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1zk0mpz.11

    In this chapter of her book on eco-collaborative housing, activist-scholar Anitra Nelson describes some of people's experiences living in different group situations and intentional communities. The guidelines she shares from Rosie Krincic for collective, consensus-based living, based on Krincic's experience at the Aprovecho community in Oregon, strike me as likely useful—some figuratively, some literally—for the 350VT staff collective: create shareable spaces; value privacy; define your mission; meet face-to-face; expect disagreements; and choose new members wisely. Later on, Nelson acknowledges the critique that cohousing can be depoliticizing, essentially enabling community members to perpetuate capitalism in a more palatable setting; she asserts that the ecological benefits of community living are a true solution, and that the collaborative nature of community living cultivates skills that can be used in more deeply political contexts. From this discussion of cohousing, I take an important reminder that even a communal, nonhierarchical structure is not innately transformative—transformation requires more of a commitment to what happens within the structure, or to what the structure is being used to serve.

Palmer, M., White, P., & Wooltorton, S. (2018). Embodying our future through collaboration: The change is in the doing. *Journal of Environmental Education*, *49*(4), 309–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2017.1364214

    Environmental education professors Marilyn Palmer, Peta White, and Sandra Wooltorton write about their experiences using nurturing conversations, friendship, and love as forms of research. From sharing stories with each other of their own

experiences with sexism emerged a collective autoethnography practice of writing

fictionalized versions of their stories—experiences of not only research but also

resistance. Early in my project, I was curious about collective autoethnography as a

possible method and was struck by the transformative experience of these scholars.

powell, john a. (2001). Disrupting individualism and distributive remedies with intersubjectivity

and empowerment: An approach to justice and discourse. *University of Maryland Law*

Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class, *1*(1), 1–22. Retrieved from

https://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=rrgc

john a. powell is a law professor, researcher on civil rights, structural racism, poverty,

democracy, and director of the interdisciplinary, change-oriented Othering & Belonging

Institute at UC Berkeley. In this piece adapted from a keynote presentation, powell

points to the history of a connection between individualism and whiteness, and of the

use of the concept of collective in exploiting groups of people, particularly women and

people not considered white (with adopting individualism being part of the process of

some groups becoming white). He also argues that communitarianism is limited by

depending on homogeneity. He writes that "we come into being in our relationships

with one another," and that "We are not unitary. We are fragmented inside. We are

fluid inside." At any scale, autonomy is an illusory goal; powell advocates for

empowerment as a more relevant framework for democracy than either individualism

or communitarianism. This offers a particular framework for relationship as the basis of

groups and societies and contributes a different perspective to the conversation about

individualism and collectivism.

Rogers, C. (1977). *Carl Rogers on personal power*. Dell Publishing Co.

> This book is one of many written by psychologist Carl Rogers and continues building on his work on the person-centered approach. Earlier, Rogers had developed the client-centered approach to psychotherapy, and he and others gradually expanded it to a wider range of contexts, like student-centered education. The person-centered approach consists of unconditional positive regard, or an acceptance of another person's inherent worth and dignity; empathy; authenticity or transparency; and attention to power dynamics. This book explores examples and political implications of applying the person-centered approach in interpersonal relationships, education, various group settings, organizations and business, politics, and intercultural conflict. Rogers lays out in the book how the person-centered approach supports individual well-being, the health of relationships, and the functioning of groups; one framework that would contribute to conditions for well-being across all these levels seemed perfectly fitting for this project.

Rosenberg, M. B. (1999). *Nonviolent communication: A language of compassion*. PuddleDancer Press.

> Psychologist, mediator, and teacher Marshall Rosenberg was a student of Carl Rogers'. His teaching, largely laid out in this book and deeply influenced by the person-centered approach, offers tools for connection, rooted in compassion and honoring the full range of human needs. Nonviolent communication, or NVC, has both a worldwide community of practitioners and a robust community of critics; many people critique NVC after having or witnessing the experience of someone using the NVC "formula" for emotional manipulation or for minimizing power or oppression dynamics, consciously or unconsciously. My own experience is that the formula of NVC (naming

one's own experience, feelings, needs, and making a request) serves me best as a mnemonic device to center compassion, rather than as a procedure to follow strictly—and my own experience is that practicing NVC has been transformative in my relationships, including with myself.

Scott, G., Ciarrochi, J., & Deane, F. P. (2004). Disadvantages of being an individualist in an individualistic culture: Idiocentrism, emotional competence, stress, and mental health. *Australian Psychologist*, *39*(2), 143–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/00050060410001701861

Psychology and mental health researchers Greg Scott, Joseph Ciarrochi, and Frank P. Deane look at a variety of research on the relationship between individualism and well-being. They lay out that, while individualistic societies can be associated with higher levels of certain aspects of well-being, including happiness, than collectively-oriented societies are, they are also associated with higher levels of suicide, and that the higher quantity and quality of social support in collectivist societies is associated with higher mental health overall. The authors also describe a study they conducted among university students in Australia, in which they found that within an individualistic society overall, people with a stronger individualistic orientation experience lower mental health and social well-being than people with a collectivist orientation. Because of the strong element of individualism in the U.S., this article affirms the potential value of orienting more collectively within this society.

Sullivan, S. (2014). Awakening to race: Individualism and social consciousness in America.

    Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society, *50*(1), 170–173.

    https://doi.org/10.2979/trancharpeirsoc.50.1.170

        Shannon Sullivan, philosopher and writer on race, feminism, and more, reviews

        political scientist Jack Turner's book *Awakening to Race*. Turner draws on ideas from

        Ralph Waldo Emerson, Alexis de Tocqueville, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick

        Douglass, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and others. He makes the case that

        individualism calls not for white supremacy, which has often accompanied it in

        American culture, but for addressing inequality: people who want to be self-reliant

        should become aware of the systemic inequalities from which they benefit, and seek to

        dismantle them. Although I find the whole concept of self-reliance contradictory with

        my understanding of the reality of interdependence, and although the review does not

        describe discussion of an alternative to individualism, the reclaiming of individualism

        presented here offers a perspective that is new to me and that I find fascinating.

Sustainable Economies Law Center. (2016, May). *Sustainable Economies Law Center*

    Organizational Policies. Sustainable Economies Law Center.

    https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mzSEvS5govK9-

    L4pGTjRnCTMaggdEuJ7VUpEtS6ioWA/edit#heading=h.tulatiz05n1w

        The Sustainable Economies Law Center (SELC) is a worker self-directed nonprofit—a

        shared leadership model like a staff collective. Their website is full of resources for

        similar organizations, and their Organizational Policies document describes many

        aspects of their own organization's structure and culture. I think that much of this

        material could help the 350VT staff with details of our collaboration structures and

processes in the future; in the present, some of what is articulated about the SELC

organizational culture, especially about prioritizing people's well-being, inspires me

and helps to clarify my thinking about our narrative around well-being as well as

concrete steps we can take to prioritize well-being.

Sylvia Rivera Law Project. (n.d.). *SRLP Collective member handbook*. Sylvia Rivera Law

Project. https://srlp.org/files/collective%20handbook%202009.pdf

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project is another nonprofit with a staff collective structure.

Their Collective Member Handbook shares quite a bit about their policies and practices,

ranging from practical descriptions of many aspects of their structure to their anti-

oppression practices, as well as specific tools that they use. Much about their values is

visible in their policies, some explained explicitly—not only addressing oppression, but

also creating a healthy, sustainable work culture, commitment to a culture of people

supporting each other, trusting different teams with different kinds of decisions and

trusting individuals to make certain decisions alone, and more. Some of their tools, like

team and individual self-evaluation templates, could be quite helpful for 350VT going

forward. The clarity with which they connect their policies and practices to their values

strikes me as important for a collective—particularly, it points to how a collective can

embody the cultural change that the group is working for.

Westfield, N. L. (2017, November 2). Bootstraps in classrooms: Dissuading rugged

    individualism. *Teaching, Religion, Politics Blog from the Wabash Center for Teaching*

    and Learning in Theology and Religion.

    https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/2017/11/bootstraps-classrooms-dissuading-

    rugged-individualism/

        Womanist and scholar of African-American religious and spiritual life, Nancy Lynne

        Westfield, writes about encountering an individualistic approach to education among

        her adult students, and students' attachment to self-reliance and showcasing their work

        individually getting in the way of effective collaboration. She describes some of her

        strategies for using her classroom as a place for cultivating collaboration, collective

        learning and knowledge, and accountability to one's own community: invoking those to

        whom it matters that one is in this learning process; and reflecting on who one's people

        are and how one's learning can serve the healing of one's people. I encountered this

        blog post near the end of this project, and it both affirms an invocation process that I

        brought into a staff retreat and invites other practices to try in the future to deepen my

        own and our staff collective's senses of accountability.

Whitley, R. (2017, July 28). Is an increase in individualism damaging our mental health? *Talking*

    About Men Blog from Psychology Today.

    https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/talking-about-men/201707/is-increase-in-

    individualism-damaging-our-mental-health

        Psychiatry researcher Rob Whitley cites historically high rates of divorce and people

        living alone in the U.S., as well as declining membership in community organizations

        and a rise in the use of social media and video games. He refers to studies showing that

stronger social support networks contribute to individuals' resilience to traumatic and

difficult life experiences, as well as to studies connecting higher suicide rates in some

places with high rates of social isolation. He strongly draws the conclusion that rising

individualism as reported in psychological research is a bad sign for mental health. This

article matters for my project because it is current and speaks to one significant reason

why moving away from excessive individualism is important.