

Women Disrupted: Centering Women's Voices for Social Change

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An Engaged Leadership Project Report in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS in LEADERSHIP

We accept this Final Report as conforming to the required standard

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Executive Summary

As a requirement to receive my Master of Arts in Leadership through Royal Roads University, I had to lead an action-oriented inquiry that contributes to positive change. For my engaged leadership project (ELP), I worked with community partners to connect with women aged 40-64 who had experienced career disruption. I captured their stories of how they responded to that disruption through an online survey and through one-on-one interviews, and invited them to express their experience through the production of a creative artifact.

Context

My ELP involved working with community partners from Hamilton, Ontario whose mandates include supporting economic development activities and the enablement of women's economic independence, and women aged 40-64 living in the Hamilton, Ontario area who self-identified as having experienced career disruption.

Purpose of Inquiry

The purpose of this research was to center women's voices and uncover insights gathered through the data analysis of surveys and narrative interviews regarding how these women had responded to the experience of their career being disrupted.

The goal of this research is to strengthen the response and level of support from community organizations regarding resources and support that women need to shorten the time between being disrupted and once again realizing their economic independence.

The impact of sharing these stories and informing a system of support will inspire other women, transform individual's lives, and accelerate prosperity for the local community.

Research Questions

My action-oriented inquiry question was: how might my four community partners (the community partners) help capture the stories of women aged 40-64 in their respective networks, whose careers have been disrupted, to help produce a system-wide response of support?

My sub-questions for inquiry were:

1. What programming from the community partners exists already, which this research may be able to build upon?
2. Which mediums or avenues for engagement might the community partners use to connect to its community of women?

3. How might the community partners further support these women's leadership development, economic empowerment, and economic independence?
4. How might the community partners collectively communicate the findings of this research, and plan for future activities that complement each other's mandates?

Approach

To help inform my ELP, I conducted a literature review on two topics; the definition and use of the word disruption and the rise of “disruption culture” (Montalvo, 2016), and women’s experience in the workplace and the causes of disruption to women’s careers, notably the intersection of sexism and ageism referred to as gendered ageism (Krekula, Nikander, & Wilińska, 2018, p. 34). I also conducted an audit of existing/public programming that is provided by each community partner that is designed for women-specific audiences (see Appendix A and Table 1).

For my engaged action-oriented inquiry, I was informed by the principles of community based participatory action research (CBPR) (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014) and worked with four community partners that acted as my Inquiry Team (Innovation Factory, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, City of Hamilton Economic Development, and my research partner, the YWCA of Hamilton). These partners helped to broadcast a call-to-action (CTA) inviting women, aged 40-64, to participate in an online survey which each partner shared through their preferred online mediums (newsletters and social media posts). After respondents submitted responses to the survey, they were invited to participate in a confidential, one-on-one interview with me. The CTA for interviews was closed after the maximum of ten (10) interviews were completed. The survey was kept open until August 25, 2019, and thirty-two surveys (32) were received by that time. Interviews were conducted at respondents’ homes and places of work, public libraries, coffee shop patios, and parks. After the interviews, each woman was invited to share a photovoice/creative artifact that reflected their experience of disruption (see Appendix P).

Key Findings

Through my audit and data analysis of my original research, I identified the following key findings:

1. After a career disruption, women often face financial hardship and experience a decrease in their income, which can take years to recover from.
2. After a career disruption, women frequently turn to entrepreneurship out of necessity, rather than desire.
3. After a career disruption, upon reflection, some women found the disruption to be a positive experience.

Recommendations

1. Connect the system back to itself; initiate bi-annual meetings and expand cross-organizational information sharing regarding entrepreneurial programming.
2. Meet people where they are; the language around entrepreneurship matters.
3. Entrepreneurial programming is important; make it more inclusive.
4. Enable and facilitate cross-generational mentoring.

Summary

The recommended changes have the potential to dramatically and positively lead to the growth and development of a new kind of venture born in Hamilton, Ontario. The changes would shorten the time between these women being disrupted and once again realizing their economic independence. The system itself would be healthier, as would be the women, their families, their communities, and the ventures that they go on to create.

Associated Knowledge Products/Change Contributed To

A PowerPoint presentation has been created to crystalize the salient insights and data analysis that were generated through the surveys, interviews, and photovoice submissions.

Acknowledgements

This research could not have been completed without the voices of the women who chose to share their experiences by responding through an online survey, and by agreeing to be interviewed. They honoured me by trusting me with their stories and their vulnerabilities, and they will forever have my deepest gratitude. Special thanks go to my research partner, Denise Christopherson, CEO of the YWCA of Hamilton who believed in the value of the question, the action of gathering these women's stories, and the quest of creating positive social change. I am grateful for the support of the leaders of my community partner organizations, David Carter of Innovation Factory (IF), Keanin Loomis of Hamilton Chamber of Commerce (HCC), and Kristin Huigenbois of the City of Hamilton's Small Business Enterprise Center (now Hamilton Business Centre), who saw the value in the research, and to Andrea Davies of the YWCA, Brigitte Huard of IF, and Marie Nash of HCC for doing all the leg work and amplifying the call-to-action and sharing it amongst their networks. Notable thanks to my inquiry team member Nick Diduck, whose support as a friend and learning partner was untiring and unwavering. My sincere thanks go to my academic supervisor, Marie Graf, for her encouragement and expertise in helping me craft and present a research product that I am proud of. Lastly, my husband, Victor Schulman Dupuis is the one that is most directly responsible for this research. His encouragement and support, financially, materially, and emotionally ensured that I had the space and resources needed to set forth on this academic journey two years ago and bring light to this important question. We should all be so lucky to be surrounded by such privilege and love.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary2

Acknowledgements5

Women Disrupted: Centering Women’s Voices for Social Change.....7

Section One: Focus and Framing.....7

Section Two: Significance of the Project to the Organization10

Section Three: Relevant Literature13

Section Four: Engaged Approach, and Implementation19

Section Five: Findings, Conclusions, and Limitations.....26

Section Six: Next Steps: Recommendations and Implications.....41

Section Seven: Summary.....45

References46

Appendices54

Tables77

Figures79

Women Disrupted: Centering Women's Voices for Social Change

“Women will see themselves forgotten, if they do not think about themselves.”

-- Louise Otto-Peters, Speech of a German Girl, 1848 (Herman, 2018, p. 63)

Section One: Focus and Framing

Topic and Purpose

In their research for the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Samuels, Samman, Hunt, Rost, & Plank stated, “the specific experiences of older women often remain underexplored and unrecognised [*sic*], leaving them invisible to policymakers” (2018, p. 9). Through centering women's stories, this research and associated knowledge product counters that invisibility.

The purpose of this engaged leadership project (ELP, aka capstone) is to center women's voices and uncover insights gathered through the data analysis of online surveys and one-on-one confidential interviews and identify recurring themes or patterns focussed on how women, aged 40-64 and living in the Hamilton, Ontario (Hamilton) area responded to the experience of having their careers disrupted (see Table 2 for examples of disruption). The goal of this research and the associated knowledge product is to inform the four community organizations, both formal and informal partners in this research, as to the resources, attention, consideration, and programming that women need to shorten the time between being disrupted and once again realizing their economic independence.

I came to this question through my own subjective experience (Wolcott, 2001, p. 85). In my 40s, I found my career disrupted more than once due to interpersonal conflict, organizational mismanagement, and through systemic changes in my organization. Finally, when I was 46, I had left a full-time role, and I was having a really hard time finding new work. I simply wasn't getting called for interviews, even though I had been part of my sector for almost 20 years. In

talking to friends and peers that were of similar age, I realized that many of them were also experiencing the same kind of disruption in their careers; firings, lay-offs, lack of promotion, or the feeling of being purposefully left out of decisions and opportunities for growth. Many of these same women were also sharing stories of difficulties in finding new work and how they were turning to consulting or starting a new business after an unsuccessful job search. These observations got me thinking; is it just me and my peers? Is this unique to the city I am living in, or the industry I am working in, or is there something else going on here?

My ELP was an engaged, action-oriented inquiry and was informed by the principles and framework of community-based participatory action research (CBPR), the methodology that guided this research. The central idea of action research is that a scientific approach is used to address important social issues with those that experience these issues directly (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 6). This research included open-ended surveys and confidential one-on-one interviews, which satisfies that requirement. CBPR is born from a commitment to social transformation and is rooted in feminist action research principles with “its focus on the...importance of women's voices in and ownership of research” (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 152). The voices of women are centered at all stages of this research; their voices are shared as intended, not after being interpreted by others, and they determined if and how their stories are shared, satisfying another principle of CPBR.

Research Question and Sub-questions

My principal inquiry question was: How might my four community partners (the community partners) help capture the stories of women aged 40-64 in their respective networks, whose careers have been disrupted, to help produce a system-wide response of support?

My sub-questions were:

1. What programming from the community partners exists already, which this research may be able to build upon?
2. Which mediums or avenues for engagement might the community partners use to connect to its community of women?
3. How might my community partners further support these women's leadership development, economic empowerment, and economic independence?
4. How might my community partners collectively communicate the findings of this research, and plan for future activities that complement each other's mandates?

Context

My ELP involved two sets of stakeholders; four community partners, both publicly and privately funded organizations whose mandates include the enablement of women's economic independence, and women, aged 40-64 that live in the Hamilton area and self-identified as having had their careers disrupted.

The community partners.

The reason my research partner, the YWCA of Hamilton, was chosen was because of their commitment to the development of women's leadership and economic enablement as evidenced through their respective existing and historical programming, research, and community activism (see Appendix A and Table 1). The next important consideration for choosing all four community partners as part of my inquiry team was due to my commitment to approach this research through an intersectional lens. These community partners provided access to diverse networks of women, which supported my research's outreach to an audience that was non-homogenous in its socioeconomic demographics and life experiences. Further considerations were the existing or previous working relationships amongst the community partners, the

geographic proximity of the respective communities that they serve, and the trust and credibility that they have already established within their communities of support, and with each other.

The women.

Professor Lynda Gratton, a globally recognized expert in human resources and the future of work has been quoted as saying that ageism at work started at 40 for women, and at 45 for men (Cook, 2018). The demographic of the audience chosen for the focus for this ELP was women aged 40-64; this was based off of Gratton's research (Gratton & Scott, 2016), the age group variant of lifecycle categorization by Statistics Canada (2011) splitting at 40, and the standard age of eligibility for the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) being 65 (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2015). The women that responded to the surveys and who were interviewed for this research all confirmed that they were of this age group, and that they resided in the Hamilton, Ontario area (consisting of the Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Hamilton (downtown and mountain), Stoney Creek and Waterdown communities as well).

Section Two: Significance of the Project

ELP Importance

This research touches upon important issues such as gender equality, ageism, intersectionality, unconscious bias, organizational psychology, the future of work, and IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equality and accessibility).

This research puts a spotlight on a seemingly invisible segment of our population and through amplifying women's voices, has the potential to directly accelerate women's financial independence and equality in a local setting. I contend that the most compelling and important reason why this research matters was articulated in the Advancing Women's Equality in Canada

(AWEC) report by McKinsey when it stated that accelerating women's equality in Canada is a "moral and social imperative" (Devillard et al., 2017, p.1).

There exists a known interrelationship between women's economic independence, women's human rights, and gender equality (Samuels et al., 2018, p. 9). When women's careers are disrupted, their economic, political, social, physical, and emotional security is put in jeopardy. In the AWEC report, the authors stated that by addressing the issue of advancing women's equality, "Canada could add \$150 billion in incremental GDP in 2026 . . . this figure is equivalent to adding a new financial-services sector to the economy" (Devillard, et al., 2017, p. 1).

In her recent article titled *Perennials, Not Millennials, Will Trigger The Next Wave Of Talent Retention Efforts*, Purtill (2018) noted that workers over the age of 55 are the fastest-growing population of workers in the US, and that their needs are driving employers to reconsider how to retain and accommodate them. In *The 100-Year Life: Living and Work in an Age of Longevity*, Gratton and Scott (n.d.) launched a call-to-action to governments and companies to make changes to infrastructure and policies as part of a social revolution to prepare for the impact of "multi-staged" lives and how people will show up at work (n.d., para. 5). Looking specifically at older women at work, Susan Douglas, a professor at the University of Michigan is quoted as saying that "a demographic revolution" is happening regarding both the number of women who are working well into their older years, as is the perception of older women's expertise and value (Bennett, 2019). Joseph F. Coughlin, director of the AgeLab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is quoted as saying, "one of the greatest under-appreciated sources of innovation and new business may in fact be women over 50 with new ideas, lots of life ahead of them and with the verve to get it done" (Pawlowski, 2017).

The economic and business management arguments as to why this research matters are rather straight forward; enabling women to fully participate in wealth generation and creating growth opportunities benefits women, their families, their communities, and the organizations that they work for.

Benefits to Stakeholders

The community partners.

Municipalities are at the forefront of delivering vital services; by convening the four community partners, this research helps connect the system back to itself (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998, para. 38) and ignites an opportunity to change things for the better for women aged 40-64 in the Hamilton area. By connecting with the women of Hamilton through these partners, and through the completion of an environmental scan that accounts for existing programs and resources, collectively we can mitigate the gaps that currently exist in helping women when their careers are disrupted, lessen the potential duplication of services across providers, foster further collaboration amongst the partners, accelerate women's economic independence, generate local insights that may foster further research and support from an even broader community of organizations, and perhaps generate a potential model for other cities that are of similar size.

I contend that the compiled narrative interviews, environmental scan, data analysis, photovoice artifacts, and recommendations are a compelling story. As a whole, they inform a new way forward for the community of support in Hamilton. When these stories are shared with more audiences in partnership with these community partners, they will provide insights and motivation to the greater community, and also help enlighten younger women before they reach this life stage.

The women.

Participating in this research has shown to have a positive impact on the women that participated in the interviews, as was shared by one interviewee whose nom de guerre was Annabelle; “Being able to tell my story that eventually resulted in me choosing to become an artist and make that the focus of my life was really helpful. I’ve had a lot of feelings to process for a long time.” (personal communication, August 15, 2019)

Myself.

I benefitted from leading this research because my biases were constantly challenged leading to a robust first-person learning experience. More importantly, I was honoured to hold space and the confidence of the women that chose to share their stories with me. That is a level of trust experienced that I will not soon forget. I have also benefitted from this research because its completion allows me to complete my requirements for my Master of Arts in Leadership.

Section Three: Relevant Literature

To help inform my ELP, I performed a literature review of two topics; an examination of the word disruption and its interpretation in the current context, and the issues of sexism, ageism, and the intersection of these two forms of discrimination referred to as “gendered ageism” (Itzin & Phillipson, 1995), as a root cause of career disruption for women aged 40-64.

I began my literature review with an examination of the word disruption; it was critical to be clear on its use and interpretation for the purposes of identifying similar experiences for women who would be responding to the survey, as there are multiple interpretations of the word disruption in the current zeitgeist. The literature review on gendered ageism was critical because I needed to ensure that my interpretation of my personal experience and those told to me anecdotally by my peers was rooted in evidence, and not subjective conjecture.

Disruption

Merriam-Webster defined disruption as “a break or interruption in the normal course or continuation of some activity, process, etc.” (“Definition of disruption,” n.d.). It is fair to say that generally up until 1995, the interpretation and use of the word was a decidedly negative expression, true to its definition. That changed with the publication of a 1995 article titled “Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave” (Bower & Christensen, 1995) in the Harvard Business Review, and Christensen’s subsequent book “The Innovator’s Dilemma,” originally published in 1997 (2003). Christensen’s use of the phrase “disruptive innovation” (1995, 2003) referred to a rather specific scenario where a new business successfully challenged existing businesses by capitalizing on previously overlooked opportunities. Since then, the understanding of the phrase has been widely misinterpreted and used colloquially to refer to an experience of upheaval, but with a decidedly more positive connotation; one that’s become synonymous with innovation or breakthroughs (“On the Disruption of 'Disrupt'", n.d., "What is Disruption? How Can Disruption Affect Your Business?", 2019). Even with widely published protestations and attempts to correct the interpretation of the phrase (Christensen, Raynor, & McDonald, 2015), the current zeitgeist around the use of the word disruption is still about one with more positive outcomes, such as positive disruption (Abbott, 2011) or creative disruption (Dillard, 2016). It’s important to note that the continued misuse of the phrase “disruptive innovation” (Christensen, 2003) is widely perpetrated by the white and male dominant power holders within innovation ecosystems in North America; self-avowed disciples of Christensen’s research, which I observed first-hand in my many years working in innovation spaces in Southwestern Ontario. Montalvo (2016) called it “disruption culture” and observed:

The culture of disruption's American Dream 2.0—where you can both be the man and claim to be sticking it to him—glosses over the fact that the type of innovation venerated by disruption culture often works to keep white men in positions of power and strengthens our relationship to instant-access consumerism. More importantly, it lacks critical engagement with the processes of disruption and the values being advanced by those we call disruptors. (para 3)

In this research, the choice is to supplant the problematic, normative power structures associated with disruption culture, and as Montalvo (2016) called for, “disrupt the language of disruption.” Therefore, when the words “disrupted” or “disruption” are used in this research, they intentionally infer the original definition of the word (“Definition of disruption,” n.d.).

Sexism, ageism, and the intersection of both at work

Women have worked since the beginning of human history, and have fought for centuries for equal human rights, including the right to earn a fair and equal wage. In the last 60 years, the experience of women in the workforce has changed dramatically, and still, they face barriers to participate unencumbered in the pursuit of their economic independence (Davidoff, 1986; Lewenhak, 1980; Paludi, 2008). According to the World Economic Forum's most recent Global Gender Gap Report (2018), it will take 108 years to close the gender-based disparities experienced by women globally, an actual increase of eight years in the projected timeframes from the previous year, indicating that we're not progressing as we should be (p. 15).

In July 2012, professor and political scientist Anne-Marie Slaughter caused an uproar and ignited a global debate when she wrote an op-ed for *The Atlantic* titled *Why Women Still Can't Have It All*. In the article and her subsequent book titled *Unfinished Business*, Slaughter (2016) highlighted the continued gender divide when it comes to (often unpaid) care work and how

women carry a disproportionate responsibility of caring for children, and later in life for aging parents. Slaughter stated that women and men are still systemically subjected to sexist stereotypes, and until men are equally expected and enabled to provide care work, it will be women's careers that will continue to be disrupted (2016). Journalist Gemma Hartley wrote an article for Harper's Bazaar in 2017 titled *Women Aren't Nags—We're Just Fed Up*, which to date has had over two billion views. That momentum spurred her to write her subsequent bestseller *Fed Up* in 2018, where she spotlighted the sexist stereotypes that many women continue to grapple with regarding emotional labour; when women are expected to prioritize the comforts of those around them instead of dedicating their energies to their own work. Hartley gave voice to the toll that that invisible labour exacts on women and argued that that additional mental load is a gendered experience, which sustains gender inequality in the home and in the workplace (2018). Both Slaughter's and Hartley's writings captured some of the more familiar examples of sexism and gender-based stereotyping related to work that may disrupt a woman's career; however, these are hardly the only ways women's careers are disrupted.

There is an immense body of academic research and grey literature that has been written over the past 50+ years focused on how women's careers are also disrupted through experiences such as the "glass ceiling" (Zimmer, 2015), or the "glass cliff" (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich, & Atkins, 2007), which are examples of what Jyrkinen (2014) referred to as subtle acts and processes of discrimination that are meant to exclude women from career development. Add to those subtle acts the overt acts of sexual harassment as captured in the current discourse around the #metoo movement (Bennett, n.d.), and the devastating mental health impact that sexual harassment exerts on women (Paludi, 2008, p. 95), and it's easier to understand how women are either externally disrupted (Ryan et al., 2007) or self-disrupted, and choose to opt-out of

workplaces altogether (Scott, Kapur Klein, & Onovakpuri, 2017). Examples of these subtle and overt omissions and acts of aggression that severely alter the career paths of women continue to show up in our news and social media streams almost weekly. No industry is immune. It is evidenced when in 2019 the chief physician of two Canadian hospitals finally resigned after a discrimination probe was launched after it came to light that over 16 years, he'd never hired even one female physician (Glauser, 2018, 2019), and when celebrity winemakers take advantage of their influence and chronically assault and harass young women new to the industry, causing many of them to leave the industry before they'd been given a chance to glean the knowledge, tutelage or experiences that they should rightfully expect when entering a new field (Hui & Knight, 2018). In Canada, the right to work in an environment free from sexual harassment is codified in the Canadian Labour Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019). Any academic or grey literature that seeks to invalidate the well-documented, lived experience of millions of women over decades is both at its best and worst, a wasteful exercise in gaslighting.

Layering these experiences of sexism in the workplace with the intersection of ageism, and women are marginalized even further in their careers, facing what is called the “double jeopardy of gendered ageism” (Krekula, Nikander, & Wilińska, 2018, p. 34). Gendered ageism “emphasizes the dominance of patriarchal norms combined with a preoccupation with youth that results in a faster deterioration of older women’s status compared to that of men” (p. 34). Through a gendered ageism lens, women are perceived to age earlier, hitting a new glass ceiling at an even earlier stage in their careers (Itzin & Phillipson, 1995, p. 85), accelerating the experience of discrimination that women are inevitably facing. To make matters worse, research related to older workers is decidedly gendered and skews male, leaving the lived experience and

needs of women invisible (Ainsworth, 2002) to policymakers and legislators, echoing the findings of the research of Samuels et al. (2018).

The examination of gendered ageism in management and careers has seen some uptake in some G7 countries in the past decade but is still a relatively unexamined concern whose time has come. One such piece of recent research showcasing a Canadian perspective was conducted by Sophie Beaton, a Fellow of the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness. Beaton's (2018) research reinforced the value of personal interviews, and how they brought a holistic understanding of the impact of systemic discrimination to the lived experience of older women. She identified six key areas where Canadian women's lives were negatively impacted because of gendered ageism (Beaton, 2018, pp. 20-22), and how policies may be put in place to mitigate the harm and provide support for these marginalized women.

I was drawn to this research question because of witnessing the displacement of older women in the workplace. The World Economic Forum (WEC) has counselled through their white papers and research that to prepare for the forthcoming Fourth Industrial Revolution "...all sectors need to increase diversity within their talent pools and their leadership to benefit from the range of perspectives, creative thinking and skills needed. ("Accelerating Gender Parity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution," 2017, p. 2), however age isn't mentioned alongside gender in this call-to-action. Gratton and Scott (2016) have identified an imminently changing employment landscape, one where people will be living and working longer, and where the nature of employment itself is being disrupted, however their focus remained on the changing employment landscape and did not address the disparity between women's and men's experience in this shifting workplace. It appears as though the observations of Ainsworth (2002) and Samuels et al (2018) are sadly validated; the lived experience and support systems needed by older women are

rarely highlighted. If we are to be guided by the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Transforming Our World, 2015), there needs to be further research and an amplification of the lived experiences of women aged 40-64 to ensure that women aren't left out and left behind as governments and businesses design and respond to the shifting future of work.

Section Four: Engaged Approach and Implementation

Engaged Approach: Research Methodology and Methods

In *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, Coghlan and Brannick (2014) broadly defined action research as being “a collaborative democratic partnership,” (p. 5), which contributes to “actionable knowledge,” (p. 6). This seemingly simple definition captures two elements that were important to me in the context of this ELP; the first being working with partners in a cooperative, open, and transparent way, and the second being to generate artifacts that are useful to those partners, and their audiences. There is a third element that was perhaps most important to me for this ELP, and that was working with people and organizations whose mandates are to intentionally create positive impacts in the lives of those that they serve.

The community-based participatory research (CBPR) framework and principles were the basis of this ELP. CBPR is an action research approach that is born from a commitment to social transformation. It purposely focuses on the complementary skills of the partners and centers the community at all stages of the research and its dissemination (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 152). Importantly, CBPR is also rooted in feminist action research principles, highlighting that the personal is political, and that women, should be the voice and own the research that is generated (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 152). As the demographic that was targeted through this research were women aged 40-64, this framework was most appropriate.

It is fitting to address the definition of community in the context of this ELP. While CBPR uses a looser definition of community in its principles as a “unit of identity” (which could be defined by geography, race, ethnicity, or otherwise defined) (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014, p. 152), Cobb strongly contended that the definition of community must refer to a physical, geographic place (Hamilton Community Foundation, Cauliflower Thinking, 2018, 8:45). To her, when our collective work is based on optimization (read: social transformation) it must be rooted in place, as communities are sites of care and shared communal aspirations (9:45). The geographic proximity of each community partner to one another was one of the criteria which helped identify them as potential partners in the first place. That local context matters greatly when it comes to encouraging the participation of all of these organizations in this research and it satisfies the CBPR principle of local relevance (2014, p. 152). Further, a shared understanding of the systems that they are part of is also incredibly important and will be invaluable as the opportunity to implement recommendations comes to bear.

The research methods of surveys, narrative interviews, and photovoice artifacts complemented this ELP, precisely because they allowed for the research to maintain its subject-centered focus.

Open-ended surveys were an appropriate method to reach out to potential participants because through the digital communications channels of the four community partners, I was able to maintain my commitment to being intersectional in my outreach and reach a local audience that wasn't already connected to my personal network.

The narrative interview process was most appropriate for this research as it “does not merely seek to uncover and retell stories; rather, it seeks to explore and interpret, in a disciplined way, peoples' lived experience in order to add to social science understanding” (Frey, 2018). The

narrative interview process “...allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 88), allowing the interviewee to share their story and experiences, with minimal interjections, ensuring that their stories remain unadulterated.

Photovoice as a method was chosen because, as noted by Catalani and Minkler (2010), it helps to improve the understanding of needs and can have an impact on policies because it compels others to action (p. 16). Combining the narrative of the interviews and the power of the photovoice with the knowledge of the community partners “can lead to the development of effective and comprehensive strategies to address complex...social issues in a way that is ...meaningful for the community involved” (Nykiforuk, Vallianatos & Nieuwendyk, 2011).

Implementation

A representative from each of the community partners was identified to make up an inquiry team prior to the launch of the research, and signed letters were received (see Appendix K). Those inquiry team members agreed to be the conduit between my research and securing any permissions or implementing digital channel calls-to-action (CTAs) in each of their respective organizations. The inquiry team members were invited to review the website and the survey questions and provide feedback prior to it being launched publicly. Each member was also provided with examples of text and image CTAs that could be used on social media channels, or through their newsletters (see Appendices I – J, L – O, Figure 8) once the Royal Roads University’s (RRU’s) Research Ethics Board (REB) provided approval. See Figures 9 – 11 for examples of the CTAs that were sent out by the community partners.

A website was created (see Figures 1 – 7) at the domain www.womendisrupted.ca (with domain name redirection also being initiated from www.womendisrupted.com) and hosted on the

Squarespace platform that incorporated the required elements (research information, contact information (see Appendix E, Figures 1-2), and consent mechanism (see Appendix F, Figure 3)) as outlined by Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (CIHR, NSERC, & SSHRC, 2014). A downloadable copy of the research information was made available in PDF (portable document format) form through the site and hosted on Google Drive. Once I received ethics approval from RRU's REB, the data collection stage of this research launched (June 3, 2019). Social media accounts under the banner of Women Disrupted were created for Twitter (@womendisrupted), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/womendisrupted>), and Instagram (<https://instagram.com/womendisrupted>), and CTAs were shared on those platforms. Social media posts were shared under my own personal accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn), as well as within a Facebook group titled Hamilton Fempreneurs, a closed group with 3,622 members.

The survey was preceded by examples of disruption (see Figure 4) and included inclusion criteria and open-ended questions (see Appendix B, Figure 5). After clicking "SUBMIT" at the conclusion of the survey, respondents saw a thank-you message, an invitation to sign up to a mailing list/newsletter for updates regarding this research, and an invitation to email me to arrange to participate in a one-on-one confidential interview (see Appendix B, Figure 6). An email address and associated storage space on Google Drive was created solely for use with this research (womendisrupted@gmail.com).

All consent agreements and survey responses were captured through the womendisrupted.ca website and stored in a Google Sheet format in Google Drive.

Once a request for an interview was received by email, respondents received a response by email and a request to schedule an interview (see Appendix Q). Once the maximum of ten (10) interviews had been secured, an updated message was generated on the womendisrupted.ca website to advise that the interview slots were filled (Figure 6). The survey was kept open until August 25, 2019, when a notice that the survey was closed was added to the womendisrupted.ca website (Figure 7).

Narrative interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon day, time and location by the interviewee and me. We met in respondents' homes and places of work, public libraries, coffee shop patios, and parks. Each woman was provided with an interview consent form prior to the onset of the interview (see Appendix G). Interviews were recorded on two devices (one iPhone and one iPad using the VoiceMemos app). At the beginning of each interview, the women were asked to choose a nom de guerre so that they could remain anonymous, and so that they could recognize their own contributions in the final report and associated knowledge products related to this research. The flow of the interview followed the sequence as outlined in Appendix C; the women were encouraged to share their experiences with as much detail as they were comfortable divulging through prompts and open-ended questions. At the end of each interview, each woman was provided with a paper copy of a Debrief Package (see Appendix D), which was also subsequently emailed to them with active hotlinks to the resources. At the conclusion of each interview, each woman was presented with an invitation to explore producing a photovoice/creative artifact (see Appendix P), which would be collected at a later date.

Narrative interviews were auto transcribed using a proprietary transcription platform called Speak.ai that is not yet accessible to the public. I was provided access by a co-founder of the platform based on signing a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). I confirmed that all data

storage considerations were covered by existing signed consent forms prior to uploading the voice files to the platform. The transcriptions that were generated by the platform were subsequently manually edited by me for clarity and accuracy, then emailed to each participant for validation to ensure the interview data accurately captured their contribution. Once validated by each interviewee, the transcripts and surveys were uploaded to the NVivo platform where they were coded manually by me.

Photovoice submissions were received in person and by email up until the submission of this final report (see Figures 12-16). The submissions are also included in the associated knowledge product.

Data Analysis

To analyze data I used relevant literature, my field notes, the thirty-two (32) completed surveys, and ten (10) audio recordings and transcripts from the narrative interviews. Two separate incidents of duplicate surveys submitted by the same respondent were removed from the final survey count (the last survey submitted being the one that was kept), and one survey was removed as the respondent took the opportunity to advise that they hadn't been disrupted in their career, therefore nullifying the inclusion-criteria.

Through the interviews I kept notes of significant themes based on my literature review, which were revisited and validated by listening to the audio recordings while manually updating the auto transcriptions. The transcription service provided auto-generated topics and keywords, although its accuracy was not entirely reliable as the product is still in its development stage.

I uploaded the surveys and transcriptions into the NVivo software platform and manually coded each data source, and both inductively and deductively generated categories for coding

(Given, 2008, p. 71, p. 85). I subsequently conducted a word frequency survey using NVivo to validate insights, trends, and patterns that I'd uncovered.

Ethical Standards

My capstone adhered to the required ethical standards outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) being 1. Respect for Persons, 2. Concern for Welfare, and 3. Justice (CIHR, NSERC, & SSHRC, 2014).

Regarding respect for persons, participants were free to consent to the study without any interference and were informed that they could withdraw at any time. This occurred during the survey stage, the interview stage, and the validation of transcription stage. The research information (see Appendix E, Figures 2-3) was available online and in a downloadable format prior to accessing the survey, and at the onset of the survey; that content is still available online at the womendisrupted.ca website. Interviewees were able to ask me questions during the interview, post-interview, at the time of validating the transcripts, and at the time of submitting their photovoice artifact.

Regarding concern for welfare, participants' well-being was actively considered, as there was potential to experience psychological harm including stress and anxiety due to reliving past traumas. Survey respondents and interviewees were aware of these risks through the research information content and could only move forward after consenting to that risk. Many times, interviews were paused as I checked-in when the women were expressing intense emotions. No identifying information was collected as a requirement to participate in the survey, maintaining anonymity of each respondent. Each woman that was interviewed was asked to provide a *nom de guerre* at the onset of the interview so that their identities are only known to themselves and

myself. At the close of each interview, each woman was provided a Debrief Package (see Appendix D) in both paper and electronic format.

Regarding justice, inclusion and exclusion criteria, recruitment was fair, according to section 5.1 of the TCPS (CIHR, NSERC, & SSHRC, 2014). No one in my inquiry team, including myself, had any power over any of the interviewees.

Section Five: Findings, Conclusions, and Limitations

The purpose of this research was to center women's voices and uncover insights gathered through the data analysis of online surveys and narrative interviews regarding how these women had responded to the experience of their career being disrupted, with the goal of informing this group of community organizations as to the resources and support that women need to shorten the time between being disrupted and once again realizing their economic independence. This section identifies the key findings that emerged based on my observations and data analysis of my three research methods; surveys, interviews, and photovoice.

The stories of disruption shared by respondents through the online survey and narrative interviews identified industries and sectors that included healthcare, mental health, local and national not-for-profits, the arts, human resources, sales, professional services, retail, hospitality, and education. The size of organizations ranged from small businesses of less than 10 employees to large Fortune 500s. The causes of disruption identified during the interviews could be categorized under three different headings: systemic issues in the workplace (e.g. a re-organization that affected more than the interviewee), mismanagement (e.g. failure to manage a manageable issue, such as a request for flexible work hours), or workplace conflict (e.g. discrimination or harassment).

Findings

In my findings, I use excerpts from anonymous surveys (S#), narrative interviews (Name) that were conducted between June 11 and 28th, 2019, and photovoice submissions. Through the analytic process outlined in Section Four, I identified the following three key findings in my evaluation:

1. After a career disruption, women often face financial hardship and experience a decrease in their income, which can take years to recover from.
2. After a career disruption, women frequently turn to entrepreneurship out of necessity, rather than desire.
3. After a career disruption, some women found the disruption to be a positive experience.

Career disruption negatively impacts women's incomes.

It was the rare woman that walked away from a career disruption with a healthy severance package. Out of 32 submissions, only four women stated that they were compensated in a way that provided them with short-term financial security, and which afforded them some time to determine what their next steps would be. "I think it was more just a relief because it meant that I didn't have to... battle anything" (Flora). "... don't start applying for jobs now 'cause you're panicking 'cause you have to start working right away, like you've got a really generous severance like now is the time take care of yourself" (Rachel). "...we used the severance to make our monthly financial commitments" (Laurel). "...it was devastating but at the same time... Well, I mean, I got a great payout" (Kate). However, that security was generally short-lived; "I was nervous. ...I was getting to the point where I was having to really start to cut back, my lifestyle was having to change" (Rachel). "But then here a year later I still haven't figured out income..." (Kate).

Overwhelmingly, women's financial position became precarious; "I wasn't eligible for EI and so I was in a panic. Obviously, when you don't have an income and then you have kids..." (Emily). "I went from this job where I was making close to 6 figures a year, to I think in my first year I made like around \$20,000" (Vanessa). "I'm an independent woman and...I've brought my kids up without any finances from anyone else, but I don't have a backup. There isn't a backup plan, it stops at my month to month paycheck" (Sally). "I could not have done it without my parent's financial support. I still have debt, but it doesn't control me" (S07). "I went from making 6 figures to working for minimum wage at an animal shelter in order to preserve my sanity and self-worth" (S19). "I have had my income drop to 60% for months or years...When I can barely keep food on the table, I don't feel like I can stop and have the luxury of pausing to plan" (S21). "I don't have the money to just walk away, but I've been branching out into other outside work and just yesterday phoned to find out the value of my pension" (S25).

Not one survey respondent or interviewee reported or indicated that they were better off financially after having their career disrupted. One woman, Laurel, reported that her current earnings are the same as they were at the time of her disruption, over 10 years ago.

Entrepreneurship out of necessity.

Beaton (2018) uncovered through semi-structured interviews that "for some women, upon the realization that it was unlikely that they would be rehired through traditional means, many of them...decided their only option was to start their own business..." (2018, p. 15). This observation is further supported through my research where this was an experience shared by 8/10 interviewees and 17/32 survey respondents.

Vanessa finally came to start her practice reluctantly after sending out dozens of resumés, and after applying for a role that went to a much younger and less experienced applicant: "...I

just didn't want to do the business part of it... And I thought 'why am I chasing after these people who just keep showing me like we don't value you?' Yeah, and so I started my private practice. (personal communication, June 10, 2019)

Annabelle only came to start her business after choosing to freelance after months of repeatedly applying for roles and getting no responses; "I could always sell everything else for everybody else ...so, I started my own business." (personal communication, June 17, 2019)

Rachel went back to school for certification in a new field after being let go from a job that she had been in for 17 years. After applying for roles in her new field and getting no responses or interviews, she for a while reverted back to applying for roles that more suited her old work. It took a mental reset for her to commit to finding work in her new chosen field that she had just completed schooling in for her to change her approach: "...it's just a contract...and I string a few of these together, eventually I'll have my own consulting company." (personal communication, June 11, 2019)

Julie was working in an unregulated sector in the healthcare field and felt stuck because her employer wasn't willing to facilitate her short-term request for flexible work hours to accommodate her partner's schedule and their childcare needs, forcing her to quit and start her own business. At first, Julie was dismayed with starting her own venture: "I think that, at least in this particular business nobody knows how to run a business.... you don't know what you're doing, you're totally just hoping for the best." (personal communication, June 21, 2019) Julie's business eventually evolved to include training her replacement well after she'd originally left, and then being brought back by her former employer to produce documentation that her replacement wasn't capable of completing. This ultimately allowed her to charge a rate and only

work a few days a week which reflected the exact same original accommodation she had requested in the first place.

Laurel worked in HR most of her professional life and felt unmoored when she was let go. She tried her hand at service businesses such as wallpapering and gardening but admitted that without any previous experience she was taking risks and grasping for opportunities to just survive. She took on caregiving for friends' children and quickly realized that it wasn't work that she was called to. Laurel shared, "...the truth of that is, you have to have that entrepreneurial spirit, that driving force, and I don't think I had it enough..." (personal communication, June 24, 2019)

Kate had been let go from a large corporation and was seeking her next role when she was directed towards entrepreneurship by others that had discovered an online side venture that she'd started years before. "...they found out about this website that I had....it was very obvious to them that I shouldn't be looking for work I should go into entrepreneurship. And so, I did." When asked why she'd never considered the venture as a viable business herself, Kate was almost incredulous; "It's not secure. I didn't know anything about that world. ...This is a whole different world like I knew nothing about. I don't even know what that meant. (personal communication, June 24, 2019)

The YWCA's programming (see Appendix A, Table 1) had a lasting and profound impact on Emily, a former participant in the program and one of the interviewees in this research. When she spoke about the BizSmart program she participated in years ago, she very much valued what she had learned in the program, and the financial supports that came along with that opportunity. The lasting value of such programming is evidenced when Emily said:

...they taught you how to learn in a business sort of way, and how to approach things that way so they taught you about marketing they taught you about organizing your business and being organized so that I'm applying all those things that I learned then to what I'm doing now right now... (personal communication, June 12, 2019)

Many anonymous responses via the online survey also reflected how women turned to entrepreneurship out of necessity. Numerous women shared harrowing stories of surviving different types of harassment, questionable ethics, and toxic cultures, and they ultimately embraced starting their own venture as a way to exert some control over their circumstances:

“When I was fired in September; everything changed, and I decided that I would spend most of my energy on developing my artwork and learning how to market my work effectively.” (S02) “I started my own practice so I could manage my own schedule and earn income to make ends meet. I have since only worked for myself as it allows me flexibility and control over my life. (S28) “I decided to start my own business following this experience [harassment] and remain self-employed now.” (S16) “I now found myself unemployed with no plan. I instantly started applying for...jobs that I had in the past...I was no longer qualified...I was able to borrow some money from my father and I purchased a franchise...” (S07) “I tried looking for work, but nothing made sense. So, I delved into working for myself in a few ways. ...as much as a struggle it is to be an entrepreneur, I couldn't trade it for the unsupportive and unkind corporate world again. (S17) “...many of the female staff accused the male boss of sexual harassment. An ensuing investigation...ended in no real changes...Staying and continuing to work there after that experience...didn't seem tenable so I resigned and started my own business. (S16)

Another issue that was uncovered in this research and which may contribute to our understanding the difficulties women face and why they turn to entrepreneurship was revealed

through my interview with Rose. Originally from a North African country, Rose is a woman of relative means who emigrated to Canada from the United Kingdom (UK) to complete her master's and be closer to her family of origin for support after a divorce. When it came to finding work after coming to Canada, she shared how different and difficult it was for her to find work in her field. Rose shared that in her experience in the UK, applicants were chosen for interviews based solely on their curricula vitae (CV). That was decidedly not her experience in Canada. She disclosed:

...once the internship was over, a research position had opened up and I was literally taken by a lady I had met by the hand, walked over to the department ...and [she] said "This is Rose. She is wonderful. You should hire her."...I just couldn't believe that that's how things were done...

Rose's experience is an important one to highlight as it identifies two more barriers that women may face in securing employment and why women would turn to entrepreneurship out of necessity; nepotism and unconscious bias. I contend that when nepotism exists in an organization it supports an environment where unconscious bias, notably affinity bias, is allowed to flourish. If nepotism is foundational to how people find employment in Canada, then the fact that older women are leaving organizations means that older women look less and less like the groups that they are trying to access for employment, and their access to hiring managers is further restricted. Szafarz's research and contention that "discrimination stems from affinity preferences" supports this finding (2007, p. 7). The frustration with this kind of barrier was articulated by Rachel when she shared, "How do I make connections to find these other hidden job market they always talk about? ... is it networking? I need to figure that out." (personal communication, June 11, 2019)

Beaton's (2018) research, my own lived experience, the anecdotal stories of women in my immediate network, a growing body of grey literature, and these stories above are indications of an invisible reality; that women, 40-64, are responding to having their careers disrupted by embracing entrepreneurship out of necessity, not necessarily desire.

Disruption can be a positive thing.

There is no denying that disruption is a powerful, life-altering experience. The emotional responses to being disrupted have overwhelmingly been described negatively as “embarrassment”, “ashamed”, “stressful”, and “burned out” (Rachel, Annabelle, S07, S20). One respondent shared that she is still feeling the impact of being forced out of her legal firm 11 years later: “To this day, I am hurt by the lack of loyalty demonstrated to myself by the senior managers for whom I had worked so hard for 10 years to make look good before their clients and the court.” (S14).

In a response of what can only be described as a model of resilience, many women also rallied and chose to move forward intentionally and with purpose, embracing the opportunities that came from being externally disrupted. Annabelle's photovoice submission (see Figure 13) expressed this beautifully when she shared, “That burst you see at the bottom left is my spirit hanging on, existing in the chaos, finding a safe space.” (personal communication, August 15, 2019)

Flora spent many years working for Fortune 500 companies, and after benefiting from outplacement services and coaching, she recognized that she was procrastinating at starting a new job search. She realized why: “...and then it was just like the big lightbulb, because I don't want to work for companies anymore.... I'm now a consultant....I also started a second business

as well. (personal communication, June 24, 2019) Flora's photovoice expression (see Figure 14) shares her expression of optimism, clarity, and moving forward.

In the original survey received from Rachel, she had this to say about her disruption:

With the available time and a generous severance package I went back to school full time. Two years later, I am now working in a new career/industry that I love that also has great future potential. I now know that getting reorganized was one of the best things to ever happen to me. If I hadn't been pushed out the door I may never have gotten to where I am today. (personal communication, June 3, 2019)

In Rachel's photovoice expression (see Figure 15), which is joyous and light, and expressive, she shared how the flowers represented her past, future, and present self.

This woman, who works in healthcare approaches her disruption this way:

It was time to see my dismissal as a blessing and take some chances. ...The excitement of building something great for myself and my patients drowns out the daily work it takes, and I look forward on this new chapter as an unexpected blessing. (S20, personal communication, June 13, 2019)

For this healthcare provider who had experienced a traumatic health crisis, the disruption affected her and her household's dynamics in a good way, and especially for her two university aged children: "It was really positive for our household definitely. ...now they're just so much more independent. Like just so much more than they would've been. It was the kick that they needed. So, for our household really, really good..." (Sally, personal communication, June 14, 2019). Sally's photovoice submission (see Figure 12) reflects the support that she relied on with her children, and how they became her source of strength.

This former employee of not-for-profit mental health agencies shared this about her disruption:

It's been hard. I am so grateful for this chance to start over. Hindsight tells me that I was burned out, not supported and a victim of bad leadership. The money was pathetic, really for what I was doing, and I will no longer work for anyone else! (S07)

Tragically though, even when women choose entrepreneurship, do the research, take the right steps, and engage with the right organizations, their efforts can still be thwarted and sabotaged because of bias and discrimination. One such local story came to light from the anonymous surveys. A woman who had successfully created a startup and was invited to take part in a high profile female focused accelerator in southwestern Ontario was summarily dropped from the program once it had been discovered that she had been previously incarcerated. Even though this woman had served her punishment and her previous incarceration had zero bearing on her current company, she was not afforded the opportunity to move ahead in the accelerator program and further made to feel shame by the program leads. The effect on her was devastating. “It knocked the wind right out of my sails. I had just quit all 5 of my jobs 6 months prior. ...the sadness was comparable to [being] behind bars.” Still, this woman, again in a show of sheer determination and resilience chose to continue to move forward:

I almost quit, spent some time at home crying and feeling sorry for myself. Thankfully I received wonderful programming, counseling and have built resilience. I choose to stand a little taller and carry on....The business is going strong, struggles at times but we are progressing. We have a team of 8 now, all of which support my struggles and strengths. I lean into my strengths and what I've learned. (S31)

A question I continue to ask is whether a disruption can ever be defined as being self-initiated, as it's usually an act of self-preservation, as was shared by this respondent, "I work in media/politics and was pressured to take a pay cut while the organization hired younger people. I quit and took another job. It was for less pay but more respect." (S12) While the answer may not be understood through this research, I believe it's another important question.

The experience of disruption is a deeply personal one, as is the response of those affected. Women's ability to positively respond is dependent upon many factors, including financial support, and emotional support from friends and family. In my observations, the women that were provided severance packages and outplacement services were able to rally more readily and find a new direction or focus, due to having access to learning resources, coaching services, and having a financial buffer which gave them time to reflect. It would take a longer view to determine if women whose careers are disrupted ever reclaim the income that they once had and is a line of research that would be valuable to pursue.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on my findings, and as answers to my primary inquiry question, and sub-questions for inquiry.

Trust is the foundation.

The root causes of career disruption are devastating; emotionally, financially, and professionally. The stories from the women that I interviewed, and those that shared anonymously through the survey often touched upon some of the most devastating times in a woman's life including being financially vulnerable, experiencing the death of loved ones, or walking through the demise of close relationships. One of the effects of being mistreated,

harassed or dismissed is that one's confidence and trust is shaken. This theme was recurring throughout this research.

To answer the primary question, how might my four community partners (the community partners) help capture the stories of women aged 40-64 in their respective networks, I proffer that to successfully capture stories of women aged 40-64, a degree of trust was critical. Through the decision of each community partner to lend their names and agreeing to be associated with this research and with each other, a level of credibility and trust was afforded to this research question, and to me as the researcher, before respondents had even engaged with the survey questions. This was the same consideration at play as I sought partners for this research as I connected to the leaders of the community organizations that I didn't already know through my network of friends and associates. Half of the survey respondents identified either one of the community partners or a friend/other as the source of how they found the survey. A few respondents noted that they had seen my post in the Hamilton Fempreneurs closed Facebook group, indicating that social networking and the trust-based relationships of associated groups and networks was important and an avenue that the community partners should use to connect with the women of their communities. This trust was evidenced when I had a number of women in that group independently ask if they could share the survey on other social media platforms, indicating respect for the confidentiality and closed status of the group, and the intrinsic trust amongst the group's members. The power and trust of these communities started with being rooted in place (Cobb, 2018), and also through sharing a unit of identity (Coughlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014).

Entrepreneurship programming is important.

An environmental scan of the programming offered by the participating community partners was conducted to answer the question, what programming from the community partners exists already, which this research may be able to build upon? The system map (see Appendix A and Table 1) shows there are few programs that specifically support female entrepreneurs in Hamilton, and there are no programs or workshops that are specifically focused towards women aged 40-64, although there are limited programs and networking groups focused on women under the age of 30. As has been shown through the findings in this section, as women are turning to entrepreneurship through necessity, ensuring that entrepreneurial training and resources are available is critical to the well-being of women in the Hamilton community.

Following is an accounting of the publicly available programming provided by the community partners. The YWCA provides varied programming, both publicly and privately funded, that focuses on general business (such as BizSmart, now known as the Women in Entrepreneurship Program), as well as specific training that supports women entering the trades, amongst others. The YWCA is in a strong position to continue to lead the programming for women in entrepreneurship especially in light of the recent announcement of \$1 million in funding from the federal government for extending their current programming (Rankin, 2019).

The majority of programming provided by Innovation Factory (IF) is client-based, meaning that after an intake process and meeting certain criteria, entrepreneurs that have already launched (or are imminently launching) their ICT (information, communications, technology) based company are provided access to mentors, resources and programming. IF has their year-long Accelerator for Women in Entrepreneurship (AWE) program which is also client-based, and provides speakers and workshops on leadership, networking, investment pitching, fundraising, sales and marketing, negotiating, and mentoring. While not a partner, IF also hosted

regional workshops in support of research being conducted as part of The Ontario Inclusive Innovation (I2) Action Strategy, which recently shared its important research titled Strengthening Ecosystem Supports for Women Entrepreneurs.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce does not currently have any specific female focused programming. It does have entrepreneurship programming oriented towards Hamilton's youth (YEP, for members 40 and younger). It hosts recurring member-only networking events, both formal (Connections) and informal (Business After Business).

The Hamilton Business Centre (formerly the City of Hamilton Small Business Enterprise Centre) showcases women-led ventures and celebrates women entrepreneurs every year through its Success in the City Event, now running in its 9th year. Its entrepreneurship programming includes seminars and workshops (some free, some fee-based), programs (Digital Main Street, and Starter Company Plus), and mentoring programs.

Collaboration is key.

In answer to the question, how might my community partners collectively communicate the findings of this research, and plan for future activities that complement each other's mandates, I suggest that it is incumbent on community organizations, especially those that work at the municipal level fronting access to vital services, to acknowledge the trends of an aging workforce (Gratton and Scott, 2016), and the existence of gendered ageism (Krekula, Nikander, & Wilińska, 2018) and respond in a way that serves the needs of this group. Further answers to this question are found following in the Recommendations.

By convening the four community partners in the first place, this research helps connect the system back to itself (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1998, para. 38). These stories are out there. By holding space for these stories, hearing them in a local context, and sharing them to a

wider audience, the Hamilton community can collaboratively and holistically create policies and programming that will directly mitigate the harm that gendered ageism has on women, and support them in accessing the resources they need to move forward in a positive and confident manner. A shared *raison d'être* mitigates barriers to trust and fosters collaboration.

Limitations

There are some limitations to my ELP regarding participant recruitment, my research methods, and data analysis.

A limitation with participant recruitment was one of the community partners wasn't able to validate that any CTAs were sent out during the data collection period of the study. If a CTA had been sent out by this partner, this may have considerably changed the number of survey responses.

A limitation regarding participant recruitment is that the whole of this research CTA was conducted online, which means that there are whole segments of the local population that would not readily have seen the CTA or have been able to participate in the research due to barriers regarding accessibility to digital tools.

A limitation regarding my research methods is my relative nascent experience as a narrative interviewer. I did preface each interview by letting each woman know that I intended to actively suppress my overt and/or emotional responses to their stories because I didn't want to influence the direction of the story; I was not always successful at doing this.

A limitation regarding data analysis is that two out of four community partners were able to provide metrics regarding views and interactions with their CTAs, therefore I do not have a comprehensive view of the actual reach of the survey and CTAs and can only speculate on those metrics across the entire study.

A limitation in the data is that the data sample is rather small, and not statistically significant enough to indicate a trend or paradigm shift, in either a local, regional or national setting.

Associated Knowledge Product

My research partner will receive a copy of this final report, and a PowerPoint presentation that encapsulates the essential elements of this report in a more digestible format. Both products will include copies of the photovoice submissions. The intention is to use the PowerPoint presentation to facilitate a joint session with representatives from each community partner organization to disseminate the findings of this research so as to mitigate the gaps and/or duplication of services across the city-wide system.

Section Six: Next Steps: Recommendations and Implications

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my observations about workplace culture, the toxicity of so many workplace environments, and the very real existence of gendered ageism that were shared through the online surveys and narrative interviews. The causes of disruption were sadly plentiful and rooted in discrimination, gendered ageism, sexual harassment, bullying and harassment, nepotism, politics, lack of support for mental health or physical health issues, lack of support for caregiving responsibilities, and blatant ethical, and sometimes legal, violations. Fixing workplace culture requires a paradigm shift and a change in how we approach the future of work, one that is outside the scope of this research, but a call that is supported by this research.

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions from the research data and the literature, and address the main research question and sub-questions:

1. Connect the system back to itself; initiate bi-annual meetings and expand cross-organizational information sharing regarding entrepreneurial programming.
2. Meet people where they are; the language around entrepreneurship matters.
3. Entrepreneurial programming is important; make it more inclusive.
4. Enable and facilitate cross-generational mentoring.

Connect the system back to itself

It was Wheatley (2005) that said to generate better health of a system, you must connect that system back to itself. All of the community partners that are a part of this research are part of an economic development system with intersecting and similar goals in a local setting. Each organization seeks to improve and enable entrepreneurial activity for the betterment of the region.

By committing to bi-annual rotating gatherings held on the site of each partner, everyone becomes a part of fostering a greater experience of collaboration, information sharing, and transparency. By sharing programming updates, funding sources, or partnering up to respond to funding opportunities from the provincial or federal governments, the community organizations could collectively mitigate the gaps in programming and/or duplication of services, and this City could see a level of cooperation not realized or modeled in any other municipality in the country. This is how the four community partners may collectively communicate the findings of this research and plan for future activities.

Meet people where they are; the language around entrepreneurship matters

The word entrepreneur only came up in one interview. One interview out of 32 submissions. It's already been established that entrepreneurship programming is essential for women who are experiencing career disruption due to gendered ageism, because they are

building businesses out of necessity, but the women that need this programming don't see themselves in the environmental scan of existing programming offered by the participating community partners (see Appendix A and Table 1). So, how might my four community partners further support these women's leadership development, economic enablement, and economic independence? By recognizing that the women that need the programming that is being offered aren't using the language of the startup or entrepreneurial communities, those disruptive cultures that Montalvo (2016) spoke of.

If programming is made available, but it continually uses the language of "entrepreneur" only, it excludes women from self-identifying or partaking in programming because of the barrier of language. Think less hustle, and more helping women recognize the value of the decades of their experience and how it can translate to entrepreneurship and building something; maybe even something scalable. This is further evidenced in grey literature; "women...did not identify with the title "entrepreneur", often seeing it as a loaded term. Instead, many of the women surveyed preferred terms such as "founder" or "business owner" ("Shattering stereotypes," April 2015). This is also evidenced by the interviews in this original research; each woman spoke about becoming a consultant (Flora, Rachel), starting a private practice (Vanessa), or starting a business (Annabelle, Julie). The only women that mentioned the word entrepreneur is a woman that's been in the ICT space for decades (Kate), and she had to be brought into the language by someone else first.

Entrepreneurial programming is important; make it more inclusive

This research has shown that while there are some programs that support female entrepreneurs, there is no programming that explicitly addresses entrepreneurship for women at this stage of their careers and life cycles. Why does this matter? It's not that the women who are

40-64 just don't see themselves in the language; they don't see themselves in the posters, programming iconography, or learning materials associated with entrepreneurship either. That imagery, while may be more diverse from a visible minority perspective, is not more inclusive from an age perspective.

One of the valuable pieces of insight from three different interviews talked about the value of outplacement services provided when the women were provided a severance package. Through the exercises, introspective work, and learning that they were availed to, participants spoke of how they were reminded of what excited them, the value in their experience and knowledge, and how their insights were built on a foundation of decades. The opportunity for the four community partners is to enable women to once again see themselves as valuable and tap into the excitement and rejuvenation they feel when they're enabled, and not being discriminated against.

Cross-generational mentoring

There is a huge opportunity for disrupted women and their younger peers to learn from one another. This isn't a new idea, but it is one that most people don't take very seriously. There are currently five generations in the workplace; enabling women to learn from one another without the influence or barriers of politics, or reporting structures could open up new levels of understanding, learning, and collaboration.

Implications

It is entirely feasible that by incorporating a more intersectional lens into current and future entrepreneurial programming the community partners could dramatically change workplace culture and influence a paradigm shift in the future of work in a local setting. By educating and influencing the next cohort of entrepreneurs, regardless of their age, as how to be

inclusive as they build their companies using techniques like incorporating blind recruiting and interview processes, unconscious bias training, or cross-generational mentoring, the next generation of companies coming out of Hamilton, Ontario could be leading the way in positive leadership and capitalizing on the vast breadth and depth of knowledge held in the experience of disrupted women.

Section Seven: Summary

The purpose of this research was to center the voices of women aged 40-64 and uncover insights gathered through the data analysis of their stories regarding how these women had responded to the experience of their career being disrupted. I accomplished this through engaging these women in a meaningful way through online surveys, narrative interviews, and by receiving their creative photovoice expressions.

The recommended changes have the potential to dramatically and positively lead to the growth and development of a new kind of venture born in Hamilton, Ontario. The changes would shorten the time between these women being disrupted and once again realizing their economic independence. The system itself would be healthier, as would be the women, their families, their communities, and the ventures that they go on to create.

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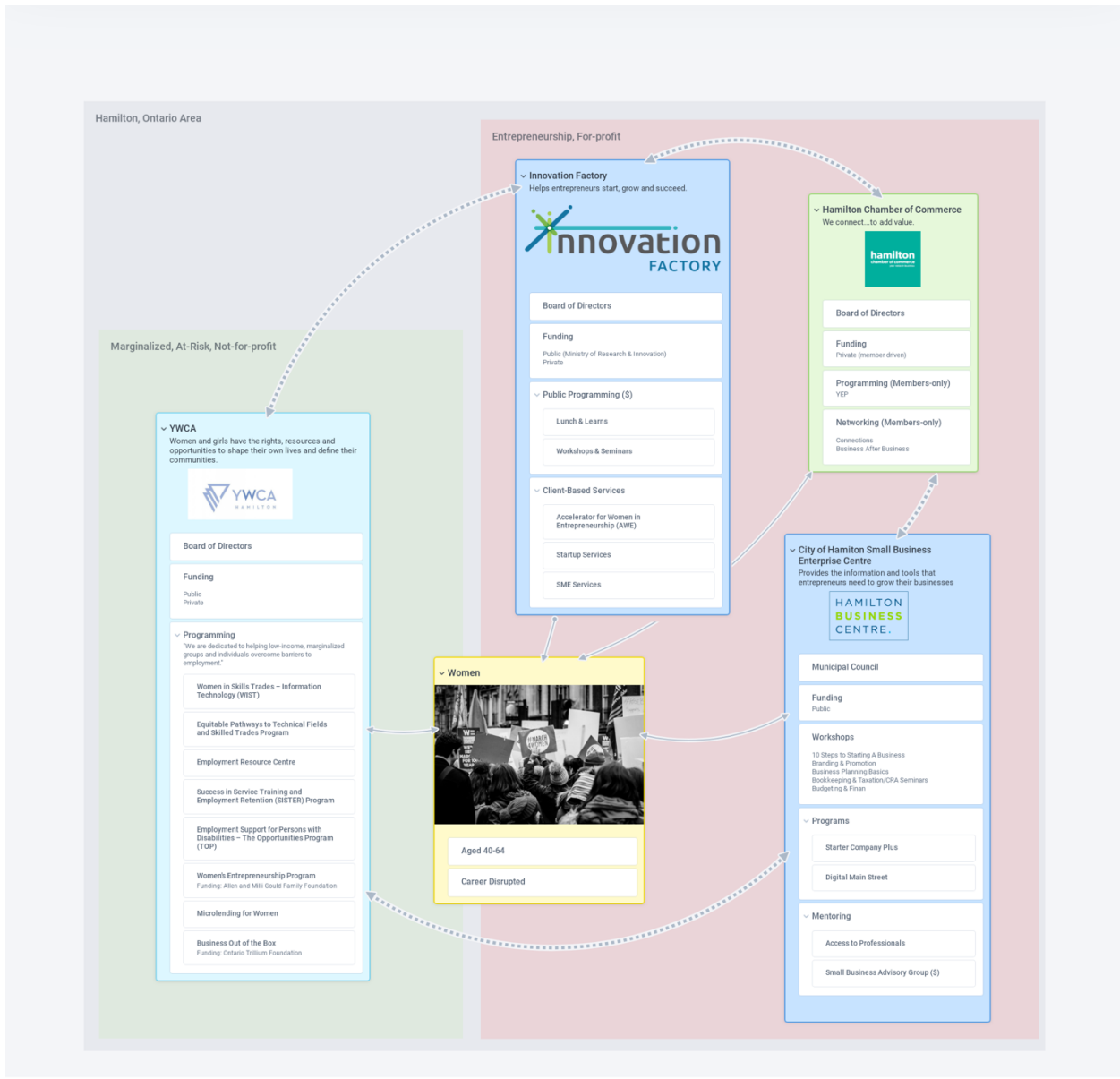
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Appendices

Appendix A: System Map of Community Partners and Participants



Note. A system map outlining the interrelationships of the four community partners, their respective communities of service, existing relevant programming, and sources of funding. This map may be viewed at: <https://www.plectica.com/maps/6B75DWETU>

Appendix B: Survey Questions

[Descriptions of situations that identify states of disruption to one's career. See Table 4 for content.]

Question #	Question	Responses	Action
1	Do you identify as a woman/femme?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If no > thank you/exit If yes > continue
2	Are you in the age range of 40-64?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If no > thank you/exit If yes > continue
3	Do you live in the Hamilton, Ontario area	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If no > thank you/exit If yes > continue
4	Which area of Hamilton do you live in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Ancaster <input type="checkbox"/> Dundas <input type="checkbox"/> Flamborough <input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton (Downtown) <input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton (Mountain) <input type="checkbox"/> Stoney Creek <input type="checkbox"/> Waterdown	
6	Do you identify as having been disrupted in your career?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Continue
7	Please describe what happened to you and please tell us how you responded to that disruption? Did you leave your job? Did you find new work? Did you start your own business? Did you go back to school or find training in a new field? Were you able to find resources that helped you along the way? Did you reach out to community organizations for help/support? [There are no text limits to your submission; write as much or as little as you're comfortable sharing.]	Open text box for narrative inputs with no character limits.	Continue

Question #	Question	Responses	Action
8	Which resources did you know about and access? Which resources did you need, but didn't know about? [There are no text limits to your submission; write as much or as little as you're comfortable sharing.]	Open text box for narrative inputs with no character limits.	Continue
9	How did you find out about this survey?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton Chamber of Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton Economic Development <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation Factory <input type="checkbox"/> YWCA Hamilton <input type="checkbox"/> Through a friend <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
10	Would you be willing to participate in a confidential, one-on-one, personal interview with the researcher behind this survey?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If no > thank you/submit/exit If yes > click to email under separate cover (to maintain anonymity/privacy)

Note. Survey questions as they appeared on www.womendisrupted.com.

Appendix C: Narrative Interview Outline

Flow	Question/Action
1.	Set the scene/meeting place
2.	Informed consent signed
3.	Inclusion criteria confirmation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place of residence
4.	Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You identify as a woman? 2. You identify as being between the ages of 40-64? 3. You identify as having been disrupted in your career? 4. Please tell me about that. What happened?
5.	Examples of prompts that may be used throughout the interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Tell me more about that.” • “What happened next?” • “What was your reaction then?” • “Are there any other things you remember happening?” • “What supports do you believe could have assisted you, or could assist women who experience disruption in their career?”

Note. Flow of a narrative interview for women, aged 40-64, who live in the Hamilton, Ontario (including Ancaster, Dundas, Waterdown, Flamborough, and Stoney Creek) region and who have self-identified as having been disrupted in their careers.

Appendix D: Debrief Package

Talking about difficult experiences can bring up troubling emotions and can leave us feeling sad, depressed, or uncertain. If you feel like you may need to access any of the services below, I will work with you to identify the right support service for you and help you access a local agency that may be able to help.

Listing of resources available from https://211ontario.ca/		
1.	<u>Emergency/Crisis</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Lines • In-person crisis service
2.	<u>Community Programs</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer access • Public libraries
3.	<u>Employment/Training</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career counselling • Job search support / training • Self-employment / entrepreneurship
4.	<u>Government/Legal</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Community legal clinics
5.	<u>Health Care</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk-in medical clinics
6.	<u>Income Support</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency financial assistance • Employment Insurance (EI) • Income programs for older adults • Social Assistance • Workers compensation
7.	<u>Mental Health/Addictions</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community mental health centres • In-person crisis services • Justice and mental health programs • Support groups
8.	Other support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Abuse/Assault</u> • <u>Disabilities</u> • <u>Family Services</u> • <u>Food</u> • <u>Homelessness</u> • <u>Housing</u> • <u>Indigenous Peoples</u> • <u>LGBTQ+</u> • <u>Newcomers</u> • <u>Older Adults</u> • <u>Youth</u>

Note: This content was provided to all interview subjects on paper at the conclusion of the interview, and was also emailed post-interview, with hotlinks included.

Appendix E: Research Information Letter

[This content appeared on a website landing page www.womendisrupted.com / www.womendisrupted.ca prior to accessing the survey.]

Women Disrupted: Centering Women's Voices for Social Change

My name is Karen Schulman Dupuis, and this research project is part of the requirement for my Master of Arts, Leadership at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by contacting XX XXXX XXXX, School of Leadership Studies: XXX@RoyalRoads.ca or xxx-xxx-xxxx ext. xxx.

Why this work matters to me

When I was 46, I found myself in the midst of a huge career disruption. I had left a full-time role, and I was having a really hard time finding new work. I simply wasn't getting called for interviews, even though I had been part of my sector for almost 20 years. In talking to my friends, I realized that many of them were also experiencing the same kind of disruption to their careers; firings, lay-offs, lack of promotion, or the feeling of being purposefully left out of decisions and opportunities for growth. Many of my friends and acquaintances were just stepping out, and turning to consulting or starting a new business on their own. This kind of thing got me thinking; is it just me and my friends, or is there something else going on here?

Purpose of the study and sponsoring organization

The focus of my research is women (or women-identifying individuals) aged 40-64 from the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Waterdown, Flamborough, and Stoney Creek) who identify as having had their careers disrupted. The purpose of my research is to capture their stories, and not talk about *how* they were disrupted, but to generate insights regarding how they *responded* to that disruption. My hope is that their stories inform a new way forward and ignite a positive and a purposeful system-wide response from community organizations in Hamilton, Ontario that support women and their economic empowerment. I'm proud to be partnered in this research with YWCA of Hamilton and its CEO, Denise Christopherson.

Your participation and how information will be collected

The research will start with an anonymous survey. The surveys will be conducted online, and the results saved via Google Drive; your responses are 100% confidential and 100% anonymous. The surveys are expected to take from two minutes to 20 minutes to complete; it all depends on how much you want to share.

At the end of the survey, there will be a question asking if you're willing to participate in a one-on-one, confidential interview to further discuss your experience. Your story and your identity will be 100% confidential and 100% anonymous. If you would like to talk further, you will click the "YES" web form button; an email will pop up, pre-populated with my email address, and when you click 'send', this will inform me that you're interested in participating in an interview. In response, I will invite you to schedule an interview with me, at your convenience. The interview isn't a requirement; it's totally voluntary. The interviews may take from 30 minutes to one hour.

At the end of your interview, you will be invited to produce and share something creative, to express how your experience of disruption made you feel. That could look like anything; a photo, a piece of artwork, a cross-stitch, a painting, an audio recording...it's entirely up to you, and again, it's totally voluntary. Doing the interview does *not* mean you need to create anything. Your words are gift enough.

Benefits and risks to participation

Benefits

As a participant in this research, the benefits you may experience by contributing to this research may look and feel like feeling empowered and validated for having their experience articulated.

My partner may be actively partaking in the closing of the gaps that currently exist in helping women when their careers are disrupted, lessening the duplication of services, and/or fostering further collaboration amongst the inquiry team member organizations and other community members.

As a society, when women's economic empowerment is fully realized, there is the potential to create the equivalent of a new financial sector in GDP for Canada alone (McKinsey, 2017). This will have a profound effect on the lives of women, their immediate families, and their extended communities in Canada, and the world.

As the researcher, the successful completion of this research and my follow-up reporting will allow me to obtain my Master of Arts, Leadership degree, likely help me extend my professional network, contribute towards women's economic empowerment in the Hamilton region, expand my understanding and awareness of gendered ageism in the workplace, and counter the experience of women aged 40-64 being deemed socially invisible.

Risks

By participating in this research, it could result in some minor discomfort that will occur when you recall sad, stressful, or hurtful memories, but nothing more than you would encounter from day to day. I've made sure I've collected a number of resources that will be ready to help you in case you're not at your best afterwards.

Inquiry team

There are four community partners that are part of my Inquiry Team: Denise Christopherson from YWCA Hamilton, the Innovation Factory, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Hamilton's Small Business Enterprise Centre. Nicholas Diduck is a classmate of mine and he'll be helping to review my draft questions, methods, and research findings. The inquiry team members will review my questions, help me connect with their different communities, and they help to make sure that my data and reporting is well constructed and complete. No members of the Inquiry Team will be involved in knowing who the participants are in the survey, and they will not be able to access any of the data from the survey or the interviews. The design of this research ensures that they will not find themselves in a situation where they have power over any of the participants.

Real or Perceived Conflict of Interest

There are no issues of real or perceived conflict of interest. If there are any changes to the nature of the extended relationship between me or any of the inquiry team partner organizations, this will be referenced explicitly in the call-to-action from the partners.

Confidentiality, security of data, and retention period

I will work to protect your privacy and dignity throughout this study. All information I collect will be maintained in strictest confidence. All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected portable hard drive which will have two-factor authentication enabled. All hard copies will be stored in a locked security box in my home office, and destroyed one year after I graduate. I expect to graduate in January 2020. At no time will any specific interviews or insights be attributed to any individual.

In the event that your survey response is processed and stored in the United States, you are advised that its governments, courts, or law enforcement and regulatory agencies may be able to obtain disclosure of the data through the laws of the United States.

Sharing results

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Masters of Arts in Leadership at Royal Roads University, I will also be sharing my research findings in the form of a final report with the leadership of the following organizations: Innovation Factory (IF), the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC), the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce's (HCC), and the YWCA Hamilton (YWCA); my Inquiry Team members.

Participants will receive a copy of the report upon request. It is possible that the results of this research may be part of an article, a conference presentation, or another kind of knowledge product in the future.

The final report will also be posted on this website after it is presented to my university and partnering organizations.

Procedure for withdrawing from the study

Notices of consent will be provided to all survey respondents at the onset of the survey. Withdrawing from the survey can happen at any time, and by not submitting content at the end of the survey. If you decide to work with me for a confidential interview, we will make arrangements together via email to meet up in a place that works for us both, and there will be a new letter of consent that will be provided to you that you will receive when we meet in real life for the interview. These letters will outline the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study. The letter will describe the format and timing of the various data collection methods and outline how my findings will be shared with my community partners. Participants will be assured that while their experiences, responses, and observations will be shared, their identities will be anonymized. The consent letter will emphasize that participation is entirely voluntary, and anyone can withdraw at any time. By choosing to submit in the survey, or by signing the in-person consent form, you indicate that you have read and understand the information above and give your free and informed consent to participate in these surveys, interviews, or by sharing your creative piece.

Please keep a copy of this information letter for your records, or download a copy of it
<here>< https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ZKKulaxtlbrLZcZHwtNiUCr_bq1Zd1Ip>.

In gratitude, and in service,

Karen Schulman Dupuis

xxx-xxx-xxxx

xxx@gmail.com

Appendix F: Research Consent Preamble - Survey**Consent form: survey**

By clicking these boxes and clicking submit, you agree that you are over the age of 18 and have read the information letter for this study. By clicking through, you state that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this survey and have data you contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.). Once you submit your survey, your answers will be anonymously tabulated, and you will not be able to withdraw your answers.

- I consent to quotations and excerpts expressed by me through the online survey to be included in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed.
- I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated through my participation in online survey to be used in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed.
- SUBMIT

Appendix G: Research Consent Form - Interview**Consent form: interview**

By signing this form, you agree that you are over the age of 18 and have read the information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this project and have data you contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.), and to have your confidential interview audio recorded so that the interview may be transcribed afterwards. You will have ten (10) days to review your transcript for accuracy and to provide any changes or clarifications that you wish to make. After that time, once the data analysis and final report writing has begun, it will difficult and unlikely that your contributions would be removed.

- I consent to quotations and excerpts expressed by me through the confidential interview to be included in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed.
- I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated through my participation in a confidential interview to be used in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed.
- I consent to the interview being audio recorded, with the understanding that the material will be destroyed one year after the interviewer's graduation from her program.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H: Research Consent Form – Photovoice/Creative Artifact**Consent form: photovoice/creative artifact**

By signing this form, you agree that you are over the age of 18 and have read the information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this project and have data you contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (e.g. journal articles, viewing of photovoice, conference presentations, newsletters, websites, etc.). After you submit your creative piece to this study, you will have two (2) weeks to withdraw your creative piece from this research. After that, it will be difficult and unlikely that your contribution would be removed from this study.

- I consent to have photographs or creative artifact produced by me included in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed.
- I consent to have photographs taken by me be included in this study, and/or a creative artifact produced by me, and with my permission, I agree to have my identity be known.

Name: (Please Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix I: Call-To-Action by Community Partners (Segmented Audience)

Email/Newsletter Invitation Example by Community Partners to an Inclusion Criteria Segmented Audience

You are invited to participate in research that is being conducted by fellow Hamiltonian Karen Schulman Dupuis, a Masters candidate in the <School of Leadership Studies> <link: <http://sls.royalroads.ca/>> at Royal Roads University.

If you are a woman (or woman-identifying), between the ages of 40-64, and live in the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Waterdown, Flamborough, and Stoney Creek), you are invited to participate in a short, anonymous survey about your career and work experience. More details about the research and access the survey can be found <at this link> <www.womendisrupted.ca>.

Appendix J: Call-To-Action by Community Partners (General Audience)

Email/Newsletter Invitation Example by Community Partners to a General Audience

We are excited to support research being conducted by fellow Hamiltonian Karen Schulman Dupuis, a Masters candidate in the <School of Leadership Studies> <link: <http://sls.royalroads.ca/>> at Royal Roads University.

If you know a woman (or woman-identifying person), between the ages of 40-64, who lives in the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Waterdown, Flamborough, and Stoney Creek), they are invited to participate in a short, anonymous survey about their career and work experience. Please share <this link with them> < www.womendisrupted.ca> so that they can find out more details about the research and to access a short survey.

Appendix K: Inquiry Team Member Letter of Agreement

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Leadership Degree at Royal Roads University, *Karen Schulman Dupuis* (the Student) will be conducting an inquiry study at *[YWCA of Hamilton/Innovation Factory/Hamilton Chamber of Commerce/City of Hamilton Small Business Enterprise Centre]* to capture the stories and generate insights regarding women aged 40-64 who identify as having had their careers disrupted, and how they responded to that disruption. The Student's credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling XX XXX XXXX , School of Leadership, at xxx-xxx-xxxx ext. xxx or email xxx@RoyalRoads.ca

Inquiry Team Member Role Description

As a volunteer Inquiry Team Member assisting the Student with this project, your role may include one or more of the following: providing advice on the relevance and wording of questions and letters of invitation, supporting the logistics of the data-gathering methods, including observing, assisting, or facilitating a communications campaign, reviewing analysis of data, and/or reviewing associated knowledge products to assist the Student and the YWCA Hamilton's change process. In the course of this activity, you may be privy to confidential inquiry data

Confidentiality of Inquiry Data

In compliance with the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, under which this inquiry project is being conducted, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated or accessed by the inquiry team advisor will only be used in the performance of the functions of this project, and must not be disclosed to anyone other than persons authorized to receive it, both during the inquiry period and beyond it. Recorded information in all formats is covered by this agreement. Personal identifiers include participant names, contact information, personally identifying turns of phrase or comments, and any other personally identifying information.

Personal information will be collected, recorded, corrected, accessed, altered, used, disclosed, retained, secured and destroyed as directed by the Student, under direction of the Royal Roads Academic Supervisor.

Inquiry Team Members who are uncertain whether any information they may wish to share about the project they are working on is personal or confidential will verify this with Karen Schulman Dupuis, the Student.

Statement of Informed Consent:

I have read and understand this agreement.

Date

Signature

Appendix L: Social Media Examples – Facebook

We're working with fellow Hamiltonian Karen Schulman Dupuis <link: Facebook>, a Masters candidate in the <School of Leadership Studies> <link: <http://sls.royalroads.ca/>> at Royal Roads University with her research about women and their careers.

If you are a woman (or woman-identifying), between the ages of 40-64, and live in the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Waterdown, Flamborough, and Stoney Creek), you are invited to participate in a short, anonymous survey about your career and work experience.

More details about the research and access the survey can be found <at this link> <www.womendisrupted.ca>. #womendisrupted

Image:



Appendix M: Social Media Examples – Twitter

We're working with fellow Hamiltonian @karensd <link: twitter>, a Masters candidate at RoyalRoads <link: https://twitter.com/RoyalRoads> with her research about women aged 40-64 and their careers. More details about the research and access the survey can be found <at this link> <www.womendisrupted.ca>. #womendisrupted

Image:



Appendix N: Social Media Examples – LinkedIn

We're working with fellow Hamiltonian Karen Schulman Dupuis <link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/karensd/>>, a Masters candidate in the School of Leadership Studies at Royal Roads University <link: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/royal-roads-university/>> with her research about women and their careers.

If you are a woman (or woman-identifying), between the ages of 40-64, and live in the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Waterdown, Flamborough, and Stoney Creek), you are invited to participate in a short, anonymous survey about your career and work experience.

More details about the research and access the survey can be found <at this link> <www.womendisrupted.ca>. #womendisrupted

Image:



Appendix O: Social Media Examples – Instagram

We're working with fellow Hamiltonian @karensd <link: instagram>, a Masters candidate at RoyalRoads <link: https://www.instagram.com/royalroadsu/> with her research about women aged 40-64 and their careers. More details about the research and access to a survey can be found at the link in the image! #womendisrupted

Image:



Appendix P: Photovoice/Creative Artifact Instructions

You know how they say a picture paints a thousand words? I think that's true. Sometimes, a picture or producing something creative, can help us share how we feel about something that's not so easy to express. As part of this research, you are invited to share how your career disruption made you feel by producing a photo, or anything you like, such as a collage, a quilt, a video, an audio-recording, anything, that could help others understand the impact your career disruption had on you.

I read an excellent article in the Huffington Post's long-form magazine titled **"Everything You Know About Obesity Is Wrong,"** and in that article, there was a little note that said this: "A NOTE ABOUT OUR PHOTOGRAPHS - So many images you see in articles about obesity strip fat people of their strength and personality. According to a recent study, only 11 percent of large people depicted in news reports were wearing professional clothing. Nearly 60 percent were headless torsos. So, we asked our interview subjects to take full creative control of the photos in this piece. This is how they want to present themselves to the world." [<https://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/everything-you-know-about-obesity-is-wrong/>]

I'd like you to take control of how you'd like to present your story to the world. It can be anonymous, or not. That's 100% up to you. I just want to be here to help your story help others that may find themselves in a similar situation as you.

So, anytime in the next two weeks, please let your creativity loose, and show the world what career disruption and your response looked like and felt like. Please share your creation with me at XXX@gmail.com, or make arrangements with me for it to be picked up. I'll honour your wishes if you'd like to sign your work, or keep it anonymous, and all rights to the work will remain yours.

In gratitude, and in service,
Karen Schulman Dupuis
xxx-xxx-xxxx

Appendix Q: Invitation to Participate in a Narrative Interview

Thank you so much for your interest in participating in a confidential, one-on-one interview to share your experience about your career and being disrupted. I believe that when we hear from women directly, we can inform others in a way that spurs them to positive action. Your story helps to create that momentum.

Where

I understand that giving up your time is a commitment enough, so I am happy to travel to wherever is most convenient for you. The interview will be held at a place in the Hamilton area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Waterdown, Flamborough, or Stoney Creek), where we both feel safe and comfortable. It's best that we meet in a quieter place as the interviews will be audio recorded so that they can be transcribed later. We could meet at a library, a park, or a quiet coffee shop. You let me know where you would like to meet, and we'll start there.

The interview could take anywhere between thirty (30) and sixty (60) minutes to complete; the length of the interview will be guided by your comfort level, and extent of detail shared.

When

My days and evenings are flexible, and I'm happy to accommodate your schedule. Weekdays, or weekends. You let me know what days and times may work for you, and then I can confirm it with you.

Privacy, confidentiality, and withdrawing from the interview

Although the interviews will be recorded, your name and any identifying information will not be connected to your interview at all, and the recording will be destroyed one year after I graduate (January 2020). You can also withdraw from the interview at any time; before, during, or after.

Thank you again for being willing to help me with my research by sharing your story.
In gratitude,

Karen Schulman Dupuis

xxx

xxxxxxxxx

Appendix R: Social media metrics captured by community partner Innovation Factory

Twitter: https://twitter.com/if_hamont/status/1140590249535561728?s=20

Impressions: 1012; Engagement Rate: 1.3%, No. of Engagements: 13

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6549632852923830272>

Impressions: 296; Engagement Rate: 3.38%; Reactions: 4; Shares: 1; Clicks: 5

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pg/innovationfactory.ca/posts/?ref=page_internal

Reach: 260; Likes: 2; Engagements: 24; Shares: 1

June 26 E-Newsletter: [https://mailchi.mp/innovationfactory/if-insider-july2019?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/innovationfactory/if-insider-july2019?e=[UNIQID])

Total newsletter opens: 849; Clicks to <https://www.womendisrupted.ca/survey>: 11

(3%), <https://www.womendisrupted.ca/>: 3 (1%)

Appendix S: Social media metrics captured by community partner Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

The promotion ran in the HCC Pipeline e-newsletter twice (June 5 and June 12). There were two links in the newsletter.

Total clicks:

(Link A) <http://sls.royalroads.ca/> = 10 clicks

(Link B) <https://www.womendisrupted.ca/> = 56 clicks

On social media, we posted it on Facebook and Twitter once:

Facebook: 175 impressions, 4 clicks

Twitter: 783 impressions, 8 clicks

Tables

Table 1

Community Partners Programming and Resources

Partner	Programming/Resources	Funding Partners
Hamilton Business Centre (formerly City of Hamilton Small Business Enterprise Centre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10 Steps to Starting a Business, Branding & Promotion, Business Planning Basics, Bookkeeping & Taxation, CRA Seminars, Budgeting & Financials • Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital Main Street, Starter Company Plus • Mentoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small Business Advisory Group (\$) ○ Access to professionals (mentoring) • Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Municipal funding
Hamilton Chamber of Commerce (HCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YEP • Networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connections ○ Business After Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Membership
Innovation Factory (IF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerator for Women in Entrepreneurship (AWE) • Startup Services (client-based) • SME Services (client-based) • Lunch & Learns/Seminars & workshops (open to public, \$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public - Province of Ontario <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministry of Research & Innovation • Private
YWCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in Skills Trades – Information Technology (WIST) • Equitable Pathways to Technical Fields and Skilled Trades Program • Employment Resource Centre • Success in Service Training and Employment Retention (SISTER) Program • Employment Support for Persons with Disabilities – The Opportunities Program (TOP) • Women's Entrepreneurship Program (formerly BizSmart) • Microlending for Women • Business Out of the Box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government of Ontario ○ Government of Canada • Private <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation

Note. An environmental scan in August 2019 of the four community partners' publicly available domains reveals a variety of programming and resources that are available to support women in realizing their economic independence.

Table 2

Examples of Disruption

Jacqueline is a woman in her 50s who has spent decades working in the insurance business. After years of performance reviews describing her outstanding work ethic, her fortunes turned once she started reporting to a woman 20 years her junior. Under her new manager, Jacqueline felt set up to fail—she was assigned more cases and held to much higher standards than her younger colleagues. Jacqueline’s manager issued a formal performance evaluation that characterized her as failing in her duties. Although Jacqueline was supposed to have 90 days to improve, her manager fired her after a few days.

At the age of 44, Veronica had worked as a bartender at a neighbourhood bar for more than two decades. The bar was being sold, however, and the buyers told Veronica that she was too old to be a bartender, disparaging her age and gender in front of other employees and customers before the sale was finalized. They did not keep her on, and instead hired significantly younger women.

Iman is a 62-year-old sociology professor with significant scholarship credentials, several teaching awards, and an illustrious record, including three stints as department chair. Her positive career recognition came to an end when the university hired a much younger dean, who denied her funding to hire needed full-time faculty, accused her of poor leadership, and favoured her younger colleagues. The dean eventually told her that he would not approve an additional term for her to serve as department chair.

SIMONE IS 55 and has become the primary caregiver for her aging parents. At first, her manager at work was really understanding about her need for flexible start times to her day, but she started to notice that she was being left out of email streams on important decisions on projects that she was a part of. When she followed up with her boss and asked about being excluded, her manager’s response was that he didn’t want to overburden her with too many emails. Weeks later, in a team meeting, she was unaware of an important decision that was made on the project and felt like a fool when she was speaking to an issue that no longer mattered. She felt incompetent, and professionally ghosted. Soon after, Simone was taken off the project altogether. She felt humiliated and unsupported.

Note. Edited and expanded for use on the www.womendisrupted.ca site. Source: Stiller Rikleen, L. (2016, March 10). Older Women Are Being Forced Out of the Workforce. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2016/03/older-women-are-being-forced-out-of-the-workforce>

Figures

Figure 1

WOMEN DISRUPTED: CENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

SURVEY



A woman's leadership trajectory in a company or organization is often fraught with gender-based challenges and pointed **disruption**. Whether it's the "**glass ceiling**", the "**glass cliff**", or outright **harassment**, stories as to why women leave these toxic environments are plentiful and well documented. In fact, we've been talking about *how* women's careers are disrupted for over fifty years.

The focus of my research is **women (or women-identifying individuals) aged 40-64 from the Hamilton, Ontario area** (including Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Stoney Creek, and Waterdown) who identify as having had their careers disrupted. The purpose of my research is to capture their stories to generate insights regarding **how they responded** to that disruption, and identify the resources or support that **may or may not have existed** for them. My hope is that their stories inform a new way forward and ignite a positive and a purposeful system-wide response from community organizations in Hamilton, Ontario that support women and their economic empowerment. I'm proud to be **partnered** in this research with **YWCA of Hamilton** and its **CEO, Denise Christopherson**.

CENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

#WOMENDISRUPTED

My name is **Karen Schulman Dupuis**, and this research project is part of the requirement for my Master of Arts, **Leadership at Royal Roads University**. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be verified by contacting Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership Studies: catherine.etmanski@RoyalRoads.ca or **250-391-2600** ext. 4162.



WHY THIS WORK MATTERS TO ME

When I was 46, I found myself in the midst of a huge career disruption. I had left a full-time role, and I was having a really hard time finding new work. I simply wasn't getting called for interviews, even though I had been part of my sector for almost 20 years. In talking to my friends, I realized that many of them were also experiencing the same kind of disruption to their careers; firings, lay-offs, lack of promotion, or the feeling of being purposefully left out of decisions and opportunities for growth. Many of my friends and acquaintances were just stepping out, and turning to consulting or starting a new business on their own. This kind of thing got me thinking; is it just me and my friends, or is there something else going on here?



Figure 1. (screenshot) Landing/home page of the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 2a

A link to the survey is below.

The following information discusses options for your participation in the study, benefits and risks, members of my inquiry team, conflict of interest, confidentiality and the security of your data, how I will be sharing results, and how you can withdraw from the study.

Please keep a copy of this information letter for your records, or download a copy of it [here](#).

YOUR PARTICIPATION AND HOW INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED

The research will start with an anonymous survey. The survey will be conducted online, and the results saved via Google Drive; your responses are 100% confidential and 100% anonymous. The survey is expected to take from two (2) minutes to 20 minutes to complete; it all depends on how much you want to share.

At the end of the survey, there may be a question asking if you're willing to participate in a one-on-one, confidential interview to further discuss your experience (an invitation may not be presented if the maximum number of interviews has been reached). Your story and your identity will be 100% confidential and 100% anonymous. If you would like to talk further, you will click the "YES" web form button; an email will pop up, pre-populated with my email address, and when you click 'send', this will inform me that you're interested in participating in an interview. In response, I will invite you to schedule an interview with me, at your convenience. The interview isn't a requirement; it's totally voluntary. The interviews may take from 30 minutes to one hour.

At the end of your interview, you will be invited to produce and share something creative, to express how your experience of disruption made you feel. That could look like anything; a photo, a piece of artwork, a cross-stitch, a painting, an audio recording...it's entirely up to you, and again, it's totally voluntary. Doing the interview does *not* mean you need to create anything. Your words are gift enough.

INQUIRY TEAM

There are four community partners that are part of my Inquiry Team: Denise Christopherson from [YWCA Hamilton](#), the [Innovation Factory](#), the [Hamilton Chamber of Commerce](#), and the [City of Hamilton's Small Business Enterprise Centre](#). [Nicholas Diduck](#) is a classmate of mine and he'll be helping to review my draft questions, methods, and research findings. The inquiry team members will review my questions, help me connect with their different communities, and they help to make sure that my data and reporting is well constructed and complete. No members of the Inquiry Team will be involved in knowing who the participants are in the survey, and they will not be able to access any of the data from the survey or the interviews. The design of this research ensures that they will not find themselves in a situation where they have power over any of the participants.

REAL OR PERCEIVED CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no issues of real or perceived conflict of interest. If there are any changes to the nature of the extended relationship between me or any of the inquiry team partner organizations, this will be referenced explicitly in the call-to-action from the partners.

CONFIDENTIALITY, SECURITY OF DATA, & RETENTION PERIOD

I will work to protect your privacy and dignity throughout this study. All information I collect will be maintained in strictest confidence. All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected portable hard drive which will have two-factor authentication enabled. All hard copies will be stored in a locked security box in my home office, and destroyed one year after I graduate. I expect to graduate in January 2020. At no time will any specific interviews or insights be attributed to any individual.

In the event that your survey response is processed and stored in the United States, you are advised that its governments, courts, or law enforcement and regulatory agencies may be able to obtain disclosure of the data through the laws of the United States.

SHARING RESULTS

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Masters of Arts in Leadership at Royal Roads University, I will also be sharing my research findings in the form of a final report with the leadership of the following organizations: Innovation Factory (IF), the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC), the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce's (HCC), and the YWCA Hamilton (YWCA); my Inquiry Team members.

Figure 2a. (screenshot) Research information letter on the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 2b

BENEFITS & RISKS TO PARTICIPATION**Benefits**

As a participant in this research, the benefits you may experience by contributing to this research may look and feel like feeling empowered and validated for having their experience articulated.

My partner may be actively partaking in the closing of the gaps that currently exist in helping women when their careers are disrupted, lessening the duplication of services, and/or fostering further collaboration amongst the inquiry team member organizations and other community members.

As a society, when women's economic empowerment is fully realized, there is the potential to create the equivalent of a new financial sector in GDP for Canada alone (McKinsey, 2017). This will have a profound effect on the lives of women, their immediate families, and their extended communities in Canada, and the world.

As the researcher, the successful completion of this research and my follow-up reporting will allow me to obtain my Master of Arts, Leadership degree, likely help me extend my professional network, contribute towards women's economic empowerment in the Hamilton region, expand my understanding and awareness of gendered ageism in the workplace, and counter the experience of women aged 40-64 being deemed socially invisible.

Risks

By participating in this research, it could result in some minor discomfort that will occur when you recall sad, stressful, or hurtful memories, but nothing more than you would encounter from day to day. I've made sure I've collected a number of resources that will be ready to help you in case you're not at your best afterwards.

PROCEDURE FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE STUDY

Notices of consent will be provided to all survey respondents at the onset of the survey. Withdrawing from the survey can happen at any time, and by not submitting content at the end of the survey. If you decide to work with me for a confidential interview, we will make arrangements together via email to meet up in a place that works for us both, and there will be a new letter of consent that will be provided to you that you will receive when we meet in real life for the interview. These letters will outline the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study. The letter will describe the format and timing of the various data collection methods and outline how my findings will be shared with my community partners. Participants will be assured that while their experiences, responses, and observations will be shared, their identities will be anonymized.

The consent letter will emphasize that participation is entirely voluntary, and anyone can withdraw at any time. By choosing to submit in the survey, or by signing the in-person consent form, you indicate that you have read and understand the information above and give your free and informed consent to participate in these surveys, interviews, or by sharing your creative piece.

ARE YOU READY TO ACCESS TO THE SURVEY? PLEASE CLICK HERE.



WOMENDISRUPTED@GMAIL.COM

Figure 2b. (screenshot) Research information letter continued on the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 3

Please ensure that you read the research information [HERE](#).

NOT FROM HAMILTON? NOT 40-64? STILL INTERESTED?

Currently, this research is focused on women in the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Stoney Creek, and Waterdown).

Doing the survey or not, if you're interested in learning the results of this research, and/or want to participate in future research please sign up here.

Your contact info will only ever be used for communicating about this research, and nothing else.

<input type="text" value="Email Address"/>	SIGN UP
--	----------------

We respect your privacy.

IF YOU'RE READY TO DO THE SURVEY, PLEASE CLICK ON THE CONSENT NOTICE BELOW TO BE TAKEN TO THE QUESTIONS.

CONSENT

By clicking these boxes and clicking submit, you agree that you are over the age of 18 and have **read the information letter** for this study. By clicking through, you state that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this survey and have data you contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.). In the event that your survey response is processed and stored in the United States, you are advised that its governments, courts, or law enforcement and regulatory agencies may be able to obtain disclosure of the data through the laws of the United States.

Once you submit your survey, your answers will be anonymously tabulated, and you will not be able withdraw your answers.

REQUIRED *

I consent to quotations and excerpts expressed by me through the online survey to be included in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed.

REQUIRED *

I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated through my participation in this online survey to be used in this study, provided that my identity is not disclosed.

Submit

Figure 3. (screenshot) Inclusion/exclusion criteria, follow-up/newsletter signup, and consent on the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 4

WOMEN DISRUPTED: CENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

SURVEY

Questions that have an * are required to continue with the survey.

Following are examples of career disruption:

Jacqueline is a woman in her 50s who has spent decades working in the insurance business. After years of performance reviews describing her outstanding work ethic, her fortunes turned once she started reporting to a woman 20 years her junior. Under her new manager, Jacqueline felt set up to fail—she was assigned more cases and held to much higher standards than her younger colleagues. Jacqueline's manager issued a formal performance evaluation that characterized her as failing in her duties. Although Jacqueline was supposed to have 90 days to improve, her manager fired her after a few days.

At the age of 44, Veronica had worked as a bartender at a neighbourhood bar for more than two decades. The bar was being sold, however, and the buyers told Veronica that she was too old to be a bartender, disparaging her age and gender in front of other employees and customers before the sale was finalized. They did not keep her on, and instead hired significantly younger women.

Iman is a 62-year-old sociology professor with significant scholarship credentials, several teaching awards, and an illustrious record, including three stints as department chair. Her positive career recognition came to an end when the university hired a much younger dean, who denied her funding to hire needed full-time faculty, accused her of poor leadership, and favoured her younger colleagues. The dean eventually told her that he would not approve an additional term for her to serve as department chair.

Simone is 55, and has become the **primary caregiver for her aging parents**. At first, her manager at work was really understanding about her need for flexible start times to her day, but she started to notice that she was being left out of email streams on important decisions on projects that she was a part of. When she followed up with her boss and asked about being excluded, her manager's response was that he didn't want to overburden her with too many emails. Weeks later, in a team meeting, she was unaware of an important decision that was made on the project, and felt like a fool when she was speaking to an issue that no longer mattered. She felt incompetent, and professionally ghosted. Soon after, Simone was taken off the project altogether. She felt humiliated and unsupported.

Figure 4. (screenshot) Examples of disruption on the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 5

Do you identify as a woman/femme? *

Yes

Are you in the age range of 40 - 64? *

Yes

Do you live in the Hamilton, Ontario area? *

Yes

Which area of Hamilton do you live in?

- Ancaster
- Dundas
- Flamborough
- Hamilton (Downtown)
- Hamilton (Mountain)
- Stoney Creek
- Waterdown

Do you identify as having been disrupted in your career? *

Yes

Please describe what happened to you, and please tell us how you responded to that disruption? *

Did you leave your job? Did you find new work? Did you start your own business? Did you go back to school or find training in a new field? Were you able to find resources that helped you along the way? Did you reach out to community organizations for help/support? [There are no text limits to your submission; write as much or as little as you're comfortable sharing.]

Which resources did you know about and access? Which resources did you need, but didn't know about? *

[There are no text limits to your submission; write as much or as little as you're comfortable sharing.]

How did you find out about this survey?

- Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
- Hamilton Economic Development
- Innovation Factory
- YWCA Hamilton
- Through a friend
- Other

Submit



WOMENDISRUPTED@GMAIL.COM

Figure 5. (screenshot) Survey questions on the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 6

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

The second stage of this research involves conducting in-depth interviews with willing participants who have filled out this survey. Currently, our calendar for those interviews is full.

By sharing your story, the hope is that it will inform a new way forward for other women, and ignite a positive and purposeful system-wide response from community organizations in Hamilton that support women and their economic empowerment.

If you know of another woman that might be willing to participate in this research, please send her this link: www.womendisrupted.ca

To receive updates when this initial research is completed, or when the research expands to other areas, please sign up for our newsletter below.

In gratitude, and in service,

Karen Schulman Dupuis

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Sign up with your email address to receive news and updates.

Email Address	SIGN UP
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Figure 6. (screenshot) Confirmed submission and invite to participate in a one-on-one confidential interview on the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 7

WOMEN DISRUPTED: CENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

SURVEY

Thank you for your interest in this research. This survey is now closed.

To receive updates when this initial research is completed, or when the research expands to other areas, please sign up for our newsletter below.

In gratitude, and in service,

Karen Schulman Dupuis

SUBSCRIBE

Sign up with your email address to receive news and updates.

We respect your privacy.

Figure 7. (screenshot) Survey closed on the womendisrupted.ca website.

Figure 8

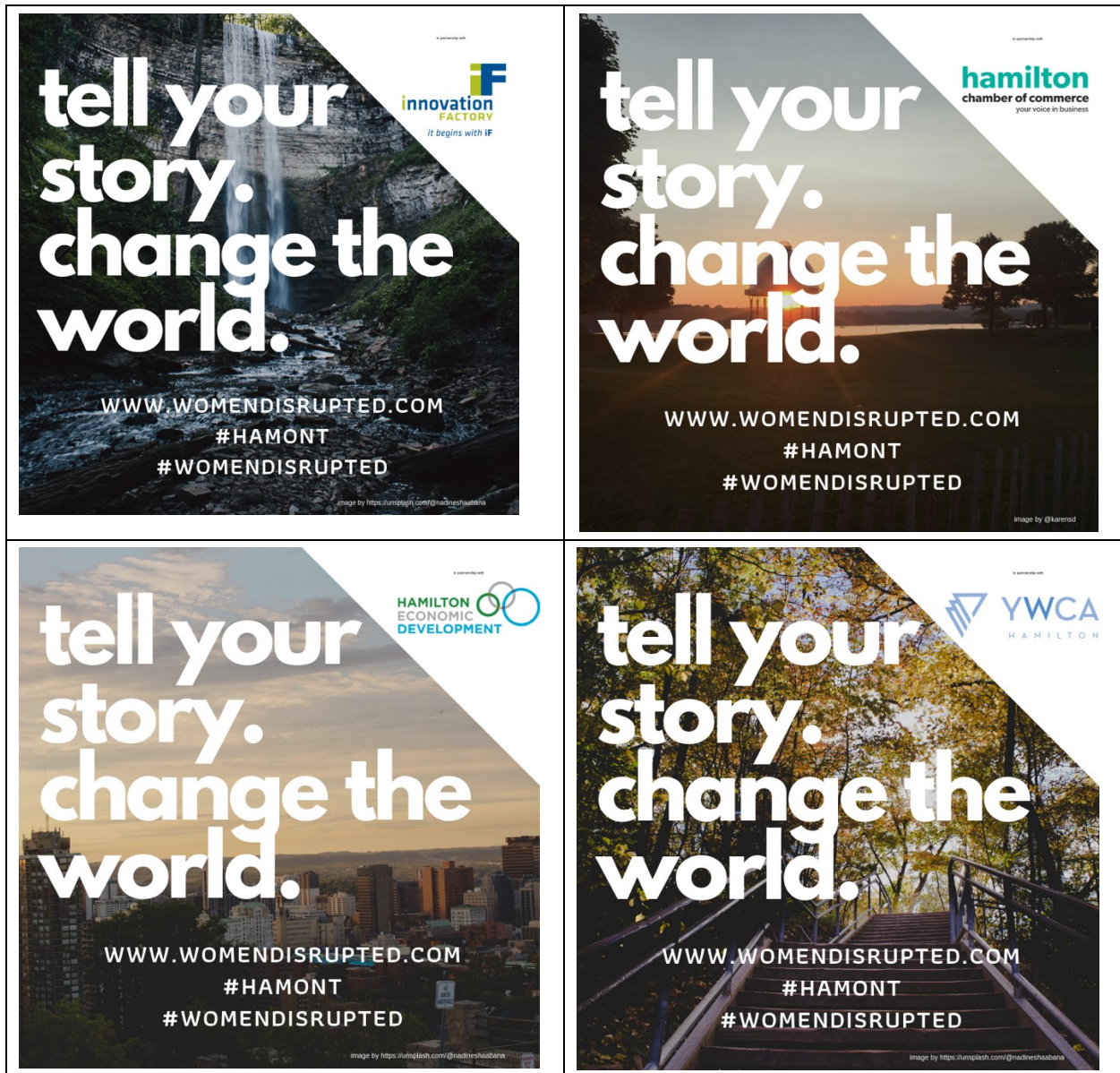


Figure 8. (images) Examples of branded CTAs that were provided to the community partners for their use.

Figure 9

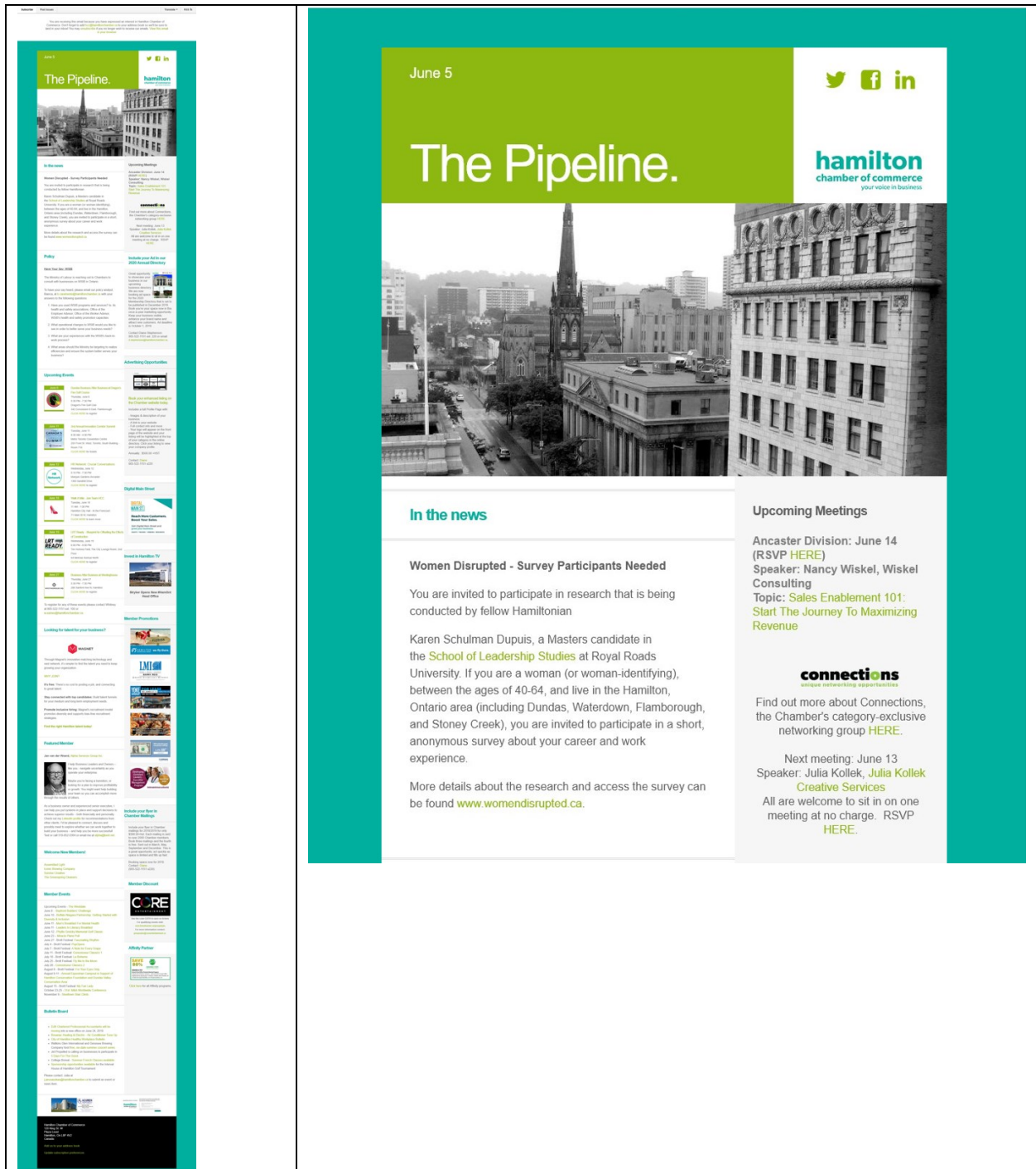


Figure 9. (screenshot) Example of newsletter CTA shared by community partner, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce.

Figure 10

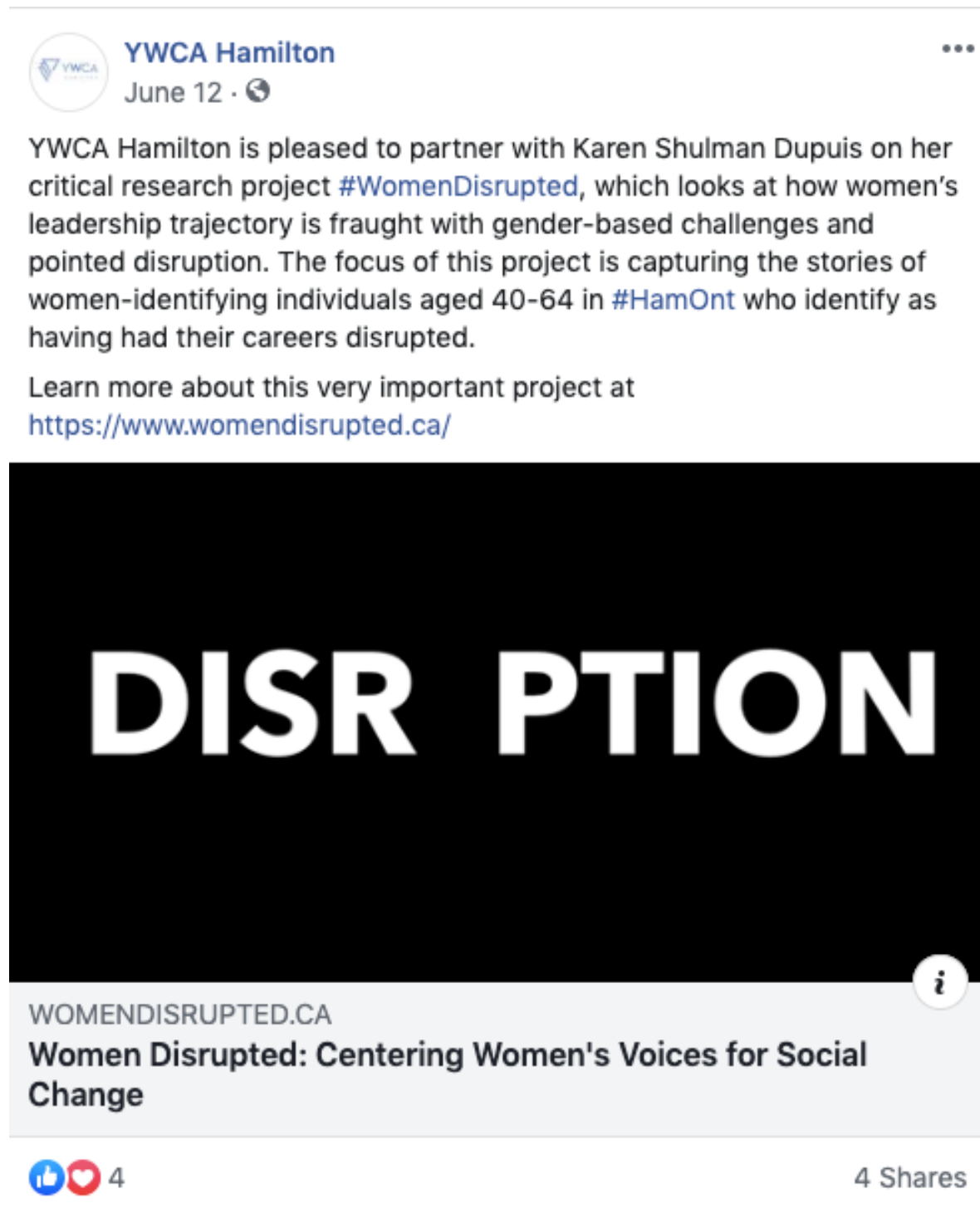



Figure 10. (screenshot) Example of social media post on Facebook shared by community partner, YWCA Hamilton.

Figure 11

 **Innovation Factory** June 20 · 🌐

You are invited to participate in research that is being conducted by fellow Hamiltonian Karen Schulman Dupuis, a Masters candidate in the School of Leadership Studies at Royal Roads University.

If you are a woman (or woman-identifying), between the ages of 40-64, and live in the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Stoney Creek, and Waterdown), you are invited to participate in a short, anonymous survey about your career and work experience.

Mor... [See More](#)

DISRUPTION

WOMENDISRUPTED.CA
Women Disrupted: Centering Women's Voices for Social Change

Figure 11a. (screenshot) Example of social media post on Facebook shared by community partner, Innovation Factory.

Figure 11

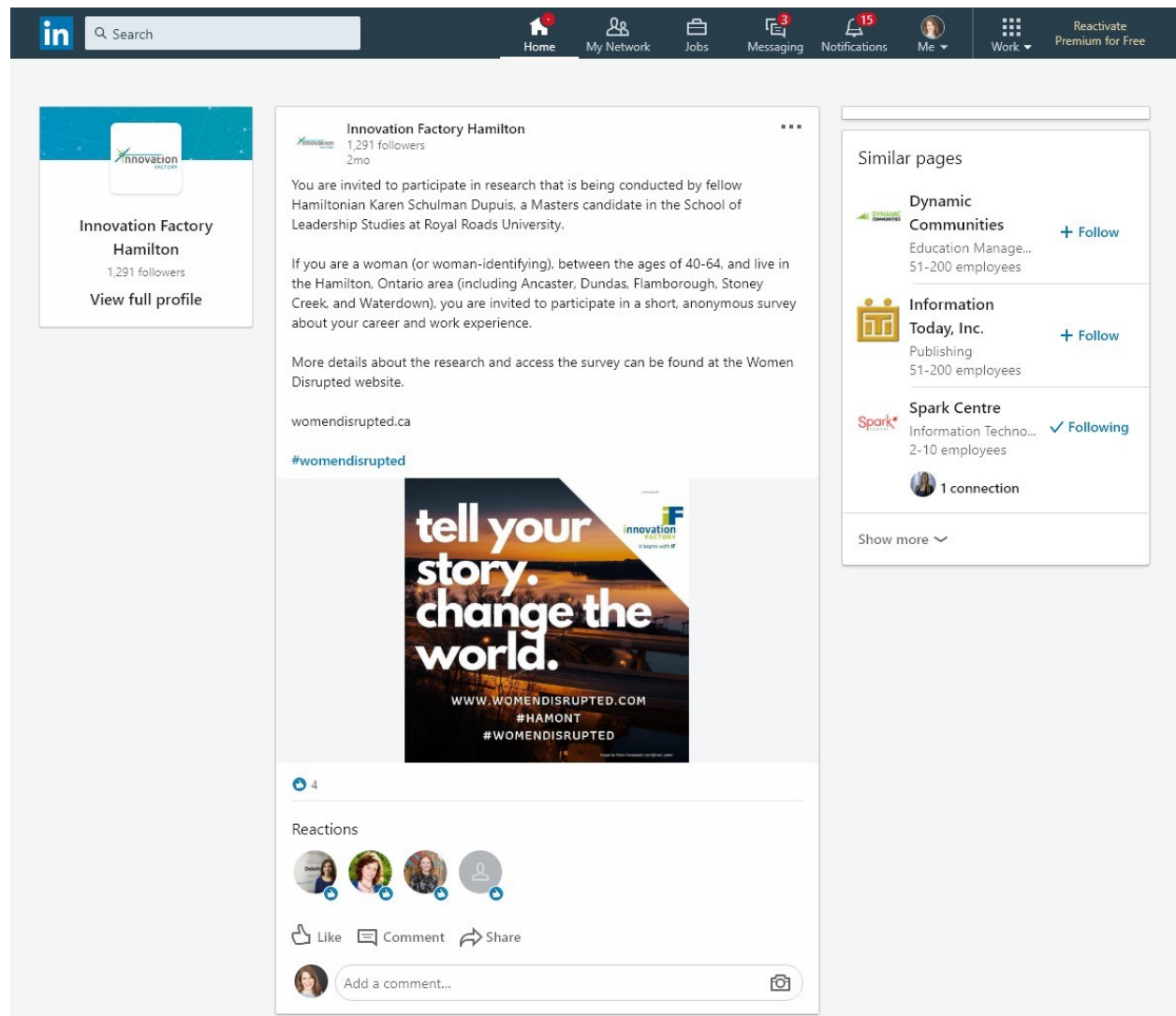


Figure 11b. (screenshot) Example of social media post on LinkedIn shared by community partner, Innovation Factory.

Figure 11

tell your story. change the world.
WWW.WOMENDISRUPTED.COM

You are invited to participate in research that is being conducted by fellow Hamiltonian **Karen Schulman Dupuis**, a Masters candidate in the **School of Leadership Studies** at Royal Roads University.

If you are a woman (or woman-identifying), between the ages of 40-64, and live in the Hamilton, Ontario area (including Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Stoney Creek, and Waterdown), you are invited to participate in a short, anonymous survey about your career and work experience.

More details about the research and access the survey can be found at the **Women Disrupted website**.

COMPLETE THE SURVEY HERE

Figure 11c. (screenshot) Example of newsletter CTA shared by community partner, Innovation Factory.

Figure 12



Figure 12. (photograph) Submitted by interviewee Sally. Title: Strength-Family (personal communication, August 10, 2019)

Figure 13



Figure 13. (watercolour) Submitted by interviewee Annabelle. “This painting is a submission to the same study, and really what you're looking at are all of these feelings I describe on paper. That burst you see at the bottom left is my spirit hanging on, existing in the chaos, finding a safe space. THANK YOU Karen, for caring enough to want to dig deeper and change it. Young women in business - especially those working for someone else hear this: make your boundaries clear, say what you need to say, become self-reliant. Know that you need not stay anywhere that you are not respected or appreciated. While money sure makes life easier and more fun, it isn't everything and I wouldn't go back to my previous work life for anything in the world. Not now. I have found where I'm supposed to be. #angrywoman #womeninbusiness #strongwomenunite” (personal communication, August 15, 2019)

Figure 14

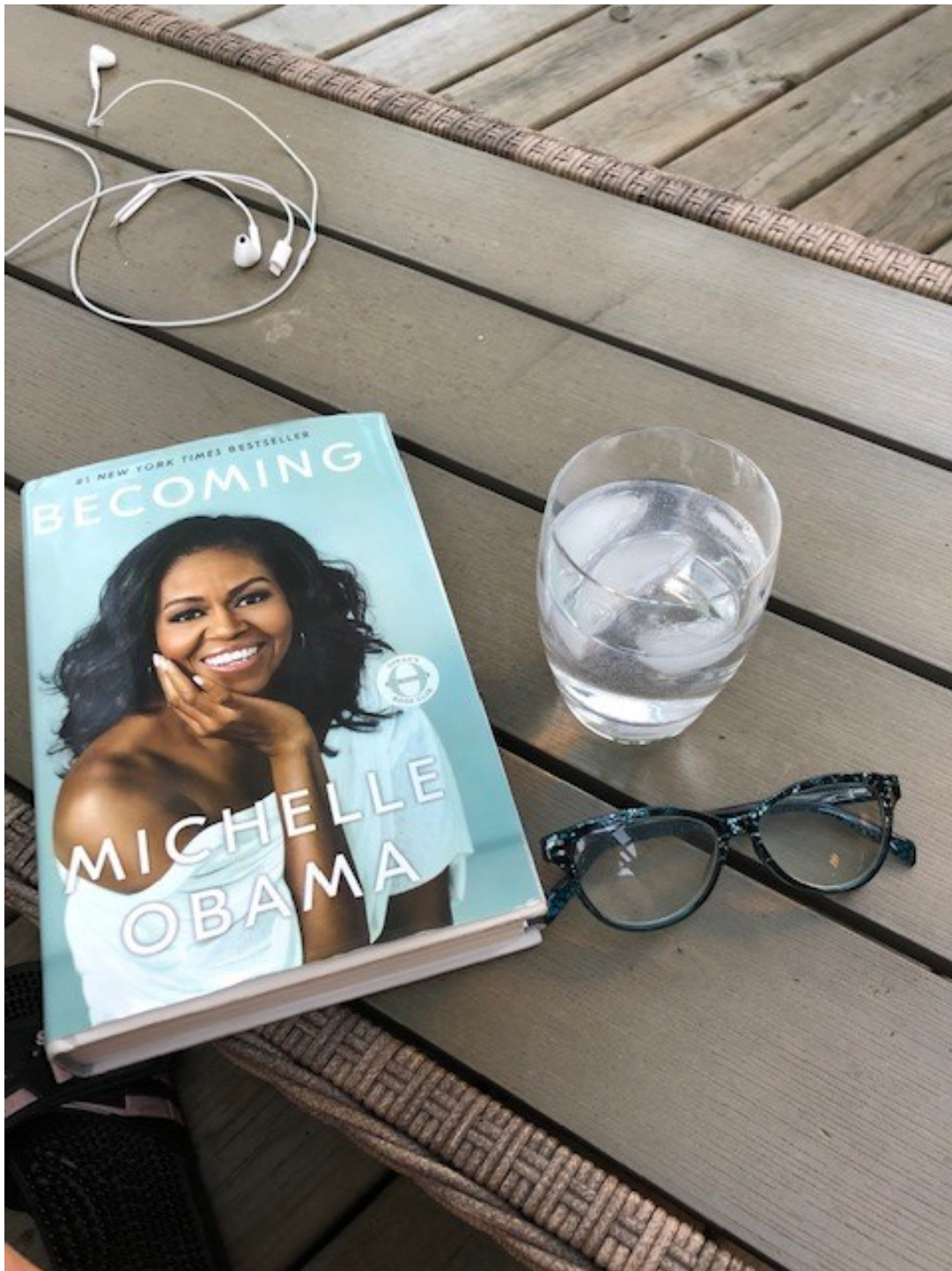


Figure 14. (photograph) Submitted by interviewee Flora. “I’m attaching a photo that I took on the weekend, that kind of sums up my life right now – enjoying my back deck with a drink and good book (this one in particular about a woman who had her life disrupted).” (personal communication, August 12, 2019)

Figure 15



Figure 15. (watercolour) Submitted by interviewee Rachel. "...this symbolized my past, present and future or the past, present and future versions of me." (personal communication, August 26, 2019)

Figure 16



Figure 16. (watercolour) Submitted by interviewee Laurel. “The artwork is representative of fresh starts. I have been wanting to try watercolour artwork for a while, actually procrastinating because of my own personal reluctance around being able to start something new that I had no idea about. This piece is my actual first attempt to watercolour painting. This is symbolic of those who have had work disruption...that feeling of reluctance, trying something new, and the fear of whether you can actually work again. My disruption really jolted my confidence and my reaction was to just avoid the idea of returning to the workplace.

After finishing this artwork, I also noticed I have ‘3’ flowers. Why 3? After googling a numerology site, it appears the number three is symbolic of creativity, good communication and social skills. As well, the number represents a playfulness, self confidence and a trusting of one’s abilities. I believe the ‘3 flowers’ truly is reflective of my current work self and how I now accomplish work.”