

The background of the slide is a dark grey color with a pattern of handwritten text. The word "NO" is written in black ink multiple times, scattered across the page. On the right side, the word "YES" is also written in black ink, appearing as if it was added to the page.

WOMEN DISRUPTED: CENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

KAREN SCHULMAN DUPUIS

MA LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE

MAL-2018-1

ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

- Focus and Framing
- Research Questions
- Approach
- Key Findings
- Recommendations
- Summary

**"STORIES ARE HOW HUMANS
CREATE MEANING."**

~Jim Gilliam, **The Internet Is My Religion**, 2015

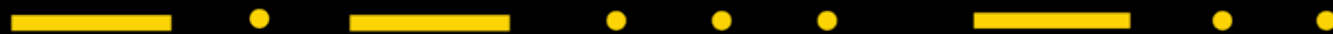


**“WOMEN WILL SEE THEMSELVES
FORGOTTEN, IF THEY DO NOT
THINK ABOUT THEMSELVES.”**

-~ Louise Otto-Peters, **Speech of a German Girl**, 1848



FOCUS & FRAMING

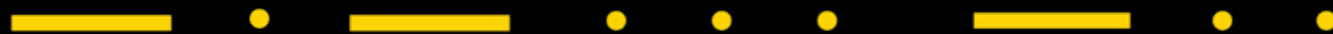


TOPIC & PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to **center women's voices** and uncover insights gathered through 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** area responded to the experience of having their careers **disrupted**.

The goal of this research is to **inform** the four **community organizations** 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**.

**WHY THIS WORK
MATTERS TO ME**



PERSONAL CONTEXT

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 & peers, 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.

IS IT JUST ME AND MY PEERS?

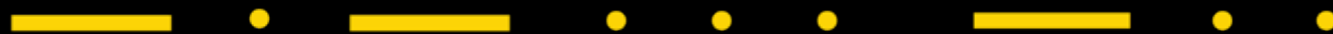
IS THIS UNIQUE TO THE CITY I AM LIVING IN?

THE INDUSTRY I AM WORKING IN?

IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE GOING ON HERE?



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



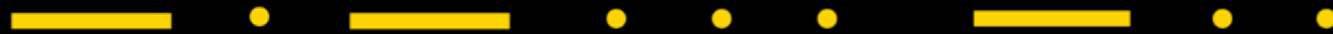


RESEARCH PARTNER



INQUIRY TEAM MEMBERS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



PRINCIPAL INQUIRY QUESTION

How might my four 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?

SUB-QUESTIONS OF INQUIRY

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

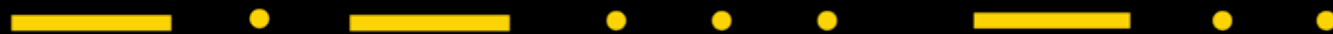
The community partners

Publicly and privately funded organizations whose mandates include the enablement of women's economic independence.

The women

Women, aged 40-64 that live in the Hamilton area and self-identified as having had their careers disrupted.

WHY THIS WORK MATTERS



**"THE SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES OF OLDER WOMEN
OFTEN REMAIN UNDEREXPLORED AND
UNRECOGNISED, LEAVING THEM INVISIBLE TO
POLICYMAKERS"**

~SAMUELS, SAMMAN, HUNT, ROST, & PLANK (2018)




HACKER HARRYS

Marketing Marys

...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



"...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



**AGEISM AT WORK STARTS AT
40 FOR WOMEN, AND AT 45
FOR MEN**

~ COOK, 2018

**WORKERS OVER THE AGE OF
55 ARE THE FASTEST-
GROWING POPULATION OF
WORKERS**

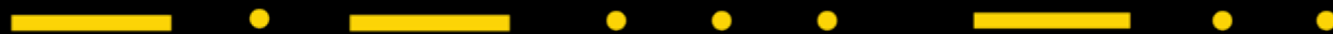
~ PURTILL, 2018

A woman's mannequin head lies on a dark, wet pavement at night. The head is positioned in the lower right foreground, with its eyes open and looking towards the viewer. The background is a blurred crowd of people, suggesting a public square or a busy street. The overall lighting is dim, with a strong blue and black color palette, creating a somber and poignant atmosphere.

**ACCELERATING WOMEN'S EQUALITY IN CANADA
IS A "MORAL AND SOCIAL IMPERATIVE"**

~ DEVILLARD, ET AL., 2017

**SO, WHAT ARE WE
TALKING ABOUT?**



DISRUPTION



def·i·ni·tion:

disruption

/ dis • ruhp • shuh • n /

noun

a disturbance or problem that interrupts
an event, activity, or process

IN THE MEDIA

FINANCIAL TIMES

Opinion **Disrupters**

On the difficulty of defining disruption

Is this term anything more than a handy marketing slogan?

Blockchain For Digital Advertising: Cure-All Or Disruption?

Forbes

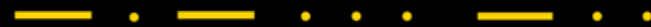
How can mid-market leaders overcome disruption and be encouraged to innovate?

GLOBAL BANKING &
Finance
review®
Global Insights & Analysis of the Financial & Business Markets

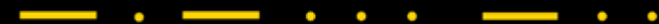
4 Industries That Are Being Disrupted by AI

Entrepreneur

disrupt



CAR ER EDUC TION



GLASS CEILING

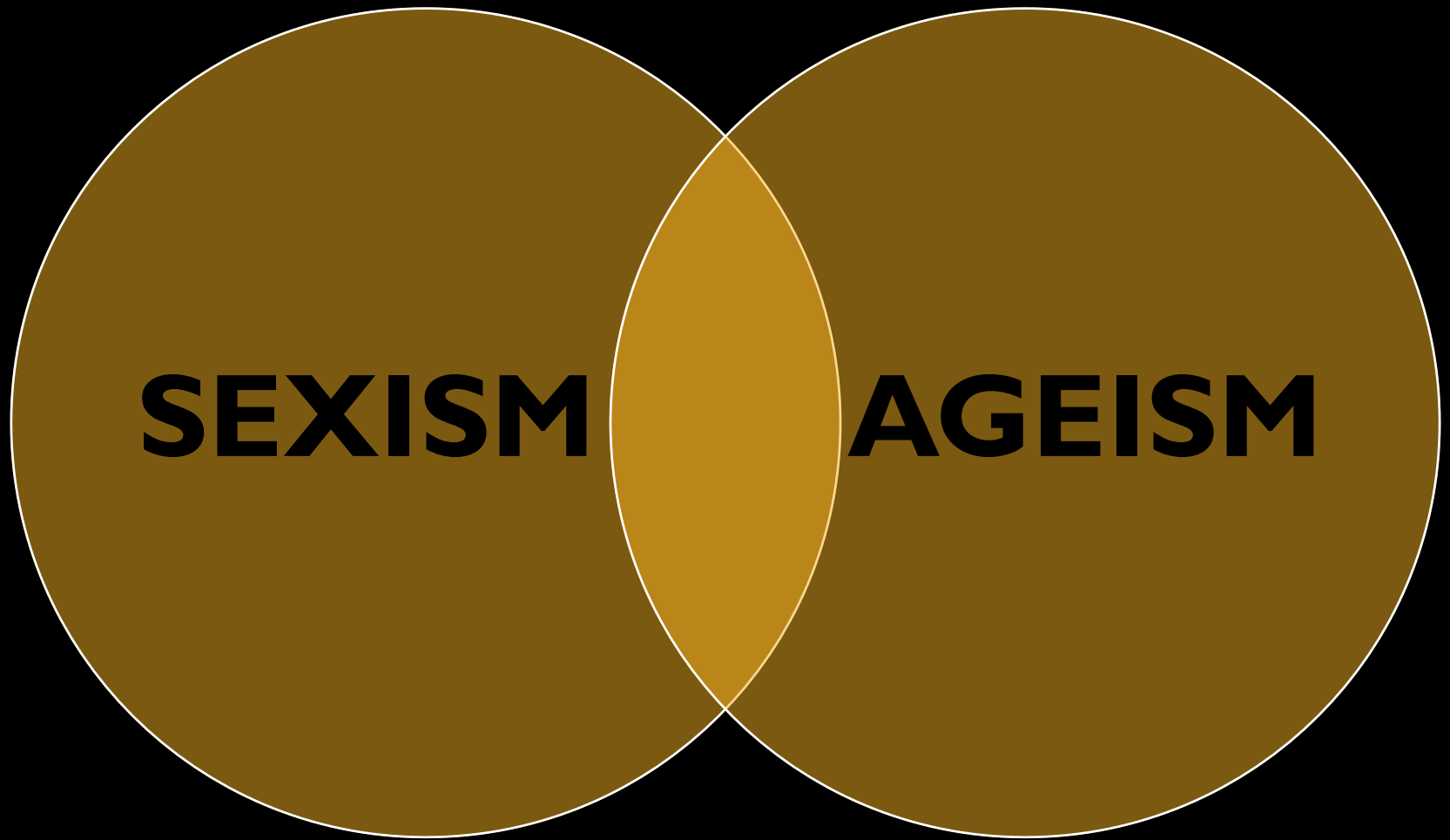


GLASS CLIFF



SEXISM

AGEISM



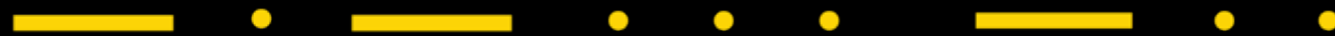
GENDERED AGEISM

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”

~ Krekula, Nikander, & Wilińska, 2018

APPROACH



WEBSITE - CALLS TO ACTION (CTAs) - SURVEY - INTERVIEWS

DISRUPTION

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**.

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.

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

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



Image courtesy of [@wadeaustinelis](https://www.instagram.com/wadeaustinelis)

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



**tell your
story.
change the
world.**

**innovation
FACTORY**
it begins with **IF**

WWW.WOMENDISRUPTED.COM
#HAMONT
#WOMENDISRUPTED

image by https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/1000000000



**tell your
story.
change the
world.**

**hamilton
chamber of commerce**
your voice in business

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image by https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/1000000000



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image by https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/1000000000

June 5



The Pipeline.

hamilton
chamber of commerce
your voice in business



In the news

Women Disrupted - Survey Participants Needed

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 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 www.womendisrupted.ca.

Upcoming Meetings

Ancaster Division: June 14
(RSVP [HERE](#))
Speaker: Nancy Wiskel, Wiskel Consulting
Topic: [Sales Enablement 101: Start The Journey To Maximizing Revenue](#)

connections women networking opportunities

Find out more about Connections, the Chamber's category-exclusive networking group [HERE](#).

Next meeting: June 13
Speaker: Julia Kollek, [Julia Kollek Creative Services](#)
All are welcome to sit in on one meeting at no charge. RSVP [HERE](#).



YWCA Hamilton

June 12 · 🌐



YWCA Hamilton is pleased to partner with Karen Shulman Dupuis on her critical research project [#WomenDisrupted](#), which looks at how women's leadership trajectory is fraught with gender-based challenges and pointed disruption. The focus of this project is capturing the stories of women-identifying individuals aged 40-64 in [#HamOnt](#) who identify as having had their careers disrupted.

Learn more about this very important project at <https://www.womendisrupted.ca/>

DISRUPTION



WOMENDISRUPTED.CA

Women Disrupted: Centering Women's Voices for Social Change

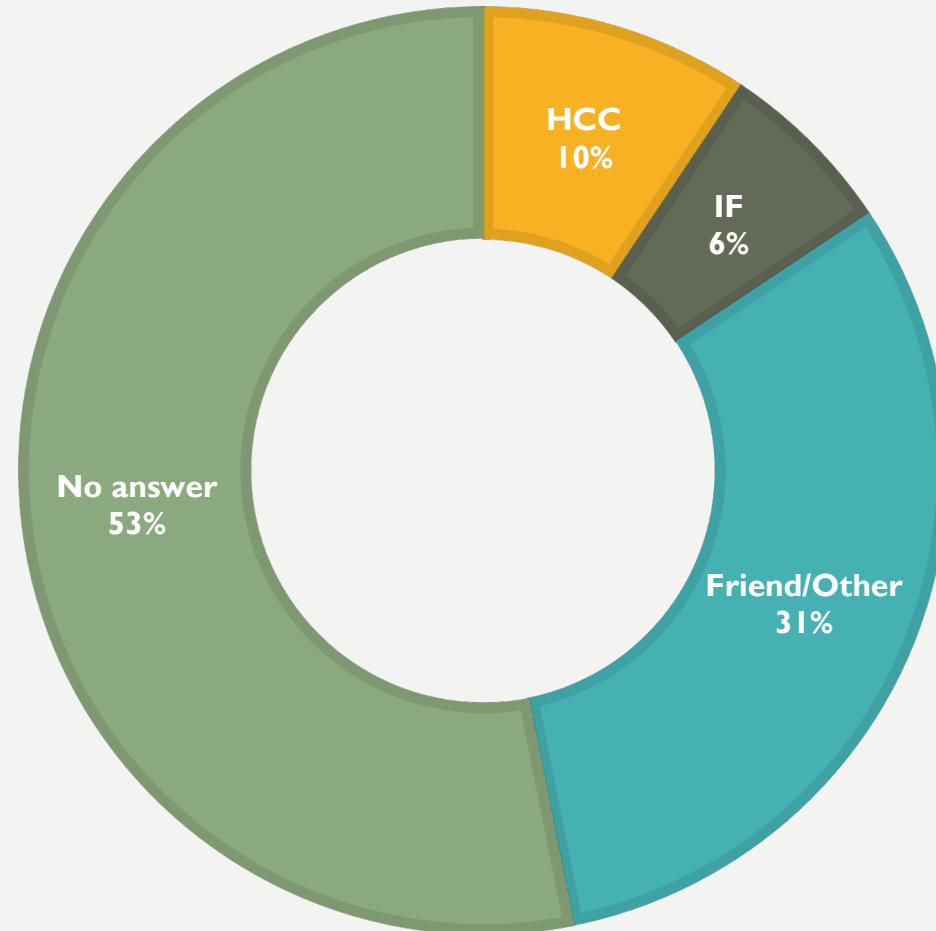


4 Shares

CTA SOURCE

WHERE DID YOU LEARN OF THIS SURVEY?

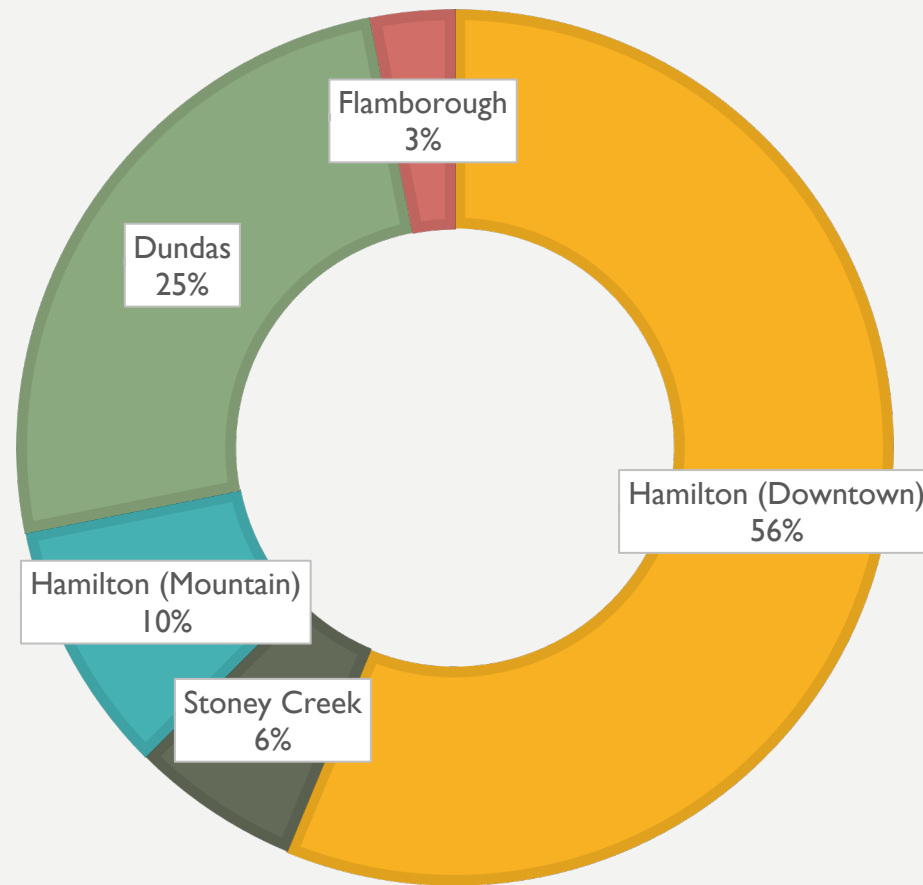
■ HCC ■ IF ■ Friend/Other ■ No answer



LOCATION

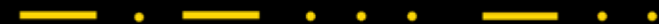
SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PLACE OF RESIDENCE

■ Hamilton (Downtown) ■ Stoney Creek ■ Hamilton (Mountain) ■ Dundas ■ Flamborough

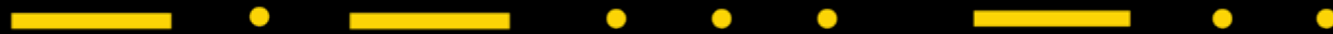


HEALTHCARE
MENTAL HEALTH
LOCAL & NATIONAL
NOT-FOR-PROFITS
THE ARTS

HUMAN RESOURCES
SALES
RETAIL
HOSPITALITY
EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



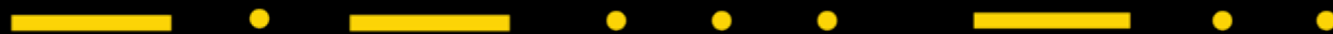
FINDINGS



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, some women found the disruption to be a positive experience.

**AFTER A CAREER DISRUPTION,
WOMEN OFTEN FACE FINANCIAL
HARDSHIP AND EXPERIENCE A
DECREASE IN THEIR INCOME, WHICH
CAN TAKE YEARS TO RECOVER FROM.**



"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)

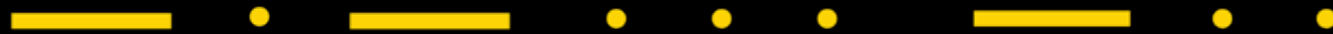
"I could not have done it without my parent's financial support. I still have debt, but it doesn't control me" (S07).

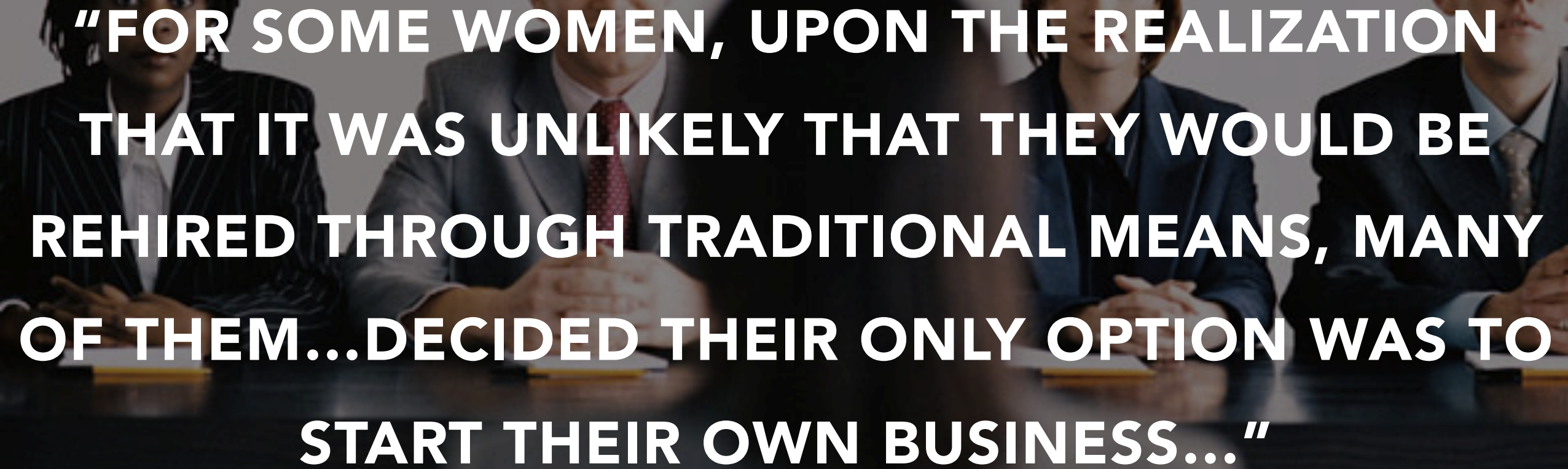
"I went from making 6 figures to working for minimum wage at an animal shelter in order to preserve my sanity and self-worth" (S19).

"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).

**AFTER A CAREER DISRUPTION,
WOMEN FREQUENTLY TURN TO
ENTREPRENEURSHIP OUT OF
NECESSITY, RATHER THAN DESIRE.**



A group of four business professionals (two men and two women) are seated around a dark conference table. They are dressed in professional attire (suits and blouses). The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark grey band across the middle of the image.

“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...”

~ BEATON, 2018

"...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." (Vanessa)

"I could always sell everything else for everybody else ...so, I started my own business." (Annabelle)

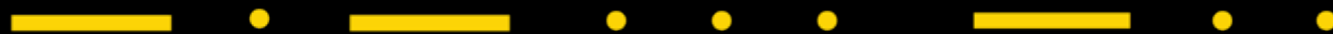
"...it's just a contract...and I string a few of these together, eventually I'll have my own consulting company." (Rachel)

, "...the truth of that is, you have to have that entrepreneurial spirit, that driving force, and I don't think I had it enough..." (Laurel)

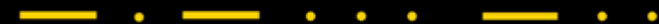
"It's not secure. I didn't know anything about that world. ...This is a whole different world like I knew nothing about. I don't even know what that meant. " (Kate)

"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." (Julie)

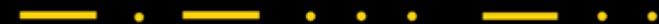
**AFTER A CAREER DISRUPTION, SOME
WOMEN FOUND THE DISRUPTION TO
BE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE.**



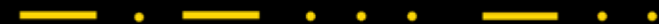
DOUBT
FEAR
HARASSMENT
REJECTION



AND STILL...



**NEVERTHELESS,
SHE PERSISTED.**



"...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. (Flora)

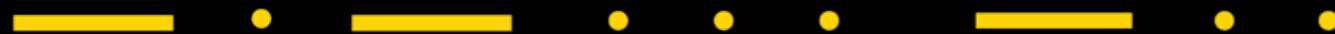
Two years later, I am now working in a new career/industry that I love that also has great future potential. I now know that getting reorganized was one of the best things to ever happen to me. If I hadn't been pushed out the door I may never have gotten to where I am today. (Rachel)

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).

"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)

DIFFICULT ROADS LEAD TO BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS

CONCLUSIONS



CONCLUSIONS

1. Trust is the foundation.
2. Entrepreneurship programming is important.
3. Collaboration is key.

TRUST IS THE FOUNDATION

How might my four community partners help capture the stories of women aged 40-64 in their respective networks?

- Trust was the foundation needed to connect to the women that were willing to tell their stories.
- Credibility and trust was fostered through the community partners agreeing to amplify and sponsor this research.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMMING IS IMPORTANT

How might my community partners further support these women's leadership development, economic empowerment, and economic independence?

- 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.
- 17/32 survey respondents and 8/10 interviewees turned to entrepreneurship out of necessity.
- Ensuring that entrepreneurial training and resources are available is critical to the well-being of women in the Hamilton community.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

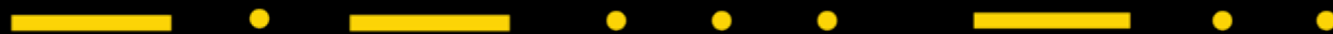
How might my community partners collectively communicate the findings of this research, and plan for future activities that complement each other's mandates?

- Municipal organizations are at the forefront of providing critical services for its community members.
- Working collaboratively ensures that the women of Hamilton can be supported with programming and services that will directly mitigate the harm caused by gendered ageism and career disruption.

Now What?!!



RECOMMENDATIONS



YOU SHOULD JUST...

- Implement Comprehensive D&I Strategies
- Create Inclusive Cultures
- Develop Effective and Fair Management Processes
- Explain and provide evidence on the business case for more women in management
- Network with other companies on good practices
- Provide good practice examples of measures and strategies to promote women in management
- Develop a strategy to promote more women in management
- Design an equal opportunity policy
- Network with women's business associations
- Provide guidelines on gender sensitive human resource management systems
- Guides on measures and strategies to promote women in management
- Introduce a mentoring scheme
- Design a sexual harassment policy

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.

CONNECT THE SYSTEM BACK TO ITSELF

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.

MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

The word “entrepreneur” only came up in one interview.

One interview out of 32 submissions.

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.

The women in this research self-identified as “business owner” “consultant” “started a private practice” or “started a business”

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAMMING IS IMPORTANT; MAKE IT MORE INCLUSIVE

There is no programming that explicitly addresses entrepreneurship for women at this stage of their careers and life cycles.

Why does this matter?

They don't see themselves in the posters, programming iconography, or learning materials associated with entrepreneurship.

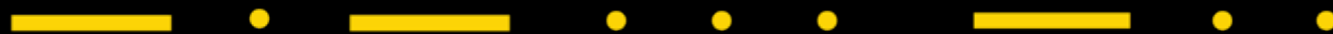
That imagery, while may be more diverse from a visible minority perspective, is not more inclusive from an age perspective.

ENABLE AND FACILITATE CROSS-GENERATIONAL MENTORING

There is a huge opportunity for disrupted women and their younger peers to learn from one another.

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.

**LET'S WORK
TOGETHER**

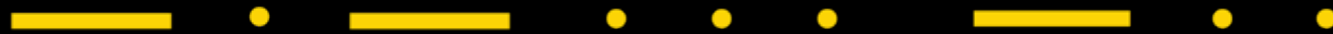


SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to **center the voices of women** aged 40-64 and uncover insights gathered through 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.

CENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES

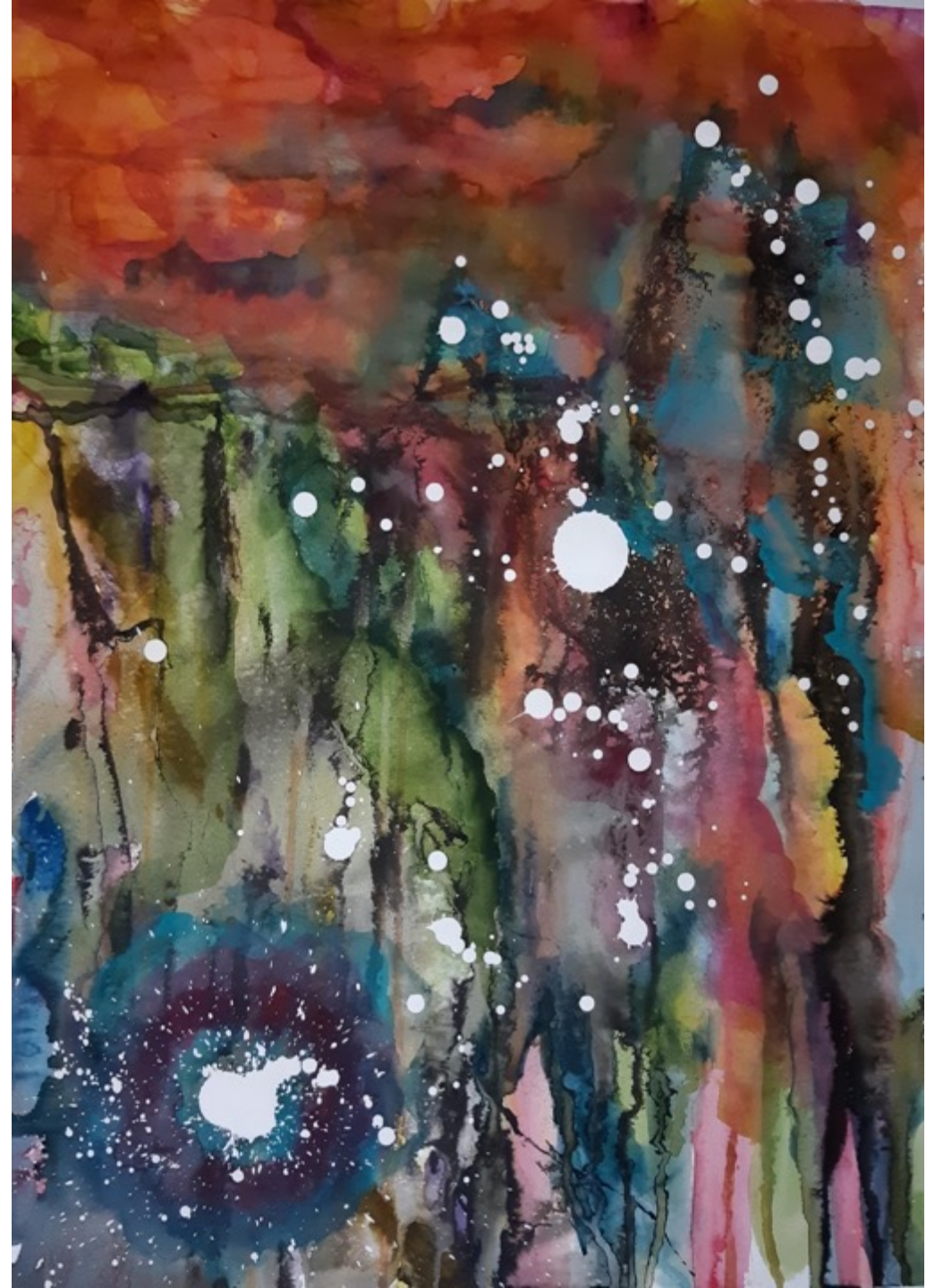


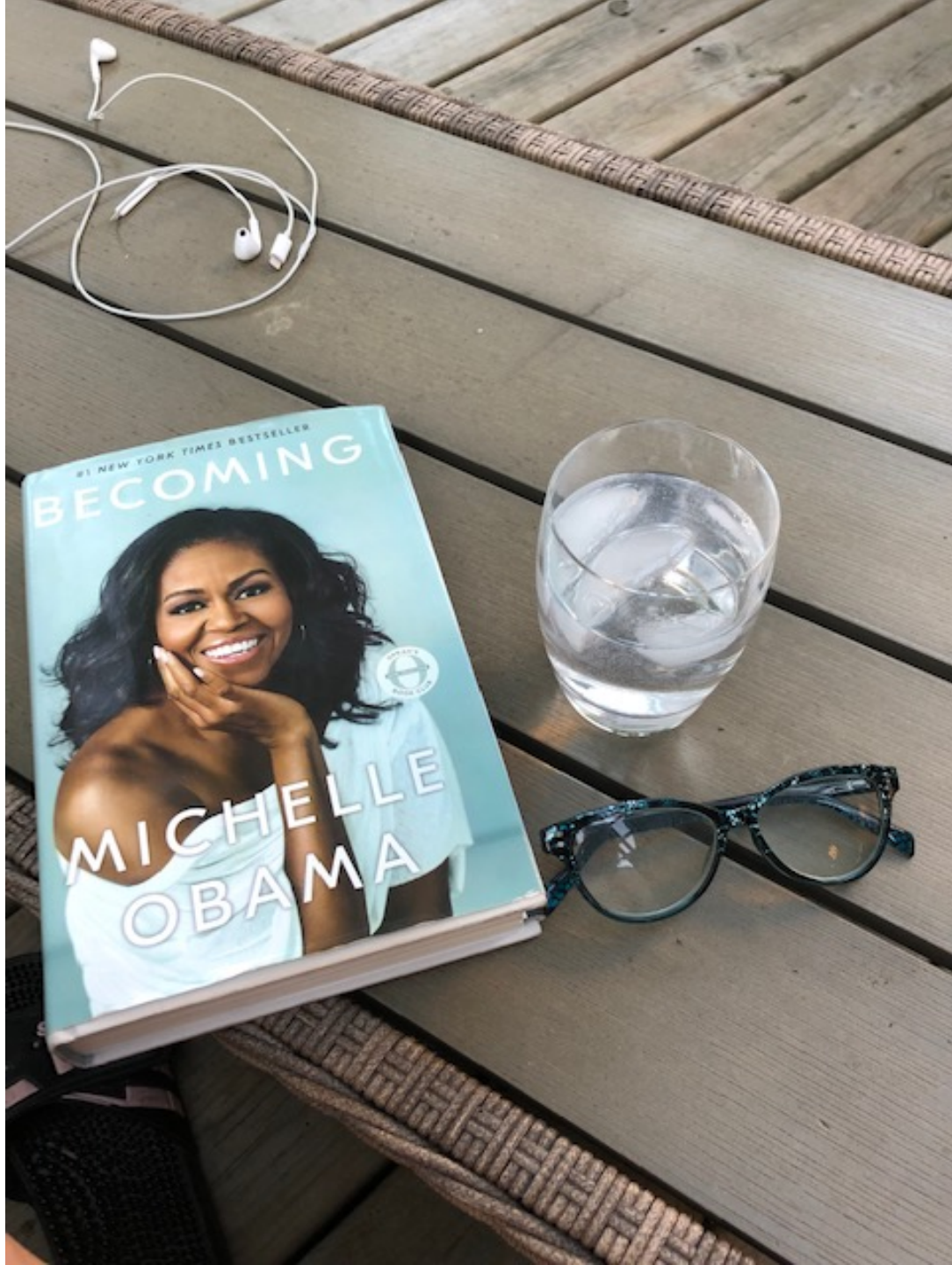


Title: Strength-Family
Submitted by: Sally

"...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"

Submitted by: Annabelle





"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)."

Submitted by: Flora

"...this symbolized my past, present and future or the past, present and future versions of me.

Submitted by: Rachel





2019

"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."

Submitted by: Laurel

THANK YOU



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

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