

# **Embodiment: Regulation and Subjectification in a Municipal Workplace**

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# Disclaimer

- \* Reflection.
- \* Group participation.
- \* Sharing information in a public space.
- \* Topic is going to touch on emotions, spirituality, intuition.
- \* You have the right **not to** participate.

# Current Role

- \* PhD Candidate – Adult Education, U of A.
- \* Senior Diversity and Inclusion Consultant.
- \* Implement the Respectful Workplace Training.
- \* Anti-harassment and discrimination program.
- \* Need to ensure that all employees have a common expectation for respectful workplace behaviors.

# Respectful Workplace Training

- The City has developed the Respectful Workplace policy that outlines behaviours that are inappropriate and provide conflict resolution processes. Approximately 11,000 employees are trained as of December 2015.
- Document analysis, observations and field experience validate that the in-class structured training is not resulting in a decrease in harassment and discrimination complaints.

# Individual Activity – Group Discussion

- \* Close your eyes?
- \* Pay attention to body
  - \* What do you hear, smell, taste, feel?
  - \* Is there tension in your body?
  - \* Where is this tension?
- \* What is the body telling you?
- \* Share findings with the person sitting next to you.

# Observation & Reflection



BODY  
MIND  
SOUL  
+ SPIRIT

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YOU

# Quote

When we discover these feelings, emotions for the first time it seems to us that we have always know them but not noticed then before but they were veiled or covered, perhaps truth is no more than discovery and the lifting of the a veil or cover from what was already there (Ortega Y. Gasset, 1969).



# Brianne my ex-colleague\*

- \* Rash on her face.
- \* Progressively worst over time.
- \* No medical cure.
- \* She leaves the job.
- \* Rash disappears mysteriously.

\* (used with permission)

# Group Discussion

- \* Was there ever a time where you used body knowledge to assess a situation?
- \* Make a decision?
- \* Do you currently use body knowledge to guide your work?

# Foundational Piece


- \* Everyone has a body.
- \* Multiple ways adult learn – body being one of them.
- \* Basic learning in childhood is non-verbal.
- \* Things come into consciousness first through the bodies.
- \* Embodiment is an intuitive process.
- \* **Intuition** – the ability to perceive or know things without conscious reasoning.

# What, So what, Now what?

- \* If we get inside our bodies this will prevent us from overthinking an issue which can lead to in-action.
- \* Body data is the information that occurs in the present moment, the immediate present time.
- \* We have our own GPS system.

# Group Activity

- \* Are you able to use this knowledge in your workplace? personal relationships?
- \* How do you use this knowledge in your present role?
- \* Discuss with your partner.
- \* Share with the larger group.



# **My Journey – PhD Study**

# Pulling a Straw out of a Haystack

- Embodiment in a municipal workplace.
- Respectful Workplace Policy, Directive and Training.
- Identify inappropriate behaviors and promote a work environment free from discrimination or harassment.

# Research Question

- What is the role of RWP Training in the City?
- (Is it to teach them from from neck up)
- Do employees learn workplace culture and norms beyond an in-class structured learning?
- If yes, how?
- But body knowledge is often ignored.



# Hypothesis

- I hypothesise that in-class training is ineffective in reducing incidents of harassment because it negates learning through the body.
- While employees are taught the definitions of harassment and discrimination and mechanics of conflict resolution; there is no space to explore the role of the body and ways in which employees *actually* learn in the field.

# Embodiment in the Workplace

- You can listen to a manager talk about the importance of having a respectful workplace culture.
- Read the company policy.
- Follow a prescribed procedure to resolve a conflict.
- Seek advice from a senior leader in your organization or take no action.

Either way, your body (with all its senses) is going through a process. This process is a foundational piece that conditions the body in the workplace.

# Case-Study –Take Away

Firefighters generally work as one solid team while battling a fire. However, their behaviour is quite different during down time in a fire hall.

For example, one particular captain continually ignores Kiran a new female recruit in the fire hall; it impacts her body and emotional state. Kiran may not be aware of this type of exclusion; however, her body will remember it.

Drive home from the fire hall Kiran catches up with what happens to her, from a cognitive standpoint, every time the captain shows up, and her body tenses up and she feels excluded.

# Group Discussion – 5 Minutes

**Are bodies expected to *be a certain way in the workplace?***

# Regulation and Subjectification

Theories of technologies of power (constant surveillance), and technologies of self (self-monitoring).

Subjectification (internalization of the norms) support ways in which bodies are regulated in the workplace (Butler, 2009; Foucault, 2008).

Over time, bodily experiences plus shaping of the mind lead to the desired behavior.

# Summary

All movement in the body is communicative and changes the structure of the brain.

# Questions

## Take Away

- \* Pay attention to your bodily sensations.
- \* What is your body telling you?
- \* Use this knowledge to guide you.
- \* You can incorporate an embodied pedagogy into your practice.