

[Episode 4.18 Running out of Fucks to Give with Carolyn Camman](#)

April 17, 2020

Hannah McGregor: [00:00:00](#) [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*, coming to you from over a month into working from home and social distancing and... You know, when this all started, I wasn't totally sure if I was going to keep making *Secret Feminist Agenda* through this. Everything felt so uncertain and so unstable and I'm trying to be easy on myself. But personally I'm finding the connections and conversations that come from doing these interviews are a really important lifeline for me. I am so exhausted after so many of those Zoom and Skype meetings that I do, but when I finish an interview for *Secret Feminist Agenda*, I feel energized and excited and reminded of why I do this work in the first place. So I'm going to keep doing it and I hope that at least for some of you it's helpful. If you have topics that you'd like me to touch on or just stuff you'd like me to talk about in general, let me know. I'm, as always, open to suggestions.

Hannah McGregor: [00:01:17](#) I also want to give you a quick content warning for this episode. Carolyn and I start off by talking quite a bit about how we're both faring in the midst of the pandemic and we have a conversation about the idea of apocalypse. Part of that conversation is about finding that language triggering, but if that's something that you're not in a space to engage with right now, you can skip to about the 40-minute mark when we really sort of switched topics. We spend kind of the first half talking about what's going on right now and then the second half talking more about Carolyn's work in general. So without any further ado, let's meet Carolyn. [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]

Hannah McGregor: [00:01:55](#) Carolyn Camman is an evaluation consultant working out of Vancouver, BC on unceded and occupied traditional and ancestral territory of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. In its most useful form, evaluation is the practice of using reflection, data, and strategy to learn, make decisions, and take wise action. The focus of Carolyn's work is to make that process accessible and meaningful for people working in their communities to make the world just, equitable, and whole. Carolyn is a queer, trans, nonbinary person who uses they/them pronouns and a white settler committed to

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discerning and disrupting settler colonial narratives and white supremacy culture in their life and work. Some of their favourite contributions to their field are the *Eval Cafe* podcast, which they co-host with fellow evaluator Brian Hoessler and the Evaluation Colouring Book. [Carolyn's theme music: "Adieu" by AIZA]

- Hannah McGregor: [00:02:54](#) So, hi, how is, how are, how are you?
- Carolyn Camman: [00:03:03](#) How, how's my apocalypse?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:03:07](#) Uh-huh, how's your apocalypse going?
- Carolyn Camman: [00:03:09](#) Every, every which way. I love that question now of like... I love and hate it, which is almost representative of my answer to it, which is like, everything.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:03:19](#) Uh-huh
- Carolyn Camman: [00:03:19](#) It's everything—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:03:19](#) Uh-huh.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:03:19](#) —right now. It's all the things. How's yours?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:03:22](#) Oh, you know. I have been finding really, in really early days... Somebody who I follow on Twitter posted something about being really triggered by people using the word "apocalypse." And at the time I was like, "Okay, you know, that's fair, but I don't really resonate with it." But I have started to find that when people... Like a former guest of the podcast has a Twitter thread going that's called "Making Sourdough at the End of the World." And I was like, "Oh, I actually...can't."
- Carolyn Camman: [00:03:51](#) Mm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:03:51](#) With the, with the sort of end times, I have realized that there's too much of my brain that is, that's gonna go there, that's gonna sort of follow those pathways and really start sort of thinking about the end times. And I have to do a lot of like old school anti-anxiety skill sets that I was offered. Things like when you start picturing worst case scenarios, also picture a better scenario.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:04:25](#) Mm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:25](#) So that you don't obsessively fixate on the negative ones. So like I've been... It's been really interesting finding myself thrown

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back on tools that I kind of was like, "Oh, I don't need those anymore. Like, my anxiety is so under control. I don't even need any of those tools anymore!" Now I'm like, [Laughs] "Oh God, oh, I really do. Oh, wow."

- Carolyn Camman: [00:04:45](#) There's some foundational coping skills out there that... There's like stuff, yeah, that I learned to do a while ago that I thought, "Okay, I'm past that now, I'm past that or I don't..."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:55](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:04:55](#) But it's like, "Oh no, I'm so glad I have that." It's like the thing you find at the back of the cupboard where you're like, "Oh, I thought I was never going to eat that!" But, you know what..?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:03](#) [Laughs] These times are rough, and all of a sudden I'm really grateful that I have those stale marshmallows leftover from gingerbread house making. I do have—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:10](#) Yes!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:10](#) —stale marshmallows; I'm not eating them, though.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:12](#) Oh.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:12](#) Sounds gross.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:14](#) I had a similar experience of someone I knew who was close to me, early up... brought up the whole like, "I really can't be around that kind of like end-times language."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:22](#) Mhm!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:22](#) And I remember the time thinking like, "Totes valid, get it. Some of us talk about the apocalypse to cope."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:27](#) Mhm! [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:27](#) But also...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:28](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:28](#) I thought I was going to have... I was like, "I will definitely not talk about that around you," but I was like, "On social media you might need to use your word-block function."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:36](#) Mhm.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:36](#) "Don't know that I won't want to talk about that in my own space."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:40](#) Yeah!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:40](#) And at the same time, it did put a sensitivity in me to it and [Small Sigh] there's still a part of me that has like, even like prior to this has, has really attached to that kind of framing. Like, you know, I really love Autumn and adrienne maree brown's *How to Survive the End of the World*,—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:59](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:05:59](#) —Kai Cheng Thom, you know, talks about apocalypse and--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:06:03](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:06:03](#) And, and, and... So there's something that I resonate with there. And I have actually stopped using that language as much and I, and I haven't missed it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:06:10](#) It's interesting to think about how many different ways apocalypse in particular can resonate because apocalypse does not necessarily mean end times. Apocalypse is a kind of great and transformative revelation. So my, like, undergrad theology [Laughs] education coming out. But that's what... Like an apocalypse is not an eschaton. It's not, you know, the world dying in a fire. It's something massive that, that transforms, that changes everything forever. And that's the sense in which, you know, Indigenous artists will talk about the idea of like Indigenous people have already lived through an apocalypse, right? That a way in which the world meaningfully ended and did not and was not repaired and perhaps will be repaired or will be made into something new. But that was, you know... A world ended. And worlds end all the time. And so I think that there is something radical about using that language, which is I think why I am seeing it used a lot in my sort of like queer and social justice communities that are interested in a resistance to like the best case scenario, if this is that the status quo returns.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:07:19](#) Mhm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:07:19](#) You know? 'Cause there's so much that latent desire to be like, "Oh everything is being turned upside down. We want it to just go back to normal." And it's like, "Mm, normal was bad." [Laughs]

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Carolyn Camman: [00:07:29](#) That's how we got here!

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:31](#) Yeah! [Laughs]

Carolyn Camman: [00:07:31](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:31](#) Yeah. Yeah, so we don't want normal—

Carolyn Camman: [00:07:33](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:33](#) —but we do want people to not be dying of a virus.

Carolyn Camman: [00:07:37](#) I think context, I think context matters.

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:40](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [00:07:40](#) And I think that I'm developing even more, just, of a personal relationship with the concept of like, "Okay, what does it mean for me to be thinking about end times as a queer person?"

Hannah McGregor: [00:07:50](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:07:50](#) "What does it mean for me to be thinking about it as a white settler?" Like the different ways that my identities sort of intersect with this... And I'm not averse to the, to the discourse, but I feel like I'm stepping back into more of an observing, like, "How are people talking about this?"

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:04](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [00:08:04](#) "How am I, how am I thinking about it?" And, and trying not to use it as a meme—

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:07](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [00:08:07](#) —for me, because we're in it. [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:08:10](#) One of the most interesting conversations I've been having—and I've had it from different sides now with a couple of colleagues—is how those of us who, whose jobs are to be observers and commentators on the contemporary moment are finding that this contemporary moment is wildly defying any of the critical skill sets that [Laughs] we currently have. And that what I am finding difficult and what my colleagues have also expressed they're finding difficult is reconciling the sort of higher-level information. So the statistics, the charts, the infection rates, the policies, the border closures, reconciling

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that stuff with a personal embodied experience of what's happening right now, which seem so wildly out of sync with each other. Like, so disjointed. And a colleague of mine was saying today that she keeps thinking about what's happening right now as though she's looking back on it from five years from now? Like, thinking about how—

Carolyn Camman: [00:09:10](#)

Mm.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:10](#)

—she'll make sense of it once she's far enough out of it? Because it's so hard to make sense of it here inside of it? And I've been really, I've been trying to really sit with this and think like my skill sets are often about making sense of things from the outside, this kind of model that we have of critical thinking and objective thinking and academic thinking that are about looking at an object to study and making sense of it. And then how do you then say, "How do I make sense of a thing when I'm so [Laughs] deep inside of it right now?" And those are, those are different skills and different tools and a different kind of thinking.

Carolyn Camman: [00:09:48](#)

Yeah...very much. And because, yeah, we're not, we're not outside of this.

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:52](#)

Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:09:52](#)

We're very in it. And I think there, there's an argument to say that we're never outside of the things—

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:57](#)

Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [00:09:57](#)

—that we suggest—

Hannah McGregor: [00:09:59](#)

[Laughs]

Carolyn Camman: [00:09:59](#)

—that we're outside of. There's quite a bit of discourse in my field, which is evaluation, which is an interesting field that's about judging things, basically. [Laughs] Assigning value and worth and merit and saying how good is this thing? Is it work? Is it worth funding? Because this is an applied... It's, it's different from research in that we are doing this work generally being paid by funders—

Hannah McGregor: [00:10:27](#)

Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:10:27](#)

—who fund social services and social programs.

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:10:30](#) Yeah, I've, I've got follow-up questions about evaluate, about what, what evaluation is.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:10:35](#) Oh, a million different answers—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:10:37](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:10:37](#) —all of which I disagree with on some level.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:10:40](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:10:40](#) But so, It's been really interesting to watch us as a field pivot in this moment to like, "Oh God, we're so used to looking at things after the fact."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:10:49](#) Mm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:10:49](#) And often saying, "Oh you should bring us in earlier into the process 'cause we could be helpful earlier on. Instead you bring us in at the end to find out, okay, you had a plan and you implemented it, did it work or not?" And all we can do is say yes or no based on our best way of doing it. And, and the evaluator is often cast as this outside person. In fact, our credibility is argued to come from the fact that we are outside—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:11:14](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:11:14](#) —of the programs and services and policies that we're evaluating. But there is a not small and growing contingent of people within evaluation who say, "Fuck objectivity."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:11:25](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:11:25](#) Quite, quite literally.
- Hannah and Caro...: [00:11:25](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:11:27](#) I was just listening to the most recent episode of *Eval Cafe* and... Where you had this conversation about like, contextual objectivity or... I can't remember the phrase...
- Carolyn Camman: [00:11:36](#) Positional objectivity!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:11:39](#) Positional objectivity!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:11:39](#) Yeah!

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:11:39](#) And I was so interested in that, like that idea of not throwing objectivity out entirely. Not saying like, "Oh, there's nothing that's knowable. There's no phenomena, there's no data. There's no..." Like we, you know, we know that there's... We observe information and we record it and we talk about it. Like, data exists. But reconciling the existence of things that we at least need to collectively pretend are objective without then sort of indulging in that sort of deep investment in objectivity as a sort of unquestioned, neutral, apolitical, universal form of information. Like it's a really, it's a really helpful way of thinking about that space between subjectivity and objectivity.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:12:28](#) Yeah. Yeah. And I referenced a couple of papers in that episode and I even want to name upfront the way I do evaluation now is not the way I was trained to do evaluation. I have been sort of unteaching and reteaching myself over the past couple of years. And these papers that I'm about to reference are papers that I have like only begun to understand.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:12:48](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:12:48](#) So I'm not speaking from this position of like established, confident knowledge necessarily, but I'm like following these trails like, "Ooh, this feels like I can, I can do my work in a useful way this way." And so the two papers... The first one that I think I found just by clicking links out of an email and just came across it, but it's a, an Indigenous Hawaiian scholar Dr. Manulani Aluli-Meyer. The article's called "Changing the Culture of Research: An Introduction to the Triangulation of Meaning." And what she describes is an epistemological perspective around triangulation and triangulating specifically and... 'Cause triangulating being a way that we find things. Like if you have three data points you can find, okay, what's within those data points.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:13:33](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:13:33](#) And she triangulates particularly between objectivity or body knowing. So this idea that going back to the empirical roots—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:13:41](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:13:41](#) —of objectivity, like that we, we know in an embodied way. Like, "This is actually what I feel and see and hear and taste and sense."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:13:48](#) Yep.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:13:48](#) [Enthusiastically] I love—! It's such a beautiful... I want to call it like a "queering of objectivity," 'cause that's like the way I would think about it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:13:55](#) Yeah, absolutely.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:13:55](#) The rational into truly the embodied, which is something that we're so missing in a lot of the Western, white settler, colonial research that we do. So there's the body knowing as one point of the triangle. And then another point is the mind knowing which is the subjective interpretive experience of the, the meaning that we layer onto the objective things we experience with our bodies. Which again is just the subversion... We think of the mind as the rational and the body as the irrational. And she's like, "Nope, other way." [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:27](#) I love that so much!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:14:30](#) Yeah, it makes so much sense! As I was scanning this article... I was like reading it in bed, just like scrolling a PDF 'cause that's what I do first thing—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:35](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:14:35](#) —in the morning before I get out of bed. I was like just writhing—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:38](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:14:38](#) —with excitement. It was so brilliant. And then the third point of this triangle... And I will admit this is the one I'm still having to read and understand better. I think my own, just from my own life, I have a less of a connection with this—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:50](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:14:50](#) —and I think that makes sense, which is the idea of spirit knowing.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:53](#) Mm...
- Carolyn Camman: [00:14:53](#) Like spirituality, but it doesn't have to be religion per se. I think I'm, I've been trying to think of it as sort of like collective knowing as well.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:15:01](#) Mhm.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:15:01](#) Like maybe the collective unconscious. And there's more in this article which... Like, I won't like share the whole thing. Definitely worth reading. I find it really fascinating and just written beautifully and like in a way that makes you feel like warm and soothed and there's just beautiful parts to it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:15:15](#) Oh, what a recommendation. I am watching an animated series on Netflix right now called *The Dragon Prince*, which is... It was created by the same person who created *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:15:28](#) [Gasps] Oh, okay!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:15:28](#) It's absolutely lovely, it's absolutely lovely. And there's this episode where one of the protagonists is having a kind of vision. He has done something dangerous involving magic and he is sort of in a, a vision state and he is visited by a vision from his, his mother who is dead and she tells him that he has to slow down his mind because he won't be able to understand the situation until he lets his body and his spirit catch up. She says, "Sometimes the mind gets so far ahead of the rest of you, but you can't understand something when you're only using one-third of the tools that you have. You've gotta let your body and your spirit also come because they also understand things in a different way."
- Carolyn Camman: [00:16:17](#) Mm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:16:17](#) And that's, that is where... This is... What are we at right now? [Sarcastically] This is a 18-minute response to the question, how am I doing?
- Carolyn Camman: [00:16:25](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:16:25](#) I am trying to learn how to let my body and my spirit catch up right now. And I'm trying to sort of feel my way through, through what that looks like because it has been so, it has been so mind focused so far for me in terms of like... So much changed so quickly and there were so many problems to solve and there have been so many emails to send and there has been so much, so many new logistics to wrap your head around. And it's like the cognitive load of grocery shopping—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:17:01](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:17:01](#) —of all of this stuff is just so much harder. And I've just been letting my mind race so far ahead of the rest of me and now I'm

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trying really, really hard to slow way down and let the rest of me try to like, catch up. And it's, it's taking a little while 'cause the rest of me is like three—

Carolyn Camman: [00:17:22](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:22](#) —three weeks behind.

Carolyn Camman: [00:17:24](#) Oh, yes. Oh and that makes me think so much about the way that time got so strained.

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:32](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [00:17:32](#) I think it used to be strange, but I've noticed, like, even it shifting, but like, those first three weeks everything took, so... Everything was happening so fast and also taking so long and I, I had this moment of like, "Oh my God, time is definitely subjective."

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:48](#) [Laughs] Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [00:17:51](#) Like we count, we literally count seconds. We use time so precisely.

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:55](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:17:55](#) You know, we do all kinds of incredible engineering feats based on a very precise calculation of time, but we have never experienced time objectively.

Hannah McGregor: [00:18:04](#) Mhm!

Carolyn Camman: [00:18:04](#) We have only had this like, subjective... I don't know what a second feels like and I know that now because it felt like so many different things.

Hannah McGregor: [00:18:13](#) And how unbelievably long is 20 seconds? Like that... Even those small realizations that... I mean, time and space that we don't know what 20 seconds is and we don't know what six feet is.

Carolyn Camman: [00:18:26](#) Right? Oh my *gosh*, yes! I *still* don't know how far... But, I mean, people have told me it's like a tall person, but it's just...

Hannah McGregor: [00:18:35](#) [Laughs] Yeah, it's, I think further than we all think.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:18:38](#) Yeah, I think so. I do like the... A lot of stores have like marked out in chalk or tape or things like that—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:18:45](#) So helpful.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:18:45](#) —like to give you that, like, "Here it is." I mean, sometimes it can feel terrifying. Sometimes it can feel helpful. I do wonder if we're going to come out of this with different kinds of spatial awareness—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:18:57](#) Mm, mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:18:57](#) —and spatial sense. Definitely our concept of personal bubbles has probably been irrevocably shifted.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:19:01](#) A friend of mine was telling me that she went to pick up a prescription and when the pharmacist was passing her the bag, their hands accidentally brushed. And she was like, "This is the first time I've accidentally touched another human being in three weeks. And it felt terrifying."
- Carolyn Camman: [00:19:21](#) Mm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:19:21](#) And, and I, so I think, you know, we're go—... There's going to be recalibration. Like, we're going to have to recalibrate what it means to be physically proximate to one another. Like, that is going to be an adjustment.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:19:34](#) And this is something that... I only just started having this conversation with people and, and it's thinking in those terms of like what, what we're going to have to do after as part of the recovery from this.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:19:45](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:19:45](#) And one of the things I also realized we're going to... It's going to be really important for us to do is to reconnect around the differences in the experiences that we've had.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:19:54](#) Mmm...
- Carolyn Camman: [00:19:54](#) 'Cause this is such a... Like, we are literally globally all being affected by effectively the same thing, this like small virus. Mutations aside, that the, you know, it's not exactly the same everywhere, but it's basically the reverse of a randomized control trial where you like try to like statistically erase differences within groups of people so that you have like a

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control condition and a treatment condition, but you've been randomly assigned so like your, your actual differences between you are irrelevant only, the only difference that matters is the... Which condition you're in.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:24](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:20:25](#) And this is the opposite where we've all been sort of given the same treatment condition effectively.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:31](#) Yep.

Carolyn Camman: [00:20:31](#) I realize that's a morbid way of saying that... And it's highlighting all of our individual differences, where we show up in the world, like what resources we have access to, what kinds of, you know, what jobs did we have or not have.

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:43](#) Yep.

Carolyn Camman: [00:20:43](#) What jobs are we doing now? Do you have kids, you know, at home or not? What age of kids? You know, where are you in the world, you know, where were you when this hit your country? What kinds of policies are being enacted, you know, nationally and locally for you? Like, what we're seeing is so much difference. And I know that the experiences that I'm having... So I live, I'm, I'm fully alone in the place where I am.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:07](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:21:07](#) So I haven't touched another person in a very long time.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:10](#) Same! It's weird, huh?

Carolyn Camman: [00:21:12](#) [Laughs] Super weird. Although I will say, I wasn't touching a lot of people before this either.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:17](#) I'm asexual, so I don't romantically or sexually touch people, but I have a lot of very, very close friends who I am very sort of physically affectionate with. And—

Carolyn Camman: [00:21:28](#) Mhm.

Hannah McGregor: [00:21:28](#) —the Wednesday, March 11th—because all of these days are just like locked in my brain now—I had coaching with my quartet—I sing in a barbershop quartet—and the coach we were working with was trying to get us to emotionally sync up in our delivery of a song. And so she was having us sing while all

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touching each other. And that is the last time I touched another person. And I, I have, I have cats, which is, I am *wildly* grateful for them right now. Yes, so you were saying: alone, that's one form, right? Like not in a couple, not in a, yeah...

- Carolyn Camman: [00:22:06](#) Right now I'm actually financially okay.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:22:10](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:22:10](#) Which actually, as a consultant, is not... Like, there's, there's some up and downs. Like I do have to keep working but I've been able to move online.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:22:16](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:22:16](#) I'm not in a position where I have to go out. I'm not in a position where I'm in a community that is like fending off people who are trying to get there 'cause it's remote and isolated and they think that, you know, they can just drop in on like remote and Indigenous communities and be safe, which is, I, I know... I'm not shocked because I know it's a thing.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:22:33](#) I've kind of, I, I'm, it's my, my sort of like deep white settler naivete. Like, I was shocked. Anyway. I'll drop a link to—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:22:42](#) Yep.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:22:42](#) —to these stories into the show notes.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:22:44](#) Yep.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:22:44](#) But, but settlers showing up in Indigenous communities without permission as a like, "Well, I'll be safe here."
- Carolyn Camman: [00:22:52](#) Yeah. Putting elders at risk, putting, putting, literally putting like the languages... Like the... And it's like we've already, we did this in Canada. Like, this is how we created Canada—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:01](#) It's the genocidal default of whiteness.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:23:04](#) —at the beginning. Yep. So like, I mean, and that's such a big... And there are so many people who are talking about this. I think this is really critical to, to be naming that this pandemic is not hitting everyone equally. That this is not the great equalizer.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:16](#) [Laughs]

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:23:16](#) You know, the term that's been used.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:18](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:23:18](#) And then like profoundly, resoundly rebutted of: "Absolutely not. This is magnifying inequities." Showing up places where there already was not enough resources and injustice and inequity and actually then magnifying it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:33](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:23:33](#) And we're going to be dealing with these repercussions for a really long time. Like, this is actually... I remember speaking with a friend who was working in an, in an equity focused organization early on where she was sort of like, "Man, is my work even like relevant right now? Like is this people's priority? Because people are just trying to survive?"
- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:48](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:23:48](#) And it's like, this is...Yes, yes.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:51](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:23:51](#) This is *critical*. Absolutely critical right now more than ever.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:56](#) Yeah. Yeah, I have, I've been seeing this and experiencing this even at sort of the very, you know, comparatively small scale, less survival-oriented things. Like, I'm on the board of a couple of different scholarly associations and we had to make the decision as boards whether we were going to outright cancel our annual conferences or try to move them online. And in both cases, the instinct of the executive was to move it online. This kind of academia's bulldozing business as usual impulse to say like, you know, "Well, whatever, no matter what happens, we continue to be productive. We continue to to carry on however we are." And one of the real tipping points in a whole bunch of the organizations changing their minds was an open letter from the Black Canadian Studies Association reminding [Laughs] everyone that the expectation of a rapid movement online is an equity issue. And that all of the preexisting forms of inequity that saturate academia, for example, are going to be heightened by something like the demand that people be writing papers right now, be somehow figuring out ways to work right now, have access to the technology that would allow them to participate in a video conference. Like all of these things are, are all framed by equity. And it was like, that letter

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went out and a ton of the associations that were like, "No, no, no, we're definitely going to go online..." Like actually people paused and stopped and were like, "Aw dang." And then like also the sort of fundamentally feminist intervention of women, who are still disproportionately the caretakers for children, responding also and being like, "No, I have kids at home. This isn't happening. I'm not doing a conference." Like you know, so, so these, these vital forms of political and social justice oriented interventions that you're right, we do have a tendency to think of those as kind of luxuries that we can indulge in in calmer times when it's actually like, no, these are, these are their own forms of sort of necessity for people to survive through this.

- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:06](#) Yeah. And it's, I think it's, I'm trying to like always ask that question of myself of like, what does this moment need?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:26:13](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:13](#) And then what can I offer that might, like, meet that need?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:26:16](#) Mm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:16](#) Because that need is changing a lot. Sometimes that need is like, actually I just need like, money.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:26:21](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:21](#) Or I need time, I need a break, I need someone to sit and listen, I need someone to, you know, finish this goddamn report.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:26:30](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:30](#) Like, just being so present to what the actual need is in the moment and not just sort of going on with like, "Well, this is what we do," but "this is how we do things" does not apply. Honestly, I think it never applied as much as people tried to apply it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:26:45](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:45](#) Very much right now, *very* much right now it does not apply.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:26:49](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:49](#) And on that point around the equity issue of moving online, there was a really great webinar, I think... Okay, time is weird, so I have no idea how—

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:26:57](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:26:57](#) —many Mondays ago it was, either two or seventeen.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:27:00](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:27:02](#) [Laughs] It was a webinar, which I think has been recorded and is accessible. But it was called “creating safe and equitable spaces online.” [sic: actual title “Safe and Equitable Engagement Spaces in the Age of COVID-19”] It was done through the Morris J. Wosk and it was Cicely Blain and Alia Ali and moderated by Elodie Jacquet. And they just talked about so many different, so many different aspects of like what it means to do engagement and facilitation and online spaces and just, you know, covered all the kinds of things like, yeah, who has what technology,—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:27:31](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:27:31](#) —who's, you know, who's in a home where they've got four different people working at home plus kids who are trying to go to school and everyone's on the same bandwidth?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:27:38](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:27:38](#) And things like... Just the experience of being online, like remembering that people have physical bodies and physical needs. Building in breaks if you're going to be doing like... Not being like, "Hey, we're going to do a four-hour session with like no breaks or anything like that." Like, building that in, slowing things down, knowing things that take, take more time. And also like recognizing that this is not a normal moment.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:28:01](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:28:01](#) This is... There's grief in this moment. People are coming in all kinds of places emotionally at different times. So it's like, yes, we can, we can continue to do work,—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:28:11](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:28:11](#) —we can continue to connect, we can continue to, to move our project's and our organization's work forward. But like, do it paying attention.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:28:21](#) Yeah.

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Carolyn Camman: [00:28:21](#) Like this again, do it, you know, sensing where people at and what actually is needed in this moment and then how does your work fit into that and not just trying to like drive your agenda that you're already committed to.

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:32](#) Yeah. Paying attention to the moment is, is so critical and does require this kind of like sensitivity and alertness that I think for some people whose coping mechanism may indeed be like head in the sand, like, plow forward, you know, try to pretend everything is the same, that, that, that expectation like you've gotta pause and, and look around and see what's actually happening is, is a challenge. But it also feels so unbelievably vital right now to be giving that kind of attention. I had a really interesting, sort of productive, heartening meeting last week with a community of other university instructors talking about how to move, particularly courses that really rely on in-person engagement, how to move those courses online. You know, courses that are really designed to be like a cohort experience where we all sit together and talk and get to know each other and what does it mean to move those online. And it was a wonderful conversation where people brought up points about how the fetishization of in-person instruction has always been inherently non-inclusive and inaccessible, and who is left out when we assume that the best education is always the education that means that people can come and sit in the same room as us.

Carolyn Camman: [00:29:55](#) Mhm.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:55](#) What, what communities and forms of gathering are we ignoring and what can we learn from the people who are already have been... You know, disabled communities for example, who are already have been gathering online for for some time. And one of the points that we kept coming back to was the difference between what we're doing right now as we finish out our semesters and actual digital pedagogy. Because this isn't teaching, this is triage. Like we're not, this isn't—

Carolyn Camman: [00:30:24](#) Mm.

Hannah McGregor: [00:30:24](#) —you know, we didn't design these online courses and, and get, now get to sort of see how they're working and make decisions about what worked and what didn't work and how might we do them next time. This is like everybody's fumbling, everybody's overwhelmed. We as instructors are overwhelmed and exhausted. Our students are going through a wide variety of kinds of crises, some crises of mental health, some having to travel. borders closing, people losing their jobs, people losing

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their housing. Like, you know, none of this is ideal [Laughs] scenarios for teaching, and trying to pretend that what we're doing right now really is going to let us learn anything other than how good we are at being compassionate and how well we can work within the sort of institutions and systems we have to try to treat our students like human beings. Like we see... I'm not learning anything about digital pedagogy right now. Obviously.

- Carolyn Camman: [00:31:23](#) Yeah, that's totally different. It's a totally different scenario and yeah, I've got a friend who, who teaches at a university who says like, "Our job right now is to be kind."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:31:30](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:31:31](#) Like that's our number one job, is to be kind.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:31:33](#) Yep, that's it.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:31:33](#) And for me that also means being kind to ourselves.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:31:38](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:31:38](#) And that, that checking in of like what is the need and how can I serve that? Like I just try to start with me because it's very easy to think, "Oh no, no, I'm fine. Like I just need to focus on this." And then when you do, when you do that... Like, I decide this is something I just know from life—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:31:54](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:31:54](#) —repeatedly learning this, it seems like it doesn't ever fully sink in but I'm getting better at it. But like, when I ignore my own needs, then I will substitute other people's needs for my needs.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:32:05](#) [Dismayed Sighs] Hooo...hoo...hooo... [Laughs] I was on a six-foot-apart walk with a friend who lives in my neighborhood last week. I was talking about how I have this feeling right now that the useful thing for me to do is like, look unblinkingly into the worst of human suffering at all times. And if I stop looking for even a second, that I have failed. As though that does anyone any good. [Laughs] So that isn't like inherently damaging me and then by extension, damaging anybody who is dependent on me. Like, how is this useful? It's a like, wildly sort of like romanticized and also just inherently, I think selfish at its heart, understanding of what it means to like, bear witness.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:32:59](#) Mhm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:32:59](#) And, and how much more useful is it for me to like, keep myself well so that I have the capacity to care for my friends and my family and my students and my colleagues. And then like, you know what? Just make like a bunch of donations. [Laughs] Like, if I'm feeling like, "Well, there's a lot of human suffering I'm not helping with right now. Like, cool, give some money to a food bank."
- Carolyn Camman: [00:33:23](#) Yep. I, I very much, I... One of the books that I really love is *Decolonizing Wealth* by Edgar Villanueva. Which is like a critique of philanthropy.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:33:33](#) Mm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:33:33](#) I mean, it's an amazing book and he, and he talks in detail about like where—particularly in the US but it's not dissimilar in Canada—like where money comes from within like, you know, the history of the wealth and the practices and what's happening. And also talking about like what, what is needed to change philanthropy so that it actually does serve justice.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:33:52](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:33:52](#) And one of the things he talks about is that money is medicine. Put it where it needs to go. Which is a very different way than thinking about it like, money is this bad thing, money is inherently corrupting, and things like that. It's like, well, it is when we hoard it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:05](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:34:05](#) It is when we keep it from where it needs to be. Actually this is reminding me of the, like the last, the last person that I physically had in this apartment with me, we didn't—it was, it was March 15th or something, so we didn't hug—but I had a friend who was in the neighborhood and she was like, "What if we just like sat on opposite sides of the couch?"
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:22](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:34:22](#) We were at that sort of stage of social distancing. And one of the things that we talked about was, yeah, this idea that it's not about what you have or don't have so much as how you're, how you're helping it move. So like, if I resource myself really, really well, but I'm disconnected from anyone around me that I could

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share those resources with, that I'm not any more useful though than if I'm really connected with people, but have also like really impoverished myself.

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:51](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:34:51](#) And even in that framing, I hear... There's a certain amount of like, "Oh, but it's better to give than to like..." There's a certain like outwardness to it of like, I'm only valuable in what I have to give.

Hannah McGregor: [00:34:59](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:34:59](#) So like, hey, Carolyn, let's challenge that. But it's like if I'm, if I'm in a network and I want to be part of a strong network and a resilient network, like I have to be showing up with things, but also being part of the flow of things I need to be giving and receiving. Like, money doesn't do us any good when only a few people have it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:17](#) Yes.

Carolyn Camman: [00:35:17](#) But when it's actually spread out, hey it's, it can be a convenient mode of commercial exchange.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:24](#) [Laughs]

Carolyn Camman: [00:35:24](#) You know? That's really, that's what it's meant to be.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:28](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [00:35:28](#) And, and... The whole Canada's federal response with the CERB thing is really getting on my nerves because initially it seemed it was the right policy of like, yeah, let's just make sure that people still have money.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:40](#) Yep.

Carolyn Camman: [00:35:40](#) Like that seemed to be the idea. Like the whole system will shut down. You know? We can't just resource banks, we literally have to resource everyone,

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:48](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [00:35:48](#) You know, individuals, businesses, all of it. And so it seemed like they were like making this good policy move of like, yes, let's make sure everyone has money or else the entire system that

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we have is not going to survive. But then, since then, it seems like there's all these restrictions that have come out where you know, like students aren't going to be covered,—

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:08](#) Well—

Carolyn Camman: [00:36:08](#) —you know, the people are not going to be covered.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:11](#) So I think Trudeau just announced this morning that they're now coming up with another program for the people who don't qualify for CERB. So it's like EI is solution one and then if you don't qualify for EI, there's CERB, and then if you don't qualify for CERB, I think they're trying to come up with a third thing.

Carolyn Camman: [00:36:29](#) Okay, okay.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:29](#) And what all of this suggests to me is that the government is desperately trying to simultaneously recognize that everybody needs to be resourced and the whole economy will fall to pieces if they aren't, while also simultaneously denying the indisputable and incredibly straightforward solution, which is universal basic income. [Laughs].

Carolyn Camman: [00:36:52](#) Right?

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:52](#) Like, if you... But like by refusing to let that... By not saying like, here's what we're going to do. Everybody gets this amount of money a month. Like, and if you're already making a certain amount of money, then you get the difference. But everybody's... Like, we're just going to make sure that every individual is getting baseline x amount of dollars a month and that's what it's going to look like. And also—

Carolyn Camman: [00:37:12](#) Yep.

Hannah McGregor: [00:37:12](#) —it's against the law to kick people out of their homes. Like, [Laughs] these things that should be the case anyway. Like the, the attempt to create these sort of this and then here's the supplement to that and then here's the supplement to that feels to me like they don't want to put the infrastructure in place that afterwards we'll be able to be like, "Well, but look at that infrastructure we already have." But that's what I think we should be pushing for.

Carolyn Camman: [00:37:37](#) I love universal basic income and I also know that it's like... There are ways of implementing it like, poorly... There are

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people who want to implement it as a, as an alternative to having any kind of social safety net—

- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:48](#) Mhm...
- Carolyn Camman: [00:37:48](#) —which like, now you're missing the point.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:49](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:37:49](#) Like, you have the social safety net because life still sometimes happens and we need to have a collective caretaking mechanism.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:57](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:37:57](#) And yeah, like give people like that baseline security, like make sure that people's like essential functioning is secure and then trust us.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:08](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:38:08](#) For the love of God, trust us, trust people, you know? adrienne maree brown's "Trust people and they become trustworthy." That actually we can self-organize in the direction of things that are good.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:23](#) Yeah. [Laughs] That's... Thinking about what you're saying about like the social safety net, about how much this pandemic is really revealing the necessity of collective forms of safety because like there is nothing like a virus to remind you of... This might not be the great equalizer, but we are all in this together because this is a—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:38:50](#) Mhm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:50](#) —this is a *species* experience. So there is really like, you know... I'm thinking about things like in Vancouver attempts to implement safe supply in order to keep people in the Downtown Eastside safe that it seems like... Is this finally enough of a trigger to make politicians really have to come face-to-face with the fact that you can't pretend that drug users aren't part of our community because that's a political fantasy that people seem to love to indulge in—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:39:25](#) Mm.

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:39:25](#) —to other people in the Downtown Eastside so entirely that we can pretend that what happens to them doesn't have an impact on us. And then here comes this virus to be like, "Sorry, that's not how any of this works." Like, we're all in this sort of society together and we are going to collectively survive this insofar as we have systems in place that are collective.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:39:54](#) Yeah, yeah. It's like this pandemic... It's not... It's, it's highlighting the inequities and, and reinforcing them and we're in it, I would say, "We're in it together," it's like it's, we're all connected.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:04](#) Yes.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:40:04](#) We are undeniably all completely connected and interdependent. If you say to, you know, address this, this pandemic, everyone has to stay home and a good chunk of people who live in your community do not have homes to stay inside, do not have water to wash their hands with, do not have access to the resources that they would need to, to take those, you know, policies and orders and actually implement them,—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:30](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:40:30](#) —then you are as fucked as if you weren't making those policies. We don't have the luxury of, of... Well, "luxury" of being disconnected from each other. I think... I mean, yeah, the way we, we do, we absolutely conceive of disconnection as a luxury.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:44](#) Mhm!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:40:44](#) The ability to jet off to a private island.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:47](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:40:48](#) Like those visions of what luxury is, or be off on your yacht. Like, we do. We, we...luxuriate? Is... What's the word for like making something a luxury? Idealized? I don't know.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:58](#) Sure, yeah!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:40:59](#) We, this is very much white settler colonialism and capitalism. This is not like a universal human "we," this is a, a specific cultural context "we" that I am part of, that is part of my cultural context where—

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:41:13](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:41:13](#) —separation is prized—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:41:17](#) Yes.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:41:17](#) —and complete illusion.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:41:19](#) Yeah, yeah! And a complete illusion. I mean, this reminds me of a conversation I had with Kai Cheng Thom in the last interview episode where she was talking about, you know, how in apocalypse narratives the hero is the sort of lone warrior who has stockpiled resources and stands over them with a gun and, you know, that this fantasy is of solo survival and self-separation. But even in those narratives, we still see the degree to which separation and isolation turns that person into a monster. That even in contexts where we are like, "Oh, nothing would be better than being able to be totally alone and totally disconnected." At the same time, we also can't help but acknowledge that like isolation doesn't work for most of us.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:42:09](#) Yeah. Like, truly. It's... And isn't really possible. I mean, again, just thinking back to like there are like very isolated, remote communities who are not isolated and remote.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:20](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:42:20](#) Like, like very, very much aware of how connected and interconnected they are in terms of like, "Hey, are we going to be able to keep getting food? Are we going to be able to like keep out folks who keep trying to drop in?" Like—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:32](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:42:32](#) —there's just no... There just really isn't such a thing as isolation on this planet.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:39](#) Whew... Globalization. It's real. It's so real. It's so materially real. [Laughs] It turns out it wasn't just an idea the whole time.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:42:48](#) We've done such a bad job of planning around it, like...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:50](#) [Laughs] Great, great segway! This is, this is classic *Secret Feminist Agenda* style, that rather than starting by like framing the conversation in terms of—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:43:03](#) [Laughs]

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:03](#) —the kinds of work that you do, we're going to have a whole conversation and then right at the end now we're gonna be like, "So what's evaluation?"
- Carolyn Camman: [00:43:11](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:11](#) Because I have been listening to your podcast and, you know, I'm like our mutual friend Zena—who is the person who originally was like, "Hey, I've got somebody you have to have on this podcast"—I think Zena knows what evaluation is?
- Hannah and Caro...: [00:43:25](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:25](#) I suspect from the way she talks about it... And I have like... A dear friend of mine I know has like... Works in public health, she, she works for an NGO now, but I know that in the past she has worked as a freelance evaluator. So I like, I have a sense of, you know, in specific situations... Like there was a project that was being done about like, access to healthcare for sex workers in Budapest—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:43:53](#) Mhm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:53](#) —and she was like flown in as an external evaluator for this program. So I have this very specific sense of like, an organization does a project, they like get some funding and they do a thing, and then they ask somebody to come and tell them if they did a good job? [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:44:11](#) That is the fundamental pattern of what evaluation as a profession often looks like.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:44:19](#) Okay!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:44:19](#) Also, can I say—this is a segway because I'm terrible—but I just... Like a fun story about Zena,—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:44:25](#) Mhm!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:44:25](#) —I... The first time I knew that she existed was because I was listening to her episode on this podcast.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:44:32](#) Oh, wow!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:44:32](#) And I listened to it and there was a few things... I was just like... I already was listening to your podcast and I was like, "This is amazing, I love this podcast." And then I was also like, "This

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person Zena is amazing. I really hope I get to be their friend someday." And then a few months later we were introduced by other mutual friends through, through my evaluation network. So I got to be... Not because of this podcast, but like I learned—

- Hannah McGregor: [00:44:55](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:44:55](#) —I learned about how Zena is and then got to meet her. It's all tied up together. It just feels—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:00](#) Aw!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:00](#) —I just wanted to share that.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:01](#) That's...delightful. That is absolutely delightful.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:04](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:04](#) And also lucky you for getting to meet Zena. What a tremendous human being.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:10](#) She's joyous and wonderful and I adore her—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:12](#) [Whispers Excitedly In Agreement]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:12](#) —and I can't wait til I get to give her a hug again.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:15](#) Ugh, right!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:15](#) There's, so... I can't wait until I can hug.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:20](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:20](#) Okay. But I will, I will brave... So what is evaluation? I mean you've, you've essentially described basically how it, how it shows up.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:27](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:27](#) It's a very, in a lot of ways, a very young field in terms of like the professional spanning of it. And it, it operates really differently, I find, in Canada... Like we don't have like PhD programs around it, a lot of people are learning... The traditional way of, is being an accidental evaluator where you learn on the job and you turn out to be doing evaluation and then you like, "Oh wait, I could do this as a whole thing"—

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:49](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:49](#) —and you make that your job.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:51](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:45:51](#) I was introduced to it in my master's program, I was doing a program in applied social psychology at the University of Saskatchewan... Social psych and, and... Applied social psych and community psych are two of the sort of "psych feeders" often into evaluation. Sorry, that's slightly weird terminology, but people come from all kinds of different backgrounds, you know, epidemiology, nursing, sociology, social work, sort of anything where you might encounter like data and social science methods?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:46:22](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:46:22](#) That's one of the definitions is used—of evaluation—is using social science methods to assess the, the quality and effectiveness of various programs, services, and policies. And I almost made myself fall asleep just by saying that.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:46:35](#) [Laughs] You said that and I was like, "What's a social science method? Is it, is it counting?"
- Carolyn Camman: [00:46:40](#) Oh, I know, I know.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:46:41](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:46:44](#) I know. So, yeah. So I... It was something that... I was in grad school and I had a course in it and really just sort of touching on some of the basics of like you would start with a needs assessment, what's the need? And then you would help them build a program logic model and then you'd, you know, look at their early outcomes and their later outcomes. And it's all very, very linear and sort of breaking it down. And there is some, there's some utility to like, some thoughtful parsing through of like, what is it, what the hell is it that we're actually trying to do? [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:47:08](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:47:08](#) And, and how do we think we would know if that was working?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:47:12](#) Mmm.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:47:12](#) And I had some experiences early on where I actually got to work with people helping evaluate or bring evaluative thinking to their programs and services and saw how engaging and useful it could be and how much people could come alive around the like, "Oh wow, we've never gotten a chance to just sit and talk with each other about what it is that we do and this is so helpful, and we're learning things and, and we have ideas and we're discovering things." And that was really compelling for me, to be part of that.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:47:40](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:47:40](#) And at the same time, I was learning to hate academia. [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:47:45](#) [Laughs] Sorry.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:47:47](#) 'Cause it had been something I'd done really well in for a long time, but in a way that felt quite hollow—.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:47:51](#) Mm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:47:51](#) —and just like narrower and narrower and narrower. And it didn't feel like I was like, getting this interesting, expansive knowledge. It felt like I was learning how to fit into a very small box.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:02](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:48:02](#) And my prospects also seemed quite like... I knew people who were incredibly prolific, published in terms of publishing, had done like postdocs at Yale and who were struggling to find a tenure track position.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:17](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:48:17](#) And I was just like that it just seems like there's no future and if there's this other amazing alternative, so why don't I, you know, take my master's degree and run with it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:28](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:48:28](#) Which I had entered, I had entered grad school assuming, *assuming*, I would do a PhD, I wasn't even thinking that *hard* about it. I wasn't even necessarily *aspiring* to it. Really.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:36](#) It's just like, "Oh, this is the career path one follows."

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:48:39](#) "This is what one does."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:40](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:48:41](#) Yeah. And I'd take it... I felt myself becoming much more compliant. Like, the whole way I went through school, I was just becoming more and more like, "This is just what you do!" And so in evaluation, even in evaluation, like, the first few years I was doing it, I was still doing it in a, in a very much as "this is just what you do." Like, "these are the steps that you follow." And as I said, like I had like, you know, one program and then some like practical experience in it. And I was working in a research and evaluation capacity immediately after graduating, but not like a lot of depth of theory. I think that's the difference I see down in the states where there's more PhD programs, where people will go more into like, "What's the breadth of what we can do?" and explore a wider array of approaches. And then it can also get very, very academic.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:23](#) As anything can.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:49:24](#) So, like I think—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:24](#) And just a set of sort of theories of evaluation, I'm sure, is a whole thing.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:49:28](#) Oh gosh, yes. Oh gosh, yes. And actually I'm spending more time like going into and reading that 'cause I'm finding that that foundation really, really helpful, but also appreciating the depth of practice that I have—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:37](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:49:37](#) —and praxis is a very big thing for me—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:41](#) Yess.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:49:41](#) —of like, making sure that I have this, you know, practice-informed theory and theory-informed practice.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:46](#) For anybody who's playing the *Secret Feminist Agenda* drinking game at home—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:49:51](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:51](#) —you can just take a shot for praxis.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:49:54](#) Yep.
- Hannah and Caro...: [00:49:54](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:49:57](#) Well, it's really important. It's really, really important. Particularly... So the turn that my practice took in the last, literally only in the last, couple of years, 'cause I had been doing evaluation for a while and I moved to Vancouver even though I loved Saskatoon, partly I was just like, "I was here all the way through grad school and I need a change of pace and I'm also tired of six months of winter."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:50:17](#) Mhm. [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:50:17](#) "Very dark. And I want mountains and my sister lives here"
- Hannah McGregor: [00:50:21](#) These are all reasonable.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:50:21](#) So I moved to Vancouver without a job or anything like that. And I was like googling like who does evaluation in Vancouver and would they get coffee with me? The answer is yes, evaluators are very friendly people. And started kind of calling myself a consultant because... I mean, I had some client work but it was like, it was more just because it was better than saying unemployed.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:50:41](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:50:41](#) And like it was building a network from scratch and like meeting lots of people, doing a lot of sort of volunteering in a professional capacity, just trying to understand like who are the organizations around here, what's the political context? 'Cause those are things that really shape, you know, what the work looks like.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:50:54](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:50:54](#) But I was doing it and also feeling somewhat disconnected by like... There were things that weren't coming together for it. And it was in September of 2018 I took a course for... It was for the SFU... They have an online certificate, mostly online; there's this one in-person class. Well, I guess it might [Laughs] not be in-person this year.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:13](#) [Laughs]

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:51:13](#) We'll see, it's September, maybe... Fingers crossed. But the certificate is "Evaluation for Social Change and Transformational Learning" and I talk about it a lot on my podcast. Right? It sounds pretty cool.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:23](#) I have heard of it and... I just assumed that it meant classroom evaluation.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:51:30](#) Ohh, I mean—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:31](#) 'Cause in university that's usually what we're talking about.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:51:33](#) And there is a lot of overlap. Like I read about sort of peda—, pedagogical assessment and classroom evaluation—.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:38](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:51:38](#) —'cause I learned things about what we think about with evaluation. But yeah, this is actually meant to be more like the program evaluation side.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:45](#) Yeah!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:51:45](#) And the first class is called transformative evalua—, transforming evalua—, advanced evaluation landscapes? The word "transformation," "evaluation," and "landscapes" are in it in some configuration and I've suddenly forgotten what. But it's taught by a woman named Kim van der Woerd who runs the only—that I know of—the only sort of Indigenous woman led evaluation firm in BC.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:52:07](#) Woah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:52:07](#) And she's from 'Namgis First Nation. So her and... We, we also in that class had Sofia Vitalis who works with her and Elder Roberta Price and Elder Lillian Howard, like that was like the teaching team. It was incredible. It was like three and a half days. Kim really like brought this deep, relational style and... Like as a... You know, an Indigenous learning practice into the room. We talked about settler colonialism, which... Some... Things that I knew about, but had never had had a conversation about in an evaluation context. We talked about white supremacy culture, we talked about how all of these things show up in evaluation, we talked about everything that we would need to do to think about evaluation differently. And I came away from it feeling like completely energized around stuff that I already cared about and believed in.

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:52:56](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:52:56](#) Like I'd always had this... Like while I was in grad school, I'd always been doing this like sort of social justice learning and work on the side, but I had so much trouble integrating them. It really felt so... Like I couldn't cite the blog posts I was reading in my master's thesis.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:08](#) Oh.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:53:08](#) You know? Like I couldn't bring those things together even though they were relevant.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:12](#) They felt like they should go together. Yeah.
- Speaker 4: [00:53:16](#) Yeah! And I just came away from that first course thinking like, "Oh, I really need to change everything I do, everything I think, and approach around my evaluation work.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:25](#) Mhm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:25](#) And I didn't even know exactly what that would look like at that point in time. I just came away knowing I needed to change that. And then at the same time I was starting to work with someone who works in participatory engagement and facilitation and I had been interested in participatory work. And I even have one of the earliest episodes of my podcast that I do with my colleague Brian, *Eval Cafe*, have.... We'd been talking about participatory methods and how we weren't sure if we were doing them or not.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:51](#) [Laughs] Great. Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:53:55](#) And the answer is—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:56](#) This is me and social science methods.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:53:58](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:53:58](#) I'm like, "I don't know what they are. Am I doing them? Probably not."
- Carolyn Camman: [00:54:01](#) Yeah. But I started getting exposed to like what it actually look like to do truly participatory work. So, participatory facilitation where it's not you telling a group of people what to do—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:09](#) Mhm.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:54:09](#) —but it's you creating and designing and holding a space where people can do amazing work together—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:14](#) Mm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:54:14](#) —with each other. And I started to see like, "Oh, this, this goes together." And that participatory engagement work was also really grounded in complexity. The SFU certificate... There's a whole, one of the whole courses is on complexity and there's another one on leadership.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:27](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:54:27](#) You know, you're three courses in, four courses in before you actually get to the one on evaluation design.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:32](#) That's so interesting.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:54:33](#) Right? Because it's all of this foundational stuff.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:35](#) Putting the right principles in place so that—
- Carolyn Camman: [00:54:37](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:37](#) —when you start to talk about how you actually do the thing, it's building up from a place of a shared set of principles. Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:54:43](#) Exactly. And it's like putting the conversation about, you know, decolonizing evaluation and challenging settler colonialism in evaluation as the very first course, as the thing that's at the centre of everything. Not the optional, add-on, we'll-get-to-it-if-we-can, but like, "Nope, this is, this is it. This is where it begins."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:01](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:55:01](#) And then you can't lose it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:03](#) Yeah!
- Carolyn Camman: [00:55:03](#) So like I had these like two like intense experiences, very close together, like within a couple of months of each other. And it, it really threw up how much I had been dissatisfied with a lot of my evaluation practice, but not knowing quite how to transition or change it.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:16](#) Mhm.

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:55:16](#) And I essentially spent the last couple of years just totally reconfiguring what it is I do and getting more and more clarity and, and working with more and more methods and transition. And a lot of it was like the initial paradigm shift of like, how do I think about, you know, reality and knowledge and knowledge production. Like getting into the ontological and epistemological side of things.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:37](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:55:38](#) And then also trying to be like, "Okay, what of my current methods that I use, you know, surveys, interviews, focus groups being like the traditional... That's, that's the social science research methods by the way is surveys, interviews, and focus groups.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:48](#) Gotcha, gotcha.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:55:49](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:49](#) And then you pay somebody to go through all of the answers you get and they tag them.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:55:57](#) Yes.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:57](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:55:58](#) Yeah. Yeah, there'll be some coding and... So this is—and this is a huge thing that I've turned around in my work—is I no longer, I don't tell people how good their programs are. I don't tell people what their data mean.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:56:08](#) What do you do? [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:56:14](#) I—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:56:14](#) [Laughs] Sorry.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:56:14](#) No, it's okay!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:56:14](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:56:14](#) There was this shift for me as well. I have data parties, I do participatory sense-making, I work with people to offer sort of like, here's an array of options when it comes to design, here are the ups and downs of the different sort of things. Like, "What, what are, what are your needs?" Like figuring out,

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working with people, like what are their needs, what, what would actually serve those needs? "Okay, here's a thing we could do." And make sure they're engaged in the design and working of it. And it becomes an ask on the people I work with, so I actually also have to learn like how do I do this in ways that, you know, are not overly burdensome, but also like there are people who would, who would really rather outsource this completely. It's like, "No, we just need someone to come in and take our data and generate a report with it so we have something to give to our funder."

- Hannah McGregor: [00:56:54](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:56:54](#) Which is, you know what? Like it's legit in this context—.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:56:57](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:56:57](#) —because fundamentally evaluation is, for a lot of organizations, about getting and sustaining funding. It's not about learning, it's not about accountability, it's about how do we keep our doors open.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:57:08](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:57:08](#) Which is a terrible, terrible indictment of, of how we fund services—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:57:13](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:57:13](#) —in our context because we have both excoriate those services and also any, any meeting in evaluation around it. And so a lot of times we're trying to work around that. Like, how do we do meaningful learning and accountability, which to me is like accountability to everyone in the process—
- Hannah McGregor: [00:57:25](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:57:25](#) —basically of like, how do we make sure that the stuff we're spending all our time on is what we want to be spending our time on?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:57:34](#) Yeah, yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:57:34](#) Time and money and energy and love.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:57:36](#) I can hear so much how like this kind of thinking would be helpful in so many different kinds of organizations and

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communities and like just different collaborative settings where like a bunch of different people are trying to work together to achieve an outcome. Like, that—

- Carolyn Camman: [00:57:53](#) Yep.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:57:53](#) —in all of these different settings it would be so helpful. So are there particular kinds of organizations or kinds of projects that you sort of specialize in working with? Like are, is there subject area expertise that that plays into sort of what kinds of evaluation you end up doing?
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:12](#) Yeah, it's, it's been evolving. So my actual, my original background is criminal justice and corrections.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:18](#) [Surprised] Oh.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:18](#) When I was an undergraduate, I did a combined degree in psychology and criminology and was very convinced that I was going to make the correctional system better.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:27](#) [Laughs] Mm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:27](#) I gave up on that at a certain point.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:29](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:29](#) I, I, I also was coming into it with the idea of like, "Oh, people, mean well, we just need to tweak it." And I came out of...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:33](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:33](#) Abolish prisons!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:35](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:35](#) Decarceration now!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:37](#) Yeah, yeah. One of those like... Realizing that something that you think is a bug is actually a feature.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:43](#) Yeah. Yeah...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:44](#) And you're like, "Oh, I thought it was, I thought it was a good, a good idea, with some problems and it turns out it's actually just a real bad idea."

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- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:51](#) Real bad idea.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:52](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:52](#) And so that was just a space that I had to had to leave.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:55](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:55](#) Although I still, I mean it's still an area... Like I, I work with organizations that work in those spaces.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:58:59](#) Okay.
- Carolyn Camman: [00:58:59](#) And that I feel really strongly about that work. But, I'm, I'm, I'm not expecting to be hired by the federal correctional service anytime soon. But from there I've, you know... Like, what I was interested in in criminal justice was the fact that it was the intersection of so many oppressions in society, effectively. And it connects to a lot of other things. So I started, also, and... I've worked in things like mental health and addictions, I've ended up working in sort of school settings, health settings, public health. I'm doing quite a bit of work right now with disability services organizations. But I've also ended up in lots of random projects. Like the, I think for me the common thread right now is that people approach me... I rarely respond to requests for proposals and go through formal channels. I'm usually having people approach me or refer to me because of like the, the way I do evaluation, very much sort of complexity and equity focused. It's, it's often people who are saying, "Hey, we're trying to do a thing that we've never done before and we don't know anyone else who's done it before and we have no idea how to do it."
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:03](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [01:00:03](#) "Can you help?"
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:05](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:00:05](#) And my response is usually, "Well, I've never evaluated anything like this exactly before. So we're in the same boat, let's figure it out together."
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:12](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:00:12](#) And that's becoming my niche. But it's also still very much in flux. Like, I'm still like two years into this re-imagining project

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and, and I can think back to where I was a year ago and be like, "Damn." You know, I've come a long way, I've learned so many things from there, and then like, I'm hoping I'm able to look back, you know, a year from now to this moment. First of all, I'm hoping that a year from now I've hugged someone.

- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:34](#) [Laughs] Sorry. Right there with you, yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:00:41](#) [Laughs] Right?
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:41](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:00:41](#) All I want right now is a hug and a haircut. That's all I want.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:43](#) Mm, God. Oh. You know what? They, they can come from the same person. That would be totally fine.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:00:47](#) That would be totally fine.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:48](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:00:48](#) I'm down with that. But yeah, so it's... And I think right now the field of evaluation itself is going to be profoundly transformed by this moment. We're, we're all discovering... Because when you have a program that you've established and you've, you've evaluated like, "Hey, this is our great program, it works, awesome, and we get all these great results and things like that." And then a pandemic hits and suddenly there's things in your logic model, your outcome chain, that don't make sense anymore.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:13](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:01:13](#) And the type of evaluation I do, which is like a development... I do like developmental evaluation it's sort of the one frame, which is this idea of you're learning and doing at the same time and they're informing each other and you're, you're adapting, you're not necessarily... You can over the long term arrive at kind of more of a fixed model potentially. But the idea is you're not starting from, we already know what we're going to do, we're going to map it out and we're just going to assess how close our implementation is to that as we go.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:37](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:01:37](#) It's more this idea, "We're going to start somewhere and we have no idea exactly where it will go from there. We're going to

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have to keep like sensing and responding and adapting to what is happening."

Hannah McGregor: [01:01:45](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [01:01:45](#) Which is something that all of us have gotten, if we weren't already experienced with it, a lot more experienced with—

Hannah McGregor: [01:01:51](#) Mm, mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [01:01:51](#) —over the last few weeks. [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [01:01:52](#) Yeah. Hearing you talk about one of your specializations being complexity, I was like, "Oh yeah. Like that is a thing that a lot of us are learning a lot about right now, huh?"

Carolyn Camman: [01:02:02](#) Yep. Complexity—

Hannah McGregor: [01:02:04](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [01:02:04](#) —and chaos, too.

Hannah McGregor: [01:02:05](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [01:02:05](#) Which is like that, that sort of other space of like, "Yeah we don't know what's happening, but it's happening real fast."

Hannah McGregor: [01:02:11](#) [Laughs]

Carolyn Camman: [01:02:11](#) And we just have to react and try shit. And then the other type of evaluation that I do is equitable evaluation.

Hannah McGregor: [01:02:18](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [01:02:18](#) Which is something that like... It's been fairly newly coined, it's been developed over the last five years. And it's not, it's... Neither of these are like checklists of like, here's how you do this or here's this, here's this exactly.

Hannah McGregor: [01:02:29](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [01:02:29](#) The way it looks like... Like developmental evaluation is very much a paradigm of like what complexity is.

Hannah McGregor: [01:02:34](#) Mhm.

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- Carolyn Camman: [01:02:34](#) And I would say equitable evaluation really sets out a purpose behind what evaluation should do, which there are three sort of underlying principles to it, which is that evaluation should serve equity.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:46](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:02:46](#) And this idea that if evaluation does not explicitly serve equity, we are serving inequity. There's not a neutral.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:52](#) Yup.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:02:52](#) That when... Within our evaluations we should be asking questions about context, you know, not just about, you know, "What was the intention behind this project and how was it designed and how well is it fulfilling its, its stated goals?" But also, you know, what is the historical and cultural context in which this arose?
- Hannah McGregor: [01:03:08](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:03:08](#) You know, who is it serving and who is it not serving?
- Hannah McGregor: [01:03:11](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:03:11](#) And how is it actually interacting with the underlying sort of systemic drivers of the space. So it's the difference between, you know, evaluating a school breakfast program where the idea is, you know, kids aren't getting food at home, so we'll give them food in the morning so that they can pay attention in class and be like, "Oh look, grades went up!" And things like that. Yay. And, and asking bigger questions like, "Why the fuck is this happening in the first place?"
- Hannah McGregor: [01:03:35](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:03:35](#) And in what ways is this program addressing and/or replicating the conditions, you know. And how is the community involved in having a conversation about that? Then...
- Hannah McGregor: [01:03:44](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:03:44](#) So the third principle is that you should be using multiculturally valid methods.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:03:49](#) Mhm.

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- Carolyn Camman: [01:03:49](#) Which is to say it should not... The validity should not be purely defined by white settler colonialism, ideas of positivism, and objectivity.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:03:57](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:03:57](#) And also focus as much as possible on participant ownership. So that again—
- Hannah McGregor: [01:04:01](#) Mm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:04:01](#) —it's not, "We're evaluating for a funder or for the project managers or for the evaluated," but it actually is that the evaluation process belongs to the people that it is serving.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:04:10](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:04:12](#) And this, what this... Equitable evaluation has come up specifically in the States where there were philanthropic organizations who were really interested in actually serving equity—
- Hannah McGregor: [01:04:22](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:04:22](#) —in work that they do and there in an enormously powerful position to be able to do so. So we're trying to do that work and then we're asking like, "Okay, we should evaluate this because we know that evaluation is helpful." So Jara Dean-Coffey is one of the people who's a driver behind equitable evaluation. And I might be... This is slightly the maybe simplified version of the story behind all of this.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:04:44](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [01:04:44](#) I'll just name that right now. Like, slightly folkloric version of the story—
- Hannah McGregor: [01:04:48](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [01:04:48](#) —which means it may not be a hundred percent exact in all its details—
- Hannah McGregor: [01:04:52](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:04:52](#) —but it's true enough and useful enough. So in the folkloric version of this, Jara's saying like, "Well, okay, so how is your

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evaluation going to serve equity?" And people are like, "We don't even know what that means or what that looks like."

Hannah McGregor: [01:05:04](#) [Laughs]

Carolyn Camman: [01:05:04](#) "What does it mean to have equitable evaluation?" And so this has, this is a... It's almost like they're, they're doing it like a platform.

Hannah McGregor: [01:05:11](#) Mm.

Carolyn Camman: [01:05:11](#) They're not saying, "This is what it is." They're saying, "This is what our principles are and our framework, we have to figure out together what this looks like."

Hannah McGregor: [01:05:18](#) Yeah.

Carolyn Camman: [01:05:18](#) So there's a lot of... Initially working with those organizations... And there's a lot of public learning around it as well. So people in these different philanthropic organizations, it's mostly in the States, but also Vancouver Foundation here in BC as part of this as well. And their new LEVEL grants program is being evaluated this way or within this framework, I believe.

Hannah McGregor: [01:05:34](#) New LEVEL grants?

Carolyn Camman: [01:05:35](#) LEVEL grants. Which I'm going to mangle the explanation of probably too much. I know that they're grants that are aimed, I think specifically towards racialized youth? You know what? There's going to be a link to this.

Hannah McGregor: [01:05:47](#) Cool, great, great. We'll put it in the show notes. Perfect.

Carolyn Camman: [01:05:49](#) Yep!

Hannah McGregor: [01:05:49](#) Perfect. Keep going.

Carolyn Camman: [01:05:50](#) I can't remember enough details. So like they produce regular blog posts saying, "Here's what we're learning about what it means to explore equity within our, within our organization."

Hannah McGregor: [01:06:00](#) Mhm.

Carolyn Camman: [01:06:00](#) "Like, here's what we're learning, here's what we're trying, here's what, here's what's not going well. Here's what's been hard. Here's where we've had some successes..." Like this beautiful, transparent, like, open source... "Learning in public" is

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what my friend Trilby Smith often says, who works at Vancouver Foundation as their director of evaluation and learning. And they're now... More and more consultants are being able to sort of get involved in this, it's this growing community of people. And the combination of, for me of developmental evaluation and equitable evaluation of like, "I'm going to evaluate, assuming that we can work in complexity." Not everything we do is, is complex, but a lot of it is, and we need to take that into account in the, in the approaches we use, but we need to do it in service of justice and equity.

- Hannah McGregor: [01:06:39](#) Yeah.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:06:39](#) Which is something that even... Again, a year ago I was so much more hesitant to say. I was so much more concerned like, "Ooh, is this gonna... Am I too extreme? Am I going to lose credibility and therefore lose my ability to serve my clients?"
- Hannah McGregor: [01:06:54](#) Mhm.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:06:54](#) You know? I'm not seen as a credible evaluator, which is so much not, that's not an objective standard to... That's a very subjective standard. You know, can I talk about doing this work this way and be taken seriously? And I was already moving much more towards like, "Nah, fuck it."
- Hannah McGregor: [01:07:10](#) [Laughs]
- Carolyn Camman: [01:07:10](#) I'm not for everyone, I won't be taken seriously by everyone. But I kept getting a lot of positive reinforcement from people like, "Nope, we need this. We need more people doing this."
- Hannah McGregor: [01:07:19](#) Yep.
- Carolyn Camman: [01:07:19](#) And now that, now that there's a global pandemic on, I've just run a completely out of fucks to give.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:07:23](#) [Laughs] [Carolyn's Theme Music: "Adieu" by AIZA]
- Hannah McGregor: [01:07:41](#) If you want to learn more about Carolyn's work, you can check out camman-evaluation, that's C A M M A N-evaluation.com or you can find out more about *Eval Cafe* at evalcafe.wordpress.com. Those links, as well as all the rest of the show notes, are available on secretfeministagenda.com. You can, of course, follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. And you can review the show. There are

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two new reviews this week, one from LottieSheply and the other one from Tuija_Hansen, both from Canada. I'm sorry if I've mispronounced your names. Reading is hard. But thank you! The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album *Chub Rub*. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org or follow them on Facebook. Carolyn's theme song was "Adieu" by AIZA. This episode was recorded on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations where I'm grateful to live and work. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]