

Building a Community of Care: Creating a Shared Set of Values and Community Guidelines Amongst Leaders in All Kinds of Girls

**Praxis Project Thesis: Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Abstract

This Praxis Thesis Project is the result of my ongoing time as a leader of All Kinds of Girls, a mentoring program for female aligned youth ages 9 to 17. The purpose of this research was to implement an intervention session to hold conversations around trust, collaborative communication, and community care in the hopes of promoting productivity and strong relationships within All Kinds of Girls' Steering Committee. This project consisted of an analysis of the Steering Committees weekly meetings and efforts, workshop interventions, and written reflections collected from participants. As I developed this project, I turned to a practitioner inquiry approach to analyze my data. My analysis focuses on the conversations and actions of Steering Committee member participants, and how we acted following the intervention. Findings from this research show that to implement change, efforts must be made continuously throughout the time of the academic year, and into the future of the program as well. In the end, this work can be taken to help form the future Steering Committees of All Kinds of Girls, and other undergraduate-run youth programs, to help foster meaningful conversations between leaders.

Acknowledgements

Community Care is the concept of a shared purpose, shared efforts, and support for each other and for the community. To build community care is not a small feat, forming from conversations and actions and love. This Praxis Project was built with the community care of so many circles of my life, and I want to offer recognition to those in these circles.

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Introductions

Hi there. Thanks for reading my praxis project thesis. I'm just doing a quick introduction to get some things out of the way. I've poured a lot of time and effort into this document. So please, take your time reading. Because I've poured so much of my energy into this, it only felt right to be able to share my inner thoughts as I discussed the work. If you see any italicized text, that's me giving my two cents. I didn't want to confuse anyone when you see this type of text later on.

But to reiterate, this document has taken up a large chunk of my time as an undergraduate, 3 semesters to be exact. So please, take it all in. There's a lot to this, so taking breaks is encouraged (I took plenty while writing). Let's get this show on the road.

The Backstory:

Fall 2018

The fall of my freshman year I was searching up and down the isles of the club fair, looking for a youth work program that felt a good fit. I remembered hearing about All Kinds of Girls (AKOG) during my admissions process. I found AKOG's table, and instantly applied for the mentor interview process. It sounded just like the group I wanted to be a part of. An all female-aligned mentoring program, with Clark students spending their Saturdays with female-aligned mentees every week hanging out, exploring new ideas and themes that bring forth our voices. I was really drawn to all the youth mentoring tables I saw, but I was particularly drawn to AKOG's table because of the focus on working with female-aligned youth. I had a lot of experience working with young girls before coming to Clark, and wanted to continue to foster connections with female-aligned youth.

This year, Nia Slater-Bookhart and Fátima Orta were the Mentor Coordinators of the program, so they were in charge of the mentor interview process as well as the administrative side of the program. AKOG works with female aligned mentees ages 9-17, but it's broken down further into the Younger Girls and the Older Girls. AKOG during my first year at Clark was a large organization, hosting about 60-70 mentees on Saturdays each week. The Younger Girls program was quite large at this time, so all the younger girls were split into age groups to keep a smaller mentor to mentee ratio.

I was thankfully accepted as a new mentor, and I was assigned to work with the nine year old group. This group was so much fun, and had such high energy each week. My role as a

mentor was to engage with the mentees of my age group, and encourage them to participate in the weekly themed activities and programming. Some of the themes were Women in STEM, HERstory day, self love day, and more. I would help our new mentees feel comfortable in the space, talk to them about anything on their minds, and play all the fun games and activities. I made so many memories with my mentees, and got so close to them all.

I remember on one of the last Saturdays of this first semester, we were all sitting in our age group during check out trying to clean up and settle the mentees down. Our 9 year olds were pretty rowdy, so Nia and Fátima always encouraged us to use the check out time as a way to relax with everyone to help check out move smoothly. I remember Nia and Fátima at the front of the room with the standing whiteboard, writing names of whose adults were here waiting for their child. While we were all waiting to see any names from our age group, my mentees began putting stickers on their faces and then on mine as well. I ended up with my face covered in stickers, while mentees were leaving left and right. Eventually everyone left, and Nia and Fátima held the debrief for the day. I got to share with everyone how I ended up covered in stickers, and Nia and Fátima were listening so intently, because they wanted to hear about my day. This memory left me feeling so involved and valued in the space of AKOG.



Figure 1: my 9 year old mentees putting stickers all over my face at the end of the day. This became a routine for them at the end of each week.

Spring 2019

In Spring 2019, I had just joined the Steering Committee of AKOG as a member of the curriculum team. At the time, Nia and Fátima were the Mentor/Administrative Coordinators, and the majority of the Steering Committee consisted of senior and junior undergraduates in the program. I can remember the weekly Steering Committee meetings that were held on Wednesday evenings; we would all meet in one of the study rooms in the library, and more often than not had to grab extra chairs so everyone had a seat at the meeting. Every member of the Steering Committee was present, and only missed a meeting on the rare occasion.

Nia and Fátima would lead the meetings, and everyone would have their notes prepared. Each of the members would all contribute to the meetings and have things to say, add, or ask. I remember specifically, one meeting was held in a second floor study room of the library which is supposed to be held for groups of 5 people. However, our Steering Committee at the time was closer to 10 people, so everyone had to pull chairs into the room. We all squished into the space and had our laptops out, ready to work.

The meetings always felt productive, things would get done every week. Nia and Fátima had power over the room, where everyone in the room had a huge feeling of respect for them. Steering Committee felt warmer, and there was a sense of care for everyone in the group. The Spring of 2019 was the most productive semester that I can remember being a part of AKOG's Steering Committee.

Spring 2021

The Spring of 2021, the semester where I designed this research, our Steering Committee was not the same. For context, it was about a year into the COVID pandemic, and AKOG had to turn to a completely virtual model for the 2020-2021 academic school year. Now I'm not sure if it's the fact that we hadn't met in person in over a year or not, but there wasn't the same energy that I've felt before. Our mentee turnout was much lower than past years; however we, on the Steering Committee, all agreed that our virtual model had had a negative effect on our attendance. Our mentees were all attending school virtually on GoogleMeet, and then would meet virtually for AKOG on Zoom each week. It's so much screen time for anyone it's understandable our turnout was low.

In a similar vein, the weekly Steering Committee meetings had then turned into monthly meetings. At that point, we didn't have much to discuss weekly. Due to the program being virtual, all committees had to be prepared for every activity we'd be doing before the program started for the semester (this way all of our mentees and mentors could be given any materials for the weekly activities at the start of the programming). Our meetings only happened about once a month, and still turnout was not great. Maybe 6 or 7 out of the 15 Steering Committee members would log onto the zoom call. The members who did log on, were not engaged in the meeting. Our meetings generally consisted of myself and our other Mentor Coordinator at the time, Deisy Rodriguez, discussing meeting topics and asking how others were feeling and if they needed support. Once we turned the mic over to others, it was very difficult to get a response. We also found it hard to see our members prepared for the semester without constant check-ins from Deisy and me.

Our mentee recruitment process was consistently behind each semester, waiting until just a week before the programming started to begin reaching out to schools and Worcester communities. Our curriculum teams had consistently been a bit behind as well. Even our supplies were ordered late so we didn't have them for our first week of programming. Everything felt off.

Reflecting on the Steering Committee of that semester, it was just a different experience compared to my time with Nia and Fátima. We didn't have the same energy, SC members were not as devoted to the work as in the past. Our group efforts seemed more one sided. It was overwhelming how much work had to be done when the energy and collaboration levels were not up to par. I hoped to get that energy I used to see back.

Reflecting (What's the problem here?):

As I reflected on my journey in AKOG, starting out as a Mentor to a Curriculum Coordinator, to now being a Mentor Coordinator I began to wonder how this happened. Before my time as one of the main leaders of the program, everyone felt more enthusiastic about their work in AKOG. At the start of this research, it seemed as though it was almost a chore to ask others to complete the duties and tasks that their Steering Committee (SC) positions required. Very few people were showing up to meetings and our Saturday programming committees were generally not on track with the semester schedule, and nobody seemed excited about AKOG anymore. Where was the drive that I saw my freshman year? When I designed this research, I

was trying to think of what happened. What clicked in the Steering Committee before, and how can I find that switch again?

Values, Practices, and Questions

When imagining this process, I wanted to focus on three key values and practices that I believed could be discussed as a group, and could be worked on to improve the quality of AKOG for mentors and mentees. These three values are trust within the Steering Committee, effective collaborative communication, and community care; terms I will further explore in my conceptual framework. With this in mind, I aimed to use practitioner inquiry methods to create shared values and a code of conduct for the Steering Committee. Through the workshop I held to promote these values, and the continuous conversations during our weekly Steering Committee meetings, I aimed to address three research questions:

1. How do I, as a Mentor Coordinator, develop a workshop intervention that promotes positive relational practices relating to trust, communication, and community care in support of a set of values and practices that can be an ongoing part of a leadership committee in AKOG?
2. What does trust, effective collaborative communication, and community care look like in the Steering Committee meetings, workshops, and actions during the fall 2021 semester?
3. What do consenting Steering Committee members say about the workshop and what worked or could be improved and what do they say about trust, effective collaborative communication, and community care?

I chose to ask these questions because I believed that answers to them could contribute to the productivity and relationships of AKOG's Steering Committee. I used the words "productivity" and "relationship" a lot in this thesis. By productivity, I mean being intentional and effective with our efforts. We make goals, and work hard to meet them. By relationships, I mean the connections we make between each other. As a group of student leaders, we all spend time together working for our program, but also work together and foster connections in the process. Moving forward, I hope the findings from this research can be used in other undergraduate-run youth-work organizations to discuss what can be done within the organizations' executive board to promote strong relationships and productivity.

My Praxis Project – Goals and Intervention

Through my praxis project, my goal was to re-energize our Steering Committee, specifically through cultivating a shared vision and set of community guidelines amongst our leaders. I created and facilitated a workshop intervention as part of my praxis, to act as a space to unpack any feelings and thoughts about the productivity of Steering Committee, as well as share what we saw as valuable to ourselves as leaders of the program.

The purpose of this workshop was to collaboratively define three key concepts: trust, collaborative communication, and community care. By holding discussions around these concepts, the goal was to have participants thinking about their values in SC and translate those into their efforts and actions in SC. We then met again later in the semester to create a set of community guidelines for the SC to help us utilize these key concepts in practice. By discussing these three key concepts, I wanted to create space for an introspective thought process for everyone to really think about what they valued, and what they wanted from themselves and their peers.

I aimed to bring forth our discussions from the workshop into our weekly Steering Committee meetings that followed. Through centering conversations and putting an emphasis on a shared set of key values and practices, I hoped to flip that switch within Steering Committee, as a group.

More Detail about AKOG:

The Where:

All Kinds of Girls is an on campus mentoring organization of undergraduate, female-aligned Clark students. As previously stated, we work with female-aligned mentees ages 9 to 17 in Worcester, mostly girls from the Main South community. The program traditionally meets every Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm (11 am to 2 pm for our mentees) of Clark's academic calendar year, October through April. In our program, we also provide free lunches for our mentors and girls in the program.

This academic year, 2021 to 2022, we adjusted our programming due to COVID protocols. We met from 11 am - 1 pm with the mentees. Unfortunately, the program didn't provide lunches anymore as the mentees are not able to eat on campus. However, the mentees were sent home with food so they could prepare lunch after the program was over. We met in

Atwood Hall every week (see Figure 2), and the program is separated by age into two groups. The younger girls traditionally met in the Blue Room, a dance studio type space on the second floor of Atwood (see Figure 3). The older girls traditionally met in Atwood 302, a larger classroom space on the third floor. The older girls always moved the desks and chairs into a circle to make the space more comfortable (see Figure 4).



Figure 2: Atwood Hall (Clark University)



Figure 3: The Blue Room, The Younger Girls Space (Clark University)



Figure 4: Atwood 302, the Older Girls Space (Clark University)

The What:

In 2021, I collected data over the duration of AKOG's fall programming, which spans from October to December. This was our first semester back to in person programming which was a big step forward for us after a year of virtual AKOG. While that was such exciting news, being back in person did not resemble what AKOG looked like pre-COVID. For instance, half of the programming was outside, and the other half was inside. Also, we couldn't have lunches together anymore, and we had to stay socially distanced and as safe as possible.

Our Younger Girls group is composed of mentees ages 9 to 12. Within our Younger Girls, "the girls" (our umbrella term for mentees) are split into age groups of 9 year olds, 10 year olds, etc. In the Fall of 2021, our Younger Girls had to meet outdoors each week, as the mentees were too young to be vaccinated at that point and were not allowed to be indoors on campus. Our Older Girls group is composed of mentees ages 13 and older. The Older Girls are not further broken up, and spend time together as a whole. Within our Steering Committee, there are two curriculum teams that help create and facilitate the activities and themes of each Saturday. Examples of our themed Saturdays include Girl Power Day, Culture Day, Entrepreneurship Day, and more. Our goal was to create a fun and safe space, and empower our girls with additional tools of support and empowerment.

The Who:

The Steering Committee (SC) is composed of several different positions/teams with varying amounts of members in each position. In Table 1 below, I've assembled this information as well as brief descriptions of each position:

Position Title	# of Members	Brief Description
Mentor/Administrative Coordinator	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for mentor and administrative matters of the program• Responsible for mentor applications, trainings, and bondings, as well as addressing any matters amongst mentors/mentees, incident reports, and coordinating the weekly Steering Committee meetings
Younger Girls Curriculum Team	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work together as a group to create and facilitate the curriculum activities for every Saturday.• Collaborate on ideas to provide effective and exciting themes and days for all of our members
Older Girls Curriculum Coordinators	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with the other Older Girls mentors to create and organize activities for girls that are 13-17 years old (spearhead conversations amongst mentors)• Help facilitate these activities on Saturdays, but a big part of older girls is collaboration between all of the mentors
Treasurer	1*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain budgets and handle purchase orders• Work closely with any budget committees and faculty, and work to achieve the proper funding required for the program from Clark University Student Council
Grants and Funding Coordinator	1**	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find and apply for grants for our program, to ensure we have adequate funding for our activities and lunches for our girls and mentors• Ensure proper implementation of grant objectives in the AKOG program
Marketing and Outreach Team	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work to recruit girls at the beginning of each semester• Maintain contact with families about program dates and updates and are responsible for registration forms and girls' attendance each week.

Table 1: Steering Committee Positions and Descriptions

**One of the new Mentor Coordinators was also assuming the role of treasurer until we could find someone who wanted to take on the role.*

***The student who assumed this role took a leave of absence from AKOG Spring 2021-indefinite, but another student had taken on the role halfway through the Fall 2021 Semester.*

Our Steering Committee met weekly as a group to discuss any matters or obstacles that arise before the start of the program and as each Saturday approaches. Within our positions, most of us meet weekly in addition to the SC meetings, working to meet our position's goals each week in preparation for our girls. For example, as a Mentor Coordinator I met with my partners on Wednesdays where we discussed administrative matters. On Thursdays, our weekly SC meetings were held where we met as a larger group to discuss what would be happening the following Saturday, and what needed to be done in preparation. Finally, on Saturdays we implemented what we worked on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Saturdays, we would all attend our AKOG programming

Who am I in my Praxis?

AKOG has been a huge part of my time at Clark since the fall of my first year on campus. I joined the program without knowing anyone else, and this felt like a big step for me. I'm not a very independent person, so joining a program that provided a sense of comfort and familiarity for me was important to me. As I've mentioned earlier, I've been a part of AKOG's SC since my second semester freshman year, and became a Mentor Coordinator at the start of my sophomore year. As for my relationship to my participants, I've worked with all of the current SC members for over a year, either on SC or as mentors. As a Mentor Coordinator, I do have a more administrative and organizing role, where I play a big part in coordinating and organizing SC matters. However, in theory, our works collaboratively rather than through a hierarchy to accomplish all of our goals.

Through the fall semester 2021, I noticed a shift in the roles compared to pre-COVID times. Only 3 of us on SC had been in our positions in person. I'd been a Mentor Coordinator for the majority of my time in AKOG, and a lot of SC only knew an AKOG where I was a Mentor Coordinator. Because of this, I could feel all eyes on me when people have questions or new ideas that were being brought up. While I do see myself as a leader in AKOG, I didn't want to be the *only* leader. I say this because our SC is composed entirely of leaders, and I wanted everyone to know that. My positionality or role at this point felt more the SC leader than a co-equal

collaborator. This is something I was hoping to change throughout my research and as I transitioned out of my position in AKOG before graduation.

I felt that through these experiences and positions I was an insider in all aspects of my research. When I designed this research, my objectives were to hold a workshop and recurring conversations surrounding shared values within the SC. I didn't intend to be the sole speaker within these spaces, I hoped to see a lot of collaboration and shared ideas within the spaces. I wanted to be a participant – a part of my research – not just a researcher.

As I continued to think about and develop my project, my lived experiences and realities were constantly running in the back of my mind to help guide me. Within this research, I was drawing on and reflecting on my experiences in youth work and my identity as a person of color (POC) who has taken on a leadership position in AKOG.

I am an Asian American woman, the daughter of an immigrant. I am also very white passing. Many times people don't assume I am a POC because of my appearance, which I understand. But still, being a POC has really shaped my lived experiences. Growing up, I tended to be more reserved about my identity and familial ties, because my white friends in my white suburban town didn't understand the differences. I was timid and reserved in my everyday interactions, keeping comments to myself. In my leadership interactions, I tend to shy away from making criticisms or asking people to improve their efforts. I think this then translated into my everyday interactions, which then turned into my leadership interactions.

Along with my identity as a POC, seeing myself as a “youth worker” is an important part of who I am and how I show up in this work. Being a youth worker, and a leader in my youth work spaces, is what I value most among my past experiences – in school and out of school. Being able to form relationships with youth and the other mentors is one of the most important things, and I tend to reflect on these experiences a lot. I tend to analyze, and see where I can improve, and how my youth work spaces can improve as a whole.

As I work through this research I've become aware of the white majority of those in the Community, Youth, and Education Studies (CYES) cohort and among AKOG mentors and leaders. (*Community, Youth, and Education Studies was my major and my primary academic community at Clark*). I find it difficult to not apologize for taking up space in an environment where I'm meant to take up space. When asking our SC to attend a meeting, or hold a check in, or for help with our duties and roles, I feel the urge to apologize for taking the initiative. As one

of the main leaders of the program, I shouldn't apologize. I think being a POC really affects my leadership style, even when I don't notice it. As noted above, I'm uncomfortable with making myself heard at times, specifically about my own discomforts. When I should have addressed some of the issues at hand within AKOG's SC, I froze and would just move on.

As I've developed this praxis project, I've really reflected on my time as a leader in AKOG as a program and within our Steering Committee, and thinking of any struggles/challenges I've noticed within our community of leaders. I also feel as being a POC, and working towards those leadership roles really makes it more valuable for me. All of the spaces I am in are occupied by a white majority, and being a leader in these spaces really feels different for me. Being a POC in these white majority spaces, whether it was the space of AKOG or the CYES cohort, my identity places me in a different subset within those communities. It's never intentional, but it's inevitable. My experiences are different from those around me, and navigating these differences was a part of this research process. One of the concepts I investigated in this work was community care, which I define as the concept of a shared purpose, shared efforts, and support for each other and for the community. But what happens when I'm struggling to find myself in those communities? Building community care within the space of SC was difficult, especially when taking into account my own struggles with my own identity.

Literature Review

This research was working to build a sense of community amongst a group of leaders, and working together to learn more about each other's needs as we share a space together. The goal was to learn of the best ways for SC to work collaboratively, and promote productivity by creating a shared set of community guidelines for the Steering Committee. Below I review literature and empirical research that resembles problems and topics of this research, to see how others might have gone about the process of developing leadership and building a community amongst a group of leaders.

Post (2015) investigated to what extent and in what contexts female leadership may create an advantage for teams as opposed to teams led by males. She found that teams led by women experience more cohesion and reported more instances of cooperative learning and participative communication than teams led by men. Female leaders are more likely to have defined themselves in a relational way compared to male leaders, which then translates to the

female leaders being more likely to face challenges presented within their teams. Post's research shows the importance of female-aligned leaders, and suggests to me the value of our shared leadership in AKOG. We are an organization for female-aligned youth and mentors, and being led by female-aligned identifying people, on the baseline, work to be the best leaders we can be. From these findings, I was intrigued to see how AKOG's leaders would define themselves, expecting to see relational definitions.

Adding a new perspective, Frkal (2018) carried out research about integrating care and critical reflection into women's leadership development programs (WLDP), aiming to explore types of transformative learning environments and how these can predict dialogue that encourage critical reflection in the context of caring relationships. Frkal conducted a qualitative interview study at a WLDP, and from this research, she was able to describe the ways in which program facilitators were able to create a context of care, and see how critical reflections occurred in this context. The context of care was demonstrated in the ways in which activities were structured and facilitated, the needs and of participants were addressed, and there was evidence of active listening, observing, and monitoring of the dialogue between participants in the classroom (Frkal, 2018). The facilitators in this study (Frkal, 2018) were also able to foster critical reflection through the subtle behaviors of probing, relating, and summarizing ideas. By making the reflections relational, the critical reflections produced further context of care in the space. In relation to my own research, I aimed to foster critical reflection with my participants to develop our own context of care. I took note of the structure and facilitation of the reflection activities from the WLDP that Frkal studied with. In relation to Post's (2015) work, Frkal focused on female led programs, and worked to build relational practices with these leaders, as I was aiming to do in my own research as well.

John Ord (2012) and a group of youth work lecturers discuss what youth work management is and what issues arise in the field. Ord looks at the structure of youth work organizations. He notes that the structure of an organization can create easily identifiable patterns of responsibility, give shape to the organization, and outline working groups. However, structure can also create division, separation, and decrease communication. Ord also discusses the culture of an organization, and how this is at times more important than the structure. He discusses how effective youth work managers will take steps to build and develop the culture that best accommodates the organization, rather than accept the culture as it is. Ord found that

productivity of a youth work organization increased when the workers felt respected and attended too. Ord also points out that to create a healthier culture in youth work management the managers must be able to listen to the voices of the youth workers, foster meaningful relationships, and build trust throughout the organization. This is relevant to AKOG and my praxis work in that I was also trying to create a healthier culture in our youth work management. I aimed to listen to the voices of my fellow SC members, foster meaningful relationships, and build trust in one another. Ord's (2012) work opened up another set of dimensions for me, opening up the conversation around relational practices in the broader context of youth work, not just female led work. This helped me shift my thinking from small scale change to large scale change within our programming. I wanted to see AKOG run smoother as a program, and Ord's work helped push me into thinking of the grand scheme of things.

Shifting from female-aligned and youth work settings to formal education, Mackenzie and Marnik (2008) discusses the leadership development of school leaders in action, and how they learn to lead rather than learn about leading. Their work focuses on graduate students working full time or part time in K-12 schools, where they learn a broad definition of school leadership, and a community of learners within a community of leaders. Mackenzie & Marnik's research is based on the framework of leadership development, which focuses on emerging leaders being self-directed and meeting the practical learning needs of mature learners and leaders. Their research highlighted and assumed the importance of reflecting on practice and the idea that emerging leaders should have the opportunities to perform their leadership skills in ways to practice and learn new behaviors. This work helped me think more deeply about self-direction as a quality of leaders, self-directed leaders and the importance of reflecting on practice. I drew on the ideas, specifically on reflection, when designing a workshop intervention for the Steering Committee, where I wanted the space to allow for reflection and to be used as a space for growth. I wanted AKOG's leaders to understand the importance of being self-directed, while also reflecting on their practices and behaviors.

Stedman and Adams-Pope (2019) explored the nature of leadership behavior and style, and analyzed how it relates to team functionality. This adds a new perspective to Ord's work above. When describing their purpose and framework for this research, Stedman and Adams-Pope found a set of themes regarding certain traits and actions that team leaders should possess. Supportive and empowering leaders should be able to support their team members, be

modest, benevolent, visionary, and strong, and provide a map of goals and pathways for achievement that encourages creativity from members and instills motivation. Along with this, they note that teamwork is extremely important amongst organizations to produce effective and efficient work. Teamwork should have strong forms of trust, confidence, commitment, accountability, and attention to results. Stedman and Adams-Pope found that an absence of trust between leaders and team members had a big impact on how the research investigators perceived their teams, indicating a sense of hostility and separation in team environment rather than harmony and civility. This work helped frame my thinking around teamwork, and working as a group to build trust, collaborative communication, and community care. Stedman and Adams-Pope helped solidify my understanding of the role of teamwork in my research, and helped me to explore the importance of the concept as I developed my workshop intervention.

The work provided in this literature review describes a vast scope of knowledge relating to aspects of my own research. With this research that concerns my direct research questions of facilitating trust, collaborative communication, and a community of care within youth work leadership groups, there is knowledge to be shared that brings together different aspects of leadership development and youth work management. With the outside perspectives on female-aligned leadership programming, and how this affects the relational practices of organizations I was able to adapt and alter any designs on my workshop interventions to better fit the space of AKOG's SC. Along with this, I took the knowledge of youth work structural needs and leadership development and evaluated the best practices in preparation for my research.

Conceptual Framework

In this research, I struggled to find the conceptual framework and lenses that I was seeing my project through. I knew how I was viewing this work, but I couldn't think of what I was pulling that thinking from and it took time for me to decipher what informed my point of view. After reflecting on my past classes with research, and working with some partners in my cohort, I found myself looking for frameworks or approaches that others took (in carrying out work that resonated with me). My goals and plans for my praxis project was most closely aligned with interpretive approaches to research and work that had been done in the area of symbolic interactionism.

As described by Merriam (2009), an interpretivist approach assumes that knowledge is constructed, not found. That is, it assumes that reality is socially constructed, that participants have different perspectives and histories, and there isn't a single observable reality. Interpretivists pay attention to subjective meanings of experiences; these can be varied or have multiple meanings, making space for complex perspectives among individuals and within a group. In my research, I was drawn to investigating everyone's individual understanding of the world we live in and more specifically, how they conceptualize their work in AKOG. Given that every experience a person has is interpreted within their own frameworks and lived experiences, through my workshop discussion and the collaborative creation of community guidelines, I was looking to learn about each individual's interpretation of experiences in Steering Committee, and then to make sense of what this means for the group (SC).

Symbolic interactionism (SI), a tradition within the larger body of interpretivist work, is a framework that attempts to facilitate the innate desire to appropriately interpret events in our lives (Vejar, 2021). According to Vejar, (2021) there are four overarching premises to the framework:

1. Meaning is an important element of human existence
2. Concept is both subjective and individualistic
3. People act in accordance with the meanings they construe
4. People derive different interpretations despite receiving identical sensory input surrounding objects, interactions, and people

Although these concepts are dense, I understand SI as the way meaning is assigned to the events and actions around you based on your own knowledge and social experiences. In short, SI is about individualistic interpretations of concepts and data, and how they bring those interpretations in collaboration with others. This framework resonates with my research as I have been constantly interpreting the events and actions of the Steering Committee from my own personal standpoint since joining the committee, and how that was influencing my own social interactions and leadership.

Konecki (2019) notes that SI gives meanings to objects and concepts during social interactions. My research relies on people's experiences and how they interpret their individual experiences in SC. I believe that people's behaviors and actions in SC are influenced by their beliefs and feelings towards their past experiences. I'm concentrating on the construction of my

central key concepts (see below) through language, face-to-face interactions, and negotiating meanings and definitions of situations. Symbolic interactionism research concentrates on a cognitive (meaning-making) and interactional level, and the definition of situations and acceptance of said definitions by partners are decisive in creating trust (Konecki, 2019, pg 282). This means that when one party defines a situation, the partners of that party should accept that interpretation as valid truth to build trust amongst SC members. By using a SI approach to data analysis, I'll be using the definitions of the key concepts of my research, trust, collaborative communication, and community care, to help guide me in my interpretations of our SC meetings and actions throughout the semester. Through an interpretivist perspective of my research along with a SI-informed analysis of my data, I'm focusing on my participants' experiences in SC and how these shape their attitudes towards productivity and shared values in our leadership positions.

Key Concepts as my Lenses:

The concepts of trust, collaborative communication, and community care are foundational to my research project. But how did I come to these three concepts? I spent a lot of time reflecting on my time in AKOG's SC, thinking back to my first year at Clark in comparison to my last. When I thought about what I wanted to revive within the SC, I thought about the specific moments that I valued my first year. I thought about what I was a part of within that first SC, and thought about what differed to the SC I was experiencing in 2021. After some reflection, I came to the conclusion that the Spring 2019 SC showed consistent attendance, constant group discussions, accountability, and a sense of community. In Spring 2021, SC had inconsistent attendance, one sided group meetings (only one person speaking for the majority of the meeting), no accountability, and no sense of community. When comparing the two groups, I came to the conclusion that trust, collaborative communication, and community care were missing.



I was looking to learn about the perception of these concepts from my peers, and see how we could work with and develop these concepts in order to form a shared set of community guidelines. In an effort to foster collaboration, I turned to the members of the SC to co-define these concepts. I believed having shared definitions of trust, collaborative communication, and community care would reinvigorate the mentors of AKOG. Through this praxis work, I focused on unpacking the foundational practices of trust, communication, and community care, and worked to build up from these practices to form a shared set of community guidelines for our SC.

Trust

Trust within this research is defined, by me, as the ability to rely on each other without hesitation. I think that a large part of my thought process and frustrations towards some interactions in SC is that I felt like I couldn't trust my peers to take the initiative to fulfill their individual and our group goals of the program. I believed that the level of accountability within the leadership wasn't as high as it could be, or has been in the past. I believed that by building trust within the group, we would have less worries about accomplishing our goals.

I've analyzed other definitions of trust to accompany my own, and further my thinking of the importance in my research and the SC. DeMeulenaere's (2012) work on the Pedagogy of Trust describes his experiences creating trust in a classroom between teachers and students. I found his work to be related to my project, just in a different setting. His framework of the pedagogy of trust had six components, and I've focused on using three of these components to help further my own definition of trust. These three components have been chosen because I felt

like they were the most relevant in the space of AKOG's SC, in comparison to the classroom environment DeMeulenaere was in.

The first is the “development of powerful shared experiences” (DeMeulenaere, 2012, p. 30). These shared experiences became spaces for building a trust-filled community. Within my work, I hoped that the workshop interventions where we discuss trust, collaborative communication, and community care would serve as our shared experience to build a trust-filled community. The second component I'm interested in is the concept of addressing conflict together (DeMeulenaere, 2012), that is, avoiding typical responses to conflict. Group discussions regarding conflict are powerful for building trust because everyone is implicated and involved in the solution, based on DeMeulenaere's experiences in his work. Again, I had hoped for the workshop intervention to serve as a space for addressing conflict together, being able to share any problems we might have had in SC.

The last component I'm looking at is the concept of shared values. DeMeulenaere describes this in his work as the teachers' alignment with students. These were acts of solidarity, where all parties become allies and not just separate parts of a system or organization. This is where the creation of community guidelines would come in.

I also found research on trust in the framework of Symbolic Interactionism, where trust is due to the process of socialization, made by recognizing the point of view of the other and through role-taking (Konecki, 2019). From an SI perspective, trust is built in our social interactions, and has a processual character. Konecki suggests that to build trust, there has to be an acceptance of definitions by all sides of interactions. In terms of my research, there was an effort to build trust by creating the definitions of these key concepts together. We worked together to learn what others think of these concepts in the space of SC and AKOG, and came to a decision of what we believed a collective definition would be.

Collaborative Communication

Collaborative communication in this research is another term I needed to define, because within our SC it spread across different areas. The term in this research is used to describe the ways in which we speak to each other, and the importance of doing so. I think that the reason I wish to highlight this concept is that I felt like there was a disconnect amongst SC members, and found it hard to communicate with members individually and as a group. Through improving the

ways in which we speak to and with each other, we as a group would be able to support each other and work towards accomplishing our program's goals. In digging deeper into the idea of collaborative communication, I drew on work in service learning and community-engaged research.

Dumlao (2018) has developed a guide to collaborative communication in her work in service-learning with community partners. I've found her definition of the concept to be the most beneficial to deepening my own. Dumlao defined collaborative communication as the set of communication practices that promote a relational perspective, showing respect and openness to the partner(s) along with their unique contributions and views. It must be grounded in a partnership-mindset that allows us to include multiple perspectives at once. Dumlao identifies one key aspect of this mindset as mindful listening versus mindless listening, and the openness to incoming information and being present to receive unspoken and nonverbal cues. A quote she used to describe this was "Attending mindfully with our ears, eyes, and a focused heart" (Dumlao, 2018, p. 42).

Collaborative communication, as a lens, was helpful to me in this research because it was directly related to our everyday SC practices. We worked together and discussed weekly matters every week, and I wanted to build a bigger emphasis on collaboration within our communication efforts. By analyzing my data through this lens, I've been able to understand where we thrived or struggled in terms of working together and practicing responsible communication practices.

Community Care

Community care is defined, by me, as having a shared purpose, shared efforts, and support for each other and to the program. Within our SC, I wanted to be able to foster stronger relationships and bonds within the group, to further develop the community we share. My hope was to be able to foster conversations that helped us to develop this feeling of sharing and support, to be able to easily and efficiently accomplish our goals for the fall semester.

This term was not something that was easily researchable. The concept of community care is still in the works, as any resources I found that even slightly mentioned community care were not relevant to my own work. Therefore, I'm not drawing on outside resources to help me define this term. Along with the lack of outside resources, this was a concept I wanted to define with my participants. We were working together to find our own definition of community within

SC, and finding ways to provide support for each other. I wanted to draw upon my own definition of community care rather than an outsider's definition because I found it hard to find outside definitions that fit my *vision* of the praxis. I thought this would speak for itself, showing that community care is a collaborative effort. This was a concept that I believed was going to be built overtime, through the combined efforts of myself and my participants.

Methodology (Stance/Research Approach, Data Collection, Data Reduction, and Data Analysis Approach)

Methodological Stance (or Research Approach)

For this praxis work, I've taken a practitioner inquiry approach to the work. I've chosen this methodological stance because as I think of this research, it stems from my own reflection of my experiences and how I believe we can change our practices for the better. Evaluation of data and reflection moments are important in a practitioner inquiry stance, to create an impact or change in the practitioner's practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) discuss practitioner inquiry from a teacher's standpoint, and how to use this research to improve one's own teaching. I followed a similar path, using this research to improve our SC and my own leadership. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) believe the emphasis of practitioner inquiry is to be making your own spaces in the sites for inquiry. This means inquiring into one's own and others' practices and assumptions. Through this, they believe that the practitioner is generating knowledge for themselves and others in the field, while also improving their own practice in the classroom. In my case, this meant inquiring into and building knowledge about leadership, and improving my own leadership skills and capacity.

In my research, I shared my research questions and motives with my participants. This is where I differ from traditional teacher research. My participants were a part of the research process with me, I involved them in my motives. My participants and I shared some of the same thoughts as I do about the productivity of the SC. We all believed, for example, that COVID had changed the AKOG we knew before the pandemic began. Since the program itself was struggling, our efforts were diminishing as well.

However, I was pushing the purpose of this research, making it clear I wanted these efforts to improve productivity. I worked to investigate the research questions, and there was a desire to engage in self and collective reflection. The research concerned the commitments of SC

members individually and as a whole, and the ability to reflect on one's experiences and motivations was key to answering my research questions. As I moved forward through the research, I worked together with the SC to engage in action, or change, to lead us to a useful and beneficial solution. By creating the shared set of community values/guidelines together, we worked towards meeting our goals with these values in mind. Lastly, as I worked with the participants, I wanted to strengthen the connections we have as a group through the research. As we built our trust and community care with the SC, I wanted everyone to feel equally a part of the research and part of the solution/end goal of the praxis.

Data Collection and Data Sources

While working with the SC members, I collected the following forms of data:

Audio Recordings:

Each week's SC meetings were audio recorded. This includes my workshop intervention sessions.

Analytic Memos/Field Notes:

Each week, I recorded notable moments from our SC meetings or general Saturday programming in regards to my research. These notes were mainly taken in the form of an analytic memo, where I also analyzed some of my data intake of the week. By this, I mean that I would listen to my audio recordings again or reflect back on our meeting topics/conversations and Saturday programming.

Written Reflections:

Following the workshop interventions and creation of community guidelines, I asked all participants to write a brief reflection regarding the intervention workshops and creation of community guidelines.

Data Type	Description	Rationale	Challenges/Limitations
Audio Recordings	All SC meetings and workshop interventions were audio recorded, a recording device was placed in the center of	Practitioner inquiry research promotes analyzing daily activities, and being able to reflect back on these audio recordings helped answer my	We have almost all of our SC meetings in person in a library study room, but some of our members are more soft spoken than others. I've found it difficult to pick up the voices of some.

	the table we sat around in a study room in the library	overarching research questions.	When we do have to hold a virtual meeting for certain circumstances, I would forget to record the meeting because the environment is different.
Analytic Memos / Field Notes	Following the SC meetings, I took notes on the most memorable moments and takeaways of the week. I also took field notes of my own personal observations of SC on the Saturday programming days.	Being able to reflect on my own reactions to events that occurred helped me to investigate the cause of these events and move forward into how we can change things.	I do not write field notes while the meetings are occurring. I find it takes me away from the matters at hand. I try to write my field notes following the meetings, but they will inevitably miss some events as I try to remember them.
Written Reflections	Following the creation of our community guidelines, I asked the SC members to write a brief reflection of their experiences and conversations in the workshop and how they think a set of community guidelines will affect SC.	Through these reflections, I was able to see how each member individually reacted to the research questions and community guidelines, which allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of our actions.	I am not able to collect reflections every week. I want to respect everyone's time, and after a 7:30 pm meeting each week I am not expecting all the members to want to stay another 10 minutes to write a reflection.

Table 2: Data Type, Description, Rationale, and Challenges

Data Reduction

It's important to understand why some data made it into my analysis, and why some did not. At every step in the data collection process (participant observation, audio recording, collecting written reflections) I faced challenges in data reduction - making the raw experience and recordings usable and manageable. I was intentional with this process. Each week following our weekly SC meetings, I went home and created a rough transcription of each audio recording. A "rough transcription" to me was noting the main idea of what each person was saying, but not worrying about if I took down the conversation verbatim. Here's an example:

Sammy: How was everyone's break

Everyone: chorus of good's

Sammy: I want to do intros but I want to get through everything before older girls has to leave

We're gonna be in person which is the biggest best news

I went into Mike's office to check on things and he told us we're good to go in person

Wednesday got official confirmation

Stephanie: Real quick how are they gonna know we go into the building

Sammy: I don't know but I also don't wanna risk it because.

Katherine: What about incimate weather?

Sammy: we'll go into the asec of bistro tent

Katherine: what about like incimate incimate weather

I took note of moments that I felt highlighted themes of trust, collaborative communication, and community care that I valued in this research or outstanding moments of struggle, frustration, growth, excitement, or engagement. Those specific moments that felt valuable in my research were then revisited. This allowed me to take an even closer look at my data. A piece of coded data from nearly each week of the semester was taken into consideration. This allowed me to see a full timeline of the semester and follow the storyline of SC throughout the semester. However, if I did share each piece of data within this thesis, it would be much too long to read (*and write*). I came to the conclusion that I needed to focus on specific dates and key moments to share in this writing. I chose data from significant dates of programming, as well as moments of frustration or growth/productivity.

Data Analysis

The workshop intervention at the beginning of the fall semester was aimed to introduce the concept of a shared set of values, and work together to create this. Following the workshop, I analyzed the weekly meetings and field notes, reminding mentors of these values and working to incorporate them naturally into conversations and looking at how the shared set of values impacts our weekly conversations. At the end of the semester, I analyzed the data I collected

throughout the semester, and looked for signs of implemented values that were discussed in the workshop. The goal was to see a productive end to the semester, with all of our weekly and semester long goals met. I looked to see if our values of trust, collaborative communication, and community care had an impact on meeting these goals, and if it made working towards goals easier.

Data Coding and Themes

As I analyzed each piece of data I collected, I coded my data, looking for outstanding themes in each piece of data. Within each piece of data, I found moments of clarity, learning, support, frustration, disappointment, and more that I categorized into my broader research themes.

CODES

THEMES

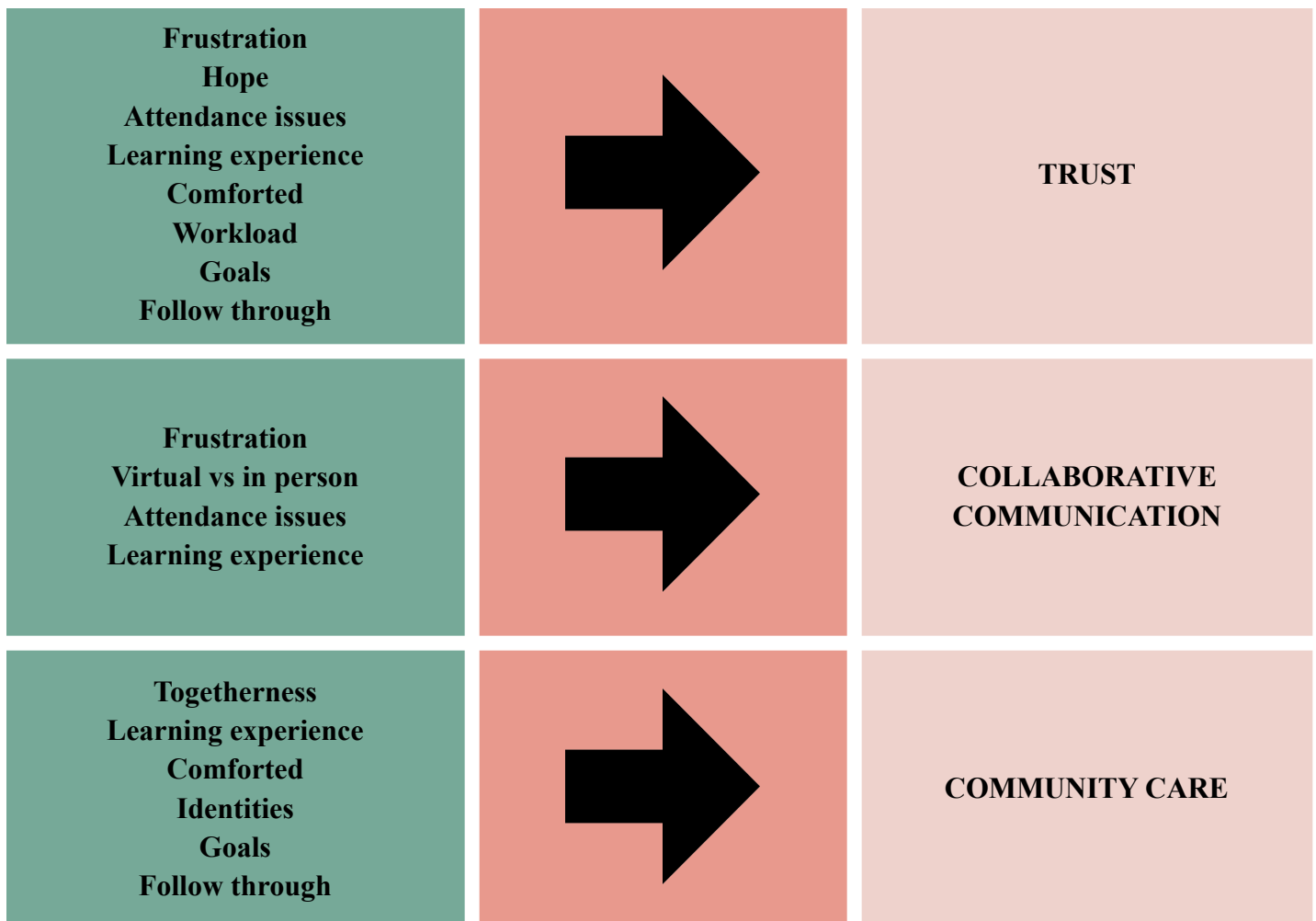


Table 3: Codes and Themes

I used these themes of trust, collaborative communication, and community care because they are the three lenses of my conceptual framework. I've chosen these themes because they have been underlying constants during my time on SC. These themes framed my data analysis because they were the main focus of the workshop intervention with my participants. We defined these three terms together, so it felt natural for these terms to frame my data analysis.

To make this clear, I did not analyze my data in the traditional qualitative analysis route. Generally, you are supposed to be looking for codes and themes as you analyze your data, not going into your analysis with themes in mind. However, this unconventional approach felt more relevant to my research. I aimed for change making research when I designed this work. I held an intervention with all of my participants at the start of the semester, and discussed with them why I was doing this research, and what I was hoping to see from it. We came together and collaboratively defined these terms of trust, collaborative communication, and community care, with the intention of incorporating these concepts into our work and efforts in SC. So using these themes, I was looking for moments of change from my participants that could have been influenced by these conversations.

As noted in the chart above, there were many different moments within the data set that could be coded into the overarching themes of trust, collaborative communication, and community care. Some of these codes fall into more than one theme, showing how intertwined these relational practices are. For example, the code of frustration fell into the themes of trust and collaborative communication, depending on the context of the data. Here's a specific example of my coding process, from some of my fieldnotes reflecting on our first day of AKOG of the fall semester:

Entry 10/17/21

"A lot of the SC members showed up late to the first day of AKOG with little to no warning (meaning that they texted someone the morning of the first day/at the time that everyone was already supposed to be at AKOG)¹. It was specifically some returning SC members who showed up late², and the new SC members were all on time or early. It was pretty difficult to start the day because they were late and the few of us on time were overwhelmed or didn't know what to do¹."

¹Frustrations → Collaborative communication

The members who were late didn't really give anyone any warning about not being able to come on time. For those of us who were on time we were frustrated and overwhelmed with what had to be done for the start of the day with less help than expected.

²Frustrations → Trust

The returning members of SC were the ones who were late. I was particularly frustrated because I had trusted them to set an example for the new SC members and mentors of the entire program. They didn't really meet up with my expectations, which broke down some of the trust I had in them.

From each SC meeting transcript, fieldnotes, and reflections I coded moments that showed those outstanding emotions or actions that were not just the usual monotonous conversation/action. As I analyzed my data each week, new codes were coming up, or the same codes were repeated showing patterns. These codes were then categorized into the three themes, to see where there were moments of trust, collaborative communication, and community care.

My Findings

Hi there again. Just reminding you readers that any italicized text is coming from me trying to clear things up and sharing my own thoughts throughout this research. Also, it's been pointed out to me that my tone switches throughout the following sections of this paper compared to anything I wrote before this. I think this might've been because I was so intertwined with this data, and it's also one of the last parts of this document that I wrote. Exhaustion can make the writing a bit more relaxed.

Before I really get into the details, I need to make this clear. I definitely approached this research with a bit of a deficit mindset. Going from what the Steering Committee looked like my first year, to a year of virtual AKOG and SC, I wasn't up with much hope. It wasn't that I believed we could not reach the full potential of productivity, it's just that I kind of had the mindset of... this isn't really going to go very smoothly. You know? And "this" is referring to both my research and our programming. Just because that's the history I've experienced. (History as in the experiences I've had with the returning SC members, their actions in the past. Lack of communication, needing constant reminders from myself or other Mentor Coordinators about things that need to be done, not showing up to meetings or programming with little to no notice, not committing to the responsibilities of AKOG SC positions). And I definitely could have changed this mindset, it was just hard. But to go off of this, a lot of my own notes and analyses talk about what was frustrating or difficult that week because that's what stuck with me. But let's get into what I found..

The Set Up: Follow Along this Journey with Me

To start, I want to talk about the workshop intervention I held with the SC. Then, I'll be sharing data from throughout the fall semester that was coded into the themes of trust, collaborative communication, and community care. I'll then close out this data analysis with the written reflections that were collected from my participants. This way, you'll be able to see the conversations we had as a group about trust, collaborative communication, and community care, the follow through (*or lack of*) from the SC members, and their thoughts on the process.

I chose to keep this data analysis chronologically organized because I wanted to really show the journey and processes we went through over the duration of my data collection. I thought it was important to show how our conversations about trust, collaborative communication, and community care could have influenced our actions throughout the semester, and then show how participants felt at the end of the semester. This is also how I experienced this data. I was living it with my participants and made my claims and conclusions at the end of my data collection, reflecting on our conversations and actions from the semester. But you'll see all that good stuff at the end.

The Workshop

The workshop was designed to be a space for collaborative conversations surrounding the SC's values. I described this space as a "workshop intervention" keeping in mind that these conversations were meant to be introspective and reflective. I wanted participants to be thinking about the three concepts of trust, collaborative communication, and community care, and how they can interpret these concepts for themselves personally and within the space of SC and AKOG.

The workshop was held during the first in person meeting the SC held of the fall semester. I created guiding questions where we took time discussing what the terms trust, communication, and community care meant to each of us, and to SC as a whole. The goal was to create definitions of each term, however I've learned that we can't always meet our goals. I'll be sharing the "definitions" of each term soon, but I wanted to share my interpretations of the conversations first to really set the scene. I'll break up the analysis by each guiding question.

I wanna set the scene first to:

- a. Show you the process of the workshop*

- b. *Share from my point of view how I saw these conversations based on my history with some of the SC members*

The first questions that we discussed during the workshop was about how each of us views ourselves in SC.

What do you think your role is in SC, think outside the box. How do you see yourself as a member in your position? What do you contribute to your position in SC? What do you think your importance is in SC or what do you aspire to be in SC?

I chose to ask these questions first to get everyone into the mindset of where the conversations were going to go. The workshop was meant to be self reflective, so asking about what we believe our roles are in SC was meant to set that precedent of introspective thinking. I used a visual to try and aid the heaviness of the questions. I was shown Deepa Iyer's (2018) *Social Change Ecosystem Map* and thought that it was a really good guide into youth work roles.

The Social Change Ecosystem Map



 **@deepaviyer**
 **@BuildingMovementProject**

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 **@dviyer**
 **@BldingMovement**

The Roles

Weavers: I see the through-lines of connectivity between people, places, organizations, ideas, and movements.

Experimenters: I innovate, pioneer, and invent. I take risks and course-correct as needed.

Frontline Responders: I address community crises by marshaling and organizing resources, networks, and messages.

Visionaries: I imagine and generate our boldest possibilities, hopes and dreams, and remind us of our direction.

Builders: I develop, organize, and implement ideas, practices, people, and resources in service of a collective vision.

Caregivers: I nurture and nourish the people around me by creating and sustaining a community of care, joy, and connection.

Disruptors: I take uncomfortable and risky actions to shake up the status quo, to raise awareness, and to build power.

Healers: I recognize and tend to the generational and current traumas caused by oppressive systems, institutions, policies, and practices.

Storytellers: I craft and share our community stories, cultures, experiences, histories, and possibilities through art, music, media, and movement.

Guides: I teach, counsel, and advise, using my gifts of well-earned discernment and wisdom.

I shared this with the SC during the workshop, but it ended up confusing everyone a lot more than it did any help. The confusion came from everyone not being able to fully identify with one label, and I think that there would have been less confusion if I didn't include these images. I spent a moment describing how you don't need to fit into one label, but can give and take from more than one. I gave an example of my own self identified role, in the chart below. Here's a table of what the participants described as their roles.

Participant	Role that was self identified
Sammy	"I feel like a <u>guide</u> which is nice but at times I feel like I'm overstepping and feel uncomfortable identifying as that. I also feel like a <u>weaver</u> seeing the lines connect through everything"

Bella	<u>Listener</u> “...translates from learning, I like to listen to what other people have to say before I say something”
Katherine	“ <u>Visionary</u> , I get bored with the status quo, sometimes I don’t think that realistically, I see it as a strength and a weakness”
Stephanie	<u>Builder</u> “able to adapt and develop and implement ideas”
Marlene	“I like the idea of being a <u>builder</u> , it’s applicable in the ways we kind of build our own roles”
Morgan	<u>Caregiver</u> “It’s a collaborative process with mentors and being able to care for the girls”
Cassidy	“I resonate with <u>visionary</u> in a way, looking into the future and finding the best potential for what we are doing and where we are going from here”
Chloë	“Personally I feel like a <u>guide</u> but in Steering Committee as Mentor Coordinator the first role would be a <u>front line responder or storyteller</u> ”
Gia	<u>Disruptor</u> “I get bored by tradition, which gets a negative connotation”
Haley	<i>This participant was not a part of SC at this point in the semester, so I’m not sure what their self described role would be.</i>

Table 4: Participant self identified roles

The next question I asked everyone was in regards to community care.

What do you envision community care means, and what do you think that this means in terms of SC? What do we want committed community care to look like?

This question led us down a rabbit hole. We spent about 25 minutes talking about how we want to build community care, rather than defining it. Which is fine, but it really derailed the conversation and led to us kinda rushing through the other questions. But let’s move on.

The majority of the discussion was centered around how we want to build community care in our own ways. Katherine was in favor of learning more about each other, and talked about how she didn’t know anything about the other members of SC.

I will say, however, and maybe it's just the role that I have in SC and AKOG, I do know lots of things about the members of SC. I'm familiar with them all and could probably say what their major is, where home is, etc. At meetings before this workshop, we've done introductions to each other about the info listed, and I've kept this info in my mind. However, Katherine might not have, or she might have missed those moments because her attendance wasn't consistent / she tended to be late to meetings.

She also noted, "there's something to be said for an emphasis on traditions and focusing on a sense of community and cultivating a sense of care." However, Marlene made a counter comment about how she appreciates knowing each other just within the space of AKOG, "Like we know each other through AKOG, but don't see each other on our own time. It's not bad, it's a cool thing like we have a blank slate for how we want to create this space and get to know each other as 'colleagues' or just people on Steering Committee, but also getting to know each other as people." Chloë noted that she didn't know her partners in the MC role, but knows each other now after spending time working together, "Yeah like getting partnered with someone I didn't really know for Mentor Coordinator in a new role, but we know each other now though." Chloë's comment really highlighted that we learn about our partners as time progresses through working together so closely and so often.

Claim: Some SC members believe that community care is built through getting to know one another and working together.

I've made claims from different sections of data, and the claims in the boxes correspond with the data above said box (the color of the text box is not significant, just keeps in theme with the colors of this document).

This claim discusses community care being fostered by getting to know one another, and I've stated this because Katherine and Chloë noted that they either wanted to spend more time getting to know SC members or have gotten to know SC members and have since felt a sense of community.

One other major topic we talked about in this portion of the workshop was the turnover rate of SC members. Bella, Gia, and I all made note of how it's difficult to feel a sense of community with the quick turnover rate of SC members, whether that's due to members graduating or stepping down or leaving AKOG in general. Bella said, "It's maybe hard to think of community in the Steering Committee because it's always changing. Positions change so often

it's hard to rely on each other if we're not all going to be here all the time." Gia called it specifically a "revolving door of people" which was a really good way of putting it. I commented on that, "That's constant. It's the constant of joining, and learning from someone, and then they graduate and you have to teach someone new."

Claim: The SC is constantly changing, and feels like a revolving door.

This claim is the reality of an undergraduate run program. People graduate, people experience burnout. It's exhausting being in charge of and running a large youth program while also being a full time student. This claim really puts into words the difficulty of having a long term committee of leaders when all those leaders are students.

Moving on from community care, we transitioned into talking about collaborative communication in SC.

To be transparent, we spent significantly less time talking about communication and trust in comparison to our discussion on community care. I could tell everyone was getting burnt out from the long session since most of our SC meetings are only about 20-30 minutes long. We transitioned into a round robin style of discussion, where one person answered the question and then we moved around in a circle taking turns sharing our answers.

I asked participants a guiding question about their own communication styles and how this fit into our SC dynamics.

How do you view yourself as a communicator and what does that look like? How do we incorporate all these styles into our own ways of communication?

Everyone shared their individual communication styles, taking turns speaking around the table. Their words are shown in the table below:

Participant	Communication style that was self identified taken from audio recording. <i>These are the exact words that each participant stated.</i>
Sammy	24/7 communicator, open honest communication, a two way street
Bella	Not an aggressive communicator, where I sit back sometimes but want things to move
Katherine	Over communicate and that's an attempt to be constantly cultivating

	<p>connection, more so the desire to be heard</p> <p>On the flip side, also sometimes become super avoidant and don't respond to anyone</p>
Stephanie	<p>Can communicate but it's hard at times especially when spaces are predominately white</p> <p>"When you're a woman of color specifically a black woman and have been the only one you kind of release your tone so you don't come across wrong to avoid stereotypes</p> <p>Always had difficult time trying to say exactly how I feel, hard to push myself to say something because of those internalized fears of being labeled the 'angry black woman'"</p>
Marlene	<p>fluctuate from being a good communicator and being an oblivious communicator</p> <p>Once I'm focused and remembering I'm pretty good at being on top of things</p> <p>Something to work on trying to be more present</p>
Morgan	<p>Really love open and honest communication and replying fast (to texts)</p> <p>If I get one too many (texts) I'm overwhelmed but if I only get one i'm forgetful</p>
Cassidy	<p>Don't like to dominate conversation, say what I need to say but at same time I like when</p> <p>the conversation is a two way</p> <p>Really respond to the way people respond to me</p>
Chloë	<p>Person that doesn't like to waste time, what is the purpose of this conversation</p> <p>May come across wrong sometimes</p> <p>Keep moving forward</p>
Gia	<p>Have a communication disorder so don't know how to communicate</p> <p>Social pragmatic communication disorder</p> <p>Blunt and honest and like directly what I need from you</p>
Haley	<p><i>This participant was not a part of SC at this point in the semester, so I'm not sure what their self described role would be.</i></p>

Table 5: Participant self identified communication styles

This table is showing the communication styles of each participant. We discussed them with the intention of finding the best forms of communication for SC. With everyone sharing their own personal styles, it was helpful to be able to mix and match everyone's needs/wants in the future of SC.

When we then talked about specifically how we think we can incorporate our own communication styles into SC, Gia specifically said she likes weekly check-ins during the SC meeting. She also said she liked the text reminders that I sent out for our meetings. Morgan specifically said "Having a meeting in person is nice to have verbal communication." Looking back, I appreciated someone commenting specifically on meeting in person over Zoom.

I should have really emphasized this point in the moment. I also believed that having in person meetings was really important to our productivity, but at that moment we had been having a meeting for an hour and everyone wanted to move on so we could leave.

Lastly, we talked about trust. I opened up the discussion with my own definition of trust, and asked what it meant to everyone else.

Trust means someone is going to help me when I'm struggling and I can rely on others to help, coming prepared for things. What does this mean to you? What does trust in your SC members and partners mean to you? How would you describe trusting them?

When we discussed trust, we mainly talked about it in terms of what trust in SC means to each other. From this, we found that a lot of people had different ideas of trust that were sometimes opposite, and sometimes complimentary. I opened the conversation by talking about how trust needs boundaries, which ended up with a lot of members talking about boundaries.

- | | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | Sammy | Trust is having an open door policy with someone. Reliance is something I value in a trusting relationship. Being able to not like it won't be a burden if something happens and I'm absent, and vice versa. Not being too reliant I guess... I'm not really sure where I'm going. |
| 2 | Bella | Can I try to summarize your thoughts? Sometimes people put too much trust in you and it's overwhelming? |
| 3 | Katherine | Are you saying trust should have boundaries? |

- 4 Sammy Yes, trust needs boundaries. Knowing where I draw the line and where I can come in and where I can't come in

I chose to discuss boundaries because I felt like a lot of responsibilities of SC building up to this workshop were being put on me. I wanted to share this with everyone, and let everyone know that I'm overwhelmed and need to reiterate that I have boundaries, and would like people to respect them.

Another point that was made was about having trust in shared position members. Like if you're on the younger girls curriculum team, you want to be able to trust the other members of the younger girls curriculum team.

Gia and Stephanie also made comments about trust being about accountability, each in their own words.

- 1 Gia Trust is owning your shit. Being very clear and honest.
- 2 Stephanie Trust is making people feel reassured when they make something or they feel a certain way. That it's ok to feel that way. Trust is someone bringing something to the table and it doesn't really resonate with my idea. Saying thank you to someone for bringing that up rather than saying sorry, blah blah. It's acknowledging you did something wrong.

Accountability is a big part of trust. Gia brought up the point that you need to own up to your actions, which demonstrates that you recognize your faults. Stephanie talked about holding yourself accountable for your mistakes as well. Not just moving on from your mistakes or when you hurt someone, but actually taking accountability and acknowledging those actions.

Claim: Accountability is a big part of trust in the SC.

Two members had thoughts on accountability within SC, saying it's necessary and valued. Being able to take ownership of your ideas and actions, whether they are good or bad, was thought to be important in the space.

The Definitions

After the workshop, I took everyone's main points and made a document that showed all of our definitions of trust, collaborative communication, and community care. These written definitions portray the combined and collaborated definitions from the SC members. I shared this with everyone and we all agreed this was a good way to show our definitions of the key terms.

Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Open door policy● Reliance with boundaries● Communicate your trust with others● Owning your shit, being honest● Reassuring people in things they do/make/feel● Dependability● "I want people to want me but I don't want people to need me"● Wanting to be self reliant and not need other people● Working together in a club other than confiding in each other● A track record → consistently coming to meetings builds trust● Showing up and getting to know each other
Effective Collaborative Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Open and honest, two way street● Being present● Overwhelming with too much communication some times● Conversations have purpose● Knowing your space affects communication → AKOG and sc being predominantly white● Direct communication● Sit back style but wanting things to move
Community Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Always changing SC makes it difficult to create connections● Learning more about each other and relying on each other● Not bad that we only know each other through AKOG, blank slate for how we want to create the space and get to know each other

Table 6: Collaborative Definitions of Trust, Collaborative Communication, and Community Care

The Follow Through

Now that we've gone over the initial workshop, I want to talk about the actions of SC members throughout the fall semester. I'm calling this the follow through, because I framed my own analysis as thinking of these actions throughout the semester as whether or not SC members were following through on our conversations of trust, collaborative communication, and

community care. I'll be discussing the following data chronologically. All the data that follows was occurring throughout the fall semester, as you read it.

The next time we met after the workshop, we held our SC meeting on October 14th, the week of the first day of AKOG. Our meetings were held (*in theory*) on every Thursday of the fall semester. So, in this meeting, we had only 1 more day before our first day of AKOG back in person. We were discussing how the day would work, and asking and answering a lot of questions because the majority of SC had never experienced an in person AKOG. There were a lot of new members and returning members asking questions about preparation for the day, what was going to happen explicitly, etc. The meeting was strictly business. For example, here's some questions that were asked were:

Katherine: What about inclement weather?

Gia: So would that [preparing lunches] be like an M&O checkout thing?

Cassidy: So are the parents picking out the food?

Katherine: Are they child sized [masks]?

Stephanie: Do we have hand sanitizer?

The meeting in general was a really good time for us to talk and think about what to expect. This felt like a moment of trust within the SC, where everyone felt comfortable asking any questions they had in preparation for the first day. It resembled having an **open door policy**, where everyone was asking out any questions they had. This meeting did have some really good examples of good collaborative communication in practice. We were **having conversations with purpose**. And I would like to say this was just the best example of collaborative communication, but it wasn't perfect. I will say that most of the questions felt pointed at me, I was the one answering all the questions. This made sense, because I did (*and still do*) tend to lead all the SC meetings, especially as my position in SC makes me a type of leader, and my partners in my position were both new so they were also learning as we went. Also since three of the SC members present had never been to AKOG in person, they had no expectations for what it would look like the following Saturday. However, I wish that more of the returning members felt able to answer these questions/the new members would have asked questions to the whole group and not just me.

At this meeting, we also discussed getting breakfast for all of our mentors, as a small bonding activity and as a way to get some extra energy for the day. I had planned on going to Atwood Hall early that morning to help set up and prepare for the day, so I asked if any other SC members would be willing to pick up the food we ordered. Katherine reluctantly offered to pick up the order, after a couple seconds of silence with nobody offering to pick it up before AKOG. I was very thankful and gave her the necessary info about how to pick it up. Gia also offered to go and pick it up with Katherine. Later on, the Younger Girls Curriculum let everyone know they were planning on coming early to Atwood Hall as well, and we circled back to who was picking up the order.

- 1 Bella We [younger girls curriculum] also talked about coming a little bit earlier and just like evaluating what's in Atwood.
- 2 Sammy Ok
- 3 Bella Umm and maybe stealing like- I know we have to set up like other things in the morning but also stealing mentors like just for- I don't know helping us organize or whatever.
- 4 Sammy Oh yeah whatever y'all need.
- 5 Bella Yeah.
- 6 Sammy Yeah yeah yeah that works that works. Are all three of you planning on coming early?
- 7 Katherine If I'm not getting dippin...
- 8 Sammy I was gonna say-
- 9 Katherine Cuz then I have to drive the stuff there and have to drive back to my house.
- 10 Sammy Yeah no so I was-
- 11 Cassidy I mean I could get dippin if you wanted to go early to Atwood.
- 12 Sammy Ok yeah cuz-
- 13 Katherine Whatever works.
- 14 Sammy Sorry yeah cuz Bella- I wasn't gonna get dippin cuz Bella asked if I would maybe wanna come early but if curriculum's gonna come early then like I can drive and people can come and maybe get dippin.

- 15 Cassidy Yeah I can come and get dippin.
- 15 Gia I can come.
- 17 Sammy Maybe if y'all both come with me, like Cassidy and Gia- yeah
- 18 *Overlapping chatter*
- 19 Cassidy One can grab the bagels, and donuts.
- 20 Stephanie I'll drink some coffee and I'll be fine.
- 21 Sammy Yeah hahaha

This felt like a better plan, since the Younger Girls Curriculum team could all get to Atwood Hall early, and since they would know exactly what was happening throughout the day they would be more productive with set up.

This is where we'll see the (lack of) follow through happening...

On the first day of AKOG, October 16th, five out of eleven SC members were late. And surprisingly, all of those late members were returning members. This was a big blow to my confidence in my research, and in my confidence in AKOG in general. I felt like I lost so much trust in those SC members after we all had just agreed to be early to our first Saturday programming. Aside from my personal reflections, this also meant that the group at large was not following through on their words. Being late directly correlates to losing trust because there was no **dependability** from the start with those who were late, and their **track records** were starting off at a low point. I also felt a direct hit to our collaborative communication efforts, since all of the SC members who were late gave little to no warning. There was no **direct communication**, or **open and honest** conversations about being late.

Claim: One intervention was not sufficient in promoting the practice of relational concepts such as trust and collaborative communication.

Based on the programming that followed the workshop, it was clear that one discussion wasn't sufficient in seeing change amongst actions from SC members. There lacked dependability and direct communication from those members which made it clear that our discussions weren't promoting change.

Regardless, all the mentors arrived on time and while Cassidy, Gia, and I were giving out breakfast, Bella was the only curriculum member who was early, or even on time. We were all running up and down stairs to help Bella get all the materials she needed for the day while the other curriculum members all came late. The **workload** for that morning was distributed unevenly, with some of us running around to set up and others arriving late and not being a part of the set up. For those of us who were on time and helping each other out, we were able to **rely on each other**, building up a small sense of community care amongst ourselves.

This day made me realize that the one workshop session would not be enough. I needed to incorporate these values of trust, collaborative communication, and community care into our everyday interactions as a SC. But how? That's where I struggled all semester. I couldn't think of how to incorporate these values and express the frustrations I felt without coming off as rude and pushy.

At the SC meeting that followed the first day of AKOG, October 21st, We reflected on our first day back in person. Everyone shared their first day experiences and how it went for them and their groups on the first day back in person or their first day ever.

Disclaimer: this is long. I'm sorry, but it's important!

- | | | |
|---|-----------|---|
| 1 | Sammy | I think it would be nice to hear how everyone's Saturday went last week from everyone's perspective. Just like, to see how it went maybe for upstairs and outside and for M&O. |
| 2 | Marlene | I think ours- |
| 3 | Stephanie | Oh |
| 4 | Marlene | Oh sorry you can go ahead. |
| 5 | | *everyone laughing* |
| 6 | Stephanie | Oh, um, are you sure? |
| 7 | Marlene | Haha yeah go ahead. |
| 8 | Stephanie | I think that even like, despite not a lot of younger girls coming, I had a really great time. Especially seeing the ones that we did have, they're so big oh my heart, and me and [redacted mentee name] fighting that was great. And then getting to walk home [redacted mentee name] had like me, Chloë |

and [redacted mentee name] and all talking one on one it was great it was really nice to all be in person.

- 9 Gia For me it was like either we were like crazy busy or like not at all which is kind of what you'd expect.
- 10 Marlene Wait, Gia was that like your first ever in person AKOG?
- 11 Gia Ever.
- 12 Marlene That's crazy.
- 13 Gia Like, not even just in the M&O, so it was like...
- 14 Marlene Yeah that's crazy.
- 15 Gia So it was just like, what do we do?
- 15 Cassidy Yeah it was the same for like me and Chloë too.
- 17 Bella Not to project onto how you felt but it was really nice for me to have you guys outside because it was like, oh you're involved. Like even though you guys didn't do a whole bunch of stuff but it was really nice to see you there because usually M&O is like downstairs and like we don't see them all day.
- 18 Katherine We'd like say hi when we take girls down to the bathroom and then never see you again. I thought Saturday went really well, I felt like there was a lot of like weirdness with the fact that there were like two age groups that didn't have girls and I think just like in general it's really weird to think about like planning with such a high mentor to girl ratio. Yeah that's like not technically about Saturday but yeah I think Saturday went well.
- 19 Bella Yeah, I think I agree with what Katherine and Stephanie both said I had a lot of fun, I had like a really surprisingly good day because I had a lot of anxiety that nobody would come at all and like even though we didn't have a lot of girls come we had a lot of fun. But I was still like, oh I hope we have more girls come in the future because I think it could just be so much fun but yeah i felt hopeful after I felt good.
- 20 Morgan Yeah I also had a really good time it was really nice seeing [redacted mentee names] come back because they weren't there last year so I haven't seen them in 2 years and they were in my group two years ago in 2019.
- 21 Marlene/
Cassidy
(unclear) Oh my god, they were in your twelve year old group?
- 22 Morgan Yeah.

- 23 *chorus of *awww*'s*
- 24 Morgan So like, seeing how mature they are now it's kind of crazy to see how in two years girls like grow so much, but like yeah I really hope more girls come next week. But yeah it was a good Saturday.
- 25 Sammy I'm really glad you had a good Saturday. I was really nervous for older girls every time a car showed up, I was like pleaseee be someone 13 years old.
- 26 Morgan Wait can I also add one?
- 27 Sammy Yeah of course, sorry.
- 28 Morgan It was also nice that there weren't any girls at first because I feel like we never get a chance to like bond as mentors, so we like all got to kind of got to talk about our prompts that we thought of like together which was nice.
- 28 Sammy Yeah I remember I was upstairs to like get stuff I heard one of you be like well since we're all here, let's like talk and I was like, that is such a good idea to utilize the time. I was gonna say I had a lot of fun on Saturday. Like not that many girls came which was pretty upsetting, but it was still really fun. The activities that younger girls did outside was really fun and the three older girls that came I love them, those three specifically, so that was really fun to see. So yeah I think it was really fun. I think it was a good transition back into person for us as mentors as well.
- 29 Marlene I was gonna say like Morgan cuz despite only having three people come it was really fun. And I think like because it was the three people that came [redacted mentee names] they've all been coming to AKOG for so long and they were talking about how they grew up at AKOG, and how they're finally with older girls which is fun for them. I also felt like it was an intro day for the other mentors because, like it was there first time there other than you [Morgan], me, Katherine, and a couple other people hadn't been there before so I felt like it was more for them to get acclimated to AKOG, because the other mentees like knew what the deal was, like all the intro to AKOG things weren't really necessary for them, but it was helpful for the other mentors cuz they hadn't necessarily been there before.
- 30 Cassidy I thought it went well. It was kind of like a mad rush at the beginning, like going to dippin and setting everything up. I thought it went well. It was fun seeing everything, it was my first time in person.

There was a strong sense of comfort knowing everyone was nervous going into the first day but we all still had a great time. Even though we did not have many mentees come for the first day, everyone had something positive to say. Specifically, in lines 8, 20, and 24, Stephanie and Morgan were talking about how they were glad that the few mentees that showed up were

returning mentees who they had pre existing relationships with. There was a real sense of community care here, with all of us feeling comfortable enough to share our disappointments but still seeing the bright side of it. In lines 8, 18, 19, 28, and 29 participants discussed that even those they were disappointed with turnout, they still had positive things to say and had good experiences. We were starting to **create connections** with one another, talking about our experiences and thoughts from the weekend.

Claim: Reflective conversations about shared experiences builds community care in the SC.

After sharing a Saturday together, we all were able to share our experiences and a moment of bonding when reflecting on the good and the bad. This felt like a strong moment of building community care because we were able to create connections with each other.

The downside here is that nobody addressed the lateness of some of the SC members. That's on me. I definitely should have brought it up directly. I just felt uneasy about being "confrontational" in my leadership position, especially since I'm pretty close with the majority of the SC members at that point. However, it shouldn't have been a confrontational interaction for me to point out that we all agreed to be early, but most of the SC was late. This is where I would have changed something. I should have brought up the values we talked about as a group, trust, collaborative communication, and community care. But I didn't. And I'll have to live with that *(even though I made life a little harder for myself in AKOG)*.

The next week for AKOG was difficult. Most of the SC members said they weren't feeling well so we held a Zoom meeting on October 28th. Our Zoom meetings are always very quick and to the point. However, they're just me being quick and to the point because when we hold a zoom meeting, I'm generally the only one who talks. You know when you had classes on zoom and everyone turned their cameras off or if they kept their cameras on they were doing anything but paying attention to class? That's basically how our zoom meetings went too. But instead of the professor lecturing, it's me talking about AKOG matters and waiting for someone to respond. There was no **collaboration** in our communication. I asked everyone their thoughts on that weeks' AKOG topics, but on zoom all I got back were blank stares. I was asking everyone their thoughts of what we should do for Mentor Bonding that semester. Cassidy, Chloë, and I had discussed some ideas but wanted the input of all of SC. When I asked what they thought... crickets. Only one person responded and it took a lot of probing on my end. This

really highlighted our lack of collaborative communication through a virtual model. On zoom it's really easy to just sit back and not participate because you're usually at home on your computer. And while a lot of the participants said they had a **sit back style of communication, nothing was going to move forward** if everybody was sitting back and nobody was actively communicating.

Claim: Virtual meetings are not a conducive or productive environment for the SC participants.

During our virtual meetings, there's no collaboration in our discussions. Everyone was used to Zoom classes where we can sit with our cameras off, but a Zoom meeting is different, and benefits from active communication from all participants. With these Zoom meetings, not much gets done as a group because there is usually just one person talking.

This meeting I (*again*) realized that I'm losing a lot of **hope** in my research. It was starting to get close to the end of the semester, and I wasn't seeing much progress. It didn't seem like we were really putting the values we discussed into practice. I decided that the next time we met would be the day we made community guidelines together. The reason we hadn't made them yet was because there were some **attendance issues** throughout the semester. We had not had a meeting where everyone was present since our initial workshop. Only about 5 members of SC had a **dependable track record** when it came to attending the SC meetings every week. There were always 2-4 people absent each week, and I didn't want us to be creating community guidelines for SC without all of SC being present. I would always ask if we could make them at that week's meeting when I sent my reminder text about the scheduled meeting, but people would not be feeling well, taking the night off, or just not showing and we would table the community guidelines for the next week. But at this point, it was getting late in the semester so we had to make the guidelines soon. So we did.

Closing Out the Semester

To start this off, I will say two participants were on Zoom for the creation of the community guidelines, and two were absent entirely. It was getting too late into the semester to push making these guidelines any later, so we just rolled with it. I did make sure to contact the absent members and they said they would be looking at the guidelines after they were made.

On November 4th, we held our weekly SC meeting and also created SC community guidelines. Before we even started the meeting, Marlene asked how long I thought the meeting would be. I know this was asked because at the last SC meeting where we focused on our research the meeting lasted well over an hour, about three times longer than our normal meetings that are only about 25 minutes. I could tell that nobody would want to stay any longer than 30 minutes of “doing my research” so I promised it would be quicker. I didn’t want to rush anything but I also wanted to respect everyone’s time. After about 15 minutes of standard SC meeting matters, we got into creating the community guidelines.

I gave Haley a quick recap of what we’ve done as a SC for this research since this meeting was her first time being on SC. I then pulled up the document of our composite definitions of trust, collaborative communication, and community care, and asked if anyone wants to think of community guidelines for SC and the space for us to “be our best selves and get our best work done and make the ebay relationships in the group.”

After we all read through the definitions and had a moment to think, we got the ball rolling.

Here’s how it went down. People shared their thoughts while I was at the computer that was connected to a projector. While people were sharing what they took from the workshop and what they wanted to emphasize, I wrote down their words on a numbered list titled “Community Guidelines.” I did my best to take down word for word what people were saying to create accurate depictions of what the SC wants to value in our Community Guidelines. I’m going to share the transcribed words from the participants, and then the Guideline that followed.

Bella opened up the floor by talking about communication, which then turned into me talking about boundaries.

- 1 Bella I heard a lot about, about like communication and and I feel like we talked about communication a lot in each section but talking about like how- sorry I’m so tired- um talking about how coming to meeting and being present in the meetings makes it easier to not talk outside of meetings so much so I guess like one guideline could be like be present and be present while you’re here so we can get the most done.
- 2 Sammy Yeah that makes a lot of sense and I feel like that like is noticeable when we’re here in a meeting and get to talk about a lot of things we don’t have to chase each other on messenger which I think is helpful.
Another thing I think we talked about was knowing your boundaries. That

was another thing we talked about, trust was like knowing when you need a break but then also like being there for each other. So I think like being able to help others but knowing when to stop? Umm. I don't really know how to word it. If anyone is thinking what I'm thinking...

3 Gia I think making boundaries clear.

4 Sammy Ooohh that's a good one. Yeah.

5 Gia Like, I might not know your boundaries so I just need you to tell me.

6 Sammy Good job, that's a good one.

7 Bella That's true.

From this, we came up with two community guidelines that relate to trust and communication:

1. **Be present** and be present while you're here.
2. Make your **boundaries** clear.

These two guidelines seemed like some of the biggest takeaways from the first workshop. We talked a lot about boundaries and making them clear but also remembering that we're here for each other. It helped us realize that maybe we were leaning on others more than they would like. So being able to make community guidelines about this was really nice for me as the researcher to see.

Claim: SC members value healthy boundary making.

Several SC members discussed the importance of setting boundaries. Being able to set boundaries was important because many times we felt overwhelmed and needed to be able to say we need a break. But, to go along with this, it's important to remember it's a give and take to set boundaries. Being clear with our boundaries was important as well because others might not have known if we needed to step back unless we communicated that.

Next, we talked about coming together and being part of a larger group.

1 Bella Um, I don't really know, sorry to talk if other people wanted to talk, but I don't know if this really came through in the notes but I was just thinking about it, how I really appreciate that Gia will like give ideas or Chloë will give ideas to us, like today I don't know I just feel like it's good to take charge of your own responsibility in AKOG but then like you can also do other things too. Like think beyond just the one role you signed up for

because we're all one Steering Committee and we all have to work together, ya know? Does that make sense?

2 Sammy Yeah that's a good one.

3 Marlene I was thinking kind of similarly-similarly to that is like I guess just remembering that we're all here like or like we're all part of AKOG as a larger entity instead of just this one group of people that we're meeting with. It's just like ultimately not really about just us. It's about like AKOG and specifically about like the mentees, and like, we're kind of just there to make a larger thing happen, so I feel like it shouldn't just be like everyone doing the one thing they signed up to do.

From this, we made two community guidelines:

3. Think beyond your "one" role.

4. We're all part of AKOG as a larger group, we're all here to make a larger thing happen.

These were two other takeaways from the first workshop that I'm glad were revisited. While these two guidelines don't directly stem from our definitions of trust, collaborative communication, and community care they are so important to the dynamics of AKOG and SC. These two guidelines emphasized the concept of SC being collaborative, working for the most important group, our mentees.

Claim: AKOG's SC is a collaborative group, and our main goal is to provide programming for our mentees.

SC works toward the main goal of our mentees. Sometimes we get so caught up in the little pieces of our own positions, we forget that everything we do is to make sure AKOG is a program that runs for our mentees.

After this, Katherine made a comment about preemptive communication.

1 Katherine I feel like preemptive communication is good cuz um I feel like a lot of the time the communication we have is really last minute like with people coming to AKOG and with people missing meetings, and I feel like a lot of the time people can kinda sense that someone's not gonna come based off like the conversations we had, and I feel like for the most part it seems like we all kinda know, but we're not kind of actively saying it. We all kind of just wait until the last minute to make a decision, then we're all kind of just

like I don't know, maybe more active about how we're communicating and setting boundaries because if you're setting it like... I don't know if that makes any sense.

2 Sammy No yeah I feel like we are kinda like-

3 Katherine It puts too much pressure on other people when you set the boundary too late.

From Katherine's comment, we made two guidelines:

5. Preemptive communication is good, avoid last minute communication.

6. Have active communication and boundary setting.

These guidelines really helped put our definitions of trust and collaborative communication into words that could be practiced. Our definition of trust talked explicitly about reliance with **boundaries**, and **communicating your trust with others**. Part of our definition of collaborative communication discussed having **conversations with purpose**, and having **direct communication**. These two guidelines had the potential to produce good practices amongst SC.

Notice how I said potential...

Following this, Cassidy chimed in on zoom, which was a bit tricky.

1 Cassidy I have a question, so I know on Saturdays... (cutting out a lot on Zoom)

2 Bella We can't hear you.

3 Several speakers What was that... We can't hear you... Could she type in the chat?

4 Sammy Cassidy, could you type in the chat?

5 Cassidy *Types in chat:*
"Do we have an absence rule for SC meetings?"

6 Sammy "Do we have an absence rule for SC meetings?"
That's a good question but we don't have one for Steering Committee, and like I don't know, I've never thought about that because I feel like SC is a little more of a time commitment. I know like I think people who have partnership positions meet like two times a week and have AKOG because older girls meets and plans, younger girls meets and plans, me Cassidy and Chloë meet and plan Gia and Sam might do their thing once a week.

- 7 Gia Text, hahaha
- 8 Sammy Yeah, hahaha so I don't know... we could just say like about being present kind of remembering it's a shared space so like-
- 9 Bella Your absence-
- 10 Gia Your actions-
- 11 Bella You go-
- 12 Gia Your actions impact others.
- 13 Bella That's what I was gonna say and your absences impact others, cuz I don't know if it really makes sense to have a rule because like who would enforce it, like it's kinda weird, I'm gonna be like hey Marlene, you haven't been showing up it's like not really my place.
- 14 Sammy That's a good point, just knowing the impact it has on others is important so thank you for bringing that up.
- 15 Marlene And just remembering that it's a shared responsibility.

From this exchange, we made the following community guideline:

7. Your actions and absences impact others; this is a shared responsibility.

This guideline stemmed from Cassidy's original question about SC **attendance issues**. And while we didn't create a guideline specifically about attendance policies, this guideline is about accountability, which includes attendance.

Looking back, I think it would've been more productive for us to have made an actual attendance policy with consequences. After this, members still were not consistent in their attendance to SC meetings, and a solid attendance policy might've helped that. But what's done is done.

This guideline also helped to bring forth the concept of community care, discussing the concept of a **shared responsibility** that Marlene had brought up several times. This guideline reminded us that what we did impacted each other and we needed to be mindful of that. Falling under those impacts is not **showing up**.

Claim: Being on AKOG's SC is a shared responsibility.

The SC is a group. If one person is lacking, others are there to help pick it up. However, this claim discusses the importance of being mindful of the group around you and how when you need space, others have to be able to pick up what's left.

After this, I gave a quick check to see how everyone was feeling and what participants were thinking should be added.

- 1 Sammy This looks good, but if anyone has anything else to add-
- 2 Gia My go to is like, assume good intent but like call out when something hurt you, you know what I mean?
- 3 Sammy *types out guideline* Does that look good?
- 4 Gia Yeah, cuz sometimes I'll like blurt out what I'm thinking without really like thinking about how it might impact other people, so sometimes I need someone to be like *mmm* maybe not.
- 5 Sammy No yeah, that makes sense. I appreciate that one because I think it is important for us to share when we feel things are uncomfortable and upsetting in a space like this.
- 6 Bella That's hard to do though sometimes, like I don't know just because it's on our list doesn't mean we'll always call out, but it definitely is hard especially because we're all working together, like sometimes it is hard to move things through like that but I like the idea Gia for sure.
- 7 Katherine I feel like that is a lot harder when we don't know a lot about each other's lives because if you have no idea what someone else is like going through interpersonally in their life, and I feel like it feels weird.
- 8 Sammy Yeah and I mean if something hurts you it hurts you, so I think that that's the point of this one, sorry not to uhh what's the word ostracize others... is that the word I'm thinking of?
- 9 Bella Maybe.
- 10 Sammy I actually don't know what that word means.
- 11 Marlene To like, make someone feel isolated.
- 12 Sammy Yeah I don't think it's like to call anyone out in a harmful way it's like to recognize that like... [trailed off and didn't finish sentence]

From this discussion, the following guideline was created:

8. Assume good intent but recognize when something hurt you.

The discussion around this guideline was definitely more critical than the others, which is something to note. It seemed like Bella and Katherine were uncomfortable with the concept or practicality of letting others know when actions have hurt us. Bella seemed more concerned with the guideline in practice when she said “just because it’s on our list doesn’t mean we’ll always call out.” She definitely made a valid point, because it is hard to actually call people out when you’re hurt, when you work so closely with everyone. But Katherine’s point was actually talking about the opposite of Bella’s point. Katherine said, “I feel like that is a lot harder when we don’t know a lot about each other’s lives because if you have no idea what someone else is like going through interpersonally in their life and I feel like it feels weird.” This was really interesting to see the polarity of the two comments. From two members of the same position, they both had almost completely opposite reservations to this guideline. Katherine has made comments throughout the semester about how she didn’t feel like she knew the other members of SC well enough. But, her attendance to SC meetings might have had something to do with that. Bella was present at all SC meetings and noted that calling people out for their actions would’ve been difficult because she felt close with the members. Maybe Katherine didn’t feel as close to the members because she didn’t come to our meetings as often. This was just an interesting observation I had. But, we have two more community guidelines to talk about. So let’s move on.

Claim: Members who are consistently present have different opinions on knowing other SC members in comparison to members who are not consistently present.

Based on the conversation above, it’s clear that those participants who are consistently showing up and present have different thoughts about the closeness of SC in comparison to participants who are not as consistent in their attendance. In terms of this guideline, Bella (who’s consistently at every SC meeting on time) believes that letting SC members know when things are going on/they are hurt can be difficult because we’re a tight knit group and you don’t want it to seem personal. On the other hand, Katherine (who has not been consistent in her attendance at SC meetings or on Saturdays) believes that it’s hard to let SC members know when things are wrong because she doesn’t know the SC members. This was really interesting to see the polarity of the two statements from members who are present or not for the majority of the time.

Katherine followed the above discussion about the eighth community guideline and transitioned into the next bit.

- 1 Katherine Because like sometimes I feel like boundaries and a shared responsibility how does that work when you're held equally responsible but when one person-
- 2 Gia Could set more boundaries than others?
- 3 Katherine Yeah it can't like... are other people absorbing extra?
- 4 Sammy I think it's a matter of working together to create those boundaries... like set your boundaries, but also understand that it is a shared responsibility and you do need to have a little give and take to get things done.
- 5 Bella You should write that down.
- 6 Haley And every week is different, so like maybe some weeks you have a bunch of stuff so you step back a little, and that's when you pick up the shared responsibility and you kind of expect that from others too
- 7 *Chorus of "yeahs" *

This lead to the ninth community guideline:

9. Have your boundaries but remember you need some give and take to get things done. The concept of boundaries was first brought up by myself during the initial workshop conversations, and was then further discussed by the entire group. This guideline made it clear that boundaries aren't to be used for an excuse to push off your responsibilities. And the conversation around this guideline showed that several members had a strong understanding of the purpose of this. It was definitely important to make the distinction between setting a boundary and pushing responsibilities onto others. Being able to "give and take" was important because it was clear based on attendance, and communication throughout the semester that some members were not holding up their end of the responsibilities that are asked of their positions.

As I've analyzed these transcripts and conversations, it's been made clear to me that boundaries are not just a concept that relates to trust. Boundaries within the SC are about trusting your peers, but also communicating your boundaries to everyone and how this affects the community care of the group. If someone's boundaries are constantly pushed, their attitudes may not be as warm to the community as you'd hope. While we only really discussed boundaries as relating to trust, and maybe communication, boundaries embody all three themes in this research.

Claim: Boundaries relate to trust, collaborative communication, and community care within the SC.

Alright, we've got one more guideline. Here's how it went.

- 1 Bella Another thing I was thinking of, this goes back to Marlene's point of how we're all part of a larger thing. Maybe you could say something about like being involved... doing your job in AKOG as well which I think most of us do but I don't know like our main point is Saturdays, like Saturdays are important and it's about that. I don't know how to phrase it
- 2 Sammy Show up?
- 3 *everyone mumbling or silent... signifying an overall uncertainty of the phrase*
- 4 Katherine Show meaningfully?
- 5 *chorus of "yeahs" and "I like that" *
- 6 Bella Show up with meaning. Cuz I feel like we have that established for other mentors, it's for us as well
- 7 Sammy Yeah that's a good point. Does anyone have anything else to add, share, comment on?
- 8 Gia What was that last bullet, like above? (in regards to the definitions that were projected)
- 9 Sammy Community Care. I feel like it's something that kind of comes about in the community guidelines in a way and like building that community through showing up and building relationship and sharing the work maybe How are we feeling with these... Good? *silence/nodding from participants* Good.

And here's the last community guideline:

10. Show up meaningfully on Saturdays.

By show up meaningfully, this meant show up with intentions and purpose. In line 1 above, Bella said "something about like being involved... doing your job in AKOG as well which I think most of us do but I don't know like our main point is Saturdays, like Saturdays are important and it's about that." This guideline drew from the concept that just coming to AKOG on Saturdays isn't enough, and you were expected to come to AKOG prepared to fulfill our roles. This was (*in my own personal opinion*) a great way to end our community guidelines. This brought together the concepts of trust and community care that we had discussed as a group. To **show up** with

purpose and intention brought forth the group's definition of trust. And the emphasis on Saturdays brought forth the importance of a **greater purpose** to our efforts in SC, AKOG as an organization, but more specifically our mentees.

These community guidelines provided a way for the SC to have clear goals and intentions in our work. However, the fault here is that these guidelines were made in November, 2021. The semester ended in early December 2021. We only had about a week or so to really put these into practice before AKOG was on its break along with the rest of the Clark students. These guidelines did embody the main points we discussed in the first workshop, (*this could be credited to those initial definitions we created being projected in front of everyone*). However, to show that everyone had a deep understanding of those definitions said something. I believe it said that the participants had kept those initial conversations in the back of their minds, even at least a little. And while the actions and events throughout the semester might not have shown that, this second workshop proved it.

Here's the thing before we begin to close out. I went through a lot of internal back and forth about conducting interviews with my participants. I felt like I wasn't collecting enough data, I was feeling pressure from my advisor to do them, I thought I needed more insight into the thinkings of my participants. But in the end I didn't conduct interviews. After a lot of thought, I ended up not doing interviews because I felt like I was so deep into the SC community that I don't think anybody would've been really honest with me. My reflection questions that I collected (you'll see those below) are basically what my interview questions would've been. A lot of this data analysis is leaning into those collected responses because it was the largest piece of data where people were sharing their exact thoughts with me. Not just saying something during a workshop to say something or keep things moving. These reflections gave me some insight into what participants really thought about the processes of my research.

Following this workshop, I asked all participants to write a brief reflection on the process of creating definitions of trust, collaborative communication, and community care together, as well as creating a set of community guidelines for SC. I sent out a google form to all of my participants. I'll share all the details below.

Prompt that was given to participants:
"This google form is just a way for us to spend time reflecting on the conversations we had together and the community guidelines we created. I'm going to list out some questions to think about, but you are free to write about anything you want. These questions are just to help guide your thoughts but please write about anything you'd like to reflect on."
1. What do you feel was gained from this workshop?

2. Did topics come up in the workshop that you have thought of before? Alternatively, did topics come up that you have not thought of before?
3. What do you see as future steps that will be taken to address any of the topics discussed?
4. Do you feel we neglected to discuss a topic?
5. What do you see as an important value of the Steering Committee?
6. What changes do you think you can make, as an individual member of the Steering Committee, to further improve the preparedness, communication, and community aspects of the Steering Committee?
7. How do you feel our community guidelines will lead our future Steering Committee?
8. How do you think having a set of community guidelines will promote productivity and community care within Steering Committee?

I made it clear to everyone that they did NOT have to answer all the questions above, or even any of the questions. I provided them to act as guiding questions for their thinking. I asked everyone to sit back for about 5 minutes to fill out their reflections, to ensure I got reflections from everyone. I've copy and pasted all of my participants' reflections into the table below, with my analysis of each reflection in the column on the very right. They are not written in this analysis in any specific order. I gave everyone the option to answer anonymously or not, so not all reflections are connected with a specific participant. Let's dive in.

But first, let me explain what's going on in this table. I've highlighted the key parts of each response that I felt held a strong connection to the key themes of my research, or embodied the message the participant was saying in their reflection. Also, the colors have no real significance other than I like them and they match the theme of this analysis. For the majority of these responses, the color of the reflection text highlighted matches the analysis I wrote. This only doesn't apply for one reflection because it's significantly longer than the others and has more of an analysis in comparison. There will be a note of which pieces of text go along with each piece of analysis. Now let's dive in.

Name	Reflection	Analysis
Chloë	I think the workshop was very beneficial. It highlighted the similarities we shared while also showing how our differences create an effective steering committee. We all relate to different roles yet these roles are beneficiary for creating a well-rounded group. When talking about trust it illustrated the different	Same but different from one another: Chloë placed an emphasis on the differences between everyone in SC and how we came together to create an effective SC. Throughout the workshops, we all had differing ideas and thoughts but came together to create definitions and guidelines.

	<p>interpretations of what trust means to us while also exploring the disadvantages of trust when there are no boundaries. I believe this workshop and community guidelines will strengthen not only this current steering committee but for the many ones later to come.</p>	<p>Future:</p> <p>Many participants talked about the concept of the future. Chloë emphasized the importance of the current SC creating community guidelines and how this will help future SC's. She didn't make a comment specifically about future implementation, but rather about how she believed a strong current SC will lead to future strong SC's.</p>
Marlene	<p>It was helpful to talk through our relationships as a steering committee because we are a fairly tight knit club that meets every week and it's valuable to all be on the same page so that we know what standards we're holding each other to/how to keep each other accountable/learning a bit more about how we operate as people and as communicators. I also think that it would be helpful to incorporate these sort of conversations/dialogues into future steering committees so that it can become more cemented into how the group works (within SC and in AKOG more broadly)</p>	<p>Future: Marlene wrote specifically about how she hoped to see these conversations in future SC meetings. She thought that by bringing these topics up in the future, the concepts would be better practiced from SC and AKOG in general. I wholeheartedly agreed with this statement, but felt a lot of regret with this statement as well. I did not bring these topics up during SC meetings throughout the fall semester following the initial workshop. I liked to believe that if I did bring them up, some of the follow through actions I noted above might've been different. But, what's done is done.</p>
N/A	<p>I think our discussions about community guideline helped us learn more about each other and create a more trusting community since we are now all on the same page. It would've been nice if every member was present for both days but I don't think it hampered our progress. We gained a better idea of what steering committee is for and what our potential is. Sometimes I felt like we repeated the same things but overall I enjoyed hearing everyone's thoughts. Especially this being my first year on steering committee it was nice to learn more about the group and get to know everyone.</p>	<p>Bigger Picture:</p> <p>This participant brought up the concept of seeing the bigger picture of SC. They specifically mentioned getting a better idea of the purpose of SC and what our <u>potential</u> was. This was really cool for me to see, because I didn't even think about the implications for SC potential in these conversations. I appreciated this participant's reflection, because they were able to see where SC could grow from this research.</p> <p>Learning experience:</p> <p>A few participants also talked about going through a learning experience in these workshops. This participant is specifically speaking on how this year was their first year on SC, and appreciated getting to know the group more through these conversations. This participant seeing these workshops as learning experiences showed that they learned about their peers and also helped build a sense of community care, through what we defined it as.</p>

Bella	<p>I think it was really nice to have time to hear from everyone else in SC because we don't often make time / space for everyone to contribute to the conversations. I feel like even by doing the workshop and guidelines, I got to know people in SC a bit better and have a better idea of their goals. I felt a little surprised at some points hearing people say things that I thought they weren't aware of (EX. bringing up absences but also being absent a lot). I think the action of making these guidelines was helpful, but I don't know how they will help us moving forward. I strongly doubt that we will refer to them moving forward, but now we are all aware of them which is nice. Also, with new people joining SC in the future, it would be helpful to have making guidelines be a regular part of SC.</p>	<p>Hypocritical: Bella wrote about how she was surprised when certain participants raised points that she believed were pertaining to them. Specifically, she was surprised when someone brought up the importance of absences when that person is absent frequently. I noted this as "hypocritical" because Bella referenced the more critical comments that were provided by people who made those same negative actions (i.e. comments about absences made by people who don't show dependable attendance). This was interesting because I've made similar observations throughout this research. It made me question the impact of these conversations when "repeat offenders" for a lack of a better term are bringing up issues that they are performing.</p> <p>Future (not hopeful): The next analysis I wrote about from Bella's response was about her not so hopeful comments about the future. She did not think the community guidelines would be helpful moving forward because she doesn't believe SC members will put them into practice. As noted above, I also felt similarly to this, specifically in regards to hypocritical commenters.</p>
Haley	<p>I feel like I gained a perspective into the complex thought that goes into the space of being in steering committee because this was my first time on this side of the operation of AKOG. I learned that being present literally and figuratively are key to being a member of steering committee. I feel like there was a major focus on the boundaries aspect of being a member of steering committee, which struck me because I did not realize how much people found this important. I think it's important to have leadership who values things like this. Since this was my first meeting in person, I was a little weary to participate in adding guidelines because this is still a new space to me.</p>	<p>Learning experience: Haley wrote about the workshop as a learning experience for her since this was her first SC meeting. She'd been a longtime AKOG mentor, so her comment about gaining a new perspective was not surprising, but worth noting. I was curious how she would write about her experience in the workshop having missed the first session, but also having been a longtime member of AKOG programming.</p> <p>Surprised: Haley also noted that she was surprised to see the concept of boundaries being so heavily discussed. Since she wasn't at the first workshop session, she didn't witness the lengthy discussion we had about boundaries. But it was interesting to see Haley note that she didn't expect SC to find boundaries so important.</p>

Gia	<p>I think that having clear cut rules are helpful for me. I also feel like it is beneficial to lay the groundwork for others to come in the future and to start new traditions. I think it helps</p>	<p>Future: Gia noted that she believes the significance of these workshops was that they laid the groundwork for more workshops in the future, and to start new traditions. She is hopeful that these processes can continue and be helpful in the future.</p>
Katherine	<p>1. What do you feel was gained from this workshop?</p> <p>The original conversation was really meaningful to me because I felt like I was really vulnerable and honest with others. When others shared personal things about themselves, I think I developed a sense of understanding about who they were as a person that motivated me to strengthen the trust in our relationships. I think it opened the door to seeing someone in a new light where they were more than just a coworker but someone that I cared for as a human being. It made me feel a lot less like an imposter playing the role of a steering committee member. I left the first training feeling really like a team or individuals with our own unique backgrounds and struggles that were working together for a shared purpose: trying to run a meaningful program for the youth and the mentors.</p> <p>During the second training, I didn't feel quite the same. It felt like where there was disagreement there were not conversations or negotiations to understand why others felt differently. Particularly in the sense of getting to know each other better and if this positively or negatively effected our ability to work as a team, I really wish that we could have gone into more depth. I felt really strongly that knowing things about others improved our effectiveness as a team and was more rewarding and had a hard time understanding the perspective that some others raised. I feel that all of the agreements we came to ultimately</p>	<p>Togetherness: (highlighted text 1) Katherine noted that she left the first workshop feeling like a team of individuals working towards a shared purpose. From this, it sounded like Katherine felt a sense of togetherness, feeling a sense of community after spending the first workshop together creating our own definitions of trust, collaborative communication, and community care.</p> <p>Not knowing each other: (highlighted text 2) In this second highlighted text, Katherine felt differently about the second workshop. She didn't feel like we appropriately had conversations or negotiations around disagreements, specifically about getting to know each other more. I wasn't entirely sure how to analyze this piece of data to be honest. I think in the moment, we moved along these comments about getting to know each other more because we might have felt like we did know each other enough to be in the space of SC? While Katherine felt strongly about it being necessary to learn more about each other, some other participants felt comfortable with the level of proximity they had with the rest of SC.</p> <p>Enacting Change: highlighted texts 3, 4) In the next two highlighted pieces of text, Katherine wrote about enacting change within her own actions. She said that she was going to focus more on attendance, being meaningfully/intentionally present, and not relying on Bella to initiate and organize anything. This was really interesting to see her note, because throughout the semester her attendance had not been reliable. I was very wary of seeing significant changes to these actions following this workshop.</p> <p>Future: (highlighted text 5) In the last piece of highlighted text from Katherine's</p>

<p>would be motivated by interpersonal connection with other e board members. Perhaps the second conversation was also less rewarding because not everyone was present and two people were remote with their cameras off/had connection issues.</p> <p>2. Did topics come up in the workshop that you have thought of before? Alternatively, did topics come up that you have not thought of before?</p> <p>I've never really considered community care for steering committee.</p> <p>3. What do you see as future steps that will be taken to address any of the topics discussed?</p> <p>4. Do you feel we neglected to discuss a topic?</p> <p>I did feel like we kinda overlooked going into more depth about knowing each other better. We talked about it in the first conversation but I didn't really feel like we talked about it in the second training.</p> <p>5. What do you see as an important value of the Steering Committee?</p> <p>Trust.</p> <p>6. What changes do you think you can make, as an individual member of the Steering Committee, to further improve the preparedness, communication, and community aspects of the Steering Committee?</p> <p>I think I'm going to try to focus more on my attendance and being meaningfully present. A lot of the time I can be there but Im running 5-10 minutes late. This puts a lot of pressure on others and I know I sometimes feel really frustrated when the</p>	<p>reflection, she wrote that one community guideline that should have been added was that these conversations should be held at the start of every semester. This lead me to believe that she thought these conversations were helpful, and should be used in the future to ensure that healthy goals are made amongst future SCs.</p>
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roles are reversed. I think I'm going to try to be much more intentional with my time and take personal responsibility for connecting with my peers if that is helpful in motivating myself to follow through with my commitments.

I do feel like showing up creates a lot of trust. Bella is really good at showing up on time for everything, organizing things...etc. Whenever we're meeting, she is always the person who is super prepared. I didn't realize how much trust this allowed me to build with her as a peer until suddenly I confided in her about my breakup.

I think that reflecting on this during this training, I've realized that some of my actions haven't necessarily been building trust in the ways I would like them to be.

A personal goal of mine is to be more intentional with my presence and not relying on Bella to initiate/organize everything.

7. How do you feel our community guidelines will lead our future Steering Committee?

One community guideline that I think should be added is that there is a conversation like this at the start of every semester within Steering Committee. Not for research, but to build mutual understanding amongst members. I also think that check ins at the start of each meeting would be really good or even thorns and roses would be a good way to interpersonally motivate people to come to meetings and help people feel valued as part of the group.

8. How do you think having a set of community guidelines will promote productivity and community care within Steering Committee.

	I really hope it'll help encourage us to be more intentional with our presence in shared responsibilities and over time help us build mutual trust and respect.	
Morgan	I wasn't there for the second part, but I'm really glad you made this space for this! it was nice in the first workshop to hear everyone's thoughts and create a common ground for all of us in steering committee, which makes the space feel more open/welcoming	Togetherness: Morgan wrote about how they appreciated the workshop, specifically hearing everyone's thoughts and having a common ground for everybody. They believed the space was more open/welcoming. This showed a sense of community care was felt after having shared discussions surrounding themes of trust, collaborative communication, and community care. Having shared experiences together built a sense of community care and trust amongst the group.

Table 7: Participant Reflections and Analyses

These responses gave me a lot to work with. I was able to see the thinking behind all of my participants, and I learnt what they really thought at the end of this research. Being able to see everyone's thoughts all together was really interesting. I was able to compare ideas and notions the participants had after spending the semester talking about aspects of the research.

Claim: Interventions and community guidelines have the potential to impact future Steering Committees.

To sum this up, many participants had thoughts about the interventions in regards to the future of AKOG's SC. Some were not hopeful in seeing positive changes, while others noted that these conversations had the potential to uplift and improve the future SC's that come into AKOG.

I'm going to be honest, I don't have much more to say about this data apart from my analysis in the table above. I felt like the table was the best way to organize the responses, and the table allowed me to comment on each and build an analysis on the participants' thoughts. Now all that's left is to wrap up everything. No biggie.

My Closing Thoughts

As I'm writing this conclusion, it's the final stretch of AKOG's spring semester, my final moments with this program. I've been struggling to conclude this work, because I knew deep down that when this piece is finished, so is my time with AKOG as an undergraduate. I don't know a time at Clark without AKOG, and many people don't know an AKOG without me. That's so scary, to leave behind a program that I've poured my heart and soul into for four years. But at the same time, the burnout is so real. For a long time I've been exhausted, with the never ending to-do list of all things AKOG every day since becoming Mentor Coordinator. But this research and thesis writing helped revive me a bit. I got to do a lot of thinking about AKOG over the years, helping me appreciate the changes that have happened in AKOG and within myself.

Within AKOG, I've seen so many different faces of the program. From my first year at Clark, the huge bustling and bumbling program that was led by Nia and Fátima. My sophomore year, where Deisy and I took over as Mentor Coordinators and had to adjust to the change in leadership. Junior year, AKOG was changed entirely by COVID and was a big hit to our program. And finally, senior year. We've been working so hard to bounce back from the initial wave of COVID, it's just been a long year. But this research helped me see the progression, finding the most valuable aspects of AKOG's SC.

Within myself, I hoped to see changes in my leadership styles and see positive growth throughout the semester. I can say, I learned a lot about what leadership methods work and what doesn't work from this research. I had hoped to transition from my own timid approaches into more confident approaches, but I didn't. All semester, I felt like this research was an extra "thing" to add to everyone's AKOG to-do list if I brought it up constantly. So I didn't incorporate our intervention conversations into our everyday interactions. The overall productivity and relationships might have benefited if I did bring up these research topics more frequently. But I hoped that one conversation would stick, like it did with me.

But in regards to this research, I've seen the development of trust, collaborative communication, and community care within AKOG's SC over the course of the fall semester. While I cannot say I saw the significant improvement I had hoped for, I do think these conversations we held surrounding these lenses were beneficial. We were able to collaboratively define these terms within the scope of SC, and it got everyone thinking of the implications of their actions before the workshops. We discussed the concept of boundaries in depth, specifically

discussing the importance of taking your space from AKOG while also being a part of the group at large. Our discussions on boundaries highlight the intersections of the themes of trust, collaborative communication, and community care within our conversations. Another main point to takeaway from our discussions was the concept of multiple communities within AKOG. We had centered some of our conversations around AKOG as a whole, rather than the concept of the small SC. We discussed that there are multiple communities within AKOG, including the SC, the mentors, the mentees, and AKOG as an entity. We were able to discuss how our SC efforts are for the greater good of AKOG's programming, and this helped us see the bigger picture in our work. Along with this, based on the reflection responses I have from my participants, they believe that these conversations can be beneficial to the future SC's.

I was told to think of any "next steps" I had for this research, but that's been difficult for me. I will not be a leader of AKOG after I graduate. So the next steps are in the hands of the next group of leaders. I do think this work had an impact on my fellow SC members: seniors and underclassmen who will be staying in AKOG. Many of them had enjoyed the workshops and were interested in the idea of continuing them as a form of SC bonding/training for the future. This work is not done, and needs to be continued within AKOG's SC. There are more questions to be asked moving forward from this. What can we do next? How do we find that switch ourselves? How can we build AKOG into what it once was, and what it can become? I'm leaving them with this, my finished praxis thesis for any assistance in what they might want to bring to AKOG's leadership. Some of them are part of my committee of readers, some of them might not even read this. But for anyone who is reading this that has been a part of AKOG, thanks for getting to the end of 68 pages. I'm leaving this program in great hands, and know that you all will continue to flourish in and out of AKOG.

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