

Research Team: Dr. Jennie Barron (Selkirk College), Diana Twiss (Capilano University), Alisha Samnani (Capilano University), Andrea Korens (Vancouver Community College), Leeza Pehudoff (Selkirk College), Pablo Pastor (Selkirk College), Jayme Jones (Selkirk College)

Project: *Courageous Dialogues: Moving Beyond Polarization* is a three-year applied research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and being carried out by researchers at Capilano University, Selkirk College, and Vancouver Community College. This project is occurring in partnership with Decoda Literacy Solutions, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, and the Continuing Education and Training Association of BC.

This project aims to identify tools, strategies, and other resources for helping our communities overcome polarization. We are convening Community Learning Circles (CLCs) through which participants can join us as co-researchers and co-creators of a knowledge product that others can use to help overcome polarization.

In Phase One of the CLCs, participants engaged weekly to learn about polarization and develop ideas for how to overcome it. In Phase Two, we will dive deeper and gather your feedback on the tools, skills, strategies we explore together, as data for our research. All CLCs will be facilitated by members of the research team.

This document explains your role in the Community Learning Circle (CLC), and once signed will confirm your consent to participate in Phase Two.

Involvement: Your participation in this research is voluntary. In a CLC you will provide input and feedback (your opinion) on strategies, tools, and approaches for dealing more effectively with polarization. CLCs will be grouped around specific themes or skill development. Depending on the desires of each group, the frequency of those sessions may be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly for up to six months. While the time commitment is largely up to participants, you can expect that it will involve a minimum of eight hours of your time.

You will be asked to do the following:

- Keep a reflection journal (either type-written or in the form of voice memos, to be shared with the researchers);
- Participate in group or individual interview; and
- Provide written and/or verbal feedback on tools, skills, strategies and approaches to navigate polarization.

All sessions and interviews will use Zoom and will be recorded. The link to the recording will be available only to participants in the CLC or members of the research team. The CLCs will be facilitated by members of the Courageous Dialogues research team.

Data Storage: Signed consent forms and all data collected will be saved on a Selkirk College Microsoft OneDrive account, with sharing access limited to those on the research team. Team computers will be password-protected and the data encrypted. The data collected will be kept until August 31, 2025.

Transcription review: Wherever transcription happens (e.g., of voice memos or interviews) we will make word file transcripts available to participants so you can correct anything that may have been misinterpreted or mis-attributed. You will have 4 weeks to review the transcripts.

Risks and Benefits: The risks of participating in a Community Learning Circle are minimal. They could include discomfort or other emotional reactions arising from discussion of polarization and our efforts to overcome it. These risks should not be more than would be expected in normal day-to-day life.

The research team will not disclose in the products of research, information that directly identifies you. You will be assigned a pseudonym for individual contributions. For the purpose of receiving credit for your contributions, you will have the option to consent to being identified by your preferred name in a list of contributors that is not connected to any specific pieces of data.

We ask that participants keep confidential any information shared by other participants. At the same time, we cannot guarantee that personal information that is shared will be kept confidential.

Compensation: To enable equity in participation, we have set aside some funding to reimburse participants for childcare, and/or transportation expenses incurred to attend in-person events that take place somewhere other than your regular place of work. We can offer \$16 per hour for childcare; \$0.50 per km for transportation (or the cost of transit); and parking. This will be done on an as-needed basis. Reimbursements will be given at the end of Phase Two unless required sooner.

Your participation in the Community Learning Circles is entirely voluntary at every stage of the research. You may pass on any activity, including, but not limited to: when you are asked questions; when you are prompted to write a journal entry; when you are asked to participate in an individual interview; and when you are asked to participate in a group interview. If you want to share something personal (e.g., through an audio recording) without indirectly revealing your identity, a member of the research team can read it aloud for you.

If you experience distress or need emotional support as a result of participating, you can contact the Mental Health BC Hotline at 310-6789 (no area code needed).

The benefits of participating in this research are that you will gain knowledge about polarization (including causes, and exacerbating and mitigating factors), and build a toolbox of approaches, ideas, and resources for dealing with polarization in your family, social circles, workplace and community.

Research Products: Research findings will be shared in a variety of ways: 1) through the knowledge product we collaboratively decide upon and create (e.g., an online interactive roadmap to resources for overcoming polarization); 2) through presentations at conferences, on our respective college/university campuses, and other events to which we are invited; 3) on our websites; 4) in e-newsletters (e.g., of Selkirk Innovates; Capilano University's Creative Activity, Research & Scholarship newsletter); 5) annual reports (e.g., of the Mir Centre); and 6) published in peer-reviewed academic journals.

Withdrawal: You are free to switch to another CLC or leave the project at any time without consequence. You may withdraw at any time. You may also request to withdraw your journal entries and individual interview data. Withdrawing other types of contributions (e.g., your visual or audio presence in a video or audio-recording or comments made in the context of a group interview) may not be possible.)

Questions or Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Principal Investigator, Dr Jennie Barron (jbarron@selkirk.ca).

The Selkirk College, Vancouver Community College, and Capilano University Research Ethics Boards have approved this research study. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact:

- Selkirk College – Paula Vaananen at pvaananen@selkirk.ca
- Vancouver Community College – Research Ethics Board at REBsupport@vcc.ca
- Capilano University – Research Ethics Board at reb@capilanou.ca

Consent – Required:

Please check the following five statements prior to signing.

- I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this research.
- I acknowledge that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without consequence, and if so, I will contact the facilitator or Project Director.
- I understand that I may request the removal of my data but this is subject to feasibility. Withdrawing other types of contributions (e.g., my visual or audio presence in a video or audio-recording or comments made in the context of a group interview) may not be possible.
- I consent to the group sessions being recorded.
- I understand that I will be assigned a pseudonym for individual contributions (e.g., quotes).

Consent – Optional:

The following two statements are optional and are not required to be checked to participate in the research.

- I consent to being identified by my preferred name in a list of contributors that is not connected to any specific pieces of data. (If I do not consent to being identified for the purpose of receiving credit for contributions, I will not be listed.)
- I consent to being contacted after the end of the project for follow-up purposes.

Participant Name _____ Participant Signature _____

Date signed _____

All research team members (Jennie Barron, Jayme Jones, Andrea Korens, Pablo Pastor, Leeza Perekhodoff, Alisha Samnani, and Diana Twiss) promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature _____

Date signed _____