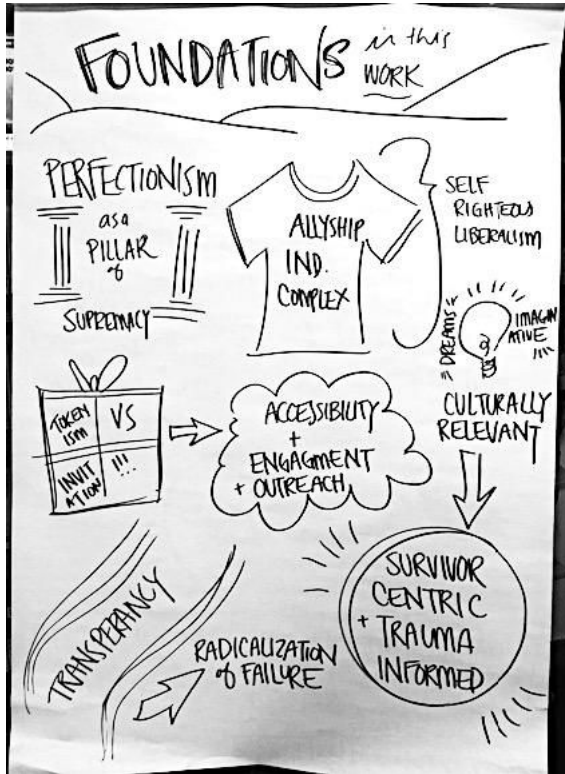


Meeting #3 Workshop with Carmella from South House  
(March)

Our third meeting consisted of a workshop presented by Carmella from South House. The workshop was designed as an introduction to policy writing from a feminist and anti-oppressive framework. Below are the notes we made during the workshop as well as Carmella's beautiful drawings.

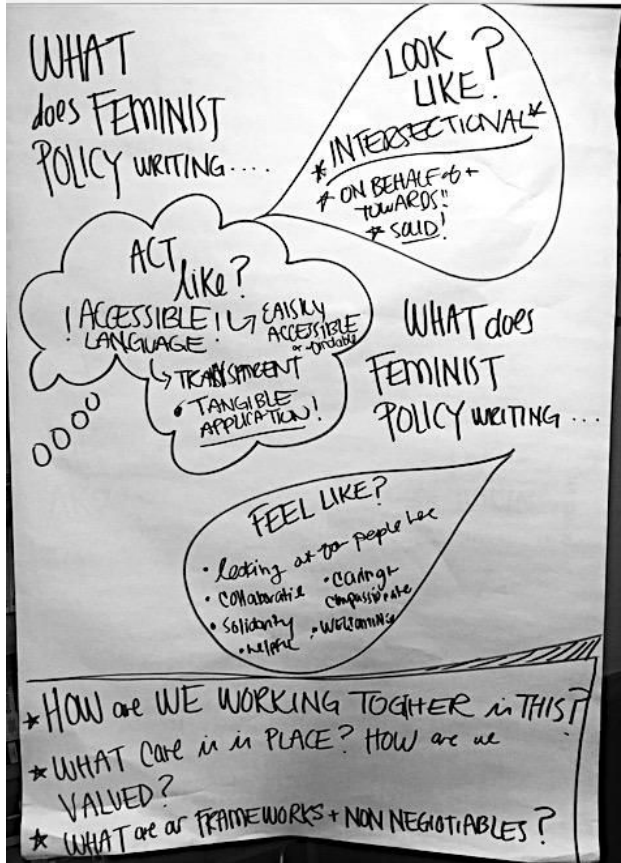




## Foundations

We talked about:

- How to navigate the desire for perfectionism and understanding that what we create will need to be changed over time.
- Why are we doing this work? Being self-critical about our own motives.
- Who is the policy for? How do we make it accessible to people? For example not using legal language that is hard to understand.
- Can we be imaginative in our policy writing? Let's think creatively!
- The importance of transparency.
- Radicalization of failure. Instead of burying mistakes, can we publicize them so that the whole community can learn?
- How can we make our policy survivor centric and trauma informed?
- The difference between tokenism and invitation when thinking about division and inclusion.



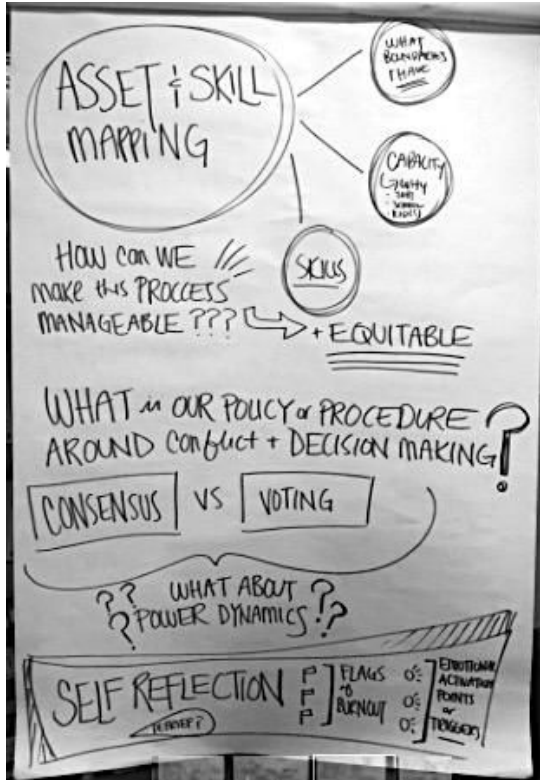
## What Does Feminist Policy Writing...

Next we were invited to brainstorm and imagine together, what does feminist policy writing: Look like? Act like? Feel like?

Some words we came up with included:

- Accessible language
- Available to public (transparent)
- Intersectional
- Protects our membership
- Collaborative
- Tangible application
- Inclusive
- Caring
- Helpful

We also discussed how we as a committee will work together. How will we make decisions (majority vote, consensus based etc.). What care procedures do we have in place? What are our non-negotiables?

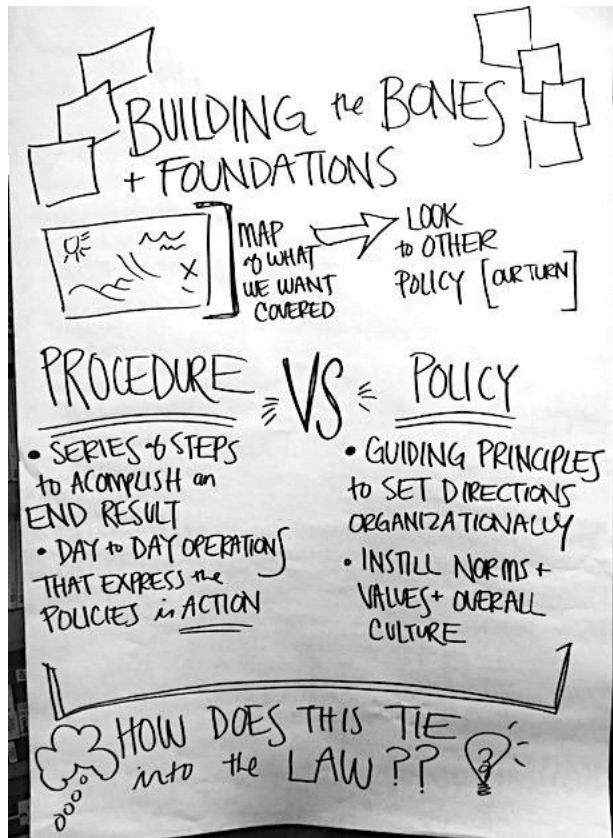


## Asset and Skill Mapping

An important first step (and one that we skipped!) is to assess the skills that the group is bringing to the process.

We discussed:

- How can we make this process manageable? Ensuring that committee members don't commit beyond what they can accommodate in their life.
- What skills do folks have?
- What is our policy or procedure around conflict and decision-making? Should we adopt a majority voting approach or a consensus approach, or a mixture of both?
- Should we start meetings with a check-in?
- How will we navigate disagreements or emotional moments?
- What about power dynamics within the group?
- Mood-checker - someone who is assigned the task of noting the mood of the group and suggesting breaks or moments for reflection.
- What are people's emotional activations or trigger points?
- Should we have debriefs after meetings?



## Building the Bones and Foundations

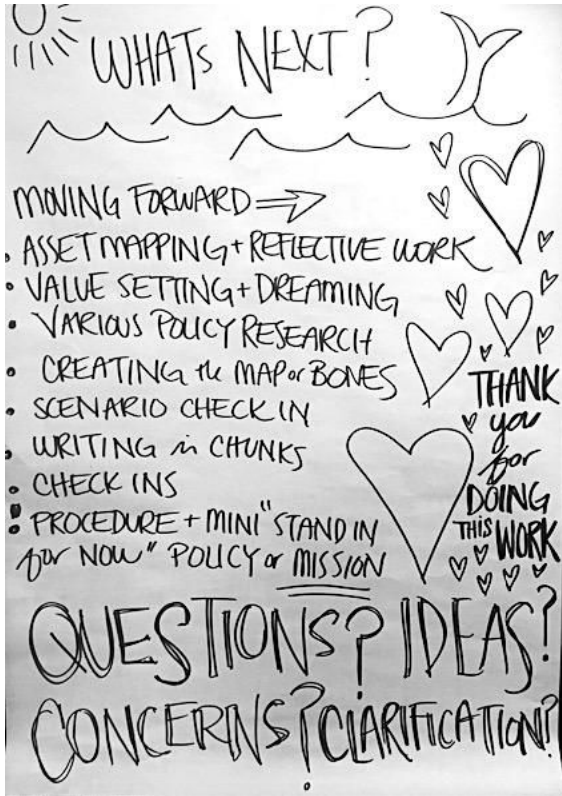
The first step in building the structure of our policy is to map out what we want to cover. In order to do this it can be helpful to consult other policies. There is an organization of student unions from across the country called Our Turn that has reviewed the sexual harassment policies of their universities and proposed changes and toolkits for improving them. The PDF of their findings is [here](#).

### Procedure Vs Policy

Procedure is a series of clear steps that expresses the values of the policy in action.

Policy is the guiding principles that sets the direction organizationally and expresses the norms, values and overall culture.

How do policies tie into the Law? Could our policy suggest informal options outside of legal frameworks (mediation, workshops etc.) as well as formal options that lead to institutional responses.



### What's next?

At this point we reviewed the basic plan to move forward as a committee. The steps identified included:

- asset mapping and reflective work
- Value setting & dreaming
- Various policy research
- Creating the map or bones
- Scenario check-in
- Writing in chunks
- Check-ins

Something else we discussed was the potential need to create a mini-policy or statement that could be a placeholder while we do the rest of the work in creating the full policy.



## Final Thoughts

Lastly we talked about how and when to engage broader community consultation and feedback and if we want to engage in collaborations with other groups doing this work.

We also discussed:

- Development Evaluation - the idea that this kind of work will be largely trial and error and we should acknowledge that whatever document we create will not be perfect and will need to be re-visited at set-times.
- Institutional Memory - how do we archive the successes and failures of this work so that future generations won't make our same mistakes?

And finally, finally, Carmella provided us with their email address so we can follow up with questions and further thoughts: [volunteer@southhousehalifax.ca](mailto:volunteer@southhousehalifax.ca)

At the end of the meeting we agreed that while we had been on the right track in many ways, we skipped a few steps in terms of talking about how our committee would function and so we've decided to return to those preparatory steps at our next meeting.