



DISRUPTED CONNECTIONS: CARE AND ACCESS AS WE MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER

Human Services Articulation 2022

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I'm an uninvited visitor on
Tk'emlups te Secwepemc territory
within the unceded traditional lands
of Secwepemcúl'ecw (Secwepemc
Nation), where learning has taken
place since time immemorial.

I am shaped by time spent in
Algonquin Anishinabeg, Wolastoq
and Mi'kmaq, and Qayqat lands.



A note on the term “post-pandemic”:

“Words create worlds.

“I’ve been thinking in terms of shifts and phases instead. The pandemic feels very present to me, and I’m not sure when or if that will stop being the case. That said, I do think we’ll shift into new phases that might include greater freedom, increased social anxiety, communication challenges related to transitions, and lots of other impacts, both positive and negative depending on your privilege and perspective.

“I’ll invite you to think about your words and whether or not they fit the global reality of COVID-19’s impacts.”

- Karen Ray Costa, “The Next Phase.”

A Little Bit About Me

I work in faculty support, which I think of as essential care work within the university.

I was the faculty lead on TRU's transition to fully online pandemic teaching, and even 2+ years on I am not sure I have fully recovered.

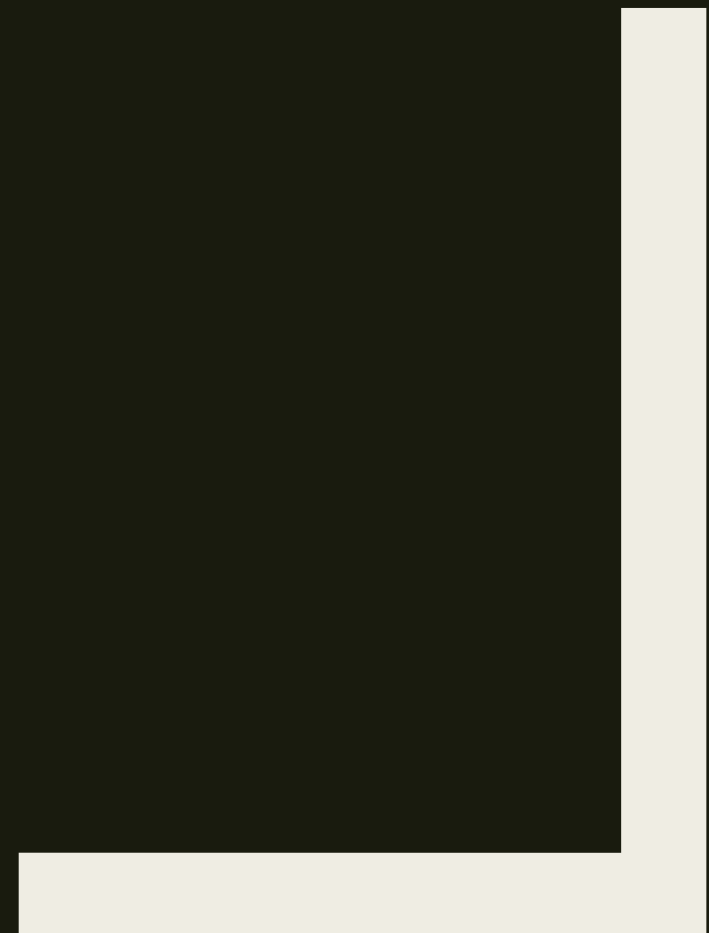
My background is community college teaching – I taught literature and academic writing for nine years before transitioning to this role.

My primary concerns are care and access: how to maximize both, but also where they fail.



HOW ARE YOU?

Please, share how you're feeling in the chat.






I CARE A LOT ABOUT CARE.

... which is why I was so excited to be invited to speak
to you folks today.





HOW DO YOU DEFINE CARE IN THE WORK YOU DO AND IN YOUR ROLE?

Has your understanding of the role care plays in your professional work changed over the course of the pandemic?

Please share your thoughts in the chat.



AT THE BEGINNING OF
THE PANDEMIC, I WAS
SO HAPPY TO BE
TALKING ABOUT CARE...

... but I was also burning out. Quickly.

The Tricky Truth About Care

- Care is strategically useful to the institution to cultivate on the micro level, between individuals; consider how much institutional marketing in the pandemic hinged on celebrating the efforts of individual instructors.
- If individuals are enacting care, the institution can remain relatively indifferent to necessary structural changes.
- But care ultimately fails on the macro level when it isn't supported by institutional structures (eg. an understaffed support unit).
- **Care cannot be extracted in perpetuity.**

CARE IS NOT
JUST A “NICE
TO HAVE.”

It's essential to
the continued
functioning of our
institutions that
we figure out how
to implement
care on a
structural basis.

Today I Want to Talk About...

How care has been extended and disrupted in the last couple of years.

What moving forward would look like if informed by an ethic of care.

Where I See Care Being Extended and Disrupted

Extended

- Flexible deadlines, compassionate course policies.
- Gradual returns to campus for faculty and staff alike.
- A new awareness of access needs.

Disrupted

- The rise of surveillance technologies in our classrooms.
- Rigid return policies that don't account for different needs.
- Scaling back of access offerings alongside return to "normal."

A NOTE ON “NORMAL.”

The pre-pandemic learning and teaching reality didn't work for everyone.

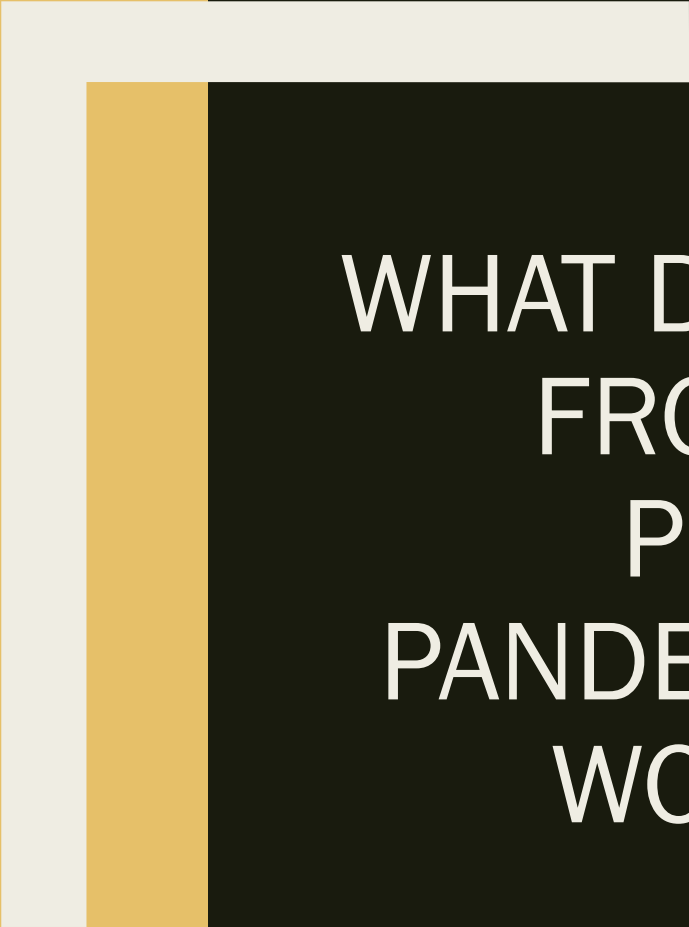
When we hustle back to “normal,” are we signaling that we are happy, as a sector, to continue leaving some folks behind?



TALK TO ME ABOUT CARE.

What are your experiences of how care has been extended or disrupted in your own working life?

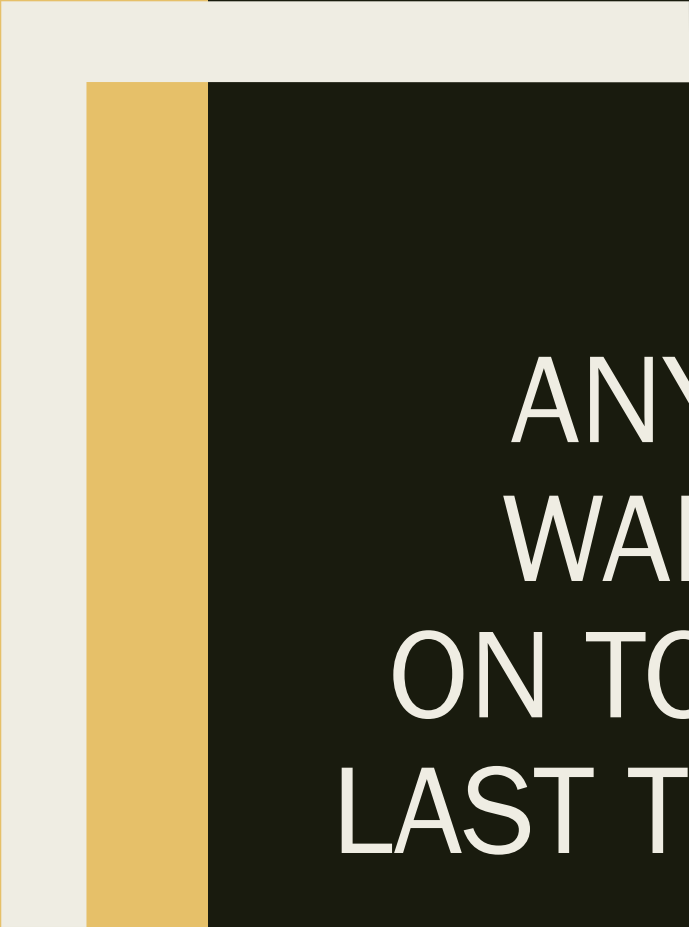
Please share your thoughts in the chat.



WHAT DO YOU WANT
FROM THE NEXT
PHASE OF THE
PANDEMIC IN YOUR
WORKING LIFE?

What matters most to
you and what have you
missed?

Please share it with me
in the chat.



IS THERE
ANYTHING YOU
WANT TO HOLD
ON TO FROM THE
LAST TWO YEARS?

Did anything work well,
or did you experience
meaningful growth?

If you feel comfortable
to do so, please share
that in the chat, too.

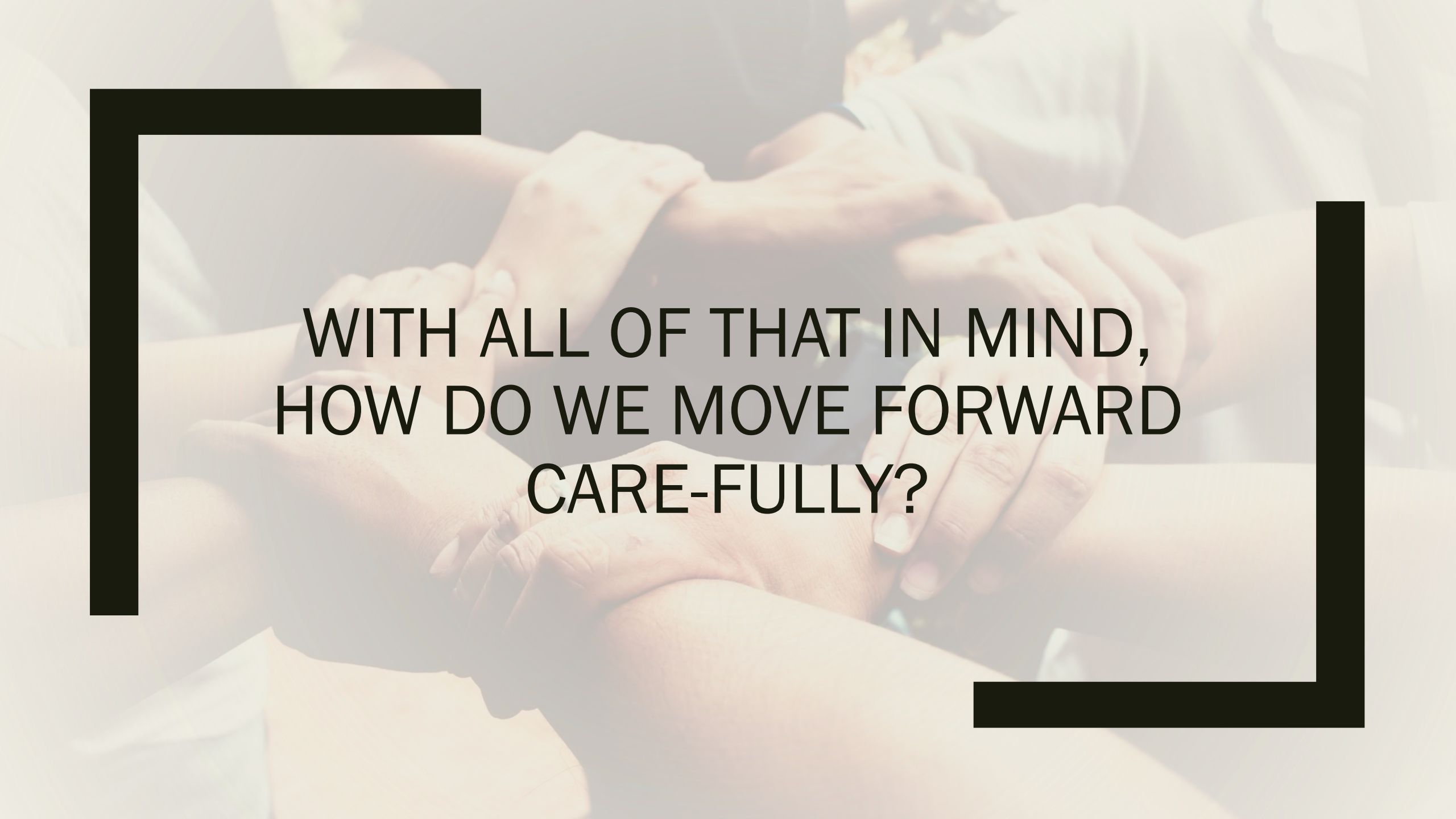
My List of Things to Keep

Digital skills and digital literacies.

Scaling courses back to learning objectives.

Awareness of access issues, both related to disability and digital divide.

Conversations about care.



**WITH ALL OF THAT IN MIND,
HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD
CARE-FULLY?**

What is an ethic of care?

Ethic of care emerges from feminist philosophy.

It argues that our relationships to each other matter, we are dependent and interdependent upon one another, the most vulnerable people impacted by a decision or choice should have the loudest voice.

An ethics of care is also always interested in the context: what situational details, what power dynamics, what pre-existing relationships might get in the way of making the most ethical possible choice?

Five Key Elements of Care

Attentiveness

- Recognizes a need.
- Considers position and power.

Responsibility

- Accepts responsibility for the need, beyond duty.
- Not obligation.

Competence

- Ensures the care work is done well.
- Ensures the need is met.

Responsiveness

- How does the carer react to feedback?
- Is the recipient allowed to say no?

Trust

- "Oil for the cogs."
- Complicated by systems of power and hierarchy.

Consider a student experiencing heightened anxiety with the return to campus:

Attentiveness:

- Notice the anxiety and determine your capacity to help, acknowledge power dynamics at play.

Responsibility:

- Does the institution accept responsibility for accommodating this student?

Competence:

- Can the need be met within the parameters of existing course policies?

Responsiveness:

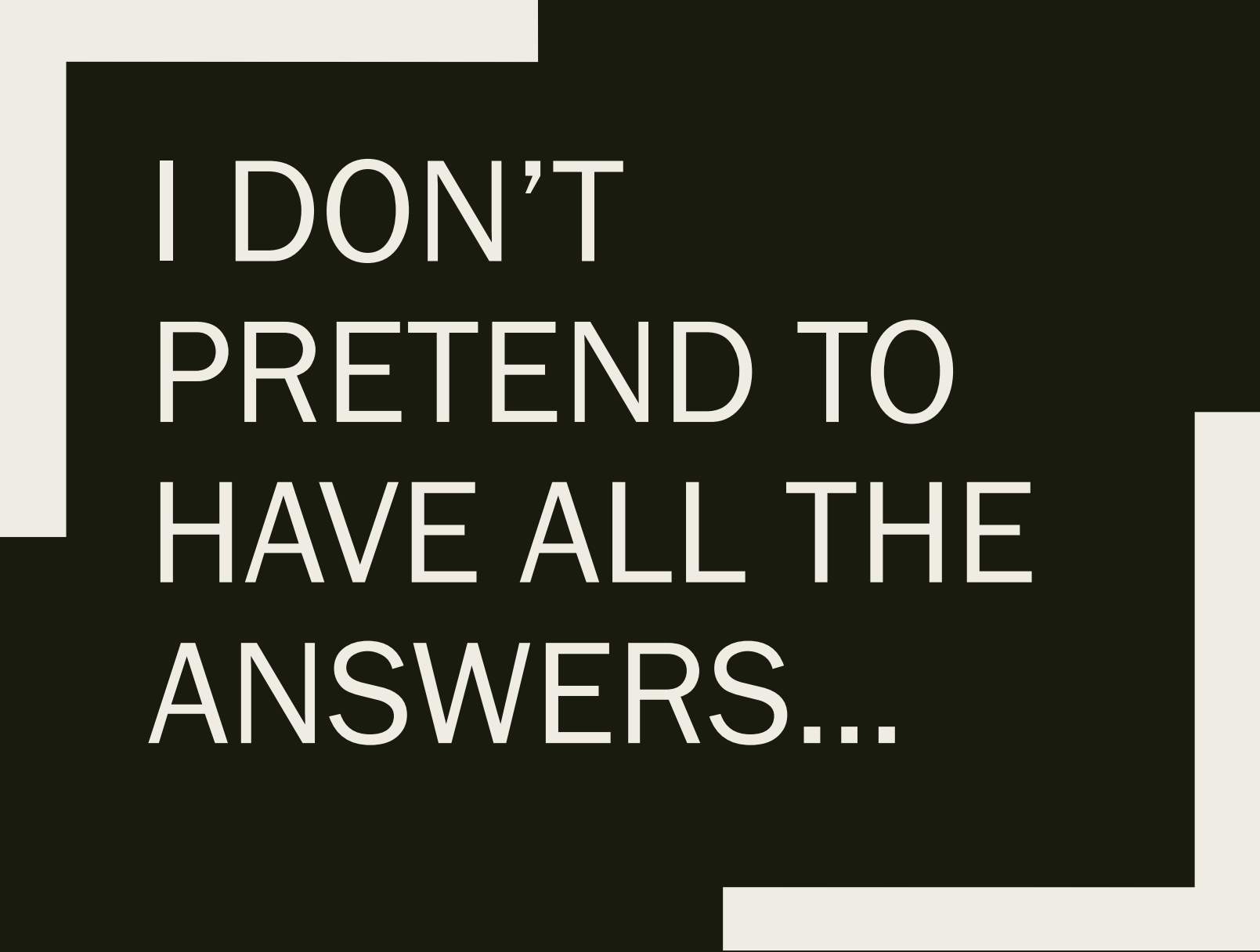
- How will you check in with the student about their needs, and how much more accommodation is possible?

Trust:

- Where do/should students place their trust?

Questions to Consider:

- Are considerations of care made at the level of individual instructors, department/faculty, or institution?
 - Consider equity and labour concerns.
- How can the institution support an ethic of care? What structural supports can make this work sustainable?
- To return to the Tricky Truth About Care, how do we render care *systemic* and *sustainable*?



I DON'T
PRETEND TO
HAVE ALL THE
ANSWERS...

... but I know it *starts*
with care being
centred in policy
processes and with
the labour of care
being recognized and
valued.

I'm honoured to have
this conversation with
people who know both
the costs and the
criticality of care.

As caring professionals
training the next
generation of human
service workers, you
know better than
anyone the value of
care, and the
importance of making
care sustainable.

I hope we can continue
this conversation in the
question period.



Thank you for
making time
and space
for me today.

Please feel
welcome to follow
up by email:

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