

Bayani Ep. 6 – Social Work Practicum

Co-ordinator, Bayani Trinidad BA, BSW, RSW

Brad Fraser 00:00

Hello and welcome to the Social Work Beginnings podcast. Social Work Beginnings is a student hosted podcast engaging with instructors, agencies and members of the Social Work community in Canada. As we strive to learn to become effective social workers at the beginning of our careers, we seek to amplify the ongoing work to advance social justice in Canada within social work. This podcast was born out of a desire to equitably increase the accessibility of opportunity to learn outside the classroom about our diverse field. Today, our guest is Bayani Trinidad. Bayani sat down with us in early 2023 and we're delighted to finally work through our backlog of editing here on the podcast to release this episode to each of you. Bayani currently resides in Treaty Six Territory in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. His ancestry and cultural roots originate from the Philippines, Spain and China. His passion for helping others has led him to his career in social work, which is cultivated by his lived experience, learning about cultures, communities and adding value to others. Currently, Bayani is the Practicum Placement Co-ordinator at the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina campus in Saskatoon and he's had this role since August of 2022. He has been working in the field of social work since 2015 in various areas and populations, including in mental health, community development, outreach, youth work, youth corrections, disability support, work, aging populations and seniors, newcomers and working alongside indigenous communities. Outside of his professional career, Bayani has passion for entrepreneurship, self-development, and breakin', also known as breakdancing. He uses dance as a way of healing, storytelling and connecting with others. Thanks for joining us today, Bayani.

Bayani Trinidad 01:48

Yeah, thanks for having me, Brad. It's a pleasure to be on here and heard a lot of great things about the social work podcast. So yeah, just extending my gratitude.

Brad Fraser 02:00

Yeah, you're very welcome. I know, a lot of students are right in the crunch of, many of them in their mini practicums here at the University of Regina, but then they're actually applying for their full practicum. And so practicum is something that you're very involved with.

02:15

Yeah, absolutely. So I can share a little bit about my role. I am the practicum placement coordinator here in the Saskatoon campus. I've been in the role for close to six months. So I started back in August of last year. And I took over for the last practicum placement coordinator. So Amy Kasner, she has worked with a couple of students already. So when she left, I kind of took over her like caseload and working with students who are going into practicum one and practicum two for the fall and the winter term. So it's really great, being back here with the faculty, I convoked with the faculty back in 2016. So it was when we were still at the the atrium building, so a couple of years back. So it's really

humbling and exciting to just be on the education side of things. So yeah, and it's been a pleasure. Just starting to work with students with the new term we're starting to wrap up with with fall and get those placement meetings like in. So yeah, it's busy but exciting times.

Brad Fraser 03:36

Absolutely. I think for a lot of students, they might not know, when you're having them register and apply to practicum. There's this whole process of recruiting the places and going through that field education piece. And then that matching, could you maybe expand on that a little bit for them?

Bayani Trinidad 03:53

Absolutely. Yeah, I was actually having a conversation with my counterpart, So shout out to Miranda Hoiland in Regina, and we were just like talking about the placement process. Like even as for me, as a coordinator, it can be a lot of information, a lot to digest, and a lot of moving parts so I can understand to where students are coming from and feeling with, you know, maybe some anxiety, lack of information, those kinds of things. So, as we're doing this whole process we do are in we provide information session to students in person, which is like a new thing that we're doing and online as well for a lot of the distance students. And in those information sessions, like there's always a lot of information to cover, especially for practicum ones. So we try to find this balance of like, you know, we don't want to overwhelm students, but we also want to provide as much information transparency and just make this process like really smooth so. What I find because it's such a big process, Miranda and I, we like to do kind of like check ins with students. So we will be sending a lot of emails just kind of like those monthly check ins to see kind of where students are at like, Hey, have you submitted your application? Have you booked your placement planning meeting? Do you have these documents, etc, etc. So right now, in February, we're in the process of doing those individual placement planning meetings where we get a real feel for like, okay, especially for practicum. One, it is your first one, where are you? Where are you hoping to get some experience, right? There's a lot of different opportunities with different agencies anywhere from, you know, working with children and youth shg, possibly corrections, mental health, community based organizations, so whole spectrum. And what I find too, you know, we're also on the back-end, we're, you know, sending surveys to agencies to see like, who can take on a student for fall. And there's a lot of moving pieces as well, where, you know, some agencies may be able to take on a student to during the winter term, but things shifts, things change, and they can take a student on for fall, whether it's their capacity, new staff, just many different things. So, in those cases, like, you know, in winter, we may have had, like a lot of other agencies, but come fall, it may have like decreased a little bit based on everyone's availability. And then so it's kind of like you're balancing like, two needs, right? The needs of the agencies, and then the needs of the students. So we're really also understanding as we do these placement meetings of just students as learning goals, their interests, their expectations, because, again, you know, if you're coming in new to a different environment, or a specific population or organization, sometimes you may have an expectation or an idea of what this placement can, like, look like. So we try to really unpack that during those placement meetings. And then also, you know, set up students for success, as they're going to do those interviews, whether it's like, resume cover letter, you know, workshops. We just had one on Friday, and then also like interview prep. So getting students to do that real like reflection piece of like, okay, what are my strengths? What are my skill sets? Where do I fall in terms of like the BSW competencies, right, anywhere from like, you know, navigating through community resources, how to

facilitate meetings, you know, communication, applying the things that folks they're learning in their courses, right, what kind of approach theory that you're comfortable with, that you have knowledge and that you can apply it field education, right. So there's a lot of different pieces. But I find it's always like to refer in our slides. It's like a complex dance, right. And so we're trying to balance the juggles and needs of, you know, students and agencies, and we're kind of those, like Miranda and I and like, and we're kind of the are kind of like the bridge of field education. So, yeah, that's my response to your question.

Brad Fraser 08:30

Yeah, thank you. I think, you know, having just gone through that placement last semester to now be in my practicum one right now, it's really neat to kind of see how all that work, leading up to now, makes it just that much, I don't know if I want to say simpler, but it just makes you have a better sense of preparedness going into that practicum opportunity. And so, when you talk about some of these workshops, and you talk about this placement, is there anything that you would maybe want to say to students is maybe a common question that comes up that, you know, students that are thinking about practicum, for maybe winter of next year? You know, they're not at that place yet, Is there something that you would remind those students way in advance to think about?

Bayani Trinidad 09:16

Great question, Brad, I would say, if you know, you're about to start your practicum one, right? And think, like, our timelines are pretty tight, because then in May, you're already if you're eligible, right, and you have the courses, you're about to apply for practicum two, I would say, and I wish I told myself this sooner when I was doing practicum is really like, be open to, you're like, you're gonna make mistakes, and that's normal as humans, right? As as future social workers, and you don't know what you don't know. And, like agencies, organizations will have different policies and expectations and some agencies like are really, like structured and they value having students like, you know, they've had students before. They want to invest into students, those kinds of things in some organizations. And this is not to label them, it's just they don't have the infrastructure to support students. And that there's only a certain number of agencies and organizations we can provide to students. But I would say any experience that you get that you will learn something, again, it takes that like, self assessment of like, okay, I'm put into a new environment. How am I going to learn in this environment? How am I going to seek support? How am I going to adapt to new situations that I've never been exposed to? When it comes to crisis? Or stress? How am I going to respond? How can I use some practices or principles in my courses, or even like in your own personal life experience that you can apply into your practicum. So I find like practicum will really grow you stretch, you challenge you and maybe test your own personal values as you're in the field. But again, it will like, you will experience that resistance in that stretch. But by the time you're done those four months, and with that deep reflection, you'll find, okay, like I can manage X amount of clients or like, I was put in this environment, and I learned ABCD. And then moving forward, as you go into your practicum, to whatever experience you got, you will have had key points that you can potentially draw in into your next practicum. So I know the first practicum is always kind of like, it's kind of like a guessing game like, Okay, how is this gonna go. But I think if you come into it, and maybe it's cliché to say, but I always like to, like, encourage, have like a growth mindset coming into it. Because if you are, and I had a really good conversation with my friend the other day about this is like, if you experienced resistance, and you're trying to fight that resistance, it's going to make it feel more uncomfortable and unsettling for yourself. But if there's a way you can, like

really embrace this resistance, because it's always like, and my mentor has shared this with me before, like, life's not happening to you, but for you. So there's a reason why these things are happening. Maybe something's coming up in practicum that make you grow and stretch, and come practicum to you've developed those whether those skills, those experiences, and then you can apply it in your future practice. And then, you know, as you're progressing through your career, and when you, you know, get that first job, right, you can also apply a lot of those things. And practicum. And I guess my last thoughts, field education is like, it is the time to make mistakes, and you're not going to be good the first time. And that is okay, because, you know, we're students, we're still learning. Right. So, yeah, when, um, a little bit of a tangent, but yeah, that would be like my, I guess suggestions perspective for for students.

Brad Fraser 13:17

Absolutely. And I appreciate Bayani how you're talking about, there's this opportunity to go into practicum, with a lot of classroom based skills that we've learned through the different courses that we've taken. But there's also this opportunity to see, what does it mean for us as student social workers to bring our ethic and value with us? And so no matter where we get placed, we're there. So we're bringing ourselves so what does that look like in the terms of who we're interacting with in terms of maybe service users we're connecting with our fellow colleagues, whether they're social workers or not? What does it mean to bring that ethic and value? And I, in my own experience, within practicum, so far, it's been lovely to see how I'm with some social workers. But there's also the different people that have completely different perspectives than we do. And so what does it look like to communicate? Hey, this is what we value, and why?

Bayani Trinidad 14:12

100%? Yeah, well said, Brad.

Brad Fraser 14:15

I think another thing I wanted to ask you about Bayani. When you're thinking about kind of that, for lack of a better way to put it matchmaking process behind the scenes, and you're connecting with students, I know often I hear as undergraduate studies representative for the Regina area students. There's a lot of questions around well, I really, really, really don't want to be placed in I don't know a specific area of social work. And so there's anxiety around that. My understanding of the processes is if that's the case, you are able to let you know that and you can talk not just about maybe the one area you're not interested in, but you can prioritize and layout, hey, these are the four or five things that could possibly be good fits. It's not a guarantee, but I think for students who's never been through the process before, it's not throwing a dart at a board blank. This is an actual matchmaking process that is taking students with specific interests and trying to match them to an agency.

Bayani Trinidad 15:13

Yeah, absolutely. I think the, that area of interest form really helps like there are, like a lot of different areas or populations that, you know, students can take interest in. I think having the ranking system does help, right, being able to rank one to five, and Miranda and I, we always have these conversations of like, you know, in the ideal world, we would love to give everyone their top choice. It's not that we don't want to, it's like, I think understanding the limits as well, I always like to use this reference,

because, you know, come practicum, too. I know, SHA is very, like popular. And see if you have you know, 50 students that want SHA but there's only maybe 10 at the time, you know, we can't guarantee everyone's top area of interests, but then that's where you can, you know, you can go back to your second choice, third choice, maybe even your fourth or fifth, right, ideally, those top three. And so, we really do our best to, you know, like find those top areas, and then, you know, go down to the lower like numbers. But the just the unfortunate thing is like not every placement is guaranteed, there was a story where I was like to reference it, like we had two students placed at this agency. And because the social worker on site had, you know, left to go to another position, and we Well, I only found out a few days before practicum. And so it was a lot of like scrambling and last minute calling. But I think the nice thing is that we will always have backup agencies. So you'll never not have a practicum placement, it may not be your exact area of interest, but at least you'll have somewhere to go to still learn and engage and complete your practicum. So it is yeah, it is quite the process. And then as I'm like looking at to like if you think of like case management, right, like there's Miranda and I have anywhere from like 100 to possibly 120 students per term as well. So we're really, you know, understanding like everyone's goals, needs, and then on top of the agency's, like goals and needs as well. So it's it's a bit of a balancing act. And you know, we don't always get it right either, right, we make mistakes. And, yeah, so hope that answers your question.

Brad Fraser 17:56

Ya no, for sure, I think you know, this practicum opportunity. You know, I before we shift gears a bit Bayni, I just want to kind of talk to the students and perhaps other people who have already completed their social work journeys with the BSW and they're thinking back to practicum, or maybe there's people listening that could become field educators, and that could actually help take on students and engage with people. There's like this set amount of hours, and I know you and I've, personally, I've talked about this outside of the podcast before, but a lot of students don't actually realize that that's a national certification that's happening. And so the practicum program, though, it's facilitated by the University of Regina, those requirements are actually set nationwide. Could you maybe expand on a little bit about how that works?

Bayani Trinidad 18:41

Absolutely. Yeah. So I remember we always bring that up in the information session. So thanks for that plug, Brad, but it's by CASWE, we it's like our Canadian National kind of governing board when it comes to field education. So when you look at other universities or programs, they follow those standards, whether it's those hours, policy, training, rules, ethics, it's all set by our national governing board. So in a way, like it's, it's to have a high standard, right. And so I think, having that as well, like in your back pocket, right, like the the caliber of practicum. Basically, the caliber of experience that you're getting is recognized by a Canadian National Board, which is, you know, pretty huge. Not other programs may have that and I think we were talking about that outside of the podcast before. So the fact that and I really like how you mentioned before, where it's like we get to learn about ethics and policy and research and you have that backed by a governing board and your courses where other programs may not have that so in a way it's like it's it's a really versatile program. It's a versatile association and governing board that like, you know, supports you in your learning. And in your, you know, future career as a social worker.

Brad Fraser 20:12

Yeah, absolutely. And I know in chatting with students, and I know you've had these conversations as well, sometimes there's that question of like, hey, like, there's a, there's a reading week, or a spring break coming up, but practicum goes straight through that. And so, you know, that's something that is entirely due to the fact that the minimum hours are set by CASWE, you know, and so when we're talking about how many hours do students need, obviously, that's the University of Regina sets up that, but there's a minimum requirement that set by that national body. And so I know with a lot of the students I talk to, they're like, hey, you know what, like, sometimes this is like taking me right to the edge of my capacity. So what does this look like? And so, you know, for my fellow students listening, this is an opportunity for us to, to advocate and continue to connect with these regulatory bodies that exist outside of the University of Regina across Canada, because they're the ones that set our standards. They're the ones that are setting kind of this minimum level. And so if there was to be reform, as I know, some students have asked about, for example, it wouldn't necessarily come directly from the University of Regina, it would come from collaborating with others. And, and why I mentioned that, and you and I've talked about this in the past Bayani, is this that social work, it's finding out that there's other people and other agencies or other jurisdictions that we need to connect with, and that we need to learn their experience? And then we build that advocacy piece? And what does that look like? And I think that's some of the really neat things I'm seeing come out of practicum. And and that of my peers, when we have our bi-weekly seminar, and there's that opportunity, hey, what do you doing in Seminar, but oh, well, hey, we're learning about what each other's placements are? And what are you doing there? And it's amazing the breadth and diversity of those placements, you touched on those different community organizations in different I guess, areas of social work. And in my seminar alone, there's just such a diversity of opportunity. And then the cool thing is, is we get to talk about it and learn from each other. So it's not just one person learning themselves in their practicum. It's coming back to each other and being like, Hey, this is what I'm learning. But what can you teach me about where you are? And there's that opportunity to get exposed to not just your agency? Because you're connecting with fellow peers?

Bayani Trinidad 20:13

Absolutely. No, that's a really good piece, Brad. And I remember, it was talking to an agency here in Saskatoon just doing an agency visit. And, you know, you nailed it on the head, there's that there's that community learning amongst students. And there's also that piece of like, networking as well. And being able to, like you said, get a feel for what other students are learning in their agencies like, hey, what, what is it like to work in that organization? What are their what are their own personal values? What has been maybe challenging you? What's like working? Well, you know, how is your your learning in that environment? Like those kinds of questions? So I really appreciate Yeah, the the seminar pieces like, I wish I could sit on in and just like be a sponge. But it sounds like it's a really great learning opportunity for students and finding commonalities as well. Like being in that role as a student and the similar learnings that everyone is experiencing whether you're in practicum, one, or practicum, two, so I'm really glad you brought that up.

Brad Fraser 23:37

Yeah, thank you. Bayani, you talked a little bit about you got your degree from the University of Regina. And so you were saying 2016 was the year?

Bayani Trinidad 23:48

Yeah, that's correct. So it convocated back in 2016. But prior to discovering of like, social work, I, I was just wrapping up my three year like, base, sociology degree. So at the time, I had no idea what social work was. Shout out to Aaron Cruz, a cousin of mine who introduced me to social work, and he's like, why don't you check out this program? It seems like it has more opportunities and more learnings and just more jobs. So I was like, okay, you know, really young student at the time and like, early 20s, and kind of had an idea of where I wanted my life to go, but still figuring things out as a as a young, young adult. And so I think I attended an information session and found out social work is such a cool, but broad, but it can be specific field depending where you want to end up in. And I think the beautiful thing I really appreciate about social work is we're helping in different capacity. Cities, whether it's from a micro macro, mezzo kind of level, write anywhere from like, you're doing research and you're getting stats on a specific social issue that could lead to a bigger impact to individual counseling. When it comes to mental health, or a lot of different other things that clients are struggling with, or, you know, you're you're referring a service or as a program to a client or something along those lines. So I think it's just nice that someone with different strengths, and skills and competencies, it's like, once you really hone in on that you can really apply yourself in the field in so many different ways. And you have fast amount of choices where you want to go with social work. But anyways, yeah, so I went through the program, my mini practicum, I did it at Crocus Co-operative. Oh, sorry, my mini practicum. I did it at Cosmo industries. And yeah, I'll be super honest and vulnerable. I, I was terrified, I had no idea how to support folks with disabilities because they didn't have that experience. And to be honest, I don't think it was a I don't know if they had the area of interest form before, but I don't think it was a top choice. However, what I did learn in that experience was like, how to be a really great communicator, how to learn more about just that, the disabilities sector, and how to build relationships and like how to, you know, have compassion and empathy. But it did really stretch me because I was like, again, we don't know what we don't know. And when we don't know what we don't know, there can be fear wrapped around that. And so, yeah, I was just like a young student who was like, terrified, I have no idea what I'm doing. When this is a part of the process, I have to go through practicum. And so I just kind of went into it just okay, I'm just going to be a sponge, I know, I'm gonna make mistakes. And so just kind of expose myself like filleted myself open, but to learning and making those mistakes and learning to ask for help. I think, at the time, I wish my mindset was like I learned to ask more questions at the time. But again, there was that that fear and anxiety behind going into practicum. So that's why to I feel like I can relate with some students who are going through that process of like just not knowing, or the anxiety behind, not knowing about a specific agency or like a field like that. That's real, like, you know, I recognize that. But it did grow me. And then fast forward to practicum two, I did it at Crocus Co-operative. So it's a small agency, and here in Saskatoon supports adults with different mental health and illnesses. And so it's a drop in program, they offer like a cafeteria, or program, different recreational kind of social programming, which is really cool. And, you know, big shout out to all the community based organizations that are Saskatoon, Regina, just all over Saskatchewan. And I think that's the real cool piece when you start to network and find out what everyone's doing. It's like, and maybe I'm like preaching to the choir, but everyone is making a difference in some kind of way. And there's just so many needs, in social work and in the community that need to be addressed. But I think everyone is doing their part in some kind of way. And so when I started networking more, I was like, Wow, this organization does this. I had no idea for this organization, did this sporting, like these kinds of folks are

having these services. So anyways, I'm kind of digressing. But yeah, practicum made me grow. It challenged me, it got me to get out of my comfort zone, learn to be a better communicator and still learning to this day and like seeking perspectives of you know, students and clients. And then fast forward a year convocated in 2016. And one of my first positions is that testing Open Door society. So working with a lot of newcomers, immigrants, refugees, that's has a special place in my heart because my parents were once you know, refugees, like leaving war from their country. So just a bit of background of that they are working in Kuwait, but at the time in the 90s. There was a war going around so they had to go back to Philippines and then find a way to come back to Thailand. Canada to establish a new life for their family. But anyway, so that that field in that area just has a special place in my heart because there's a lot of amazing stories, the the trauma resilience that folks go through families, individuals, and I worked in the school, so I was supporting a lot of students who are like new to Canada and just understanding our system, understanding cultural norms, values, things like that. And so yeah, that's, I guess, one piece of like, my career and then I've worked in a lot of different other community based organizations, I won't go to too much detail but just shedding a little bit of light on them, like working with, you know, use use still a big passion in my heart. And then combining my other passion with breakdancing and the culture of hip hop, incorporating that in in a social work lens, and shout out to blueprint for life, which is organization based out of Ottawa, they've allowed me to work with them by doing like youth work through corrections and different rural and indigenous communities and reserves. So it's kind of having like that social work lens, through kind of a hip hop lens that kind of intertwine by providing youth workshops, through dance music, art, just expressive therapy, on top of having a really deep discussions on, you know, substance abuse, bullying, boundaries, those kinds of like, basic life, things that every young person should know. So, yeah, that's, that's a little bit of, you know, my, my career and just what I went through to school, and so yeah, if there are any students that pick my brain, about community based organizations, or youth work, or working in corrections, or anything, I'm always happy to help I always go by this, this term that I use, and that I got from hip hop, it's called each one teach one. And just basically, the concept of that is like, for me, like, as I'm learning through life, personal and professional, I just want to share that with with others. And I think we all learn through not just individually, but as a community.

Brad Fraser 32:17

So yeah, no, absolutely. Bayani. And I think, as I hear you talk about just kind of this journey that kind of took you between this like different area. You know, I think about first and foremost, you just mentioned this kind of like ability to blend an interest you already had within hip hop culture. The breakdancing, but then you're actually able to bring that into social work. Could you maybe expand on that?

Bayani Trinidad 32:46

Yeah, absolutely. So I'll give a shout out to, his name is Stephen, aka 'Bboy Buddha' Leafloor, he was this breakdancer that pursued his master's program and started his organization called blueprint for life that combines social work, and hip hop, and he wrote a master's, like a thesis paper on it. And I think if like, for me, anyways, it's just my perspective. So with working with youth, is that, you know, if there's a way we can communicate, not just through our words, whether it's like through storytelling, or art, and I think that's where like, I really love dance, music, like just the whole art piece of hip hop, it's another way to connect and build rapport with, with clients, with youth with community. And I know for me, as a

young person, I struggled like communicating and using my words, so I've come a long way. But if there's a way you can connect, not just through words, but you're still storytelling through sharing common interests, or culture, or foods or things like that. That's like, one of the biggest pieces in social work is how do we connect? How do we relate? What similar experiences do we have? And so I think the nice thing about like hip hop, and just that culture on its own, and what I've learned and gone through is like hip hop was birthed from oppression. And so a lot of it started out in the states in the South Bronx where a lot of young people of color were from African or like Latino descent. They were oppressed because poverty was happening. A lot of violence, gang violence, marginalization, racism, like all those things were happening. But because of a individual by the name of DJ Kool Herc, he was this DJ that provided this space where youth could express themselves through music and dance. So he would do this thing he had like those old school turntables, you would do the merry go round. And people could just have different color, different culture, it doesn't matter what is, you know, maybe happened to you in the past, you can be in this space and vibe, and enjoy and connect with each other, and celebrate through dance and culture, despite your differences, right. I think the really cool thing about hip hop and their own personal values, it's it's peace, love, unity, and having fun. And so I think what, what Bboy Buddha did, Stephen is like, he used those kinds of same values and incorporated into his social work practice. So, basically a bit of background, what blueprint would do is they would offer this kind of weak programming to youth, or the communities that we would go to whether it's youth correctional or a community or reserve, and it's, it's like a five day intensive programming, where we get to explore the different elements of hip hop, whether that's like music, rap, freestyle, DJing, dancing, beatboxing, photography, spoken word, all those elements. And it was a way to kind of have that building that rapport, and that relationship piece. And, you know, some use would be, you know, a little bit nervous, because they're like, oh, who are these strangers, but as you invest that time into youth, and saying, like, hey, like, you know, I've also gone through maybe some similar struggles that you have, like, come check out what we're doing. And then, you know, as we're building these relationships, and doing these programming, and you know, dancing, engaging in art, you're building that, that connection piece, and then to we can go a step further and have these, you know, not so easy conversations around. Yeah, like substance abuse, bullying, racism, a lot of those topics. And first, I think just what I know about like social work and combination of hip hop, is like, there's there's storytelling. And storytelling is so powerful, because we can relate to each other's stories, whether it's similar struggles, or similar successes. And I know there's that piece of like, ethics and policy in social work. And so I think that also helps guides our programming and how, you know, we go into communities and coming into it in a respectful way, as well. So there's, there's kind of like, I would say, there's elements from both social work and hip hop that can combine really well. And that can help with your practice and your approach when it comes to engaging with communities and clients. So like, I don't know, for any future, like social workers out there, if there is something you're really passionate about, maybe it's photography, or some kind of expressive outlet, or sports or, you know, any kind of skill you have, I think there is a way to connect it into your practice. And I guess, depending where you ended up in, right, in your job, but that's the one thing I was trying to find is like, How can I incorporate a passion of mine into my learning and into the social work field? And so, yeah, that's a little bit of a ramble. But yeah, I wanted to share my experiences on that.

Brad Fraser 38:39

Yeah, thanks Bayani, because I think when you were talking about how you were blending these different things together, and how it was an existing passion that you had, and then you talk through briefly the history of hip hop, and then what it looked like in terms of providing a space to, to resist that oppression. And you talked earlier about, pardon me practicum, right. And you also said that resistance word. And so there's this opportunity, I think within our own social locations to look at what makes us, us, but what does that look like within that paradigm of social work? So that when we do go into these spaces, we are thinking about the ethics, we are thinking about, hey, is there a way that I can maintain confidentiality and privacy? Is there competency here? What am I going to go in and do right? I myself not a competent, breakdancer, I'll leave that to you Bayani, but when we could, but I would love to connect with youth and be able to tell stories and and do things and I know one of the things that I do is I will connect with people over basketball and it's just it's such an opportunity just to be able to see that there's these things that we really enjoy. But those things are also bridges into relationship with other people. And that's a huge part of social work and what I was hearing you say about being able to connect with youth because if you're just there to say hey, Here's my 15 minute PowerPoint presentation on whatever subject, that's fine. But what are we giving youth and quite frankly, anyone we work with, to be able to find things outside of that. And so when we can participate together, you mentioned food, you mentioned these different cultural norms that you had to help people with. All of that is a huge part of I think that service to humanity piece within our ethics and values, because it's not just helping in terms of meeting a direct need, but it's coming alongside to participate in community. So it's more of a with. And so I think a lot Bayani a little bit about how, specifically, when you and I've talked, you've highlighted how there's this journey you've had within your own social location, incorporating these things that are important to you. And then you found that social work, gives you that not just a lens, but quite frankly, a foundation to stand really firmly on to then get to a place where you're moving things forward in a way that helps people with a lot of substance. Is there anything else that you would want to share with with people in terms of maybe they're at the beginning of their social work journey? Or maybe they're listening? And they're like, geez, yeah, I really need to figure out a way to take something that I'm creative with or artistic with, figure out a way to implement that. Is there any advice you'd want to share?

Bayani Trinidad 41:31

Yeah, that's, that's a great question, Brad. I would say, and I, Yeah, I would say that, I guess the number one thing is like, you're not, you're always going to be learning, there's always going to be something different you're exposed to, and you are going to make mistakes. But when I found like, I guess for myself, like if there is a passion, and I like how you said you brought up basketball, I think a lot of youth can relate to that. I think there are a lot of different services and programs we can offer. But I think looking at the humanity side first, how can we communicate? How can we connect? And how can we offer a safe space to people that we're supporting, because I think it's very easy to get caught up in the, you know, I want to, I want to provide this service, I want to impact this community this way. Or I want to have all these really amazing, fantastic ideas. But I think it and I wish I knew this sooner, but you know, better late than ever, but really understanding like, who are the folks that we're supporting, and connecting with, before having that idea or, or service that we're providing. And I think earlier on to, and again, it's better like late than ever, it's like understanding that trauma informed approach. I wish I knew that earlier on and practicum. But again, better late than ever. And then under also understanding, and I'm learning more about it, too, is just the idea of colonialism, and how it's

impacted nations, communities and individuals in various ways, and not just in the Canadian context, like if you look at that, through a world perspective, like colonialism has happened, like everywhere. And just just seeing the impacts and that has caused for people, whether it's Yeah, anywhere from like resources to, you know, taking away of culture, language, those those things. I think it's really important to consider basically, like the history and how things happened, especially for you know, marginalized groups. And yeah, I would just say, you know, also, like network too, if you have, like a really cool idea that you want to implement, whether it's in a program with an agency, I always like to seek perspective to have like, folks who've done something similar, right, so maybe another student, you're connecting with, like, Hey, I've always wanted to start this photography program. And I want to incorporate it with working with, we'll say, just like seniors, like offering like more programs and services to seniors, like, maybe chat with other photographers or connect with other folks who are working with seniors, and maybe they've done it already, or maybe they haven't, it can be like a gap that you'd like fill in. So really take the time to like, plan it with a good intention. And yeah, network. Have like, if you have one idea, another person could have the same idea, you can collaborate on it. And I find through networks and connections and groups, and maybe I don't know, maybe doing like a focus group, it really helps, because then you have that same vision and goal. And it's just like bringing together people and resources to also have, like more of an impact and a realistic impact to like, I think when I was doing programming, I wish I really understood the idea of like, specific goals or smart goals. Sorry. Right? And seem to if it is sustainable, if it's realistic, timely, measurable, those kind of things.

Brad Fraser 45:48

Yeah, it's interesting hearing us talk about the importance of connecting with the community, and thinking about not just your fellow social work students and the different people that might be providing these services, but who are the the people that we're actually trying to connect with, and something that came to mind as you were talking biani, about what it means to like, think about that humanity. And the impact of colonization, not just here in Canada, but in other countries as well, is that there's that stigma associated with social work for some people. And so, you know, it's, it can be very important to not just kind of start out with, Hey, my name is Brad, I'm your social worker, because automatically that can create a power dynamic. And it essentially reinforces this type of relationship, that may or may not be what we're intending to communicate. And so what does it look like to enter into relationship with the people that we're connecting with those communities understand that they know themselves best, and that we may have access to resources, or we may have skills or different things that we can do to help them with, but making sure that we think about it in terms of how do we allow it to be person centered, so they're coming to either to us, or they're telling us, like you said, maybe in a focus group or otherwise, this is what we have, as a need, these are the needs that we're having. And I think moving into those areas of hey, I'm Brad, I like shooting hoops, right? That's a important place to start. I'm Brad, I like working alongside you. Right? And I think those are the things that if we really think about that, perhaps a unique opportunity of social work is to have that like professional regulated, registered social work level, to say, I am committed to advocate for change, I am committed to serve you, but not just serve you individually, like you touched on earlier Bayani, being way beyond micro, but that opportunity to serve people in terms of their entire community, and hopefully, a community that you're actually able to be a part of, rather than kind of a commuting social worker, though, that's not always doable. There's that opportunity, I think, through art, through creativity, you mentioned dance, to

actually enter into communities. And I think a far more respectful way. I don't know if that triggers any thoughts for you, but I'll leave that there.

Bayani Trinidad 48:17

Ya know, you brought up a lot of really great points, Brad, even just our labels, right? Like looking at history, right? As social workers that can be potentially triggering or harming to folks. So even just the language that we use, right, going into communities or engaging with folks, and just like, I don't know, finding this, I guess, like common ground, on that human human piece of just like, I'm just like a human, just like you, not any better, right? And finding that humility, when we're engaging with clients, and, and community. So I really like what you said, of just like, hey, and Brad, like to play basketball, right? Or these are some of my interests. And finding those ways to connect, it always comes back to the that connection piece first, and acknowledging I like what you said to you about being person centered approach. And, again, it can be easy to forget about that. And just focus on, you know, the service or like, you know, our, our own, like professional agenda that we have to provide within this organization. Right. It's it's that human piece, that person centered approach and knowing who we're engaging in. So yeah, you touched on a lot of really great points.

Brad Fraser 49:40

Yeah, the only other thing I was thinking about Bayani, before we close here, is that you and I've talked in the past about, I guess I called it critical hope, I forget if those are the words you used as well, but just this desire to create empathy. And one of the things that I've seen, fellow practicum students talk about is sometimes you're going into a practicum. And you're new, you're a student, you've kind of got that energy of like, yes, I want to help people, but you're going to enter into it. And you might be entering into a place where there's a lot of weight that's been carried for a very long time. And so your new energy might be a little incongruent with some of what others are carrying. And so you've talked about how you found a way to incorporate your social location, you've found ways to incorporate the values, you talked about the refugee experience your parents went through. Could you maybe give us a closing thought on what it looks like to remember that, as social workers, when we expand beyond, like you said, just like the kind of point A to point B service delivery, how we can bring that critical hope and perhaps critical empathy, not just to, perhaps the service users, but to our peers and colleagues as well?

Bayani Trinidad 50:58

Yeah, that's a great point. Great question, Brad. I think tying it back to the pieces, especially if you're, you know, very new, and you're coming into this field of practicum. And I think having that excited, hopeful, kind of, I like how you said critical hope, or critical thinking kind of like energy and bringing to that. I think also acknowledging this like piece of like, yeah, combat compassion, fatigue, it's, it's a real thing. Like, I think it's great that we can have this energy and kind of fire within us to help change the world, change folks, change systems, potentially disrupt systems. But because of our work, you know, we're in people sector, and there's emotions, and there's feelings and things that are going to happen. So it's also like, how can we as like, I always go back to the analogy is like, whenever I'm going into this work, I always want to make sure, and it's, and it's not perfect every time like we're human, is our cup needs to be full. And how does that look like? And then when you touch on, and I appreciate, like in all the courses where they're always like self care, self-care, what does self-care look like for you? Right?

Having that piece as well as like, as you're going through this difficult work, and supporting folks and knowing that there's going to be limits to what we can do, or services that we can provide, whether it's within the agency itself, whether it's within the community, whether, you know, there's only a certain number of resources or staff, or people to go around to support like, I think keeping that in mind, and sorry, I'm kind of drawing on a blank. What was the question again?

Brad Fraser 52:54

Well just if there's anything else you think in terms of bringing that critical hope, because you talked about that compassion fatigue. And I think when you're talking about this relationship that you build through field visits, and you're looking at practicum placements, there's this very real reality that you're taking very new students who are so excited to help, so excited to, you know, share their fire, that you may be entering into a place where there's some compassion fatigue. So what does it look like to not just be bringing that critical hope to the service users or clients or whoever it may be that you're working alongside, but to those peers and colleagues that are going to be teaching you. But you're also going to be holding on to that energy? That you're, cuz you're just that's why you're here. You talked about it, you want to help people? That's the common thread. We're all here because we want to help.

Bayani Trinidad 53:46

Okay, yes. Yeah, I think just adding on to that Brad is like, as a student, incoming new into field education, there is still kind of like those power imbalances, right? As a student, there are things with, you know, let's be real, there is going to be limits and only certain things that a student can do in field education. But what I've been hearing about, you know, some agencies is that there are agencies that like to, because they've been doing things for years, and what they've been doing is great, they also value and I won't say like, every agency is like this, but they will value new perspectives. So if students are coming in with that fire, and that like new energy and like, I think it's okay to ask questions of just like, hey, this is an idea that I have, could we incorporate this in our programs or service delivery? And then, you know, worst thing worst cases, they say no, but at least you you brought that out, or like, Hey, I noticed you have this specific policy. Have you ever thought of maybe shifting it or adapting it. They're changing it, or like I noticed, you know, you don't incorporate trauma informed, have you ever considered incorporating trauma informed into your practice or approach? So I think it's kind of like that balance of like, it's kind of like dancing. Like you're taking a step forward, you're like, hey, try this doesn't work. Okay, well take a step back. Okay, maybe we have this other idea and that allows both the organization in the community, the student, everyone, all the stakeholders to take two steps forward. Right. So I think there will be limits. And I think with anything, there's always going to be risks, there's always going to be a risk to trying something new. And then I think that's where it's like, understanding, okay, where are my personal values that, personally and professionally? How does it also match up with that organization? What are they thinking? What are their values? And where are they at? And can it can can they mix? Can they align, right? Can we collaborate together? Or are they very just, and again, I won't say any specific agencies, but some can be just stuck on their ways. And this is what they've been doing. And this is how they're gonna continue on. Right. So with any kind of change, there will be risks. With any kind of growth, there's going to be risks, but I think it's also okay to reinvent the wheel from time to time. And I think that's the beautiful thing of having new students with that new energy, new fresh perspective. And even for me, like I shout out all the students like I'm learning a lot from from y'all too, because when I went to school, it was different from when students

are going to school now. So it's really cool that both our field is constantly growing, their approaches, practices, it's starting to change and adapt as well. And I think to just throwing the technology piece like a lot more information is being passed around at a quicker rate. So in a way, we're all growing faster through our different resources, technology, even to be able to do this. Zoom, you know, web, podcasts, that view has been like a really cool opportunity, and even just getting to know you, Brad, I've learned a lot from you, as you know, a mature student like I think it goes back to again, the each one teach one piece, we can always learn from one another, whether you're a student, Prof, someone in the field, but it takes that openness and that that humility piece.

Brad Fraser 57:27

Yeah, absolutely. Well, thank you so much for joining us today Bayani. I think it's been a really awesome opportunity to not just hear about your perspectives in terms of your position as a practicum placement co-ordinator, but also as well looking beyond that into just what it's been like on this journey of social work. So thank you.

Bayani Trinidad 57:47

Absolutely, Brad. Yeah, thanks again. And I think yeah, it's been great just sharing ideas and hopefully the the conversations that we have can add value to a lot of students or anyone who's listening into this podcast. And you know, I give you a lot of props to for having this platform and inviting guests like myself and everyone else to just share their experiences share their stories, what they've learned in their professional career and personal life experiences to I think it's it's a huge value add so thank you so much for inviting me and I'm looking forward to hearing like other future episodes

Brad Fraser 58:28

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