CC5 Adolescent Voice

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**SPEAKERS**

Dorian Tellis, Heather Sattler, Gabriel Velez, Benjamin Linzy, Antonio Butler

**Benjamin Linzy** 00:00

You're listening to Marquette University's COVID Convos podcast. In each episode, representatives from Marquette's STEM and humanities communities will bring you insights into the pandemic that you may be missing. Marquette University is located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the traditional lands of Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, and Menominee peoples along the Southwest shores of Michigame, North America's largest system of freshwater lakes, where the Milwaukee, Menominee, and Kinnickinnick Rivers meet and the people of Wisconsin sovereign Anishinaabe, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Oneida and Mohican nations remain present.

**Gabriel Velez** 00:37

So we'd like to welcome you to today's podcast. My name is Gabriel Velez, and I'm an assistant professor in educational policy and leadership at Marquette. And to start this podcast, which is going to focus on youth and youth voices. I'd like to hand it over to one of our guests who will introduce himself in a second. But to further add on to the land recognition and honoring that you heard in the opening of the podcast. So Antonio, go ahead.

**Antonio Butler** 01:03

So I'm Antonio. I'd like to take this time to honor the fact that in Milwaukee we are based on traditional Potawatomi, Ho Chunk and Menominee lands. I'd also like to honor all the shores of the five Great Lakes where people of Wisconsin’s sovereign Anishinaabe, Ho Chunk, Menominee, Oneida, Mohican nations currently reside. We'd like to honor all of our ancestors who came from many lands unwillingly and willingly. And also to honor our elders, our teachers and everyone who is in the room with us today.

**Gabriel Velez** 01:36

Thank you Antonio. So today, I have three wonderful guests with me, Antonio, Dorian, and Heather, who will introduce themselves in one second. We're going to have a conversation really trying to center young people in a conversation about COVID-19, particularly in reference to sort of major developments that are going on now in society. One is the reopening of schools and colleges and universities. That is making sort of the headlines of newspapers every day. So we want to talk about how we can center and think about young people's perspective, which is often left out in that discourse. So with that, I'd like to introduce my three wonderful guests I have, but I'm going to let them sort of take over for that. You already heard from Antonio. So I might let Antonio go first introduce himself, and then we can have Dorian and Heather follow.

**Antonio Butler** 02:19

I'm Antonio. I am a 2017 graduate of Alliance High School. I've been doing restorative practices for about, I want to say five, four or five years at this point, and I am a restorative practice practitioner. Dorian is my work partner and we are currently in the process of really implementing this work across the city.

**Dorian Tellis** 02:42

Hello, my name is Dorian. Like Antonio said, Antonio is my work partner. I've been practicing restorative practices for about four years. I'm also a graduate of Alliance. I graduated in 2018. I would say the goal of what me and Antonio do is to be able to push the work forward. We're starting to do that with a model that we've created for our city.

**Heather Sattler** 03:04

My name is Heather. I'm actually starting ,which I can't believe, my 25th year of teaching in the Milwaukee Public Schools. And this is my ninth year at the Alliance School and I teach restorative practice. I collaborate with my current and former students and work partner Sharon Lerman, to teach people the work people from the local, national and international communities and so grateful to be collaborating with Dorian and Antonio to implement the model that we have been cultivating for the last several years so that we can bring the work of restorative practices to our city and really transform how we think about justice and healing.

**Gabriel Velez** 03:46

My own work and I should have mentioned a little bit in the beginning, but my research sort of involves how we can get at youth voice, particularly from a developmental perspective. And so I identify as a developmental psychologist, and they do a lot of research with community engaged, and then also sort of research through surveys and other types of data collection to try and understand what young people are thinking and what they're going through as they develop, and they grow into themselves, and they grow into adult members of society. And so with that in mind, I think we have this great sort of mix of voices. I'm really excited that Dorian and Antonio, you've come to join us. And you're gonna be able to offer this perspective, as young people and as young people involved in this work in the community and working with other young people and other folks of all ages, and then Heather with your real depth of experience as an educator, because I think these are conversations that need to happen across these different realms, and are not necessarily happening that way right now. And so with that in mind, a topic and theme that we want to really delve into is this idea of schools and colleges and universities reopening. And so as I mentioned, you know, every day there's a headline, whether it be about a school system releasing its policy or a college or university submitting it sort of detailed maybe 200-page plan on what it's going to look like. And then there's often conversations about the teachers unions and how the parents are feeling and, and so what I kind of want to open up for discussion today, What are your thoughts and feelings about the youth place in that both in terms of how to give more of a voice to the youth perspective, but also about what young people are thinking and feeling and might be going through with this idea in mind of upcoming new school year?

**Dorian Tellis** 05:14

Well, I could go. Honestly, I think I can understand how parents feel about being at home with these children and how it can be overwhelming. I think that sometimes we forget how much time that we truly spent, like how much time that we actually get to spend away from each other versus really being around each other. I think that can be a little bit overwhelming. And I think that it's also very tough for parents, because as someone that isn't off but watching my sister, as an entrepreneur, I have to try and rearrange her schedule, so that she can accommodate these online classes. It can be a little bit overwhelming and then I think it's also tough to think like “Dang, you’ve taken somebody's tax dollars for school, but they don't get that opportunity.” And also, I think just for educators, in general, for me, somebody that spends a lot of time at their own high school, volunteering and giving back to students, I think that it's hard to measure what that student engagement is gonna look like. I mean, of course, on the collegiate level, you're paying hundreds of thousands of dollars, so you're going to sit in those classes. But I think that for high school students, or inner city students that may not have access to all of those things. It's a little bit tougher. And it's tough to ask a 14-year-old to be self-motivated to know you need to log off for this class at this time, and you need to be ready. I think that that's kind of a huge ask. And then especially for seniors, once you get to that space where you feel like I've made it to the mountaintop, I've done everything I'm supposed to do… I think that that's a huge ask, in general. And then even with the financial hardship that comes from the whole pandemic. I mean, these students the only time that they may get to eat is literally at school. So I think that there's a lot of things that go into it, besides students just literally being in close proximity to each other. It's, it's way deeper than that.

**Antonio Butler** 07:11

Yeah, I like where you left off. Being a part of a school community is very much so like deeper than just attending school. Like for a lot of students, they, their only space away like their, their school is their home away from home. And I can speak on that personally that being at school was really relaxing for me. Not, not in the sense that I came to school to relax, but it was just a way to escape some of the chaos from home. And just to get outside of my house, you know, other than going to school, there wasn't really much else that I did and that school, you know, I had my friends and my supporters. I had teachers there who really cared about me and just wanted to see me succeed. And I you know, being in that type of culture, specifically, you know, at Alliance was… it really helped cultivate the person that I that I am today: having a space where I could be responsible for me and take responsibility for my actions and really depend on myself in a way while also having other people there to support me. And then having friends there to, you know, root me on to really, you know, want to see me do greater things and having teachers there who also wanted to see the same thing for me noticing my potential, even when I didn't notice it myself. Just having that that type of culture really, you know, it helped me out a lot throughout the amount of time that that I was in high school and it's helped me develop into the person that I am now. And so I feel like reopening schools is kind of a touchy subject because there are a lot of guidelines. There's a lot of new framework as far as what it looks like to go to school safely. Quotation marks on “safely,” but um, I do feel like it's necessary for, for a lot of students to be able to learn in a space where it's person to person. There's person to person interaction there is you know, body language, there's tone of voice, there's facial expressions, and there's a lot of those things you can't get over an internet session. There's a lot of things that you can't really pick up on. You can't you know, as a teacher, I can only imagine what it's like for you to have to create an entire syllabus and run it off of Zoom meetings or run it off of Google meetings. And focus on whether or not your students are actually retaining any of this knowledge. Those things are like as a teacher, I feel like it's like second nature for you to be able to pick up on that in person, because that's, that's a part of your job. But for you to have to shift that all online it can be very difficult, and as Dorian said for 14-,15-, 16-, 17-year-old students to have to wake up every day and be self-motivated and want to learn over a computer screen have to take notes over a computer screen have to turn in assignments over a computer screen, it can be a bit taxing for younger people.

**Gabriel Velez** 10:03

Yeah, you know one thing that that what you're both describing and talking about makes you think of is in some of the research that I've been doing with trying to get the voices and perspectives of adolescence, I'm really struck by how often young people are talked about as a generation that just knows technology, that just understands it. And, you know, all they want to do is be on their phones or on their screens or their laptops. But I think what you both spoke to is the sense of maybe just being versed in that doesn't mean that you can translate your entire life in your entire schooling to a virtual format. And everything just worked out. Right. I mean, it's hard to focus or, you know, it's hard to read all the cues, or something I'm seeing in some of my research is people missing the little moments, right. They're missing the interactions in the hallways. They're missing, you know, the time at lunch with their friends or with other folks. They're missing, you know, talking to their teachers in a way that's not just content transfer on a virtual screen. Even though there are a generation that's accustomed to technology. It doesn't mean that It's okay, and that everything's the same just like that. And so yeah, I really appreciate some of that depth and thought in both of your perspectives. And it's great that you're talking about that teacher perspective, Antonio, because we also have with us a wonderful educator here. And so Heather, we'd love to hear some of your thoughts on this sort of question and topic as well.

**Heather Sattler** 11:16

It's such a big and multifaceted question. Because I always think about, you know, I love in the beginning, how you talked about, Gabe, who's sitting at the table. And when we think about making decisions that are going to impact our community, I always wonder and ask who's at the table? Who's, who is representing the community when the decisions are being made? I think it's complex. One thing I appreciated about Milwaukee Public Schools is them taking the time to really ask students, teachers, working with the community at large to look at what do people really want to do in terms of opening the school? What's really most important to them? Just looking at the data, and I'm sorry, I don't have all of the figures with me. But I know that more than half of the people who were asked in the survey expressed concern about health and well-being, and wanted to make sure that that was taken care of, and so that we could return to school when it would be a safe enough for us to do that. I guess that's important, too. But the reality is that the connection that happens in the context of the classroom is magic. The relationship that every year, I need a new group of young people in each of my classes, and I'm certain that we're supposed to learn something important from each other. And by the end of the year that emerges. It's really difficult. I was back in my classroom to clear out my things at the end of last school year and I just went back to school yesterday to help with handing out laptops to new freshmen and I got really emotional. Because I think there's something so special about being in the space of the classroom with young people. I guess what I want to say is when we think about doing this online learning work that we are all doing right now, I think what's really important to me is collaborating with my students, as I always do, to find what is the best way forward for them. You know, we every year we talk about what we're going to do in a my restorative practice class where the students have experience in the work and they're coming back as seniors, we develop the class together, and they really set the trajectory for the work. And then the junior class where the students are beginning to learn the work, they also create and develop their projects. And so now more than ever, I'm going to continue to do what I've always do, and working in a way that I'm collaborating with my students to do work that matters to them. But now when we think about doing this online learning platform, it's really collaborating with my students to figure out what's really going to serve them best and how can we do this work in a way that really serves them and serves our community. And nobody really knows better than them.

**Gabriel Velez** 14:08

I think that's a great point, you know, and that's something that speaks to the whole discussion and discourse, which right now, maybe rightfully so. But it's focused on a policy level, right? We're seeing articles about what are school districts going to do. Should schools open to the close? But there's a question to have, you know, the ways that sort of on a micro level within classrooms, if it's virtual or within schools, that that can be worked, that can still center and put the youth perspective and voice there. So even if it has to be a public health decision to have a school be virtual, it doesn't mean that you can't lose that sort of having young people front and center and letting them sort of take charge of their learning and take charge of the community building. And you spoke a little bit that that Heather and Antonio or Dorian, I would love to hear any thoughts you might have to have ways that schools or classrooms could maybe function and work that could help in this virtual transition for schools that are going to be virtual to really hear and respect and, and put the youth in these positions of helping drive what this is going to look like.

**Dorian Tellis** 15:06

I'll be honest. I think that is going to be very tough. I feel like it almost is going to kind of allow teachers to be more creative in how they hear students. I think about my time as a student at Alliance, how little things are… how teachers kind of new posture, how you respond to questions, like they kind of knew if there was an issue or they knew if I needed help, or I needed assistance. So honestly, I think it's a really… it's really tough to sit with that. I think it's about making sure that we can create a space where students do feel like they can be heard, because I'll be honest with you, my niece is seven and she was crushed when she found out she couldn't go to school and it took for me to tell her, you know, these things are going on and those things are going on. But for someone that was seven to look me in the face and say what they didn't ask me what I wanted, they didn't ask me if I wanted to go to school, it was tough to, to kind of sit with that. Like, wow, like so early, you felt like your voice wasn't valued. So I kind of had to take a step back and let her know, “your voice is valued.” And you should use your voice when you're in school. when you're in class. You know, answering questions or just kind of being more responsive to kind of use that and sometimes things we can always deal with. So I think that the best thing that I would tell a student that is going to school, that might be frustrated that they are kind of doing everything online, I think is to use this use this moment, use this time to find ways to kind of speak up. Like I know on the collegiate level there were a lot of people that were like I can't believe that you're gonna take my money and tell me, you know, when everything was normal, or I guess you could say for lack of a better word normal, like, oh, there were too many people in this online class. You know, you gotta go in on campus to now everybody's online. I think that people should speak out about that. And I think there should be petitions, and I think that students should be writing the head or whoever and kind of making some noise. So that's probably pretty much the best advice that I could give honestly, just because it's easy for someone to tell one person to shut up. But when there's thousands of people, it's a lot tougher for you to tell somebody to shut up.

**Antonio Butler** 17:41

This. Yeah, this is kind of a difficult question for me. I know that if I was still in school, if I was in this situation where I know that this is the only way that uh, that I'm going to be able to, you know, pass my class, I really would depend on the on the teacher in that aspect. I would just see where the teacher wants to go with this, and really try to work with him or her on that on that type of situation and just let them know, you know where I am and where I stand on what's going on with the classes and, and how we're being taught and what we're learning and how we're learning it, it would be like, um, I gotta say that I'm blessed I'm not in this situation because it is a difficult it's a difficult topic to discuss about having, you know, having a student's voice heard in this in this particular time, where their education matters just as much as the knowledge that's supposed to be passed to them, like the way that they learn matters just as much as what they are learning. When you put everyone and you have no control over you put everyone in a cookie cutter situation where it's like, this is how we have to learn, you know, there's not a lot of leeway. It can be difficult for you know, for particular students and it could be even more difficult for teachers who have a certain way of teaching students. Yeah, it really is a difficult, like difficult topic and conversation to have is, is making sure that everyone's voices, the teachers, the students, staff members, you know, making sure everyone's voice is heard, and that everyone can be acknowledged in a way that is respectful.

**Heather Sattler** 19:17

We have to think about like, what's the purpose of education. I want my students to be creating with me. And so I think what's really important for our young people is to have an thinking about the work of restorative practices in particular, having a sense of who they are, and how they created the story about themselves both from the experience of working with their family of origin, but also based on their experiences by the various identities that they claim and how that experience has them. Seeing themselves and having experiences in the world and having them see other people and expanding experiences in terms of the way other people are treating them. And so I think it's really important in order to do that kind of work, you have to have a relationship with somebody so that there can be that kind of trust, right. And in the work of restorative practice, it's all about understanding the origin of the work, right? This lives within all of us. It lives in our DNA. Our ancestors sat in circle, and we think about circle is the heart of restorative practice. And we honor that this work comes to us from the elders in Canada, right from the Carcross Tagish, the Tlingit and the Hollow Water nations who gifted this work to us. And so we really honor that. In learning this work, we learn to listen deeply to ourselves and each other, right. And we learn that we are part of a larger system that overvalues and undervalues people based on various identities. When we think about education, I always like to think about what's the purpose of education, and where are we going at the end of the school year and I always tell my students to, to look at something with a critical eye and question wherever you comes from we talk about, like, the person who's creating the story is the person who really has the power, right. And so we start with that story about ourselves. And I always tell my students, the story you have about yourself is the most powerful story of all. And so I think there's a question here is, what's our story about education? What's its purpose? Because as I'm looking at this year, I'm thinking about, you know, as always, who do I imagine or envision or hope my students will be and know and think about and potentially do as a result of this work together? But I want to invite them into that process. And so I think, as teachers, as a teacher, as I look at this school year, I'm looking at this year, like I always do in terms of redesigning the classes that I've been teaching, thinking about collaborating with my students, but the question is, is how? Right? It's the various formats and Antonio, I love what you said. It's the how, as well as the what, right? And so I think this is where we have to keep trying We have to keep collaborating together. There's a lot of like, like online platforms, I'm really fortunate to be part of a really powerful online program at Alverno College, it's a doctoral program and transformational leadership and education. And it is a transformational program. And because there's some really good modeling in that I feel comfortable and drawing from some of those platforms that have been used in that program. But I think here's the bottom line. It's about looking at the big design. And the question that we're asking, it's about looking at collaboration. And it's about being flexible about what works and what doesn't work just like in the classroom. So I think that good teaching, it can translate to a digital format, but it requires practice and will and if young people are getting lost, which happens, it's about how do you connect with people's families, you know, I'm prepared to get in my van and like, kind of wave to people out the window and be like, “Hey, what's going on? Where are you?” So I think it's about that willingness in that relationship in that connection to come to the online space, because a lot of my students have expressed they don't like the online format. And during an Antonio and I have talked about that, but one thing I think we found, and then I'm going to be quiet, is that the virtual circle space can be a very powerful and intimate space. And that is something that surprised me greatly. And I certainly thought it would never be the case. But I am very heartened to say that it's possible and so that gives me hope that we can build on that to do the work in school as well.

**Dorian Tellis** 23:39

I think that one thing one thing I will pose to you though, Heather, think about all of the first year teachers. I mean, think about it. You’re seasoned. You are an O.G. teacher. You've been around the block, up the valley, through the woods, like through the woods. You've done all of that. Just imagine this first year teacher that's got all of her handouts. And I'm going to do this on the first day. And we're going to do that and I've got all my wipes and tissues. And I like good. Are you going to work from home? Like that's defeating? I mean, I definitely really appreciate your optimistic outlook. It's something that I really love about you. But I'm, I'm thinking, if I was to put myself in the shoes of a first year teacher, I would be crushed. What am I supposed to do? How is this supposed to work? What is my curriculum supposed to look like? And then for me, personally, as a learner, this would kill me. The idea that I have to log on every day and look at a computer screen would kill me. I can't I like to physically hold papers. I like to read through my text was I those were some of the things that I really hated on the collegiate level. Oh, I'm gonna email you this handout. Like, no, I want the paper. I'm paying thousands of dollars, please give me a piece of paper. So I think that that's tough. And then I'm thinking about like smaller children. My nephew is getting ready to go to school. That's a huge responsibility that you just put on a parent. Because now we got to go over the ABCs and the flashcards and the color just and then just in general like parents want freedom. I don't care what nobody mama say. You'll be happy to watch your kids go away. You would be like, Lord, please! Auntie, cousin, somebody come take this baby! I'm just imagining how depressing that he could be for a parent. I mean, of course nothing wrong. Everybody loves their baby. You love your kid. But how overwhelming could that really be that you feel like you can't escape or just get 30 seconds to breathe. And now you're gonna give me something else to work on. Oh, I lost my job. And now I need you to teach your kid how to do this. And looking for a job is a job in itself. I think that I just felt like that was something I needed to be seen.

**Gabriel Velez** 26:00

Thank you for sharing that. I think that's a great point, a couple things that are really coming out of that, to me I'm thinking of one is with that last point you're making, even for older kids, right? When the parents have to take on more oversight in their education, I mean, kids then know that right? Kids are not, you know, immune to understanding that all of a sudden, my parents got to be more present has got to be on me, or, you know, they're dealing with their own struggles. And now I got to be sort of asking them to help educate me. Right. And so that's, you know, that's kind of a thing that's affecting entirely whole families. And then your other point, too, is a great way to think about, you know, all the folks out there that are going to be in a transition or new. One of the things I'm seeing in some of the the voices I’m getting of young people who were either in their freshman year of high school or looking ahead to transitioning into college, is how scary that new experience is going to be without sort of the set structures in place where they know like they can meet people or they can learn about what college life is like or, you know, they're entering new educational phases and that's hard to do as a young person, right? I, I was terrified when I entered freshman year of high school. I remember I can remember sitting there by myself in the cafeteria, you know, frightened beyond all, you know, ever would have ever been before. But you know, people are that's something that young people are going to be experiencing and going through, and it's tough. And then you brought up the wonderful perspective, I think of the teacher as well where you know, newer teachers who aren't maybe a seasoned to know how to sort of build relationships and work with their students and in different ways.

**Heather Sattler** 27:29

You know what Dorian? I'm so glad you said that. I'll be honest with you, I'm totally overwhelmed by this. And so what you're hearing is me on the verge of designing, translating this curriculum that I love and the work that I love, which I continue to evolve every year with my students into new space. So frankly, I'm totally overwhelmed by it. But for me, it's always about looking at like, what can we create together? And what are we what are we going to do and so on. My God, my love goes out to all the first year teachers. it's probably one of the most difficult and challenging times. And one of my beloved former students is brand new teacher this year, you know, and he's kind of going through the process of creating his online curriculum. And I feel and I feel for freshmen. My daughter is a junior at Rufus King High School, and she works with new students coming in to the program. And so, you know, she talked about being an online program and orientation. And we're going to be doing that at Alliance as well. I have a couple of students who are older students who are going to be facilitating program tomorrow with our freshmen or incoming freshmen. But Dorian, your points are so well taken. And I'm a single mom of three children. And so my children are all going to be doing online learning as well and they have theirs and also I have to support them in doing their teaching. So it's a lot for all of us. It is 100%. And I think one of the big things that I continue to think about and I keep saying, what are we going to create? Because what's really important to me and I is that my students are really well aware of who they are, and the well aware of the power that they hold within themselves, and have an understanding about the system and how things work. So that we can really look at like, what can we create, and what do we want to shift within the system to make things move. And so I'm choosing to look at this time as, as a generative time of incubation. And so I'm really thinking about that in terms of working with my students and supporting them and looking at like, what do you really need? Because I think there's a lot we have to spend some time in the spaces of our hearts, really feeling through how this time has impacted us because this is the time of great transformation, it's also a time of great chaos, it's a time of great shift, some really important transformation is happening. And so it's really important that we take time to attend to our hearts. That has to happen first, so we can build forward. And I think that's harder to do an online space. But Dorian, you’re right. I always tend to be very optimistic and see the bigger picture and then figure out how to build with the people with whom I'm working, namely my students. I don't think it's going to be easy, but I'm willing to keep pushing through because it's worth the work.

**Gabriel Velez** 30:37

Thank you, Heather, for sharing that. And we're gonna have to start wrapping up in a minute, but I did one last sort of through line and maybe Antonio or Dorian and you could speak to this, I did want to sort of bring up this idea that you're saying that we are in some ways in a moment, of great transformation and rupture of real opportunity. If we if we view this in a different light, I mean in one light, it's an extreme challenge and this is not to belittle the struggles and suffering that that many people are going through. But, but in terms of education, we also have an opportunity to say, hey, maybe the ways that we've been doing things, maybe the inertia, maybe the systems, we can change them, we can shift them, we can do something a little different. And one of the things that I love about the work that all of you doing with restorative practices, is I think, this perspective of sort of, that we can do things a little differently than we have been. And have you talked about the history of it, and being in all of us. And I think that is entirely true. It's not, you know, new and entirely out of nowhere. But as, as a society, the way we tend to traditionally do education, I think is very different. And in some ways, you know, there are a lot of problems with it. But then we are in this moment of transformation and rupture and restorative practices is all about building community and restoring people as people. And so you know, we're all going through something right now, whether we've lost a loved one, whether we've lost our job, whether we've just had to quarantine, we all need some sense of restoration in ourselves and in the community. So I think the work can really fit in with this conversation. So I just wanted to offer a space here at the end to Antonio or Dorian to maybe speak a little bit to the work you're doing or how you see sort of restorative practices fitting into this conversation.

**Antonio Butler** 32:11

I guess I'd have to say, you know, I do like how you were saying this is a chance and an opportunity for us to see that things can be done just a little different. And I see in Milwaukee in particular, I guess I'm trying to find a way to put this. It's a very segregated city to put it ,to be quite frank. It's, it's, you know, it's very separated. It's very divided. And there's like some sense of isolation. And so for me, being an outsider, you know, I moved here about 10 years ago from Mississippi. And, you know, being from Mississippi, southern hospitality is life, having that smile on your face. Even if you don't know this person, you're driving down the street past and you blow your horn, you wave your hand you like that's life. And then I'm into this new space where that's just not you know, that's that is not the deal here where I see that a lot of people are just guarded over their own personal lives. And it's not just neighborhood to neighborhood, it's like household to household. It just feels as if you know, people are very, very guarded and very defensive, very protective of, of who they are and what they stand for. And I feel as if restorative practices is a way where we can all sit in a space and be respected, to be looked at as a human being to be respected as another person with a story with a life with experiences and to really hold the stories of other people. I may not know who you are. You may live down the block from me, but now I know a lot more about you, you know, in this in this hour of sitting with each other than I would have learned over the next 10 years of us being neighbors. And so that's, you know, that's what I feel is so powerful about restorative practices is that it teaches empathy. Without it being the main subject without it being the main topic. It teaches you how to empathize with someone else through the stories you shared. And Dorian, if you want to, you know, if you want to branch off from there you can.

**Dorian Tellis** 34:14

I totally agree. For me whenever it comes to facilitating a circle, especially in these moments when I'm being able to create a space for people, I think it's the ability I think that a lot of people don't always want to admit, “Oh my god, spending this much time at home is overwhelming.” Or, you know, like, not being able to go out and do things that you're traditionally able to do is overwhelming. It's tough for me as I call myself the fun aunt. And not being able to take my niece all these different places and to have to stare her in the face and say like, “No, we can't go to bounce Milwaukee or we can’t go to the movies or I can't do this with you.” It can be tough. And I think with circle, or a sort of practices with me being able to kind of get those things out in share those things with other people means a lot, and then also, when other people are just able to share similar stories to me. So I think that there's, in this time, I think that our work is needed more than ever. And I think that also shows with the opportunity that we were using, being able to work with the Center of Self Sufficiency. So I definitely am super, super proud to say that I do this work just because I feel like is needed more than ever and not that he wasn't needed before. But going back to what Antonio said, that empathy, that empathy helps a lot because it can be tough. When you know, you might not have as much money as you're used to, and somebody might ask you to hold a couple dollars. So you might feel a little bit different and you can sit amongst them and hear their stories and hear what they're going through. So I totally agree.

**Gabriel Velez** 36:00

One of the things I heard from the both of you here and that is the sense of building connections amongst people right and it being true to their humanity and, and that's something I think we can do with young people in schools and we can bring this focus particularly right now in general in the work that you're all doing is, is definitely speaks to this, but in this particular moment into this question of schools reopening, it can have a particular salience I think.

**Heather Sattler** 36:22

And also this idea of inviting in you know, I think about the work of restorative practice understanding each other but also there's a lot of pain. When we see the world and other people through our pain, we act in a way that can be really hurtful to ourselves and to each other in in doing this work. It's really about supporting ourselves and each other and being connected with our pain and understanding what we really need, how to get what we really need. Figure out what we need to do to take care of ourselves and also recognize how our actions are impacting other people so that we can move forward in a way that's healing and generative for the relationship and it's not just about saying sorry, it's about doing sorry, as my beloved teacher, Yvette Murrell, who’s taught me that it’s really important to think about around this time too. And I think that when we're in crisis, we revert to sort of old ways of doing things that sort of have us in this loop. I think it's really important to be intentional. When we think about school, when we think about the justice system, really looking at how can we move forward in ways that are healing and having us coming back to ourselves and be connected to each other, versus being further isolated and separated, like, like Dorian, like Antonio was talking about initially. And that's why we're so grateful that during an Antonio, we received a grant for them to work at the Center for Self Sufficiency, in collaboration with the Office for Violence Prevention. And so our intention is, is we're collaborating with the district attorney's office with the justice system in Milwaukee and other partners. to really support people so that if there is an issue that happens during an Antonio can support the community through circle, they can receive referrals. And we've also worked with the library. And so there's many library spaces where in the future, we hope to open up so that people can gather in the space of the library. And they will have the opportunity to teach people this work in the community. So we really envision this work, living and inviting people to hold this within themselves and within their communities in a way that makes sense to them. So Dorian and Antonio are here kind of lighting a fire and creating a space for people to learn the work and hold it so that we can find ways to connect more deeply. Thank you, Heather for sharing that. And I love that phrasing, the lighting the fire. I think if that's something we can sort of use as a focus for driving how we think about young people right now let them like that fire. Let them kind of lead the way and take charge and initiative and I think the example that you're all providing with the work you do is a great It's a great example of that. So unfortunately, I think our conversation for now is going to have to come to an end, I always enjoy talking with the three of you. And I hope that those out there have enjoyed it as much as I think we have. I will encourage anyone who's listening to this to please feel free to reach out to me. And I know we'll have little bios and some information about some of the work that our guests are doing. So we really encourage you to sort of be in touch and to think about this. And, you know, for those of you who are out there doing the work, where you're putting young people at the table in front and center, and you know, thank you for that. And I think for all the young people out there who are going to be listening to this too. Thank you for your voices, your input and for lighting those buyers amongst the rest of us. Thank you all. Thank you, Antonio. Thank you, Dorian. Thank you, Heather. Thank you, it's an honor.

**Antonio Butler** 39:42

It was definitely an honor.

**Dorian Tellis**

Definitely. I can't wait to be back.

**Benjamin Linzy** 39:49

Thank you for listening to this episode of COVID Convos. You can learn more about this podcast and research being done at Marquette University by visiting the Research and Innovation website at marquette.edu You can reach the podcast via email at covidconvos@marquette.edu. Music for this episode is "Phase 2" by Xylo Ziko