

Tigress Osborn (TO): Hi, everyone! I am Tigress Osborn, I am NAAFA's Director of Community Outreach.

Welcome to our most recent installment of our 2020 NAAFA webinar series. For those of you who are joining us for the first time, NAAFA is the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance. We are a 51 year old fat rights organization that has- that does- that does work about improving fat people's lives and enhancing quality of life for fat people through civil rights work, through political work, through education, and through representation. We are super excited to have with us today, Gloria Lucas, from Nalgona Positivity Pride.

I just want to give you a couple of NAAFA notes before we get started with Gloria, so please bear with me. First, I will remind everyone that the reason we are able to make these webinars free is because of member contributions. If this is something that you support, please do, we, we understand what the world is like right now and how hard times are for many people in our community and in the other communities that we are in solidarity with. And we, so, we certainly recognize why giving can be hard at this time. But, if it is something you are able to do, and you support the work that NAAFA is doing, you can give through our website. And we will be launching our new website within the next few days. So, we're very excited about that. naafa.org. Darliene? Org? Yes. I always- it's sort of an inside joke with the Board that I always forget what our website is. My apologies. But you can go there and it will be in the captions of this video if you are watching it on YouTube. And one of our- my fellow board members will put the direct link to giving on our website into the chat for you in case you are interested. And you can also sign up at our website for membership to NAAFA and for our newsletter, which is a, which is also free information that comes out monthly from our Board. We do have some other pending webinars coming up this summer, our, our next one is coming up in July. You can find all of that information on our website. You

can follow us on Instagram at NAAFA Official, and you can find us on Face, on Facebook, under NAAFA as well.

So, I also want to just give a quick reminder to those of you who are NAAFA members and have been following this, that tomorrow, June 30, is the deadline for applications for new board members. So, if that's something that you've been thinking about and you're good at working to deadline, you still have some time to get that in and that application is available on our website as well. If you're watching this on YouTube, then by now we've probably chosen our new board members and you can learn all about them in our NAAFA, in our NAAFA newsletter.

So with no further ado, I would like to introduce you all to Gloria Lucas from Nalgona Positivity Pride. I first met Gloria at Palabras bookstore here in Phoenix, which is where I'm broadcasting from today.

And, Gloria was presenting that evening on the effects of colonialism on the legacy of eating disorders in community- in communities of color. I have- I was super fangirling because I had been following Gloria on Instagram, where she is a star of representation for Black and brown people in particular, Black and brown women and Femmes in particular, in the body positivity movement in the social media world. So, rather than reading you Gloria's entire biography, I'm going to let Gloria tell you a little bit about herself. And so, Gloria would you just give us the highlights of your bio please. The things that you most want people to know if this is their first time meeting you.

Gloria Lucas (GL): Okay, so, hi everyone. Thank you for tuning in and willing to hear me out. So, I currently live in Orange County, Santa Ana, California. And I've been based here all my life. Born and raised in Southern California. And I started doing this line of work, particularly with, with body justice and eating disorder advocacy, in about six years ago, and I started organizing around feminist issues, more geared towards women of

color when I was 17. So, that's a little bit of my background ranging from sexual health education to HIV to working with youth to now running Nalgona Positivity Pride, which is my organization that focuses on centering the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, people of color who struggle with eating disorders. So, I identify as Chicana. I identify as Mexican with indigenous descent, and I am a small fat. I am- I have light skin, I have that privilege. I am cisgender, I'm hetero-terrible, as I say, and I'm able bodied and struggle with chronic illness. So, those are a little bit of my privileges and where I am coming from.

TO: Thank you. And I think I forgot to say in my intro, my pronouns are she/her, and I'm sorry if I missed you saying that. Gloria, that's you too, right?

GL: Yes.

TO: Thank you. Okay, so let's start here. What is a "nalgona" and why did you choose that for the name of your movement?

GL: So, "nalgona" is slang term for a woman with a big behind or big butt. And how that came to be was actually my friend, Darby- we used to work together- and they said, one day I don't remember what we were talking about how I came up, but, they just said, "Oh, it's because we're nalgona positive." And I started laughing and I said, "That is so cute!" And, during that time, I was just starting with discussions on body image and eating disorders and I just said, "Well, that's what I'm going to call it. I'm gonna name it that." Not realizing that it would become this, you know. And I probably would have gone with a different name. But, then maybe not. Because, it's been helpful to bring people to the conversations because it's- particularly for my community, because it's accessible and people kind of understand what it means and are like, more like, curious about it. Like what is this all about? So, I feel like it helps start conversations that might not have happened, or what would happen

otherwise. So, yeah that's the background information about how it came to be.

TO: So, you said when you started this, if you had imagined it would become this, you might have chosen a different name. What is the “this”, what is- What did you imagine it would be? And how is that different from what it has become?

GL: So, you know, like, I had been organizing different events and groups since I was 17 and nothing really took off or hit, you know, the country, you know. And now I have followers from around the world. Like, I've been able to travel and present on these subjects at different universities, internationally. And I was not expecting all of that, because everything I did back then was really, like, local, and only in that area versus all of a sudden I had universities contacting me wanting me to speak. You know, people wanting to interview me. I'm being featured in the- All these things that I just did not realize this would create such impact for people. So, this is what I do full time, as well.

TO: What- why do you think people were so thirsty for this?

GL: Because nobody was addressing it and, and particularly for people with my background. I am a woman of color. I'm a daughter of immigrants. I'm first generation here. And everybody behind closed doors is struggling with body, one body image issue or the other and so I- Everybody wanted it but nobody had the language for it. And, so, I think that's why, because everybody was struggling- is struggling.

TO: So do you- so, you know, as I said in the intro, NAAFA is, you know, a long-running fat rights organization and we use the word fat in our name and we claim the word fat. And one of the things that we hear a lot in Fat Community is dialogue around the difference between fat activism and body positivity. Tell me what body positivity means to you. Like, when you

hear that term, what does it mean to you? And where do you fit in or not fit in with that?

GL: So, for me, personally, body positivity has- was very helpful in my own journey. And in coming to terms and understanding of why I feel the way I feel about my body. And, so, ultimately the body positive movement is- came out of- from my understanding- from the fat positive community. And, so, for me, is- the body positive movement is about centering and celebrating the peoples whose bodies have become “othered”. However, the body positive movement has come to be mainly for folks who are more socially acceptable. Right? And, it's become heavily commercialized, co-opted. Co-opted by the weight-loss industry, beauty-wellness industry, and it has also made it a moral obligation that all people must feel confident in their bodies. Because if you're not then there's a problem, right?

TO: You're failing somehow.

GL: Right, right.

And the center has become beauty, rather than social justice, and it still prioritizes this Western view of health, of “you pull yourself by the bootstraps”. And it's like, you could be chubby. You could be fat. But once it becomes “unhealthy”, then you need to make changes. Right? So, there's like, you know, restrictions, and it maintains the status quo at the end of the day. Right? It's not welcoming of super fat folks, it has overlooked and ignored the contributions of fat Black women and neuro diverse folks, as well as genderqueer and the transgender community. And, so, I find that the body positivity might be a good first introduction. However, it's not shaking the systems in place that make it impossible to be safe in our bodies, but sprinkle a little bit of diversity in existing colonial white supremacist systems, and ideologies already in place. And so there's a lot of shortcomings when it comes to the body positive movement because again it's catered to white cisgender, able body, women, and the movement is

politically bland, really, and again ignore the work of fat Black women that have been doing this. So yeah.

TO: You- What does it mean to be politicized around body image? You said the movement is “politically bland”. What does it mean to be politicized around how you think about your own body?

GL: I think that it needs to push beyond Nike, including more plus size options. It needs to move past more fat models. It needs to be beyond, “I feel sexy in my underwear.” Right? It has to include, for instance- with everything going on right now, and that has been going on. Because it's nothing new. What we're watching in the news and what we're experiencing in our communities- is the defunding the police, defunding prisons, and actually going beyond the funding. Like, abolishing the police. Abolishing I.C.E. detention centers. Abolishing prisons. Because as long as these continue, Black, Indigenous, People of Color will never feel at peace in their bodies completely.

TO: So, I just want to, I just want to feel okay about my roles, Gloria. So, what does that have to do with abolishing the police?

GL: It has everything to do with that. I mean, it's something that actually I was talking about yesterday. Is how- just looking at the content within these last few weeks, last month, and how people are posting the same things.

I have not been in my body. And that's me being the light skinned Chicana. I can only imagine what Black folks are experiencing and have been experiencing. So, to me, right now, seeing the content about anti-dieting-

Right now we are in survival mode. I'm scared that my loved one might get killed by police. I'm scared that my loved one might get deported, or might be put inside these detention centers that are actually a lot worse than jail. Right? So, I just feel like there has to be a blend of looking at all of these

things as connect- they're connecting, but they're just not hitting the mark. I cannot have peace with food and with my body if I am profiled just by being me. Right? So, I don't know, I just feel like it just has to be deeper, like these conversations. And I see these pages continue to post anti-diet, you know, and fat positivity but have no analysis on race. And I just, I just feel like people can afford to not look into these things more closely because it doesn't primarily impact them. Right? But for us, like, it's every day, we're just like, what's going to happen next?

TO: Well, and part of what's challenging- I mean, I'll speak from my personal perspective as a, as a fat woman of color- and again, like you, like with light skinned privilege, with privilege around education, privilege in lots of other ways, but still as a fat woman of color part of what's challenging is that the inverse of what you're saying is also true. Right? So, on the one hand, I can't feel good about my body if I'm worried about being targeted by the police or I'm worried about my loved ones or people in my community and being targeted by the police. On the other hand, if I make it home safely from that traffic stop, and then I go to take a shower to relax and I hate myself when I look in the mirror-

It's like, it's that cycle, right? Because you're getting it from both sides. And that's, that's part of what, part of what keeps me motivated as an activist is having that political lens. So, that even on the days when I am, I, I'm experiencing being very much in my body but in my body in a much more negative way than I usually am. Right? Because the stress and the outside pressure and whatever, the worries about COVID and the way that it affects fat people, and- both medically and socially- and seeing the uptick in commercialized diet culture. Like you mentioned, you know, how commercial sometimes body positivity is and there are all of these diet industry forces that have taken up body positivity as a way to sell you their diets during this really difficult time. So, we're going through a pandemic and you feel bad- you could feel better if you did, you know like that. And when I feel like when all those things are coming at me, part of what helps

me is that political commitment that I have to fat rights and fat liberation means that it's more than just my feelings about my body. And you know, and it helps me think about how that movement and those, you know, the founding, the founding mothers and fathers and parents of this movement, were in solidarity with other social justice movements right- with disability rights activists with, you know, with LGBTQ activism and so you know, like you said with women of color often leading leading the charge in some ways. And, so, for me, that political connection is actually part of what reminds me how important the work is even when my personal experience is not feeling that great about my body. You know? So, it's sort of like two sides of the coin, right? Like, getting it from both sides. And you mentioned, you mentioned colonialism and as I said in the intro, like I first met you presenting about colonialism specifically. Tell me how you began to learn what colonialism was. Like, did you- Because most of us did not grow up hearing about that. Unless we are very lucky somewhere in our education, or have that one teacher, or that one like "angry mentor", whoever it is, right? We- a lot of us don't even- a lot of Americans are not even familiar with what that terminology means. So how did you encounter colonialism? And then, how did you start to make the connections between your understanding of that and your work around eating disorders and body image?

GL: So, this is a very heavy question to answer. And to make it- to simplify it- I think just being in activist circles allowed me to learn more about- First off, historical trauma and then I remember encountering the work of Dr. Joy DeGruy, who covers Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome, which talks about the effects of slavery in the Black community and its effects today, you know. And so all of these things came together and helped me connect the dots. Because, at that time, I wanted to know why I had developed an eating disorder. Because, I don't look like, what at that time, I felt was a person with an eating disorder. Now, I know it doesn't have a look, you know, but at the time I was like, "Why did I develop this? Like, I'm not skinny. I'm not thin. I'm not privileged. I don't have, you know, anorexia.

Like, why did I develop this? And that's, you know, hearing all, learning about historical trauma and colonialism, I just started putting the pieces together and started talking about it. And, you know, it's true because colonialism and colonization is- we don't talk about it enough. But yet, it's so potent, that it is part of every system and interaction we have. Right? So, it's in the air. We just can't separate it- we can't differentiate it all the time. That's how potent it is. And that's how colonization works. Where it becomes the dominant way at looking at things. And this reminds me of- you know I recently posted about Andres (inaudible), who was a young Salvadorian, young man, here in Los Angeles, in Gardena area. And, he got shot in the back, six times by police. They destroyed a lot of the cameras in the area and then removed and took some with them. And I made a post about it. A white man appeared in my comment section, saying all the reasons as to why police were justified for shooting this young man while he was running away. And so, what he said is, "You know, we must look at the facts and no one is above the law." And, you know, it made me think, "First of all, who created the laws in this country? It wasn't indigenous people. It wasn't black people. Who makes up police departments? And why were police departments even created? And why are Black and brown folks killed at disproportionate, higher rates than white folks? And what Kool-Aid have people been drinking that has removed their ability to humanize Black and brown people? Who taught them how to remove all sacredness of Black and brown youth?" So, colonialism and colonization, is part of- it's so embedded and tied to everything that people have completely lost touch to their own humanity, and the humanity of others. And, so, historical trauma, are really the chaotic coping skills, the chronic health issues, the psychological wear and tear, and the spiritual fragmentation that has been passed down over and over in generations. And it gets passed down, because, one, the environment that we live in makes it easier for historical trauma to be reproduced and to be psychologically injured over and over again, through learned behavior, and through the genetic link. Right? The study of epigenetics shows how trauma can pass on. And what's worse is that there's really no knowledge

about it, the acknowledgement and no force to create resources for those who are part of this diaspora, right? Of all this colonization that occurred. So, it just continues to get passed down, passed down. Conflicts, cumulative trauma, that stays within families and communities. And so, you know, let's take for instance, the impacts of (inaudible) brown children in detention centers. When brown children look at other children that look like them in these places where they spray chemicals that causes them to bleed. Right? Or, looking at the higher rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women, and not much is done about it, or the hyper sex- hyper sexualization of women of color, and hyper sexualizing people is really a means of dehumanizing them, right? Or, looking at gentrification- how communities of color are being pushed out of their own homes. The lack of resources in media that uplift brown and Black youth, and experiencing food insecurity at higher rates, toxic masculinity in the household and living with these fears of, one, you yourself being killed by police or someone you love, or your neighbor or whatnot. So, all these experiences, every day, impact what we think and feel when we look at ourselves in our body because these message messages are that we are- there's something wrong with us. That we're easily disposable, undesirable, unlovable, dirty, not human. And, so, that is why body image, and eating disorders, right, are not single lived issues, but connect to, you know, all these complex systems of oppression.

TO: But that's so much. That's so much. So, where do I start, if I'm new to this, if I'm somebody who's not from a community that has a lived experience of that historical trauma. And I want to be a better ally to those people. Or, if I am somebody who does have that lived experience, and it's overwhelming to me to think about five generations of trauma- like I'm just trying to get through this next meal. As somebody who has food challenges, or as somebody who has body image challenges, like, where do you start? Where did you start? When you see this big overwhelming picture you started to become politically aware, or more politically aware,

and you start to make all these connections like how do you parse it down a little bit so that it's manageable for you?

GL: I think where I started is-

There's a difference between you having the opportunity to learn about this later in life than to experience it once you're immediately after you're born. So, I think just recognizing that part. And, you know, when folks ask me this- because it is heavy- I consider it like a dirty closet that you just keep putting things in there and you know you've pushed, you have to push the door to close that closet. It's like, you have to let that all fall down, throw away what you don't need, and fix what you need in there. And how you can do that is becoming a good listener, really letting these ideas marinate, as I like to say. Really, unpacking and unlearning all of this on a very personal level.

And that takes time. It's like an onion, with the many layers, right, you have to remove and the closer you get to the core you cry. You know it's painful work. It sucks. And, but, the whole goal with all of this, particularly, if you come from a privileged (inaudible), is not for you to save us or to save others, but do less harm. And I feel like if we frame it that way it's just much more easier.

So, educating yourself. Looking at your bookshelf- I'm old school in that sense. I can read off screens, but, I mean, as you could tell. So, who is in your bookshelf? Are there any fat folks of color in there? Are there folks who from, that have disabilities? Are there folks with, who are immigrants? Who are you reading from? Who are you supporting?

Also, podcasts that you listen to. Podcasts are free! There's no excuse. Like, you could be washing the dishes or doing your thing, and listening to all these podcasts. And again, having these very difficult conversations with

family. And I know that's not easy, because families- they're a mess- but, you know, starting these conversations. So, it's a lifelong process.

TO: So, but how do I start the conversation? Like, do I just, sort of, you know, sit down at Sunday dinner and say, "Grandma, let's talk about how colonialism affected your body image." Like, how did, how would you start the conversation with somebody who's new to the conversation?

GL: Right, I mean, I would say again, the importance of educating oneself on the subjects. And then you could do that, if you want to, you know, you could start by small questions like, "Grandma, Mom, how did you come to terms with your own body image? How is your relationship with food growing up?" What has- I think about, like, what recipes in the family were passed down? Even starting with that, and kind of shifting like, why is our food is the way it is? And then, you know, there's- you could get creative with it. You could get Martha Stewart with how to start these conversations.

TO: And the food piece is one of the pieces that I've heard you talk before- about in terms of colonialism and its effects on how communities eat, how they ate historically, how they eat now. And, yes, I think that's actually, that's actually a really great entry point.

GL: And again, you know, in my family it's very difficult because there's a language barrier and generational barrier. And my parents were not born and raised here like my- None of my parents graduated middle school. So, you know, and that's not to say that they're not intelligent, you know, it's just these terms that are very U.S. versus where they come from, it's it's it's just very difficult to have these conversations and you just have to find the common ground and, you know, start off slow sometimes with them, and not give up.

TO: Yeah. And I find that that is, you know, one of the things that I love about your work is that I find that it is more accessible than than some

people who are you know hardcore about the politics of body image and body positivity, because sometimes I think we get into- and I probably have been guilty of this before myself- like, I think, sometimes we get into that mindset that we need to demonstrate our expertise even more than other people need to demonstrate theirs. And, so, we, particularly, I think for people of color, but, also, just as fat people, and as the experience of fatness being something that people outside of fat studies don't always take seriously academically- so we're trying to prove that academic foundation, or that academic worth, and we start using all this- what I was called grad school language. And sometimes we're leaving people, important people in our communities behind by doing that. Like, there's a time and a place for that super academic, you know, super academic talk and then there's some time to just say like "we're nalgon positive". You know, and like sometimes you say, "We need to talk about the systemic effects of historical trauma and white supremacy and colonialism," and sometimes you just say like, "Girl, we need to talk about these white people. We need to talk about these white people." And you're very good at doing both of those things, you know. And I think it's one of the, I think it's one of the things, reasons, that people really spark to your work. That they know your work is something that they can share with people in their communities, even if they are, you know, they're not the person who's going to read the 400 page annotated- like, they're not. So, I think that's, I think that's really, I think it's really important to keep that balance. And, do you agree with that? Do you see that in activist community about like the sometimes being inaccessible?

GL: Oh, hell yeah. Yeah, I have no college degree myself. You know, I just read. But, I just- it's something I have been really thinking about more recently is, you know, we're seeing more white folks, also light skinned people of color, and white people of color- which is another concept that I have kind of been learning- kind of wake up and want to start being in solidarity with folks. And, I think we need to get comfortable with the idea that, one, it's not going to be perfect, but you keep having to show up. It's

going to be uncomfortable and going to be painful, you're going to mess up. Two, it's not going to be academic. If academia was supposed to save us, it would have already done so. There's a reason why they're called the ivory towers. You know? There's a lot of great work- amazing, you know, people in academia doing amazing things. But, it's not our end all, you know, it's not.

TO: Right. Our way our communities don't only look like that, so, we can't have solutions that just look like that.

GL: No, the majority of people are working class people, humble people. And a lot of the most impactful movements- looking at the Zapatista movement, or, you know worldwide- have not been people in academia. They've been in allyship. But it's been poor people who create amazing changes that are needed.

TO: I want to- I see that there are a couple of questions in the chat. And thanks for your patience. So, I'm gonna ask Gloria one more, and then get to some of yours.

Gloria, I know your work has focused a lot on eating disorders. Why should people who don't have eating disorders themselves be invested in that recovery community and, like, why does it- How is it interrelated to other people's experiences?

GL: Because we live in a society in which disordered eating gets rewarded. So, it's everywhere. It's normal to have a disordered eating pattern- which can be as dangerous as having an eating disorder. And, I think, as long as we have fat phobia, this leads to a lot of stress around eating food. And so, right now, everything is connecting, there's no reason to leave anything out. Yeah.

TO: Okay, I'm going to go to a couple of the questions from the chat.

“I was hoping Gloria could clarify the epigenetics research that she mentioned a bit ago. I'm familiar with the concept but not this particular section of the research.”

GL: Yeah, I've heard this from Dr. Joy DeGruy, who talks about the memory, and the study of the cellular matter of DNA, right? And how both trauma and resiliency like this- the character resiliency- can get passed on. This is not my study field. However, I have read up on that and it's a fairly new field, and so more and more is coming out. And, also, Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart talks about it in some of her work. Particularly with indigenous communities in the U.S. and more specifically, if I'm not mistaken, the Lakota people.

TO: Thank you. And thanks for- you've mentioned a couple of people, you know as we've gone along, I hope folks, if you missed those names, you'll be able to catch them in the transcript of this, or a YouTube video later. And at the end, Gloria I'll give you time to just do some general shout outs if there's other people that you want to put people up on. So, thank you for that question.

And the next question. “As a white, cis woman, I've been trying my best to do what BIPOC activists, that I follow and read, have been saying to do to be an ally. My problem is, I don't know how to quantify if I've been doing it “right”- in quotation marks- doing it “right”. I've been getting educated and taking action, but it feels like the only quantifiable result I have been able to track has been a constantly increasing amount of horror about what BIPOC people are subjected to- historically and currently. How do I know if what I'm doing is actually helping and actually making me the kind of ally that's needed?”

GL: I think we got to get out of our fears of being imperfect. And if we look at the roots of perfectionism, where does it come from? White supremacy.

Because there's no such thing as perfect, (inaudible). I've messed up. I've been called out, and it's going to happen again. Right? All of us. You're gonna mess up. And in those moments where you mess up, and you, again, let it marinate, and you might not understand that first, but within a few days, months, sometimes even years, you're like, "Oh, I understand. And the reason why it took me time to understand it is because of my privilege." Ok. So, when it comes to solidarity with movements, you have to do a lot of listening, and see what is the solidarity that these specific groups or individuals might be needing- because everybody's different movements are different. So, looking into- maybe if you're trying to be in solidarity with a particular type of organization, grassroots effort, individual, whatever, look and see if they have already maybe published in what ways they need help and what ways you need to step up. And, also, looking for ways to be in solidarity where you don't expect a cookie. Right? More than often, solidarity is very behind the scenes. It is firm. And that's that, right? And you could always ask, "Like, I would like to support, I want to know how." And sometimes it is literally your body, defending and protecting those. Other times it's money. Other times it's resources. Other times it's different things for people depending also where you are at. And I have found that in order for solidarity to truly take place, people in positions of power need to lose their power, need to lose their resources, sometimes lose land- because the land doesn't belong to us, you know, so. Yeah, I don't know, if that answered your question because, you know, every group is so different. I myself, you know, I'm not a Black person, so, I cannot speak on behalf of Black folks. But, at least with it for myself, as a brown person, as a very small grassroots organization, the ways that I seek support is making sure that I'm able to pay my bills on time so that I'm able to continue doing this work. Because there's very few of us doing this, and I'm tired of breaking my back to make ends meet. Right? Because only people of color can do specific type of work, and they're needed. And, so, for me, it's been seen in people share my events online, seeing people buy my merch. You know it even if it's merch, you know, it's not necessarily for them, but they buy it for others. You know that can uplift them. It's seeing people not

expect me to do all the labor. Even something as simple as that. You'd be surprised at how many emails or comments I get of white folks demanding labor out of me. And I'm like, "No, it's not gonna happen." So, whenever I get white folks who know "off the bat" that I don't owe them anything- you know, that's helpful. That really goes a long way. So, yeah. I don't know if I really answered the question but hopefully it helped.

TO: I think so, um, you know, I feel, feel free to follow up with a follow up question if there's more that you want to hear from Gloria about that just go ahead and hit me in the chat if you want to hear more on that answer. You mentioned your merch and I should say that at NalgonaPositivityPride.com, Gloria sells merchandise, Nalgona brand merchandise, but also other body positive, eating disorder support, all kinds of merchandise. So you should definitely check that out and buy cool stuff from Gloria.

I know that, Gloria, at the event where I first encountered you, you had some particular items that you asked white people not to buy unless they were buying them for people of color. Like, this was not made for you, so please don't purchase this unless you're purchasing it for personal color. Do you get pushback when you make that kind of statement at your events?

GL: Oh, from that sign I got death threats. Yeah, for sure.

You know what's funny is that the first time I put that sign up and I say, "Here are other ways you can support." Right? It was in an almost- it was a cultural event for people of color. And it was, like, literally a sprinkle of white folks. And it was this couple, this white couple, that took a picture, and posted it on Reddit. And it has been come up on Reddit a few more times. And I know it goes up there when I get all these emails, and they email me and message me everywhere. They message me, they email me on Instagram, on my Etsy. They go everywhere. And I'm just- And then demanding that I explain myself and I'm like, "The sign says it all. Like, you

either are down ,or you're not. But you're not gonna die if you don't wear my shirt.” No one's dying here. Oh yeah, I get pushback all the time. All the time.

TO: I laugh when you mention Reddit because- well- you laughed when you mentioned death threats. And I laughed when you mentioned Reddit because I know some of the worst fat activist stalking comes out of Reddit. And so we- It comes up in like half the webinars we do somebody mentions the time that they, you know, something they said got put on Reddit and then all of these, you know, like, angry Reddit users who are generally cis, straight, white men, at least the anti-fat ones are. I know there are other things on Reddit, but generally the anti-fat ones who organize around harassing fat people are that. And it comes up every single time. It comes up every single time. How did you get to the point where you, you know, you get death threats around your activism and you can laugh about it instead of being worried or are you both?

GL: I mean, it kind of comes with the territory, you know, unfortunately. And there's a lot of fragility out there. I mean if something happens, it's going to happen. What can I do, you know? And I'm doing what I feel like I was meant to do. And everybody's gonna die. I might as well die for a cause, I guess. I don't know. You know, and it's not like- And I can't even complain because I know my fat friends, who live in larger bodies than mine- just for posting a picture of themselves- get death threats. You know? And, so, who am I even to be complaining about that. So, I still have a lot of privilege in my own body that allows me that when I post a picture it's nothing but compliments. You know, like, I have to acknowledge that first. I have to acknowledge that Black folks, you know, they get pulled over. Their experience of them being pulled over- me getting pulled over- is different.

TO: So, you think- you just, you just sort of put it in context with the privilege that you do have even though it's- Other people on the further end

and down that, sort of, privilege spectrum, are not getting death threats. Right?

GL: Right, right.

TO: You just mentioned being, you know- yourself in comparison to larger fat folks. And I know that you have sometimes said that you don't always use the word "fat" to identify yourself. When you do, you specify "I'm a smaller fat." But you do like "gordita". You don't use "fat" or you do use "fat".

GL: So, it depends on the context. Because, I have found- I feel fatness for more privileged people- people with privileged bodies- the context can change. Right? I have been able to travel throughout the country, and in certain areas, I'm not seen as a fat person. And I need to hear that out because I, cuz, I sure as hell see the privilege that comes with it and how I'm treated differently. Versus in Los Angeles, I might be considered a fat person. So, the context of fatness can change, but again that's based on, you know, being in a smaller fat body. Right? So, honestly, it's still something that I'm navigating as my body continues to change because of depression and an eating disorder. And I don't have the answer. I really don't. But I can say that, I do try to own the benefits and (inaudible) one of the things I was having with my sister the other day with her man was, you know, I was explaining to him the concept of privilege. And I told him, like, I'm very aware of it because had I been in a larger body, had I been undocumented, and had I have had a disability, you know, I wouldn't have this platform. Folks much rather hear me talk about fat phobia than a fat person themselves. Right? So, I'm very aware of that even when my body changed. All of a sudden people now look at me in my eyes. I hadn't experienced that so much before.

TO: When you were larger?

GL: Mmhm. So, it's like I'm aware of these things. And I feel like folks in the body positive movement sometimes need to take a step back, take a seat, and really give space for those that are super fat, that are in larger bodies. So, yeah, something that I'm still, like, trying to put together and understand where I fit with all of this. Right?

TO: I mean, I know that's challenging for a lot of people, when they are figuring out- and it kind of ties into the question you were asked earlier about, like, how do you know if you're getting it "right". Like, it's challenging for a lot of people when they figure out where they fit into activist movements in terms of where to utilize their privilege, and then where to shut up in their privilege and pass the mic to somebody else or pass the opportunity to somebody else or whatever. And I think, you know, that's challenging for a lot of people.

GL: Yeah, yeah.

TO: I have another question for you from the chat. So we're going to take probably about 10 more minutes, so, if you have more questions for Gloria, please go ahead and put those in the chat. Is that good for you, Gloria, about 10 more minutes

GL: Sounds good.

TO: So, if you have other questions, go ahead and put those in the chat now. The next question is, "Describe what you see as the current state of the fat liberation movement, and how you imagine it progressing in the future."

GL: I feel like, for this particular question I need to take a seat. Because, again, where I stand right now with my body- I don't know if I should be the one defining that. You get me? I would much rather hear a person in a larger body, like say that. A fat person. A super fat person.

TO: Is there- What about the- I was just about to ask that question. What- Can you answer that question in terms of more generally body positivity?

GL: Girl!

TO: And what the state of it is and where you think it should be going?

GL: I am so disappointed right now with the body positive movement. I'm trying to figure out where I fit in all of that to be completely honest. Because I'm just disappointed. I'm disappointed. And I'm like, in some ways, I'm like, I don't want to be associated with y'all. You know, sometimes I feel like that and other times I'm like this is mainly why I work alone, because y'all mess it up for everybody else.

TO: What- Say something- speak a little bit more specifically about what is disappointing.

GL: It is disappointing to see people of my size take up so much space instead of, like you said, passing on the mic. It's disappointing to see accounts- because I'm most active on Instagram. I'm not with the TikTok yet, I'm trying to. I might get there, I'm trying to, but it's- They just keep posting the same content. I'm like, "The biggest uprising in history is taking place. And you're just talking about HAES, Health At Every Size. The same content you were posting before COVID. You're still posting it right now. Like, does this not shake you, smack you in the face, and tell you how you must connect what you're posting with race? How you need to be sharing the content of other Black folks right now?

Your little square ain't enough. It's not enough! Stop being lazy! So, it's just- And honestly, honestly, it's also people of color. It's like you just make one post and kept it cute and in line with your branding? You know what? F your branding right now! Black people, brown people are getting killed in the

streets. And you want to keep on with your color scheme. I can't. I can't. I cannot. Like, throughout this whole time, I'm just like- people still putting about eating disorders stuff and that's important, of course. But, it's like, I have not been in my body.

I cannot comprehend my eating disorder right now. But you're just posting on eating disorders. That's it. Not on like uplifting and sharing the content of Black folks in the eating disorder world, not looking at the disparities in eating disorder treatment for Black folks and people of color. No, it's just the same stuff. Am I making sense here?

TO: It makes sense to me. Y'all let me know, in the chat, if you need some more clarity.

I'm gonna ask you the next question, because, well, it's related. The same question, but like, what about how this applies in any eating disorder world, should people be, like, do you timeout your recovery to talk about something else or how do you balance it or-?

GL: I don't think I understand the question.

TO: When you say, "Why are you still posting the same stuff." Am I not supposed to post that stuff anymore at all? Or, am I just supposed to post that stuff and more other stuff, or like how do I balance it? How do I balance still taking care of, you know, taking care of those urgent needs. Because, I would say, you know, eating disorder recovery is an urgent need, right? How do I balance that urgent need with the other urgent needs?

GL: Well, they're not single issues, right? Like, I mean why not repost, what other BIPOC- Black, Indigenous, people of color are posting that's related to current content. I just don't understand why people can't repost. You know, and yeah, obviously continue posting eating disorder stuff because for other folks- I haven't been in my body- but other folks- like you said you

have been in your body and it is not, it's not positive, right? And maybe other folks do need that. But relating to what marginalized communities are experiencing. That's all I'm saying. It's just like, it's not the time right now to learn and to wake up. Then, when? If it is not the time right now to get them uncomfortable about- even myself- I've just been thinking, Tigress. I guess I've been thinking about, "Damn! I have not really been showing up for others. I really haven't."

And so I'm thinking about all these things and how I need to change things within Nalgona Positivity Pride. You know, and my content has changed because it has to. I have no other choice. Yeah, I still put an eating disorder stuff, but somehow make it relatable or add a race analysis to it, or repost.

TO: I mean, I guess you do have, like, it's, it's on brand for you to talk about those things. For people whose brands have been more, as you said earlier, you use the term politically bland, then you know making that shift is challenging. You know, and also for people who consider themselves already- that their brand is representing a marginalized population. So, people in eating disorder recovery are a marginalized population. Fat people are a marginalized population. So, now you want me to split my audience with another marginalized population? Yes, we do.

GL: Yeah. Why not? What else do we (inaudible)? What else needs to happen? More deaths? What else? I remember when- maybe this was like three four years ago- when it was up in the air whether or not the Dreamers, were gonna get DACA. And then again, when, you know, there was more transparency on our coverage of the children- brown children in cages- primarily brown children in cages. And, like, I didn't see anybody post about that.

I'm like, how is this not connected to body politics and body liberation?

I was a mess during those weeks. I'm a mess right now. Right? It's just like how, how, why not, why not right? What else needs to happen for folks to wake up and to repost or to pass down the mic.

TO: So, I just want to get a couple more of the questions from the chat in. How would you reimagine eating disorder treatment-

So I'm going to combine these ones that are all about eating disorders at once in case your responses are sort of inter-related.

How would you reimagine eating disorder treatments? Do you see any way for us to keep big eating disorder treatment centers accountable, or even smaller eating disorder and pain/body trust clinics? How do you keep people accountable?

GL: How do you keep people account? And how do I view it differently? So, the way I would, you know, in my world, how I would want, like, eating disorder treatment is for it to be free, to be centered in worldviews rather than Western views, to be... to not be this concept of, "you go to a resort in a nice area to get treatment and away from your community to receive that help", but rather it is all around you. That there's actually an active community around you fighting against fat phobia and all these other systems of oppression. I don't want to- I would not want to hear any more company- you know insurance companies- denying access to treatment. You know, I would like to see help for people in low income communities, right there in their communities. I would like to see these services in other languages. I would like to see these centers actually be catering to fat people where fatness is not the problem. Right? So how to hold them accountable? You know, this is something I've been thinking about myself. And, I think it just ties back to the importance of knowing that you just have to keep showing up and expect that you're going to mess up, right? And,

you know one of the things that (inaudible). Oh my god I could never say their whole name: size diversity health-

Oh my god. Let me Google. I'm embarrassing myself.

TO: Somebody put it in the chat. Association for Size Diversity, and Health. That's right.

GL: Yes. There you go. Yes!

So what they did is, they have a diversity board, which is what I'm part of. And they pay us for our time to give our input. I feel like that's one thing we have to realize is that solidarity should cost you. And I'm not just talking about money. I'm talking about, it should cost you. It shouldn't be- Hm?

TO: It should cost you what besides money? It should cost you comfort?

GL: Time, energy, maybe sometimes money. Maybe, actually, yes, money. It should cost you. It should make you uncomfortable. Because what I see is a lot of these eating disorder treatment centers, they're hiring people who are amazing, in their own right, but they keep, they keep it safe. They keep it safe. It's like, "No. Hire the people that you're scared of. That will tell you the truth. Hire them too, you know." So, yeah, it should cost you. It should cost you your comfort levels, it should cost you your time, your energy, everything. So, that's what I would say is, like, start putting people- not only start putting people of color- like hiring people of color, but what are the power dynamics there too? One, are they working for you? Or, are they your peers in the same level? Also, before you start hiring, is your space, your work, is the work environment, safe for people of color and Black and Indigenous people? Is it truly safe? What policies are in place? What type of culture is in the, in your company?

You know that they're gonna actually make it safe for Black, Indigenous, people color to work there. It's a whole shift, a whole shift that we've been saying.

TO: Yeah.

Why do you think it's so pervasive? The idea that the image of, like, a single type of person having a eating disorder, when, we know, there's evidence and there's been evidence that people from all socioeconomic classes, people from all races, people of all, you know, people of all genders- like eating disorders cut across so many different identities. Why is it so pervasive that image of the thin, young, white woman?

GL: Because it's easier to view them as people that need help and as people that need to get rescued. Versus people of color, Black, or, Indigenous people. Because once you get Black, Indigenous, people of color, you're just not going to get that singular problem, where it's like "I don't like how I look." No, your gonna get the full package. In this country it's still not- continues to show that they're not ready to handle all it. They could do single-minded issues. But it's easier. It's a damsel in distress.

TO: Ah. Damsel in distress is a really good way to think about it. I mean, it's a problematic way that people do think about it, but it's a good handle for how to, sort of, imagine what the difference is between some of the people who need recovery support and some of the people who get recovery support.

GL: And it makes me- It Reminds me a lot of folks that struggle with substance use. How you get this- a Black and white person- one gets criminalized, one gets help. Right? And I think it's the same with eating disorders.

TO: Yeah, some people get demonized and some people get assistance.

GL: Mmhm.

TO: It's a parallel, for sure.

Okay, last question from the chat and then we're gonna wrap up with final thoughts from Gloria. What about people- I think this connects back to what we were talking about earlier about marginalized communities. And people who you said, " If I already represent a marginalized community, why do I need to work so hard to represent other marginalized communities?" I think this is when this popped up. Please forgive me, questioner, if I add in context that you didn't mean. What about people who are marginalized because of race and gender? I think we often silo these two when they are so interrelated.

GL: I mean they are, you know. I'm sorry, repeat the question one more time.

TO: What about people who are marginalized because of both race and gender? I think we often silo these two when they are so interrelated. So, why do we sometimes talk about race without mentioning gender at all? Sometimes talk about gender without mentioning race at all?

GL: I think for me personally it's already implied. You know, it's a given for me. And, yeah, for me it's already part of the conversation, it's already, it's already part of the package. You know?

TO: Your package specifically I mean, I think in your description on your website you talk specifically about wanting to serve Black and Indigenous women and Femmes, right? Why do you focus your words that way? And do you have any resources to point out for people who identify other than that in their gender- men, or other folks who don't identify as women or Femmes, but who are also people of color who are not being centered in

eating disorder treatment and body image stuff. Like, why are you, why are you focusing on the woman and Femmes?

GL: A lot of what I do does just focus on women and Femmes, for sure. But there's other components that are open for all as well. For instance, our monthly free peer support group for Black, Indigenous, people of color who struggle with eating disorders is open for all- anyone can attend, right? Other things that I do are primarily for women-women of color- and Femmes, right? Because that is my background. And that is where I come from, and I understand the intersectional- how oppression is intersectional. Ultimately, our experiences are not just "I'm just a woman", or "I'm just a person of color", but it's a tangled yarn. Do you call the yarn ball, right? So- and I feel like, for instance, I wouldn't feel comfortable, leading- and this is just me- leading something that is for transgender folks. If anything, I should be supporting organizations that are already, or people or efforts, that are serving that community. Does that make sense?

TO (off-screen): Yeah.

GL: Like so, for me, it's me staying in my lane.

TO: So, it's not that you think the work is only- It's not so much that you think the work is most important for those people. It's just that this is the area of the work where it's best for you to take leadership, and someone else should take the leadership in those other areas.

GL: Right.Right.

TO: Yeah.

Okay, well we should wrap up soon and I promised that I would ask you at the end if there was anything that you really wanted to talk about today that we didn't ask you about.

Is there something that's on your mind in terms of where your work is going, or in terms of, you know, the state of Fat Community or body positive community that we didn't ask you about that you really would like to leave people with thoughts about.

GL: I just want to remind folks how there's a lot of canceled culture happening too, like canceling people because they messed up and it's like none of us are disposable particularly marginalized people. So, it's important to keep showing up. Just show up, be a good listener. Move away from perfectionism and read. Do a lot of reading and supporting the work of those that are doing the work that come from these specific communities.

TO: Is there anyone or any work that you would like to give a shout out to? Please.

GL: So right now, Elizabeth Ayiku is fundraising for her film, Me, Little Me” [<https://www.melittlemefilm.com/>], which is about, based on her eating disorder journey. She's a black woman. She's from out here in Los Angeles. I posted about it today. I'm continuously posting for folks who need support or fundraising and whatnot. I would say I can also share with you a list of fat, Black women to follow on Instagram. I could pull that up and share if folks are interested. And just again, how can you, how-

TO: We can send that out to people who registered for this webinar and we can link to it in the captions of when we put the video up.

GL: Perfect. So, yeah.

TO: Just remind everybody where to find you online. I know you said you're most active on Instagram. Do you tweet? Do you snap? Do you, like, whatever the people are doing?

GL: Oh, someone shared the “Me, Little Me” film link. Thank you!

Where can they find me? On Instagram: Nalgona Positivity Pride. I know it's a mouthful, but that's pretty much where I'm at.

TO: On whatever you're on, it's that same, same handle on everything.

GL: Yeah, I have a Twitter account but I really don't post there. I just started a TikTok.

TO: Yeah, we talked about TikTok with our last panelists and there has been some growth. You know, TikTok, had a problematic relationship with fatness when it launched. And fat people were just like, nah, we're gonna use this anyway and took it over. And there's a lot of fat positivity, especially from young people and young, you know, Black and brown people on, on TikTok. So, I sometimes too, Gloria, people who've seen some of our other webinars will know, sometimes I have that reaction of like, “I'm too old for TikTok”- (inaudible)

GL: (laughter) That's how I feel!

TO: You're not too old to just get on there. And that cross-generational relationship, you know, as Gloria talks about the people we need to be learning from. That cross-generational relationship is super important. You know, and in both directions, because you can't understand historical trauma, and you also have to understand historical liberation movement, right, if you don't know. If you don't you don't know what you're building on so listening to our elders is super important, especially in marginalized communities. But also, not letting our eldest take the stage all the time. Like, because that's how the younger activists and younger pieces of community learn, so, find them. Go to TIK TOK, everybody, and look at fat people on there.

GL: Basically youth organizing too. They need guidance. They need the support

TO: Are a lot of your followers young, Gloria? Do hear from a lot of, like, like teenagers?

GL: I sometimes do. My main audience is like 25 to 31, 32, which is my age group, so, that explains why. But, I do get some awesome messages from time to time, or high schoolers wanting to interview me for a project or- yeah.

TO: Well, that's good. I'm glad to hear that they are tuning in to what you have to say. Thank you so much for being with us today, for just being candid and sharing your thoughts. And I just want to encourage everyone who tuned in today to please-

Please do check Gloria out in her own spaces. Follow her. Support her. You'll see posts on her page about how you can- All the kinds of support that Gloria mentioned, you know, sharing things providing financial support, all of those things, you will see that information on Gloria's Instagram about how to do those things or you can do them through her website.

And, and once again, thanks to the NAAFA Board for supporting this, and all of our NAAFA contributors who help us bring these webinars to people, who help us compensate our webinar presenters, and bring the webinars to people without, you know, without any registration fees. We are super grateful to you all for that. And we'll be back in July with some more webinars for you. We're trying to schedule some extra ones for the summer and while folks are still doing shelter in place in many places in the world. I'm trying to give you some extra opportunities to meet these fabulous presenters and also mingle with each other. I'm going to end the recording here, but I will leave, not log out of the room quite yet, so that if people

want to exchange information in the chat you are welcome to do that. So, Gloria, if you want to take a look at the chat before you log off. You can see that folks are pouring in to thank you for your time.

Thank you everybody for being with us. Gloria, thank you so much.

And we will see you all for the next one. Look at the NAAFA website or follow us on Instagram- NAAFA Official on Instagram. And we'll have information up soon but our next one. We also put our webinars as Facebook events. So, if you're not following us on Facebook, you should follow us there. Thanks for being here everybody. Take care. Big fat hugs to all of you. Bye bye.

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