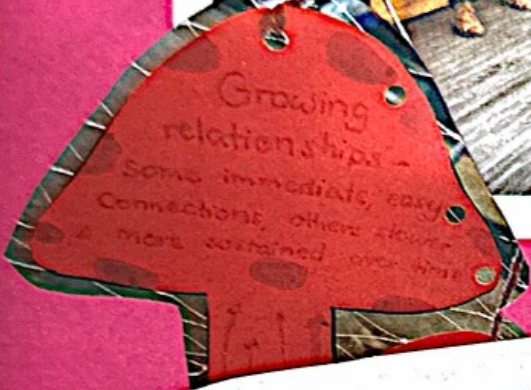


Imagining New Ways to Grow



Over two weekends in February and March 2023, we came together to creatively think about SoLoss – both as it was and how it could be in the future. These research workshops come out of a partnership between InWithForward, RECOVER (City of Edmonton), and the University of Alberta – we wanted to come together with folks that have been a part of SoLoss (Losstenders, sharers, and sounding board members) to collaboratively imagine new ways to grow. This is a short summary of our time together.



DAY 1

WHAT WAS SOLOSS LIKE?



Before we dove into what Soloss was like, we introduced ourselves and shared our offerings - something that represented ourselves, our creative practices, or our relationship with Soloss and with grief/loss.

HISTORY OF SOLOSS



We took a walk down memory lane with Hayley and Sarah as our guides - going over the history of Soloss, how it began, how it evolved and a bit on where it is going.

THE LEGEND OF SOLOSS

We spent some time storytelling with each other about 'what Soloss was like?' We used paper, markers, yarn, and fabric to express our memories - how those memories felt, who was there, and what happened.



After working in small groups, we mapped out all of our stories on the wall and collectively made connections and threads between each of our stories...creating the 'Legend of Soloss'



DAY 2

HOW DID SOLOSS MOVE?



After a check-in round and some sensory tea drinking, we jammed to Dolly Parton's "9-5." We explored the '9-5' things as those that are 'mainstream,' 'dominant,' 'social norms,' or things socially expected of us. We used cut-outs of shoes, briefcases, ties, birds, and roadblocks to help us consider where the '9-5' comes up in our lives. We also wrote, drew, and cut and pasted our ideas on big sheets of colourful paper.

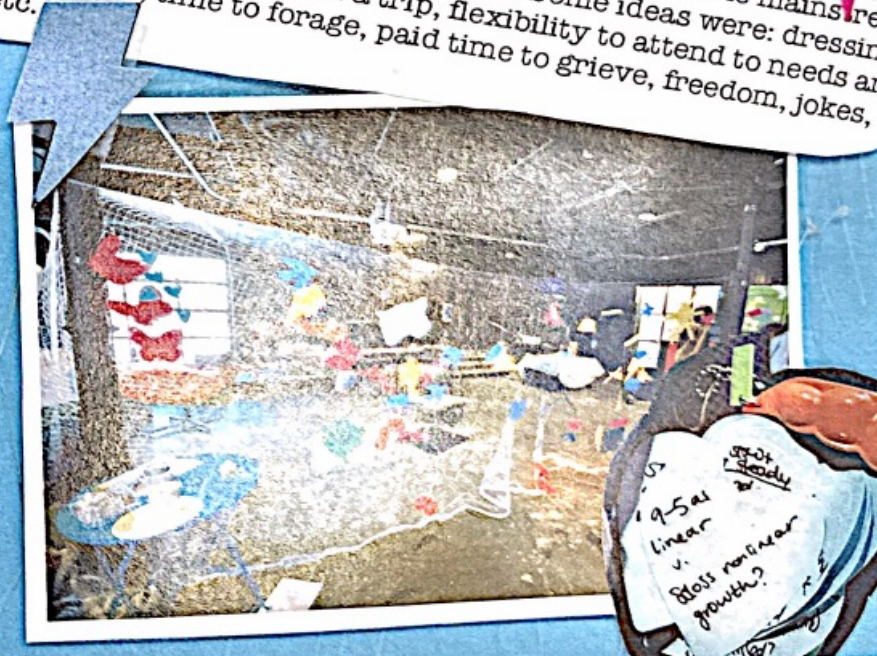


We pasted all our creations up on a wall of brown paper, which hilariously kept losing its tape and falling down. We presented to each other about our experiences with the '9-5', and what is both liberating and constraining

OUTSIDE THE 9-5



We explored how SoLOSS was and wasn't part of the mains ree of the '9-5' and life outside the '9-5. Some ideas were: dressing how you want, going on a trip, flexibility to attend to needs and be human, time to forage, paid time to grieve, freedom, jokes, etc.





The 9-5 poetically collapses under its own weight.



Growing relationships
some immediate
connections may not
be made until the end of the year.



DAY 3

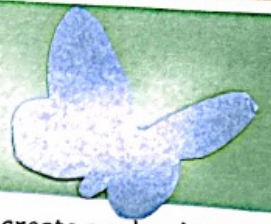
CAN WE GROW WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT SOLOSS?

This was our starting question, but the day ended up focusing on how we can safeguard Soless. How might we nurture what is working well, and protect Soless from what might be harmful? To do this, we worked in small groups to determine what we would "keep" about Soless, and what we would "guard against."



Soon, we used the "great" and "godawful" to label what practices seemed rejuvenating, and what might be a sign that Soless has been captured, co-opted, mainstream-ed, or "Starbucks-ified."

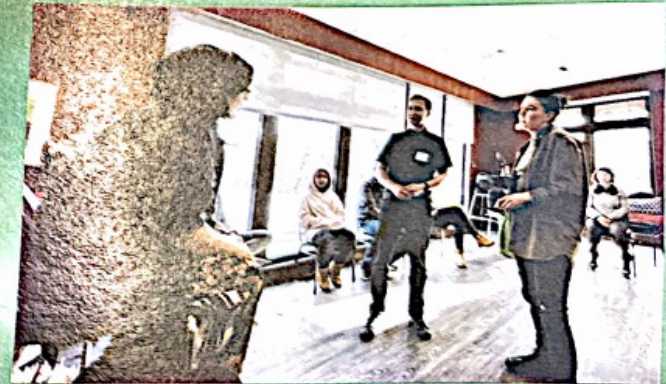
SCENARIOS / ROLE-PLAY



After lunch, we were given some scenarios to create a role-play. These "what if" scenarios built on the "keep & guard against" activity. While the scenarios were silly (eg the City Police wants to endorse Soless and creat Po-loss), our role-playing explored: *How might Soless respond?*



Featuring the best of YEG's theatre scene: "PO-LOSS," "The team ate too many 'shrooms," "Soless & AHS," & last, but not least, "The mutiny of Hayley." These cringe-hilarious-scary moments sparked imaginative new roles and forms of spread and growth in Day 4.

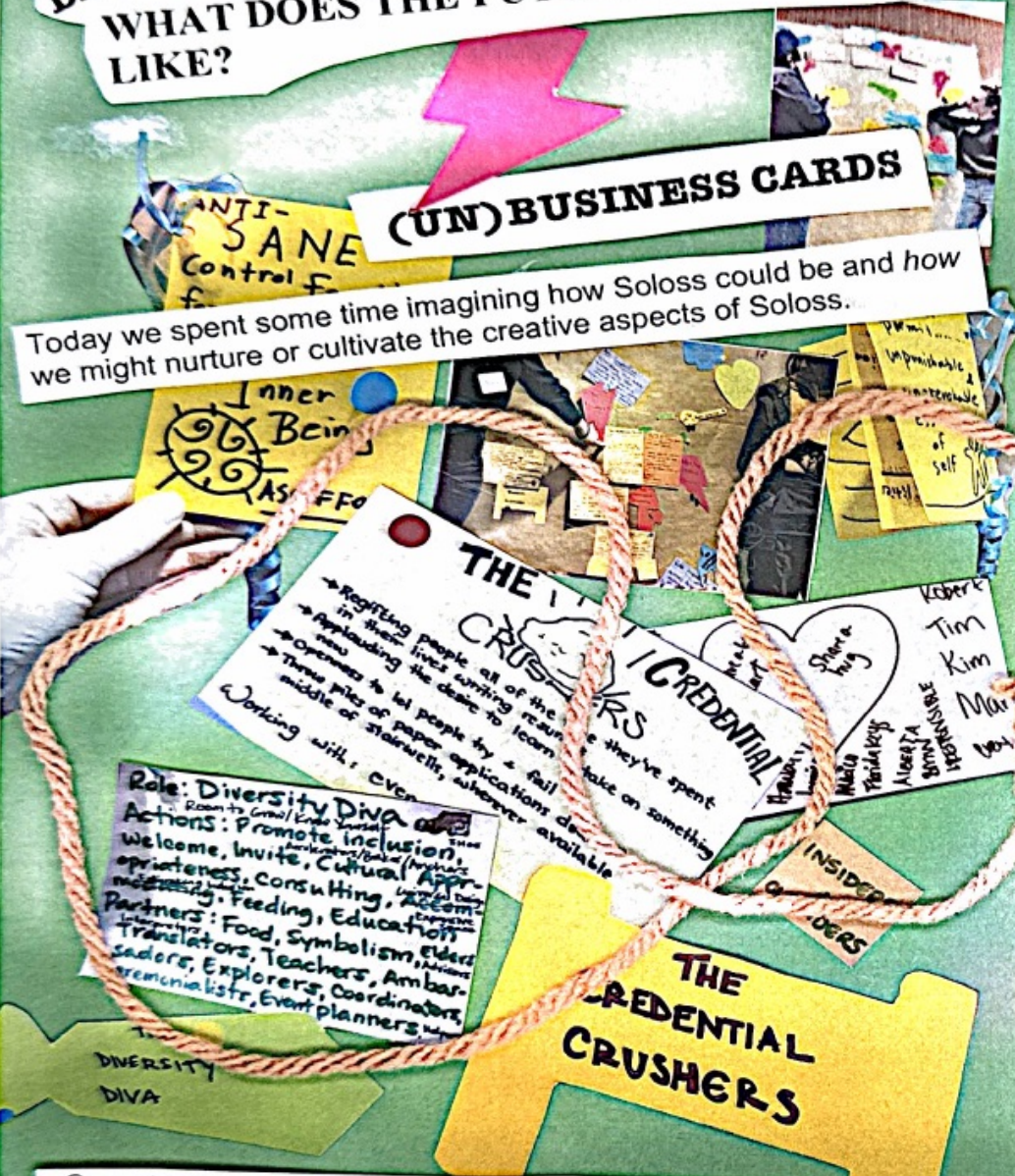


DAY 4

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF SOLOSS LOOK LIKE?

(UN)BUSINESS CARDS

Today we spent some time imagining how Soloss could be and how we might nurture or cultivate the creative aspects of Soloss.



Over the first 3 days, there seemed to be a desire to resist mainstream approaches and cookie-cutter systems that don't generate genuine and unexpected moments of care and relationship. We had fun creatively dreaming about the roles and practices that might nourish Soloss - and created some (un)business cards together. Some were roles for individuals, but most were for groups/collectives.

MODES OF GROWTH/SPREAD/STRUCTURE

In our final activity of the day, we looked at some different models of spread and *what/how* they were designed to spread. In groups we considered initiatives & orgs we have personal experience with, as well as those with widespread recognition. We used these to help us clarify what we are trying to spread with Soloss, and what that could look like.

We paid particular attention to variables like how centralized vs. distributed power is, and how standardized vs. organic a model is.

Here are a few examples of the models that people were aware of and curious about:

- AA
- The Secret Language of Trees
- Anarchist Bookfairs
- Co-counselling
- Yard Share YEG
- And about 15 more!

We look forward to spending some more time with these models and considering how we can try out some new ideas with Soloss.



(See the back page for some final thoughts)



Thank you!!!

We are incredibly grateful for our time together and for your willingness to share your time, energy, ideas, and presence with each other. Over the next couple of months, we will spend time making sense of all the ideas and creativity shared in the workshops. Our intention is for these workshops to inform what happens next with Soloss and also to support others in the community that are doing similar work. For example, we will likely share what we learn with community organizations in Edmonton, present at a conference, and publish articles. Once we have made better sense of what was learned in the workshops, we will share a summary with you.



We would love to have you involved in these next steps! Joining us in the sense-making would take up to 12 hours of your time between May and July. We have funding for 6 people to join us in our sense-making.

*If you are interested, please reach out to Hayley for more details at **780-964-8504**. Also, feel free to contact Hayley about any other questions you have about the project.*

For more information about the research aspect of this project, contact Tim at t.barlott@ualberta.ca. To reach out to the RECOVER team at the City, you can contact them at urbanwellness@edmonton.ca



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RECOVER-

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