

THE ORAL HISTORY OF CRITICAL DIETETICS: WHAT HAS BEEN LEFT UNASKED?

Mount Saint Vincent University

Department of Applied Human Nutrition

The Oral History of Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?

by

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A Thesis

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Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to Dr. Jacqui Gingras, for if she did not initiate the Beyond Nutritionism workshop in 2009, World Critical Dietetics, as it is today would not have come to fruition. I also wish to dedicate my thesis to participating and non-participating founding members of WCD for their time and effort invested into the organization and its historical events. Again, to all members who recognized the many areas for dietitians to yet explore and who feel that they do not fit in the traditional role of a dietitian—otherwise, known as the “misfits.” Finally, I dedicate my thesis to Dr. Jennifer Brady for suggesting an oral history Founding members of World Critical Dietetics (WCD) and believing that I had the ability to undertake this important research work and the documentation of the history of WCD.

ABSTRACT

Title: Oral History of Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?

Introduction: World Critical Dietetics (WCD; formerly Critical Dietetics), was founded just over 10 years ago with a mandate to foster critical and feminist approaches to dietetic scholarship, education, and practice. The founding members have published several pieces that describe the mandate, mission, and vision of WCD. However, there is no research that has documented the founding and evolution of WCD through the eyes and experiences of its founding members. To fill this gap, my research will invite founding members of WCD to revisit, reflect upon, and share their experiences of founding WCD using oral history.

Objectives: My aims in exploring the founding and evolution of WCD are three-fold: 1) to document the formation, organizational, and social history of WCD since its founding in 2009; 2) to gather insights, anecdotes, and collect stories of “history from below” of how critical dietitians understand how and why WCD formed; 3) and to gather the meaning of the actions taken by founding members of critical dietetics to evoke change in the profession (Grele, 2007, pg. 38; Brady, 2009).

Methodology and method: Oral history, as a methodology seeks knowledge in the meaning making that emerges from narrator’s memories of lived experiences. Oral historians capture the lived experiences of narrators through oral history interviews. Personal narratives are of historical significance because they reveal how an event in time was understood and interpreted, and what meaning it holds in narrator’s lives (Perks & Thomson, 2016). Analysis of oral history testimony identifies patterns and themes that emerge across the narratives (Baylor University Institute for Oral History, 2016). For this research, I conducted oral history interviews with eight founding members of WCD who were attendees of the Beyond Nutritionism (BN) workshop in 2009 during which attendees founded WCD. Each narrator participated in two, one-hour long interviews that were conducted approximately one week apart.

Results: Based on the insights of the narrators who participated in this research, two global themes emerged from the data. The first global theme, To Be is to Become, elaborates how WCD was established as an international non-profit organization aimed at invigorating change within the dietetic profession. This global theme comprises two organizing themes: 1) a movement in action, which describes participants’ the meaning that WCD holds for participants as a transdisciplinary movement; 2) finding connection and community, which captures the unanticipated but immediate

bond among those who founded WCD. The second global theme, What Does it Mean to be a Dietitian?, captures participants' evolving ideas of what being a dietitian means, and also comprises two organizing themes: 1) reflexing with purpose, which describes participants' initial beliefs that dietitians could be engaged for many professional roles beyond the traditional, clinical setting; 2) a push for transformative practice reveals how participants cared deeply about the future development of the profession and took action to perpetuate growth in areas related to social justice, health equity, and advocacy.

Conclusions/Implications: It is important for WCD as an organization to persist in dietetics. WCD brings recognition to complex problems and questions about dietetic education and practice while also providing radical solutions and support to educators, practitioners, researchers, and students through untraditional and transdisciplinary approaches. WCD also underscores the importance of research on how dietitians can belong to roles related to social justice work while exposing the many opportunities that dietitians could take part in. As an organization, WCD will continue to grow its membership base and develop as a community that advocates for inclusivity and diversity in dietetics, while expanding the breadth of knowledge and professional roles into which dietitians may evolve.

Acknowledgments:

This research work had been proposed by Dr. Jennifer Brady. When I asked Dr. Brady for a challenge upon entering my thesis work, she delivered the idea—but not without her full support, wisdom, and guidance. Many expressed their gratitude for conducting and documenting an oral history on World Critical Dietetics, but I feel immensely honored to be able to not only record such an exciting piece of history, but to also connect with those founding members who initiated the Critical Dietetics movement. Through connecting with those founding members who participated in this study, I have great appreciation for you sharing your life endeavors and career experiences as a dietitian. Your voiced experiences echo through my thoughts as I begin on my own journey as a RD, and I will continue to carry your shared knowledge and expertise along with me through my own experiences. Special thank you to Dr. Jacqui Gingras for initiating the Beyond Nutritionism workshop, digging into the depth and complexity of dietetics, and continuing to push the profession forward. Again, thank you to founding members and current members of WCD today who continue to grow and develop the organization as well as the profession itself. To my thesis committee who believed in me conducting this research and provided me with their support throughout the processes. Thank you to my family, my mom, dad, brothers, sister, and the Jones' who believed in me and listened to me talk aloud about my struggles, insights, findings, and excitement over this research work. Thank you to my pup, Monty who sat beside me every morning as I walked back and forth speaking out loud while then running to the computer to type out my words. Thank you to my peers, colleagues, and preceptors who listened to me explain my ideas and concepts; Jillian Ruhl, Rachel Waugh, Chelsey Purdy, Julie LeBlanc, Lauren Richardson, Anne MacIntyre, Desiree McAllister, Saint Vincent's Nursing Home.

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Table 1: List of Participants

Participant's name:	Geographic location:	Roles at the time of Workshop (2009)	Current role today (2022)
Dr. Cathy Morely	Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada	Consulting Dietitian Researcher, Editor of <i>Practice</i> , Dietitians of Canada Journal	Associate Professor School of Nutrition and Dietetics, Acadia University
Charna Gord	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	Dietitian for Toronto Public Health	Recently Retired
Dr. Debbie MacLellan	Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada	Chair of Nutrition Department at University of Prince Edward Island	Recently Retired
Dr. Jacqui Gingras	Okanogan, British Columbia, Canada	Associate Professor School of Nutrition and Dietetics, Toronto Metropolitan University	Associate Professor Department of Sociology, Toronto Metropolitan University
Dr. John Coveney	Adelaide, Australia	Professor of Global Food, Culture and Health in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Flinders University.	Professor of Global Food, Culture and Health in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Flinders University.
Dr. Lucy Aphramor	Manchester, United Kingdom	Senior Health Promotion Specialist, Diet and Cardiovascular Health, Researcher	Adjunct Professor, Department of Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University. Founder and Director of Well Now
Dr. Yuka Asada	San Diego, California, United States	Masters student at Toronto Metropolitan University	Clinical Assistant Professor for School of Public Health, University of Illinois Chicago
Kristen Yarker	Vancouver, British Columbia	Self-employed dietitian at Kristen Yarker Nutrition Agency	Self-employed dietitian at Kristen Yarker Nutrition Agency

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Introduction

World Critical Dietetics (WCD; formerly Critical Dietetics), was founded just over 10 years ago (2009) with a mandate to foster critical and feminist approaches to dietetic scholarship, education, and practice (Critical Dietetics, 2009). The founding members have published several articles that describe the mandate, mission, and vision of WCD. However, there is no research that has documented the founding and evolution of WCD through the eyes and experiences of its founding members as to why they felt the need to found an organization such as WCD.

Interviewing and interpreting experiences from the founding members of WCD through the method of oral history aims to fulfill the gaps of knowledge that may have traditionally been viewed as irrelevant or unrelated to dietetics, while bringing forward a more critical approach to practice (Gingras, 2012; Gingras et al., 2016). The purpose of researching the history of WCD is to bring forth the obligation dietitians have to understand food and nutrition from a global and socially just lens, and the need to integrate theory and knowledge from other disciplines into dietetic practice (Gingras et al., 2016; World Critical Dietetics, 2020). Thus, why is a critical perspective important to bring into dietetics. To fill this gap, my research will invite founding members of Critical Dietetics (CD) to revisit, reflect upon, and share their experiences of founding WCD using oral history. My aims in exploring the founding and evolution of WCD are three-fold: 1) to document the formation, organizational, and social history of WCD since its founding in 2009; 2) to gather insights, anecdotes, and collect stories of “history from below” of how critical dietitians understand how and why WCD formed; 3) and to gather the meaning of the actions taken by founding members of critical dietetics to evoke change in the profession (Grele, 2007, pg. 38; Brady, 2009).

In the next section I review related literature which provides important background on the dietetics profession in Canada as well as on Critical Dietetics.

Review of the Literature

Dietetics in Canada

Dietetics is a self-regulating profession through a provincial college or professional association which is then granted oversight of its members by a provincial act (Dietitians of Canada, 2020). There is diversity in how dietetics is regulated from province to province in terms of policies and procedures, as well as the scope of practice statements. As an exception, dietetics is not a regulated profession in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon (Gingras et al., 2016; Sellinger & Breenbaum, 2015). Dietitians are described as experts in food and nutrition and work in various settings, including community centres, public health, hospitals, media, food industry, and private practice (Fraser & Brady, 2019). Often in the context of the environment, collaboration with other health care professionals occurs through scientific research, advancing the food industry, informing public policy, or working with patients and communities across the country (Dietitians of Canada, 2020). Dietitians provide nutritional support to the public through translating medical and nutrition science into information that could be understood by the public (Dietitians of Canada, 2020; Brady et al., 2013). The Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research (CFDR) survey ranked registered dietitians as the most credible source for nutrition and food information along with government associated materials (Canadian Foundation for Dietetic Research, 2015). Therefore, dietitians uphold the expectation to differentiate nutritional

knowledge from diet trends and jargon by relying on evidence-based nutrition science (Dietitians of Canada, 2020; Gingras et al., 2016).

Becoming a Dietitian in Canada

The process of becoming a dietitian in Canada begins with attaining an undergraduate degree in human nutrition and dietetics that has been accredited by the Partnership for Dietetics Education and Practice (PDEP) (Dietitians of Canada, 2020). The other component includes applying to the practicum portion of dietetic education, also known as internship (Dietitians of Canada, 2020; Gingras et al., 2016). This practical portion includes rotations where interns complete practicum placements in three key areas of dietetic practice, administrative, clinical, and community, which is supervised by dietitian preceptors (Gingras et al., 2016). Once a dietetic degree has been obtained and acceptance into internship has been secured, the last component to obtaining the title 'Registered Dietitian' is writing the Canadian Dietetic Registration Exam (CDRE) (Gingras et al., 2016). Although many may understand the realm of dietetics to be comprised of natural and holistic approaches to food and health, the undergraduate degree is heavily comprised of courses in chemistry, biochemistry, physiology, microbiology with a reliance on quantitative research (Dietitians of Canada, 2020; Gingras et al., 2016). The accredited and prestigious program takes a total of approximately five years of education to become a registered dietitian in Canada (Gingras et al., 2016; Dietitians of Canada, 2020). Once graduates receive an assessment of academic and practicum experience from the provincial regulatory body they live in, they are able to apply their knowledge and skill to practice (Dietitians of Canada, 2020).

Despite the extensive and rigorous education involved through the completion of a university degree and internship, dietitians are still unsure of their role in addressing social justice and advocacy (Fraser & Brady, 2019; Brady, 2019). For example, Brady (2019) states:

Although there are some important texts that address dietitians' roles in redressing the social and structural inequities through advocacy, this pool of literature is small in comparison to that which focuses on nutrition science and individual behaviour change (p. 148).

Statements such as these from critical dietitian Dr. Jennifer Brady provides insight to the lack of literature, knowledge, and education surrounding equality and advocacy. Adding onto Brady's statement mentioned above, Maclellan (2019), notes that she has observed changes to the structure and the regulation of the dietetic profession and its education programmes over the past thirty years as a dietetic educator. Today, dietetic education is highly invested in evidence-based practice and the biomedical model of health (Maclellan, 2019). Placing the medical model as the focal point of dietetic practice eliminates the holistic, humanistic, social justice approaches that were rooted in home economics, where dietetics was first formed (Maclellan, 2019; Gingras et al., 2016). Although dietetic education values and sustains elements of home economics in the curriculum, it is beyond the scope of this research to explore or comment on the degree to which elements of home economics may remain in dietetic education and practice across Canada.

Gingras and colleagues (2016) assert that dietetics reoriented its focus to become more invested into the medical model of health as a way to continue its status and growth as a profession while also providing more employment opportunities to women. However, this shift meant that the profession also focused on an individualistic approach to nutrition (Gingras et al., 2016). Gingras et al. (2010) states, "dietitians are trained to provide individually focused food and nutrition solutions that may fail to address underlying complex social problems (i.e., poverty and food insecurity)" (p. 239). Accepting the many ways food intersects with culture, WCD sees nutrition science as one pillar of knowledge, while expanding its other pillars to include other

knowledges and ways of knowing to elaborate critical perspectives of food, nutrition, and health (Gingras & Brady, 2019). Critical Dietetics presents itself as an organization that questions the status quo, the knowledge acquired through dietetic discourse, and the interrelated complexities of food (World Critical Dietetics, 2019).

Critical Dietetics

Critical Dietetics aims to support and advocate for dietetic education, practice, and research through transdisciplinary scholarship, which means learning from varied areas of knowledge (WCD, 2020). The intention of integrating different branches of knowledge into dietetic education and practice is that it will lead to a more “trauma-informed, compassion-centered, and justice enhancing approach” (WCD, 2020). Critical Dietetics is a unique approach to practice in that it incorporates knowledge from other disciplines, but what is also intriguing is how WCD transpired at an educational event (Aphramor et al., 2009). In June 2009 a workshop titled *Beyond Nutritionism: Rescuing Dietetics Through Critical Dialogue* (hereafter *Beyond Nutritionism*) was held at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario (Aphramor et al., 2009; Gingras & Brady, 2019). The workshop was initiated and hosted by Dr. Jacqui Gingras (Gingras & Brady, 2019; Aphramor et al., 2009). It was at this workshop that the attendees founded Critical Dietetics. Dr. Gingras received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to prepare and assemble attendees for the event and through the interviews, I am able to reveal through Gingras’ personal narrative as to how the idea formed to submit a grant proposal. (Gingras & Brady, 2019). The combination of participants involved in the workshop included dietetic researchers, practitioners, regulators, and students, as well as others who hailed from sociology, disability studies, textile arts, gender studies, and education (Gingras & Brady, 2019). The

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collaboration of researchers, practitioners, and students resulted in conversations about gender, race, class, ability, size, dietetic epistemology, post-structural orientations to dietetic education, art, and poetry in the context of dietetics (Gingras & Brady, 2019; Aphramor et al., 2009). According to Gingras and Brady (2019), within these conversations two words continued to surface throughout the duration of the workshop—*critical* and *dietetics*. WCD is a brave and challenging endeavour that requires us to “depart from familiar ways of doing” and “expand our dietetic identities” (Aphramor et al., 2009, p.2). Critical Dietetics believes that understanding the practice of dietetics involves challenging our assumptions, giving voice to those not often heard, embracing reflexivity, and exploring power relations (Aphramor et al., 2009). Understanding dietetics and taking a critical approach to education and practice is a process of asking and hearing challenging questions (Aphramor et al., 2009). These questions may lead to exploration of diverse perspectives, philosophies, and recruiting other ways of knowing (Aphramor et al., 2009). Critical Dietetics derived its power to grow from supportive relationships through welcoming constructive dialog, discussions, and debates that challenges the mind and self to transcend (Aphramor et al., 2009). Through this growth and over the decade WCD has experienced several positive milestones that reflect the effort put forward by critical dietitians (Gingras & Brady, 2019).

In 2019, Critical Dietetics adopted the name World Critical Dietetics to reflect its international membership and scope. The mission of WCD is to advocate for and support transdisciplinary knowledge in dietetic education, practice, and research that can show how complex social issues regarding gender, race, class, ability, size, and art intersect with dietetic discourse (World Critical Dietetics, 2020). As the second dietetic association, WCD differs by encouraging exploration and inquiry of post-structural orientations to dietetic education and epistemology (World Critical Dietetics, 2020). Post-structuralism does not close or confine

education to a specific structure. Rather, post-structuralism keeps in mind that education or knowledge is in flux and constantly changing with its culture, history, and environment (Midensky, 2018). Questioning post-structural orientations in dietetics involves allowing space to bring in methods that not only analyzes the structures of the education we provide to dietitians but also the function or purpose of what they learn. WCD understands the need and function of nutrition science and research, however WCD cautions us think to critically about the knowledge we learn and to consider knowledge from other disciplines (Gingras et al., 2016). Dietitians of Canada and Critical Dietetics have not always agreed in harmony because of conflicting views in what the profession of dietetics entails. While DC places its core commitments on the science of nutrition to promote and treat health, WCD acknowledges food as more than a source of nutrients and understands that the knowledge necessary in understanding health is socially, culturally, historically, and environmentally constructed (Gingras et al., 2016). The acknowledgement of food as a complex, contextual, social matter has not gone unnoticed. Those who have experienced a non-objective relationship with food often look to Critical Dietetics as a source, an outlet, and a voice which results to the associations upcoming growth and development.

What is Critical Dietetics Today?

Since 2009, WCD has developed as a voice for critical research, practice, and education (World Critical Dietetics, 2020). Throughout the past years, WCD has gained recognition and interest from within the profession and has continued to grow with the addition of new members, an open-access journal, a website, and online social media network. World Critical Dietetics hosts an annual conference by bringing change makers together, giving those invested in diverse forms of research a sense of belonging, and including knowledge from the natural sciences,

social sciences, and the humanities (World Critical Dietetics, 2020). Critical Dietetics encourages a transtheoretical and inter-epistemological approach to practice as a means to support and respond to questions that cannot be explained through a positivist worldview (Brady & Gingras, 2019; Gingras et al. 2016). For myself, a positivist worldview implies that occurrences can be scientifically verified through objective and statistical data, and often excludes the context of the circumstance. A transtheoretical approach involves applying and integrating theories from other disciplines into practice (Gingras & Brady, 2019). While an inter-epistemological approach considers how we have come to learn or, how we have come to know the knowledge we apply at work, home, and in social settings (Murphy, 2011; Gingras & Brady, 2019). An inter-epistemological approach means obtaining value and appreciation for all knowledge frameworks and literature, this includes rethinking how often western science is prioritized over other forms of science and knowledge (Murphy, 2011; Gingras & Brady, 2019). The intention of integrating a transtheoretical and inter-epistemological approach to practice and education is to better prepare students and professionals for the “messy and relational” elements of dietetic work where complex questions often arise (MacLellan, 2019, p. 5).

Implementing theory into dietetic practice helps create an understanding of complex issues and prioritizes communicative action and practical solutions with a view to effect change (Gingras et al., 2016; Brady & Gingras, 2019). Communicative action is a theory derived from the German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas (Brookfield, 2005). Habermas interprets communicative action as taking action through communication—an approach that involves the collaboration of individuals to reach an understanding through cooperation, reasoned argument, and consensus or more *shared decision making* (Bolton, 2005; Brookfield, 2005; Elwyn et al. 2012). Incorporating communicative action theory into professional practice is necessary

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because it brings in other people's thoughts and ideas to produce an effective and inclusive plan or proposition that can help negate personal desire and power (Bolton, 2005; Brookfield, 2005). I feel that bringing in others' ideas through effective communication and collaboration can help reduce one's potential, and maybe hidden personal desires and power. Additionally, an individual's goals and plans of action can change through the process of communication and collaboration, which can help to visualize and understand complex issues from various standpoints (Brookfield, 2005). Humans naturally engage with others making it is fundamental to try and understand another point of view (Beasley & Bacci, 2007; Brookfield, 2005). Accepting and acknowledging other viewpoints through communication is fundamental as life situations continuously involves reaching or coming to an agreement with others (Brookfield, 2005). In summary, a broad spectrum of theories (trans-theoretical) and valuing other ways knowing within and outside of Western knowledge (inter-epistemological) is a way of practicing communicative action theory as it involves accounting for the many theories and ways of knowing without creating a hierarchy of knowledge when establishing a decision or reaching a consensus through communicative action. Critical Dietetics understands that the approach taken to create change is a choice (Brady & Gingras, 2019). The choices we dietitians make inherently reflect our values and philosophical approach.

Informing the axiology (core values of the organization) of WCD with theory and knowledge paradigms that value other forms of learning helps in understanding and addressing complex issues surfacing in today's world. The core values and theories grounded in WCD praxis are comprised of three tenets: a commitment to anti-oppression; critical praxis; and reflexivity (Brady & Gingras, 2019). These tenets are likely to expand, change, and develop as the efforts of Critical Dietetic scholars, practitioners, and students continue to learn from and

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contribute to various disciplines (Brady & Gingras, 2019). Brady & Gingras (2019) discuss “how these tenets should be understood as overlapping or interdependent facets that are collectively necessary to the mandate of Critical Dietetics” (p.17). As WCD contributes to the understanding of food and culture, these directive tenets intend to bring awareness towards self by encouraging dietitians to consider how the culture and position they grow up in affects their world view, practice, and research (Brady & Gingras, 2019). An important question to ask is, how does dietetic education engage students to become aware of their position and privilege? According to Brady (2019), “we have a responsibility as a profession, and as individual practitioners because we have response-ability - as people with the privilege of knowledge we have the ability to respond to health inequities and social injustices” (p. 155). This minimal learning and know-how on educating dietitians to be advocates allows some dietitians to view advocacy as work that lies beyond the scope of dietitian’s knowledge and practice (Brady, 2019). Therefore, WCD aims to diffuse the uncertainty dietitians have in their role when exposed to global challenges such as, economic inequality, racial injustice, sexism, violence, and the climate crisis (Brady, 2019; Fraser & Brady, 2019). The purpose of WCD is to recognize that these issues are relevant and intersect with the food knowledge we apply in? dietetic practice (Brady, 2019). Therefore, these tenets are inscribed into the backbone of CD’s values to help foster and develop new and seasoned dietetic professionals into food and nutrition specialists that can respond to and conquer issues surrounding social justice (Gingras & Brady, 2019; Brady, 2019).

The effort to acknowledge and redress social injustices is complicated and can be challenging. However, dietitians can start becoming aware of social injustices through welcoming self-reflexivity and asking themselves questions that may unmask assumptions and familiar ways of practice in the profession (Gingras et al., 2016). For example, would I choose to

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be a dietitian if I was not a white, middle-class female? (Brady, 2018). These questions can sometimes seem difficult to ask because learning to become critical is a personal endeavor that involves learning to be vulnerable, engaging in reflexivity, and questioning our assumptions (Aphramor et al., 2009; World Critical Dietetics, 2020; Gingras, 2012). However, engaging in critical theory and dialog is necessary if the objective is to achieve justice, equality, and tolerance. Positivism is limited in solving complex issues such as, food insecurity, urban agriculture, overfishing, climate change, food waste, underpaid employment in food work, food sovereignty of Indigenous people, and fat phobia (Brady, 2019). These complex issues along with the history of knowledge in dietetics requires different learning paradigms (Gingras et al., 2016).

The intention of WCD is not to replace the biomedical model (Gingras et al., 2016). It is recognized that prior empirical scientific research and its methods have allowed the discovery of vitamins and treatment of nutrient deficiencies, such as scurvy (Gingras et al., 2016). However, the scientific method does depreciate other forms of knowing and “views food simply as a vector for nutrient components rather than as an object of desire, pleasure, and disgust; a sensory experience and so on” (Gingras et al., 2016 p. 100). Efforts to understand other viewpoints is fundamental to WCD because we live in a world full of different cultures, agendas, and ideologies (Gingras et al., 2016). WCD continues its growth and determination to build a food system that attends to the social and cultural factors that negatively impacts the physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational health of all people (Brady & Gingras, 2019; Gingras et al., 2016). With recognition that the current approach to nutrition and dietetic practice does not attend to the multiple meanings of food and the complex contextual nature of health and illness, WCD calls on dietitians to explore innovative new ways of approaching practice (Gingras et al.,

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2016, Aphramor & Gingras, 2009; Aphramor et al., 2009). The exploration of new ideas for dietetic practice is fundamental and necessary to achieving a more humanistic approach for graduate dietitians in the twenty-first century (Gingras & Brady, 2019). Through bringing in more of the humanities RDs are able to flex social potential through allowing patients and clients to recognize their individual agency in society.

The founding members of WCD have put forth great effort to reshape the body of knowledge existing in dietetics (World Critical Dietetics, 2020; Aphramor et al., 2009). Yet, the efforts and the experiences of the founding members of WCD have not been documented. Therefore, gathering memories, stories, and anecdotes of founding members' experiences of founding WCD will not only foster a better understanding of the complexities dietitians experience, but it will help better define what it is to be a dietitian in Canada.

Oral History Methodology

What is Oral History?

In brief, oral history is a field of study and a method of historical research that involves gathering recorded interviews of personal narratives and lived experiences (Oral History Association, 2020; University of California, Santa Cruz, 2020). The voiced experiences of these personal narratives are of historical significance because they reveal how an event in time was digested, interpreted, and understood by people who have not often had their voice heard (Perks & Thomson, 2016). However, the recollection of people's past experiences does not mean that the aim of oral history is to search for the 'facts' of what really happened. Rather, the intention of oral history is to study how one's memory can help to understand and make meaning of events experienced in the past (Portelli, 1991). By collecting and interpreting interviews from those who have experienced an event, the researcher can analyze the recorded interview for patterns and themes that emerge from gathering narratives (Baylor University Institute for Oral History, 2016). Once the interviews have been conducted, interpreted, and transcribed they can be deposited into an archive and accessed by the public or used for research purposes (Oral History Association, 2020). In what follows, I discuss in greater depth the theoretical underpinnings and method of conducting oral history.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Oral History

Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of oral history involves learning about the background of research that has been examined and critiqued in the field and study of oral history. This includes polarizing perspectives, research findings, and social context of not only the limits, but also the possibilities and unique purposes of collecting interviews as a research method (Grele, 1998). I begin this section on the theoretical underpinnings of oral history with a discussion of the

reliability of memory and the value in exploring people's past experiences. Then, I describe how oral history as a methodology approaches the interpretation of personal narrative. Last, I share a reflexive discussion about myself as a novice researcher, including the privilege, responsibility, and transparency that comes with the position I feel accountable to uphold. As I continue to explain the methodology and method behind this research, I will note the term *researcher* and *interviewer* refers to myself; the individual conducting the research. The term *interviewee* is also applied interchangeably as *narrator* (Brady, 2009).

Reliability of Memory

I initially understood the study of oral history as the work of a detective, whereby I would be looking for facts and evidence to show how history truly happened. However, this is not the case. It was not until months of researching oral history that I discovered the purpose of this unique research method is to collect individuals' memories of past events (Portelli, 1991). Requesting individuals to return to their memory to recall events from the past may seem to researchers, who are interested in the 'truth' of what happened in the past, like an unreliable way to gather information. For example, historian Studs Turkle (1970) explains that his "work is not history, but memory, and he not searching not for fact, but the truth behind the fact" (Portelli, 1973, p. 39). What I gather from Turkle's explanation is that, although the responses the interviewee offers to the researcher may be faulty or unproven, they are still credible, relevant, and valuable to explore. Credibility in oral testimony exists in how the interviewee believes and remembers the past and the meaning that they have cultivated from that experience. The relevance of the narrative, whether the details are true or not, lies in the meaning that interviewees' make of their memories, and how that meaning impacts future decisions, judgement, or viewpoints.

Interpretation of Speech & Silence

A researcher must develop sound communication and listening skills to support the narrator in describing their past experiences in a way that connects with project objectives and the overall purpose of the project. Although I understand listening is an active skill that requires purposive and strategic effort, simply listening does not suffice in oral history (Portelli, 1991).

To gather in-depth thought processes from the narrator, the historian is required to analyze how the story is told and the enigmatic replies to questions asked (Portelli, 1991). Enigmatic responses are responses that are difficult to interpret, mysterious, or hard to understand.

Responses that are difficult to understand or follow may at first seem irrelevant or unimportant in the moment. However, researchers should be aware that mysterious responses can provide further detail into the narrator's experience. An ambiguous response may include moments of silences or pauses in conversation (Passerini, 1979, p. 58). Portelli (1991) explains:

The exact length and position of the pause may have an important function in the understanding of the meaning of speech. Regular grammatical pauses tend to organize what is said around a basic expository and referential pattern, whereas pauses of irregular length and position accentuate the emotional content... Many narrators switch from one type of rhythm to another within the same interview, as their attitude under discussion changes. Of course, this can only be perceived by listening, not by reading. (p.65)

Not only should the historian listen for pauses in conversation, but they should also attend to the tone, volume, and intonation of speech (Portelli, 1991). Attention to the rise and fall of a narrator's voice can help the interviewer detect moments with emotional content, especially if the storyteller is lacking an extensive vocabulary. Asking the narrator about a particular prior experience, the historian is likely to hear words that are subjective, such as feel, think, or believe.

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The non-objectivity of oral sources may not give a complete representation of what happened at the event, but it tells the historian what the event meant to the interviewee (Portelli, 1991). Portelli (1991) recognizes the most “unique and precious elements of oral sources, which no other sources possess in equal measure is the speaker’s subjectivity” (p. 67). When subjective words present themselves during the interview, such as interesting, unpleasant, sorry, the historian should ask the narrator to further define the subjective term in their own words. By doing so, the interviewer can gain a stronger understanding of the narrator’s experience. Subjectivity in narratives becomes increasingly meaningful when a group of people in individually conducted interviews repeatedly express similar thoughts or feelings towards past events (Portelli, 1991). Therefore, if the approach to research is broad and articulated enough the historian should be able to identify personal opinions, perceptions, and emotions that exist collectively among a defined group of individuals (Portelli, 1991).

Oral History and Critical Social Theory

Oral history is a research method that aims to gather “history from below” (Grele, 2007, pg. 38). That is, oral history aims to document and recount history through the memories of those who occupy marginalized positions in society by virtue of their identity (i.e. women, racialized, LGBTQ, and poor people), and/or by virtue of their position *vis a vis* denigrated forms of knowledge (i.e. non-positivist epistemologies). Collecting history from below challenges the status quo by giving those who have not often had their voices heard a way to share their perspectives, experiences, and opinions about events from the past. Thus, oral history challenges the status quo by which knowledge about the past has traditionally been informed by those who occupy dominant positions in society. Documenting and preserving the experiences and

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recollections of those who have not typically had their experiences or perspectives heard fills in the gaps, or cracks of how an event was interpreted through them. This differs from the dominant paradigms of knowledge that are associated with those who occupy dominant social positions who may experience and interpret the meaning of an event in a different manner due to their positionality in the world. Therefore, gleaning insight from those who are positioned “below”—those on the fringes of dominant ways of knowing and being brings awareness to unjust systems and inequalities from the abject position. Hence, oral history is well-suited for research that also draws on critical, social theory, which also aims to disrupt well-worn power inequities (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

The founding members of WCD occupy a marginalized position with respect to the dominant ways of knowing and being that shape the dietetic profession. The views of those who founded WCD on dietetic practice and education, and even the knowledge base on which dietetics claims its expertise, do not conform with prevailing ideas, practices, or values that have predominated the dietetic profession. Conducting oral history interviews with founding members of WCD enabled me to record and archive the formation, organizational, and social history of WCD. I was also able to collect and report founding members’ understandings of why they believe an organization such as WCD was needed as a way to change the dietetic profession.

Oral history disrupts what counts as knowledge and dominant forms of knowing by valuing the insights, perspectives, and viewpoints from those who are not often heard. However, recalling events from the past involves the use of memory which traditional history and knowledge identifies as subjective and unreliable, as opposed to the valid and reliable measures that scientific knowledge supports. Oral history, like critical/social theory understands that all

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thoughts, true or false, are dependent on conditions that can change (Bohman, 2021). Therefore, oral history challenges the facts or truth of science and the power maintained through knowledge hierarchies (e.g., objective > subjective). This is also challenged through critical/social theory acknowledging and accepting that all knowledge is constructed and influenced by the society around them (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Oral history invites us to consider dominant forms of knowing by adding value and credibility to other ways of knowing, including personal experiences, viewpoints, and perspectives.

The experiences of those who initiated the WCD movement are relevant to critical, social theory in that it assists in generating “knowledge that will change, not just interpret, the world” (Brookfield, 2005, p.25). The work of founding members further aligns with critical, social theory in that their intentions are to “unearth the manifestation and operation of power inequities within current social structures” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 27). Documenting the experiences of those who founded the CD movement develops knowledge and understanding of why founding members believed dietetics could be transformed through transdisciplinary scholarship and contributes to the wider movement for social justice. Dietetics traditionally has favored the pure and applied sciences in its education, practice, and research (MacLellan, 2019; Hirschhorn, 2018). The founding members raise the importance of incorporating the social sciences and the humanities into dietetics to inform a safer, fairer, and socially just practice. Therefore, through founding members’ perspectives being publicly archived through oral history methods, I am able to generate knowledge that will hopefully not only change the dietetics, but also change the world.

Me, the Researcher

As a novice researcher, I quickly learned the relevance of extracting knowledge from multiple disciplines can help better communicate, understand, and interpret what the interviewee is saying (Richie, 2015). An important responsibility of the historian is to “uphold the standards of the various disciplines and professions with which they are affiliated” (Oral History Association, 2002). Adhering to standards from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics extends and lengthens the planning and research involved in an oral history project. The length of time it takes to understand the complexities of oral history as a method while borrowing from other fields of studies for me, at least was unanticipated. As I move through the process of conducting my first oral history, I feel as if the unseen amount of groundwork makes oral history something that is “easy to learn, but hard to master” (Nolan, n.d.). Like many inexperienced oral historians, I believed that I thoroughly understood the intricacies and complexities of oral history after reading a few books, scholarly documents, and listening to oral histories (Grele, 1998). However, like Wong (2009), it was not until I continued to read and seek additional literary sources that I found oral history begins with a critical evaluation of myself, the researcher. Understanding myself as researcher requires reflexivity and asking myself the same questions that I would ask my participants. As Wong (2009) states, to understand power dynamics and the positionality held as an interviewer in relation to the interviewee, the researcher must place oneself physically in the shoes of the other—that is, experience an actual interview as an interviewee would. Unfortunately, being introduced to and conducting oral history at the same time has brought me to the realization that I have not experienced an interview as the narrator. Therefore, I am limited in this aspect. However, as the researcher, it seems imperative to build and foster a trusting relationship with the narrator and

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allow myself to be vulnerable and open in dialogue with the narrator, as anxiousness from the interviewee can impact the trajectory and flow of the story revealed in the interview (Wong, 2009). My aim is to build an open, trusting relationship with my participants to reduce tension and stress that the narrator may be experiencing. I intend to do this by having conversations with the participants, sharing narratives that I have written previously, and remaining open and accepting to any experiences they may share. Before conducting oral history interviews, it is recommended for myself, the historian, to conduct background research on each participant, the history and field of dietetics, as well as frameworks related to the discourse of dietetics from primary and secondary sources (Oral History Association, 2020).

Understanding the interviewer's background experience, as well as the dietetics profession and the critical dietetics movement, will also help me to better understand the point the interviewee is trying to get across. Additionally, it will enable me to draw stronger connections between theory and practice. What research from scholar-dietitians has revealed in the past is the need and desire for creativity within the profession (Lordly, 2014; Brady & Gingras, 2012). Creativity is understood as a way to explore self and identity (Brady & Gingras, 2012). Gathering personal narrative by allowing founding Critical Dietetic (CD) members to share their stories and memories encourages them to reflect on their past education and professional experiences while future dissemination of these stories will facilitate the learning of new coming dietitians and create exposure to the challenges and forthcoming opportunities that exist from within the dietetic profession.

As I entered this research theses, I gained awareness that the culture and the position that I stand in can influence the themes that I see arise in my data. For example, my findings may differ from a researcher who may have had a longer history in the dietetic profession and who

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has received their education from home economics studies, of where dietetics initially emerged from. I feel the groundwork, I have put into studying the methodological techniques of oral history along with the structure of applying a thematic analysis has helped sway me from personal biases and highlighting themes/topics of which cater to my personal interests such as body weight, bodies, diet culture, and family studies within dietetics. Although participants did touch on these topics throughout their interviews, they have come to reveal more as underlying concepts rather than the main themes, which is contrary to what I would initially thought.

Interestingly, the themes that did come out of the data allowed me to reflect on how and why I entered dietetic studies myself. Prior to entering dietetic studies, I thought about how earning the title of an RD through an accredited university program could open up a variety of broad and unique opportunities as a nutrition professional. However, as I entered dietetics, I found myself questioning, *Why aren't dietitians doing cooler things*—Or engaging in the many things that I believed dietitians could be a part in? Through this research, what I found was that the Critical Dietetics movement began as a way to diversify and broaden the profession—and that participants in this study, like myself, did not set finite definition of what the role of an RD entailed. As a recent graduate, researcher, and dietitian I never exactly imagined myself becoming involved in how we progress and evolve the profession. But as I reflect back and alongside with this research, I see how the future of the dietetic profession of has become an important part of my thesis work and my future work. I want to be here for the dietitians—former, current, and future. To ensure they're acknowledged and proud of their contributions to the profession today and in the future to come.

Method

This study applied oral history as a method to collect qualitative data through oral interviews. Oral history aims to explore and analyze historical events from the past through engaging with the narrator in a dialog that allows them to revisit their memories of that specific time. The principles and standards involved in conducting and creating oral histories can vary from project to project and are dependent on the researcher's main objectives and interview participants selected (Oral History Association, 2002). Oral history as a research method involves detachment from the positivist (excludes context) epistemological approach from which dietetics traditionally obtains its understanding of nutrition and health. Dietetics often takes on a reductionist approach in that it reduces the value of food down to its nutrients, which excludes context, such as the cultural and social components because the knowledge it leverages evaluates foods through its objective and physical properties. Deviating from the observational approach to research in itself is a unique process to pursue, as dietetics generally contends to the *science* and *objectivity* of food and human nutrition. Dietetics has traditionally promoted research that utilizes the scientific method that implies knowledge is verified through experiments that use objective and quantitative measures. This method of science tends to reduce potential theories or understandings into small entities of biochemical and molecular processes which strips away the context and thus the complexity and particular dynamic of an issue.

Participant Recruitment and Eligibility Criteria

To participate in this study, participants are required to be:

- a founding member of Critical Dietetics
- amongst the attendees of the Beyond Nutritionism workshop in 2009

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When Critical Dietetics first emerged, an article in the Dietitians of Canada Practice Blog titled *Critical Dietetics: A Declaration* was published to invite and inform others from outside and within the dietetic profession on the beginning of Critical Dietetics as an association (Gingras & Brady, 2019). Twenty-three participants who attended the *Beyond Nutritionism* workshop composed and signed the Declaration including Dr. Gingras (Gingras & Brady, 2019). Dr. Gingras was the organizer and creator behind the *Beyond Nutritionism* workshop. Therefore, she was first contacted with an invitation to participate in an interview for this research.

Qualitative studies generally use a smaller sample size as opposed to quantitative studies due to the richness of the data collected from each participant (two hours of recorded interviews per participant). Initially a sample of four to six participants were intended to be selected from the list of twenty-three workshop participants through systematic random sampling (Gingras & Brady, 2019; Whitfield, 2018). However, eight participants revealed interest to participate in the documentation of the history of CD and to gather a broader understanding and interpretation of how the movement initiated, as the researcher, I decided to interview and include all eight participants in this study. Participants were conveniently and systematically sampled from the participant pool of twenty-three attendees by choosing every fourth person from the list of workshop attendees listed in alphabetical order. Founding members selected through systematic randomization were contacted via email an invitation to participate in the study. If one of the selected participants chose not to participate or had a delayed response, then another potential participant was systematically selected and emailed an invitation until the total required participants were recruited. As previously mentioned, due to a delayed response through email and shown interest to participate in the study, a total of eight founding members responded in agreement to participate—rather than the sample of four to six participants that were initially

intended to be recruited. The email invitation provided information about the study, indicating the purpose, aim, and objectives of the research and a request to support and contribute to dietetic knowledge and the history of WCD. Those participants who agreed to engage in the study were contacted via email, phone, or video call to discuss details of the research, including the project goals, the interview process, interview dates, the end products of the research, and to answer any questions or concerns the participant may have had (Oral History Association, 2020).

Data Collection

Each participant was asked to participate in a two-part oral history interview, with each part taking approximately one hour. Part one and part two of the interview were conducted about one week apart. When conducting Part I of the interview, I ensured research notes about the narrator and the interview guide were at hand. As indicated by Oral History principals, I recorded the introduction of the interview and included it as part of the data. The majority of the data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix A). The interview guide was grouped into three chronological sections and broken into two parts (Part I and Part II) with several probes for each segment. The purpose of conducting the interviews in two parts is that it gives the interviewee and the interviewer time to reflect on Part I of the interview and creates an opportunity for both to address any lingering thoughts or clarifications in Part II of the interview. Another reason for using a two-part interview process is that oral history interviews seek deep understanding of participants' stories and memories and can be quite long and tiring for participants. A two-part interview reduces participant burden and enhances the quality of the data. Part I of the interview was transcribed within four to eight days of the first interview, and prior to the Part II interview. Transcribing the first interview before the second interview allowed myself to address any remaining questions that may have been unanswered or unclear and created the

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opportunity for me to discover questions that may have not yet been asked but are relevant to the research. Essentially, conducting a two-part interview gave the interviewer and interviewee time to reflect on potentially overlooked details that may have been key components to their narrative.

The composed questions were open ended and broad enough to allow the narrator to respond to and “address issues that reflect their concerns” (Oral History Association, 2020). Throughout the interview process historians are advised to explore all relative areas of interest therefore, the dialog can deviate from interview guide in an attempt to “extend the inquiry beyond the specific focus of the project to create as complete a record as possible for the benefit of others” (Oral History Association, 2002). Impromptu dialog and further probing questions that came up during the interview process was encouraged by oral historians to enrich the matter of the subject (Oral History Association, 2002). However, I maintained awareness of the time throughout the duration of the interview to ensure the appropriate amount was attributed to each question but yet resisted rushing the interviewee through their personal narrative. Resisting to exit the interview and enticing the interviewee to describe the intricate details of their experiences further enriches the data collected (Oral History Association, 2020). At the end of each interview, I inquired if narrators would like to say anything they feel is prominent or important to the research project that had not been asked in prior questions. Some interviews exceed over sixty minutes because the narrator was further revealing their personal experiences and indicated they were okay with the interview extending over the stated time.

Interviewees were situated in several geographic locations therefore, online communication platforms such as: FaceTime Video or Skype involved a test-run one day prior to the interview to resolve any possible technological issues that could occur (Oral History Association, 2020). To respect the rights of the participants, they were given the option of a

visual/audio interview or audio alone (without the video) recording (Oral History Association, 2020). The interview audio was transcribed verbatim using MAXQDA software (VERBI Software, 2020). The transcript was edited according to The Baylor University Style Guide, which referenced how to indicate meaningful pauses or hesitations in the dialog (Institute for Oral History, 2018). However, it is important to note that the transcript does not exist to replace the actual tape recording (Portelli, 1991; Oral History Association, 2021). The value of oral history is archiving the interviews for the listener to have the ability to hear the nuances of speech, laughter, and silence which can only be noticed by listening, not by reading (Portelli, 1991; Oral History Association, 2021). To aid in my familiarity with the data, and so that I was able foster a deep understanding of interviewees' narratives, I transcribed the interviews myself (Portelli, 1991; Institute for Oral History, 2020; Brady, n.d.). Once Part I and Part II of each participants interview had been transcribed, the transcribed data was analyzed utilizing a thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The thematic analysis supports in conducting a coding framework by identifying key words, text segments, and topics from the interview (Attride-Stirling, 2001). After systematically searching the data of transcribed interview through the identified codes, themes were abstracted from the coded text segments (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Once themes had been explored they were further categorized and condensed into clusters of shared issues (organizing themes). The broader themes (global themes) are described and summarized how they are connected by utilizing text segments from the original transcript to support the thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). A detailed step-by-step process is further outlined below.

Data Analysis

The tool and step-by-step process guide to exploring recurring themes that emerge in the data is a technique called *thematic networks* (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Thematic networks is a

method used to analyze data through web-like illustrations called *networks* (Attride-Stirling, 2001). These networks summarize the main themes that emerged throughout the data and draws on core features that were common throughout each oral interview (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The ability to interpret statements and draw upon common themes is grounded from Stephen Toulmin's Argumentation Theory (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Purdue, 2021). Argumentation Theory is an interdisciplinary approach into understanding how one makes meanings of past events and how they negotiate their thoughts and decisions (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Purdue, 2021). Below is a step-by-step process of how I analyzed the data through *thematic networks* (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

1. First, the data or text was transcribed from each interview and then the second step in creating thematic networks involved dissecting the text into meaningful and manageable pieces of statements, quotes, or single words that are relevant to the literature and research objectives mentioned above (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Each text segment was refined and renamed to help identify the common or striking themes that emerged (Attride-Stirling, 2001). To avoid confusion, text segments were set with word boundaries and limitations so they did not become repetitive or interchangeable (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

2. Once themes had been derived from the text and identified, the themes were assembled into similar coherent groups, e.g., Themes about X, themes about Y (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

3. Possible themes were then arranged into groups. These groups of themed text segments represented *basic themes* (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The basic themes were then rearranged into clusters of shared issues to create *organizing themes* (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Once organizing themes were arranged, several revisits to the original transcripts were made to ensure the data supported and reflected the findings and groupings of text (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

5. Next, organizing themes were identified and labeled based on underlying issues by summarizing the main claim, proposition, or assumption that the organizing themes are about (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The main claim derived from the organizing themes then were arranged into the “*global theme* of the network: the core principle that encapsulates the main point of the texts” (Attride-Stirling, 2001 p. 393). The procedure was then repeated for each grouping/network (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

6. Once the *basic*, *organizing*, and *global* themes were identified they were arranged into web-like representations, called a *network* (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The network was verified and further refined to ensure it reflects/supports the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The purpose constructing and organizing a thematic network is that it not only creates a tool for the researcher, but for the reader as well (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Finally, I revisit my original research objectives and questions to summarize how the network supports the arguments and claims made in the interview (Attride-Stirling, 2001). A discussion of each network and its results are described in detail with excerpts from interviews along with an in-depth analysis that first includes my voice and then prior research that further supports the themes that have emerged under the network (Attride-Stirling, 2001). For a more detailed explanation on the process of creating thematic networks as an analysis technique see Attride-Stirling, 2001 article (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Through utilizing oral history as a method and a thematic analysis, it has revealed that the themes that emerged from the data bring forth the inevitable and necessary need to adapt to what is now needed in the profession and how surprisingly difficult the effort put forward to do so has been. Through collecting data and analyzing the transcripts, interpretations of why and how WCD was established through the memories of founding members. Furthermore, through the themes that emerged out of the data, discussions surrounding the challenges and opportunities to

progress the future of dietetics have been brought to light and illuminated through the first voice perspectives of seasoned, well-rounded dietitians. Academic, peer reviewed, and government research have also been brought in to further support the research findings and to influence action orientated change within the profession.

Results and Discussion

Participants

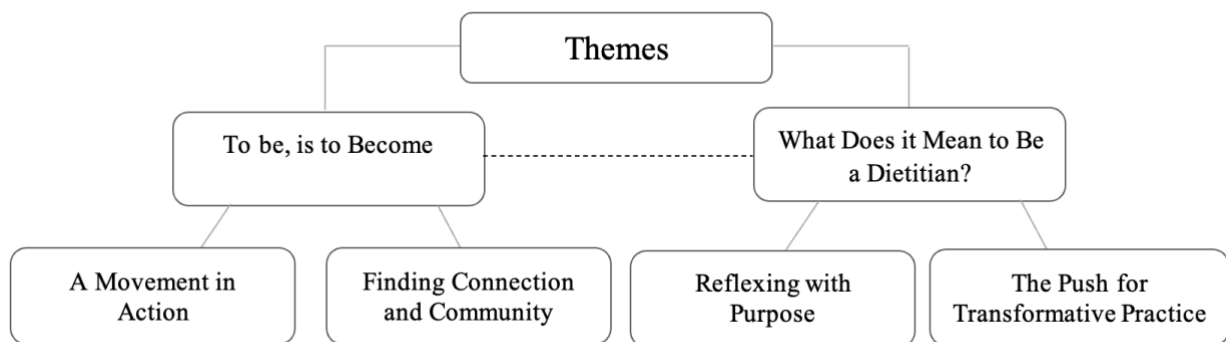
The participants in this study include eight individuals from around the globe who were engaged in the dietetic profession, either as practitioners, researchers, educators, and/or regulators, and who attended the workshop, *Beyond Nutritionism* (BN) that was held at X University in 2009, and as such are among the founding members of WCD (See Appendix B for the list of participants).

Themes

Below, I draw on the oral testimony of those who participated in this research to present two global themes that emerged from my analysis. Each global theme comprises a number of organizing themes that elaborate the essential features and support the patterns of the global theme. Together, the goal and organizing themes expand the scope and complexity of participants' experiences as they relate to the objectives of my research. Recall that my research objectives are three-fold: 1) to document the formation and development of WCD since its founding in 2009 through the oral testimony of its founding members; 2) to gather insights, anecdotes, and collect stories of *history from below* of how critical dietitians understand how and why WCD formed; 3) to shed light on the meaning of WCD to its founding members, including the significance on founding members' professional lives and identities, as well as to the dietetic profession more

broadly. In other words, this research seeks to elaborate how, why, and to what effect WCD formed as understood by its founding members. The two global themes that emerged from my analysis of the interview data in response to my research objectives include: 1) *To be is to Become*; 2) *What Does It Mean to Be a Dietitian?* (See Figure 1 Global Themes 1 and 2 Diagram). As noted, the aim of oral history is not to uncover facts about “what really happened,” but is to draw on people’s memories and the meaning of their experiences from past events. Hence, the global themes, and corresponding organizing themes, illuminate how and why the events that surrounded the *Beyond Nutritionism* workshop were meaningful for those who participated in this research.

Figure 1. Global Themes 1 and 2



Global Theme 1: To be, is to become

The first global theme, *To be is to Become*, comprises participants’ memories of the BN workshop that took place at X University in 2009 during which WCD was formed (View Figure 1. Global Themes 1 and 2). The theme, *To be, is to Become* refers to how participants understood that eventually dietetics would be disrupted and transformed into becoming a profession where diversity was required, and questions related to knowledge and practice were continuously reflected upon. Questioning the advancement and practice of dietetics was not intended to demean the profession, but rather provoked as a way to continuously strengthen the profession.

Therefore, *to be* present at the BN workshop had become a way for participants to bring the change they aspired to see into the profession. Therefore, *to become* progressive and more diverse in scope of practice, WCD formed as a collective to voice areas related to food and nutrition where the expertise of dietitians is valuable and necessary. Essentially, WCD initiated the process of diversifying the profession through expanding the body of knowledge in dietetics while also addressing their role in systemic and structural inequities. This theme elaborates how WCD came to be and why a movement was important to establish in becoming a profession that is engaged in socially just practice and activism/advocacy.

Participants who attended the workshop recognized that dietetics needed to change. Critical Dietetics came together to discuss the complexities of food, nutrition, and health in the context of dietetics and to become a more inclusive and diverse profession. Those present at the workshop understood how health and wellbeing is impacted socially, culturally, historically, and environmentally, and that there are many avenues for dietitians to explore and expand upon. Therefore, this theme describes how the movement Critical Dietetics came to be and why it formed into an organization known today as, World Critical Dietetics. This global theme comprises two organizing themes: 1) *A Movement in action*; 2) *Finding Connection and Community* (View Figure 1. Global Themes 1 and 2).

Organizing theme 1.1: A Movement in Action

The first organizing theme, A Movement in Action, describes the events and the wider context of dietetic education and practice in Canada that set the stage for the *Beyond Nutritionism* workshop, as well as the events that unfolded during the workshop as remembered by participants that led to the founding of WCD.

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The story of WCD begins well before 2009, and is rooted in the experiences of Dr. Jacqui Gingras, who planned and hosted the Beyond Nutritionism workshop at X University. Hence, the story of WCD begins with the experience of Gingras becoming a registered dietitian (RD). Following the completion of her undergraduate degree in dietetics Gingras was accepted to the dietetic internship program at Royal Columbian Hospital. It was during internship that Gingras quickly learned she knew very little about working with people, making her realize how complex educating others about food and nutrition really was. Below is an excerpt of Gingras describing how her dietetic internship motivated her to apply for a master's program:

Despite all odds—I got an internship at Royal Columbian Hospital, in New Westminster, on the coast near Vancouver. And I decided not long after that, I would apply to do my masters degree at U of A [University of Alberta] because I just wasn't finished learning. Despite the thought that I knew what I needed to know to do my job now for the rest of my life (laughs) I quickly learned that I knew pretty much, very little. I knew very little. And yeah—

After being accepted into a master's degree in nutrition at the University of Alberta, Gingras started a private practice where she worked with people struggling with eating issues and engaged in anti-fatphobia activities to advance fat liberation, which included a scale smashing and a diet book shredding. After her masters, Gingras' goal was to move her private practice from Edmonton to Vancouver. As Gingras rebuilt her practice in Vancouver, she also applied to PhD programs. She initially applied to an interdisciplinary program but was unsuccessful. Prompted by conversations with colleagues in sociology Gingras applied and was accepted into the Faculty of Education at University of British Columbia. Gingras recalled that the “hinges flew off the door”

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as she discovered the social sciences and critical social theory; she realized that there was a large amount of literature that was relevant to food, nutrition, and dietetics that she felt she needed to catch up on. Gingras' inspiration to write a book for her PhD was influenced by a professor who graduated from the same department and was the first in Canada to write her dissertation in the form of a novel. Gingras shares how her professor influenced her to write a creative autobiography titled, *Longing for Recognition* for her PhD dissertation in this way:

Well, I wouldn't call what I wrote a novel. I would call it a *creative autobiography* or a *creative autoethnography*. But she [the professor] showed me through her own examples what was possible, and she came out of that department that I was in. And so, she was my inspiration. It's funny that we're talking about her now because she passed away five years ago... I reached out to her, to thank her for teaching me what she taught me, and I found out that she had died because I discovered her obituary. And so, I've been thinking about her a lot lately. And that was one of the reasons I wrote that book, but the other reason is because the women who participated in the research with me asked me to do something more creative than just write your standard dissertation—because they wanted their stories to be heard.

Gingras recognized from an early time in her career the desire for RD's voices to be heard and the need for dietetics to incorporate knowledge from other disciplines. During the time Gingras was writing her dissertation she engaged with scholarly authors outside of dietetics who were educators in sociology and environmental studies who influenced the work of her book, how she understood people, food, nutrition, and human wellbeing. Upon finishing her PhD studies, she began to consider how pursuing a career as a professor at an educational institution could be a

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potential route to impact those who would become future nutrition and dietetic professionals. Here Gingras shares how obtaining a PhD influenced her to become engaged in creating change and exploring dietetic education:

And so, it [sociology] wasn't even on my radar—education was, because I was concerned about how we were educating RDs. And so that's what lead me to talk to somebody in that PhD program. And you know, the faculty of education is mainly concerned with preparing teachers for the K-12 system, which was not me either—and yet, there was one program within the faculty of education that was kind of a catchall for people who were interested in education, but didn't come from a traditional background. And that's where I fit, in that place of misfits. And I just have so much gratitude to the people that I went through my PhD with, who taught me so much. I had so much catching up to do...

... When I started a PhD, I didn't do it to become a prof, but and I've told this story many times. But one of my friends in the PhD program started to apply for jobs to become a prof before he finished his dissertation. And I thought, *Oh! That's interesting.* That's an option I guess, because I was still doing private practice and doing quite well and being able to support myself.

Despite Gingras' success with private practice, she felt the need to make a career change and a way that she could influence dietetic knowledge. Shortly after graduation, a job opened at Ryerson University. She applied the first time without success and then reapplied in the nutrition department the following year eager to research dietetics through a transdisciplinary approach. Below Gingras describes below why and how she found her career as an academic educator:

...As I moved into the internship and started talking to people and listening to their stories and realizing that it's not all about me—I was totally insufferable. I started to recognize that, *Okay, if you're going to do this work then you need to think about how you're doing it.* And you need to take little bit more care with other people—that I'm encountering in these places and in these hospitals. Yeah, I started to develop this when I did the internship rounds—things shifted for me, in that—that's where the seeds of skepticism were born—or it's the profession. Because, *Okay—I think what we're doing is harmful to others.* All this time I've invested to become this person who's going to help others, I think could be happening, with respect to weight management, especially. I thought, *Whoa! This is not good.*

...And this job came—this job opening came up at Ryerson. And so, I applied—and I didn't get it... Then I reapplied for the next years posting in the nutrition department at Ryerson and I went there again, and I said again, "This is what I want to do. I want to look at how we educate RDs. I want to explore these different sites of marginalization within the field. And they hired me. I set out right away to start doing that research, *I was really excited*—I wrote so many grants, raised so much money, and hired so many students and it was just a flourishing research program and we were pushing out paper after paper on things that had never been researched before, and Jenna was a big part of that—I mean, she was just, yeah - especially during her master's degree, later on. Because I didn't meet her till the end of her undergrad, but just anything was possible.

Engaging in research and working with students made Gingras feel as her true self and as if she had found what she was inherently passionate about. Gingras shares how within this time as

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a professor at Ryerson she was inspired to write a grant to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for the workshop in this way:

I absolutely felt that I'd found my calling. And that was going to continue. And I was digging in deeper, and deeper into questions that certain people did not want to explore because they wanted the status quo to be maintained. But that wasn't feasible for me. ... Well also, just one of my last things that I want to say is that—it was during that time that I wrote a grant that enabled all those people to come together in that room at that university to create Critical Dietetics. So like you, Critical Dietetics has kept me going through that very hard time. And it's not *Critical Dietetics*, it's the people that are part of Critical Dietetics—that were there from the beginning, the Cathy Morelys', the Jenna Bradys', the Debbies', the Daphnes', and the Johns', and just Lucy, and just all of those people—they were there. And that has, yeah—kept me alive.

The funding for the workshop, *Beyond Nutritionism* (BN) had provided the opportunity for those from around the globe to gather and create the unpredicted establishment of what is known today as *World Critical Dietetics*. A particular point to note, is that not all of those who were invited were RDs. Rather, those who were invited were individuals who contributed to Gingras' learning during her PhD studies, as well as authors whose work had informed the auto-ethnographic fiction book, *Longing for Recognition*. Gingras describes why she felt the need to involve others who held knowledge outside of the traditional realms of dietetics:

But the fact was that we were able to come together—and really it was such a selfish, self-centered initiative for me because it was the authors of all the people that I wanted to learn from and hear from. And authors of the people that I quoted in the book that I

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wrote, and the authors of those papers that were so important to me—as I was learning and growing during my PhD. I just felt like if we could all get in the same room something powerful would happen and some more transformation would occur faster than it had been.

Gingras thought was that if she could bring together those who had influenced her ideas and thoughts about food and nutrition together that others would better understand the need and urgency for the profession to change. Therefore, the purpose of the workshop was to bring perspectives germane to critical and feminist scholarship to bear on the accepted norms, values, and culture of the dietetic profession, including its knowledge-base, pedagogical approaches and education to new practitioners, as well as practice. Gingras describes her reason for initiating a workshop in this way:

I wanted to understand how people were thinking. I wanted to understand why people were doing the things they were doing. I wanted to understand how to talk to people. How to listen. I wanted to understand how to create the conditions where behavior changes would flourish. I wanted to become a better person and also, a better dietitian. I felt like I was so ill-equipped in terms of the psychological reasons for people choosing the foods they do. I need to understand humans. And of course, myself.

In other words, Gingras' initial aim was not to found an organization, but to better understand herself as a RD by creating an opportunity for people who had influenced her thinking and that were connected to the dietetic profession in some way to come together. Gingras developed the grant application in the fall of 2008 and was awarded the grant funds in

the spring of 2009. It was not anticipated that she would receive the funds but once she had, Gingras moved quickly to organize and host the workshop for June of 2009. Students of Gingras at the time included Yuka Asada (a participant in this study) and Jennifer (Jenna) Brady (current president of WCD). These students and other peers participated in helping Gingras coordinate travel for international attendees, plan accommodations, and food, as well as other components necessary to plan the workshop.

In preparing for the workshop, participating students were asked to submit expressions of interest in which they identified a topic related to the workshop's theme. Based on those expressions of interest, five students were selected to present a paper at the workshop. Gingras' planned to have 17 attendees, including the five selected students, present their papers in thematic sessions. Each thematic session would comprise three to four presented papers that would be synthesized by a discussant. The discussants included Dr. John Coveney (Australia), Dr. Lucy Aphramor (United Kingdom), Dr. Marjorie DeVault (United States), Dr. Ann Fox (Canada), and Gingras (Canada). Gingras also planned to include other activities such as research circles and working groups at the workshop.

As Yarker recalls those who were contributing presentations at the workshop had their research papers sent out to read before the event. Yarker remembers reading about the themes and topics to be covered at the workshop becoming excited over the knowledge that would be shared and discussed at the workshop. Yarker describes how she felt in the lead up to the workshop in this way:

Because I think the original contributions we did receive as a package beforehand, so we read them beforehand and then people presented on that. I'm not sure—that seems to be a memory—airplane reading and like getting excited beforehand.

McLellan further describes how she felt excitement leading up to the workshop and too how she became to understand that the meaning of the gathering defied the need for fanciful accommodations and housing arrangements:

It was funny because we were put up in the residence. Which—you ever lived in residence? Not the most cushy accommodations. (laughs) I don't want to appear snobby, but you know. I got into my room and there's this one really hard bed. Really hard single bed, and a closet, and a shared bathroom. And I mean, I'm sure we wouldn't be able to do that now—with the pandemic. Life has changed so much. But, that was not the important part of the weekend—where we were, because we didn't spend much time in there. And yeah, I think right from the beginning Jacqui set the tone for the workshop—as to why we were all there. Because most of us were from Canada, but we did have John Coveney from Australia and Lucy Aphramor from the UK [United Kingdom] and we had—oh what's her name, Marjorie DeVault from the US [United States]. Well that was another reason why that intrigued me, because I had read Marjorie DeVault's work—and I always love to go to hear people that I've read their work. I like to go hear them speak and when I knew she was going to be there that further prompted me to go for sure. But yeah, it was just an invitation kind of out of the blue.

MacLellan shares her interest in DeVault's work—an academic outside of dietetics and why it had persuaded her to join the event. Morely recalls how she too felt delighted and influenced by those participating in the workshop, despite not knowing what could happen over the next two days:

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I was excited to be there. I was excited to see from the pre-reading and the pre-work we had, who was going to be there. Some people I didn't know, but there were lots of people that I did know and all these amazing masters' students that were there. And I remember standing there and it was just like a little student desk as the signage place - in classrooms, it was nothing fancy. And I was standing at this little desk filling in my name tag or something and John Coveney was way down the hall, and we just ran to each other like slow motion—so great! And he didn't know anybody, so he was like, “Oh, thank goodness you're here.” So, I was really excited. I didn't know what Jacqui had in mind for how these days would unfold. How can it be that you invite thirty people, and everybody does a presentation and then you make something out of it? Like, how do you do that? So, I was really excited to be there, but I had no idea how this was going to unfold.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Leslie Bella, from Queen's University due to her expertise on professionalization in healthcare professions, publishing, and her ability to foster critical dialog. Participants from Canada who were selected to join the workshop were invited based on their knowledge in dietetic discourse and aspiration to weave critical social theory in the profession. Below Gingras shares how she came to decide to write a grant. The grant's funds would create the potential to gather authors and those who influenced her education to take part in the workshop's discussion and transformation in the dietetic profession:

Mm-hm. I can't remember the exact moment when I got the idea to write the grant to fund the attendants, but I think it was very similar to other times I've written grants is; There's money available to do something that sounds amazing and so I wrote the grant

and received it. Now, these things take years so you submit a grant in October and you don't find out until April and then I think we moved very quickly to host it that June.

The approval of the grant required Gingras to organize the upcoming event quickly. And although the organizing details of the workshop were crucial, it seems that the excitement of the upcoming event had more to do with the potential for change in dietetics rather than the constitutes of the two-day workshop.

Day One of the Workshop:

Gingras recalled that day one of the workshop had begun with an emotional start:

And it was also a really difficult time for me personally Nikita because I was—I had actually separated from my partner—like, a few days before then, like it was all happening at the same time. And so emotionally I was a complete wreck during those two or three days—I can't even remember what it was—in June, 2009 and I was thinking about whether I would go back. My partner had actually asked me to leave because I was giving so much of myself to my work that—I was you know, just basically absent. And I was missing my kids, my son would have been three and my daughter was um, almost six. It would have just been her birthday (sigh) and yeah. I made some opening remarks for the workshop and I started crying which is only mildly embarrassing—like, incredibly embarrassing, because a lot of these people were my heroes, I've never met them before and here I am crying. And I was thanking the people behind the scenes that made it possible for us to be present, and I just remember John as I started choking up, I remember John [Coveney] saying, "Here! Here!" (Claps hands).

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After Coveney recognized Gingras' sentiment in her emotionally charged welcome and stepped in, the workshop—or the beginning of a movement was now in motion as described here by Gingras:

—he's actually British but he has an accent and he's like, "Eeya! Eeya!" And he started clapping and that helped me kind like, *Okay, get yourself together!* And then the program just—moved on with itself—launched itself. And so yeah, you can imagine how enriching and intense that was.

After a frantic beginning, the workshop then proceeded and individuals began to present their papers. Yarker recalls here how she felt about the topics and themes that were brought into discussion from individual's presentations at the workshop:

I just remember sitting there and really thinking about what the people were talking about. And there were many things that I hadn't considered, or yeah, it was all just really—they were new perspectives for me. It was great being amongst people—I always love being amongst people who are super passionate about things—that just really enlivens me, so I love that. And I love learning new things—that's something I've always loved, learning new things. Yeah, I just remember being alive, very alive during the whole thing. Very excited and engaged and yeah. I don't have very specific moments I just remember that overall feeling and like, you know—if I need to use the washroom, I'm like, run to the washroom quick and comeback because I didn't want to not miss anything. Or even if it was a break, I wanted to talk to the people casually, I didn't want to miss a conversation.

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Asada also echoes Yarker's feelings of excitement towards topics that were being presented and brought into conversation at the workshop in this way:

I just remember overall feeling very excited because the things that these people were talking about, in terms of discontent with the profession, with the professionalization process, with dietetic education—all those things. I remember just thinking, I had just lived it, I had just come out of the internship, I had worked as a clinical dietitian. So for me, it was like all my lived experience, but being talked about in a scholarly way. So, that was really exciting to me.

For Asada the lived experiences of becoming and being a RD was not often a topic she heard discussed among her peers and colleagues, which had made this scholarly event rather unique from others. Gingras' program outline, including the facilitated discussions were expressed by participants as “groovy” and “exciting.” Coveney noted that what made this event interesting from other scholarly seminars was the concept of having newer scholars present their work and then having a discussant connect together the commonalities between each paper presentation. Aphramor, also reveals that having students present as participants whose voice was equally valuable was a novel concept to her as well. However, those participants who were students at the time of the workshop like Asada, reveals how she at first felt intimidated before entering the workshop because the well know academics who were attending the conference:

I still at this point in my life really didn't have a lot of exposure to people who had graduate degrees even. Like, I haven't met—you know, coming from my family background and my upbringing—I hadn't met a lot of people with PhDs, or scholars, or something. So, A) I was highly intimidated of them all throughout my master's program—that was kind of the first time where I was seeing so many more PhDs—of

course and undergrad. But I think with the masters, especially it being such a smaller program, you just had more interaction with professors. Because in my undergrad program our classes were big. So yeah, being in this meeting with them and then everybody being *soo* you know—not like, *I am Lucy Aphramor the professor and you are a student*. No, everybody was very collegial and treated me like my experiences mattered.

Diffusing the hierarchy between educator and student, as well as being amongst people who resisted the conventional and traditional social norms of academia, created an organic and unanticipated connection among workshop participants. Asada describes that it seemed most educators and attendees in the room had a philosophic approach that they were all there on equal grounds and thought deeply about their positionality as an academic which influenced participants comfort for an open dialog during their time at the workshop. Therefore, what happened was those participants who were at first intimidated were now feeling excited and honored to be sitting there and thinking about new perspectives they had not before considered amongst passionate people.

The criticality of the themes that were shared throughout the workshop and the conversations explored brought light to the various complexities of food and nutrition including the various experiences lived by those who encountered challenges in becoming and being a RD. Although participants hailed from diverse locations, various disciplines, and areas of dietetic practice, participants described feeling an unanticipated and immediate bond among the other attendees at the workshop. This immediate connection is interesting because participants described how finding a community of people who were thinking about the complexities of food, nutrition, and health in the context of dietetics was uncommon and difficult to find—even on a global scale. And because meeting professionals who shared like-minded values and ideas surrounding dietetics

was a rare occurrence, participants often express that they experienced feeling alone in their career. These encounters were so rare in fact, that in instances where Morely heard a voice that explored the contextual and social factors of food and nutrition, she would often reach out to further engage with that individual. Therefore, in this case, finding their people was not intentional, but not entirely random either. Participants share that they had, through chance meetings, made connections prior to the BN workshop. However, the workshop gave them the time and space to engage, collaborate, and openly share their concerns for the profession.

So, although Aphramor and Coveney met other BN workshop participants previously at other academic functions, it was unexpected and unknown that they would again connect years later to collaborate across the globe—yet, it's not as if meeting and connecting later in the future was entirely unplanned. It was almost as if these people *coalesced* or came together to eventually form something bigger. Below I will share experiences from the memories of founding members as to why they felt they had found their people through gathering at the BN workshop in 2009.

Organizing theme 1.2: Finding Connection and Community

It slowly became evident throughout the first day that those who had decided to attend the workshop all held different perspectives which contributed to the acknowledgement that there existed an array of possibilities for RDs to be involved in. MacLellan, a prior Dietitians of Canada (DC) board member describes how she began to recognize the gaps that existed within the dietetic profession:

Well, I was chair of the board of directors for Dietitians of Canada and on the board for three years. During which time we were working on what was then called *Vision 2020*—which is obviously behind us now. I noticed at that time— because we did a lot of

member connections and member outreach that there were a lot of DC [Dietitians of Canada] members who were not very happy with the way things were and I remember thinking that the board of directors was not functioning the way it should be either. And it was a challenge because you're working within an organization who had a leader who had been there for many, many, many years and who had a lot of power. So, I knew that Dietitians of Canada had to change, but I remember at the time when I was on the board of directors, I wasn't really sure where it had to change.

Although MacLellan was uncertain of where change in the profession needed to happen, it seems that what members desired was change within the profession and to explore beyond the traditional role of a RD and to question what being a RD means. However, finding others who were eager to explore the depth, breadth, and the role of a RD was hard to find. Gord expresses how gathering at the BN workshop had been something she had been longing for in her career, in this way:

Oh, to me it was like—it was like, being offered a glass of water when you're dying of thirst. It was a breath of fresh air. It was hope. It was like working and just knowing that there was so much better work that could be done in the profession. Dietitians of Canada, at that time—it's improved a lot. You know, people that are critical of it now—and it has room for criticism, obviously—Dietitians of Canada—but back then it was so removed from who I was or the kind of work that I thought we should be doing. And all of a sudden there was this group of dietitians and well-educated academic dietitians saying, "Let's make some change. Let's talk about how we can improve the profession. And I couldn't believe it, it was like a lifeline I would say, professionally. Not personally, but professionally was like a lifeline.

What did being a RD mean? Where were RDs needed? Or who would benefit from the knowledge of a RD? Many of those who gathered at the workshop collectively recognized the range of professional possibilities where the expertise of a RD and nutrition professional could be beneficial in eliciting structural and systemic change in society. However, there was uncertainty about the role and practice of a RD that explored beyond the traditional area or setting of a RD. Gord's describes how she began to feel frustrated in her career as a public health RD in this way:

At one point I co-taught a course at Ryerson. I was getting really fed up with the work at Public Health. At that time, I had become a *healthy-living* or *healthy-lifestyle* dietitian.

We were just doing *cookie-cutter* sessions in the community, and I had really struggled to try and talk about dietitians going out into the community and doing the kind of work that Kim Travers wrote about, Kim Raine wrote about—you know, where really working with community groups to—

Although Gord felt moments of frustration in her career, what Gord experienced by attending the workshop was meeting other RDs who felt the same way as she did and lived similar experiences as she did throughout her education and professional career. A memory of how these intimate connections formed at the workshop is further shared by Gord here:

Oh, I do have another memory—yes, it involves Debbie MacLellan from PEI [Prince Edward Island]. I remember because I gave my presentation and Debbie said to me—oh I'll never forget this—I ended my presentation saying that *I had to leave dietetics*—you know, in order to practice the way I wanted to, or work the way I wanted to—something along those lines about how sad it was that I had to leave dietetics. And Debbie said in a

very compassionate, professorial manner that she didn't really think that I had left dietetics—that she thought I was still quite immersed in it, being there at the conference for example, and writing about it. And so, she kind of challenged my narrative in a way that actually had a very big impact on me and helped me to *reshape* the way I was looking at my relationship with dietetics. In other words, she kind of said, "Come on back. You haven't really left yet. Come on back in." So, I remember that.

MacLellan at the time of the workshop was the chair of the nutrition department at University of Prince Edward Island which was not heavily compromised of traditional dietetic roles and responsibilities—meaning, not working within a clinical setting or doing nutrition counselling. Therefore, MacLellan recalls here how she felt compelled to reach out to Gord while at the workshop:

I was chair of the nutrition department—I'm not really doing any dietetic work. I wasn't even at that point during those years really doing any dietetic work. I wasn't even at that point in those years really doing any dietetic education—very small amount. But I said, *"I'll always call myself a dietitian because I'm proud of the profession that I'm in. You know, I may never practice as a dietitian again in the traditional sense, but I'm still a dietitian."* And then she started to cry—and then I started to cry—then she gave me this big hug, and about six months after that workshop she emailed me and told me what an impact that had made.

What I feel is important to note in this memory is the power that can transpire between two professionals being vulnerable to one another. Being open and understanding to a peer's perspective as they share their personal experiences allowed one RD to regain a feeling of

belonging within her profession. Vulnerability is a virtue that CD continues to advocate for in practice. Gord expresses how being able to be vulnerable and open about her position as a RD at this workshop enabled her to feel connected to the profession in this way:

Well, we didn't know each other. I didn't know Debbie—you know, she just put out her hand to me and I took it—like, figuratively speaking—I was at the front of the room. And I may have written her afterwards knowing myself because I always believe in acknowledging or giving thanks back—and I never felt like I belonged as a dietitian. Till this day I always feel like I don't really fit the way people think of dietitians. So, this was the first time I felt a place of belonging. And I've continued to feel a place of belonging, yeah.

It was through participants presenting at the workshop where it revealed that common feelings of frustration and aloneness within the profession was not so uncommon after all. And seemingly, it appears that through sharing their life experiences and vulnerabilities that attendees were able to *find their people*. MacLellan recalls and quotes Jill White—the former president of WCD, for making a statement at a conference in Chicago saying that she felt she had finally *found her people*:

She [Jill White] taught at Dominican University in Chicago and I was at that conference in Chicago and when she said that, "*I finally found my people.*" It kind of resonated with me because it was like that at the workshop on nutritionism—in that there were people there from very wide-ranging areas of the profession... Like, it was really an amazing experience—I don't even know if you could recreate it. It was one of those things that happens, and you look back on it and you think, *Wow that was so incredible*. And it kind

of unfolded—like, Jackie didn't really have—well, she had an agenda. It was kind of a fluid agenda but it just kind of evolved over the two days.”

MacLellan was not the only person who expressed they had found a place of belonging by attending the BN workshop. Another participant, Aphramor further supports how participants began to feel as if they had found their people and why they felt they were brought together:

I can't remember what happened when—but there's a *buzz*, you know? There was one person and I remember him saying that his partner had said, "Oh, you found your people." He was talking, and it was very much that—like, this is a group of people. It wasn't that I was expecting consensus. It was more that I didn't think everybody else was expecting consensus—it wasn't about agreeing with each other, it was about saying, *There's a problem and we need to acknowledge there's a problem*. And then talk about what we're going to do about it.

For Aphramor, acknowledging that a problem existed in the profession was an element that connected this group together. In addition to addressing current challenges in dietetics, Aphramor also recalls how participants explored diverse methods to express feelings, attitudes, and experiences about food and nutrition in dietetics. Aphramor describes an unexpected event at the workshop where there was a cogent realization of how this group had merged magically in an passionate, intuitive manner:

—before I went, I had this really strong urge to make a textile poster. I've never made a textile—I don't think I've ever made a poster, like an academic poster. Never made a textile poster in my life before. But I had this really, really strong urge like, to bring ideas together in this sort of collage. So, I made this thing and I can remember not mentioning

to Jacqui because it seemed a bit weird. I didn't want to sort of tarnish Jacqui by association—I don't want Jacqui to have to say, "Oh yeah, and Lucy made this um—thing." (both laugh). And then—it was amazing. I can't remember the order that this happened in either—so my role there was to like, when invited to comment on what people were saying—I can't remember if it was that somebody said something and then I thought, Oh yeah this is where my handy textile poster comes in—or Cathy Morely, who was one of the other participants also had a textile poster. And I can't remember if it was when Cathy got out her textile poster that then I'm like, "Oh guess what?" I can't remember. But there was something again, really, really significant without even knowing—just about something. Like, if you know you're walking into these spaces—like I made that textile poster because I was going there—would never have made it otherwise. There was something about being with a community of people who share liberative values, encourages us to do the thing that we wouldn't otherwise do— that's really, really important. And then to have affirmation of Cathy, "Oh yeah, this is what I do—I'm a textile artist." "Oh—you what?" It's just awesome.

Aphramor and Morely were acquainted, however they did not know each other very well or, had planned to create textile art prior to attending the workshop. Morely recalls the experience with Aphramor in this way:

So, my presentation at that was called "*Why a Doc with a Dip Doc?*" So, why would you take a person with PhD and send them to do diploma in documentary film—that's why I called it, *Why a Doc with a Dip Doc?* And I talked about why film was important to me. And at the same time, I brought along some pieces of textile art that I had made in my

first year that was all about what my research was about—families, eating, and illness. And I showed those to the group and then I just sat down and going, *Oh my God, I must seem like such a flake!* But Lucy hauls out of her backpack this wall hanging she had made about the challenges and—I forget the right word—of working in dietetics. It was amazing! So, we had our pieces hung up on the wall and the two of us are going, *OH MY GOD, THIS IS SO COOL!!* (laughs) We both made textile pieces—*how cool is that?* And then so that's what I was doing at the time—I was going into my second year of textile arts when that workshop took place—and I had no idea—oh yeah, I did know. I had a very perfect plan, but then it all went awry when there was a job available.

Aphramor and Morely recognized the power in arts-based inquiry (the purposeful use of artistic skills, processes, and experiences as educational tools which aid in fostering learning in non-artistic disciplines and domains) as both a tool and an outlet for dietetic research (Boston University, 2022). These two participants, Aphramor and Morely not only share their creativity but also their desire to communicate the experience of being a RD, which surprisingly is not a usual endeavor—*Why?* This, we do not know. Although I'm sure there are many theories to support why RDs do not express their career experiences creatively to the world.

However, it seems that these connections made with those at the workshop occurred partly because of two reasons, 1) Curiosity to further discover the profession of dietetics, and 2) Desire to explore other ways of thinking, outside of the traditional scientific method of which the foundation of dietetics is comprised of. After the first day of the workshop, these new formed relationships transferred into the second day of the workshop which led to the unexpected establishment of something new.

Day Two of the Workshop:

The openness to explore diverse perspectives and creativity continued to be ongoing throughout the second day of the workshop. Notably, there was *vibe* that made this event feel unlike other academic gatherings. Asada describes a memory of how her colleagues were collaborating below:

You know, the other thing I remember is that *it was fun!* I remember at some point we had all these multi-colored rainbow sticky notes, and we were putting everyone's ideas—like—you had to go up and put your sticky note up. Then we were moving sticky notes around and brainstorming—people were just having fun and laughing, like it wasn't the same type of scholarly meeting, *vibe*. I think in part that has to do with a lot of the people had very long-standing and friendly relationships with each other and so we could behave that way—like, just goofy and then also people's personalities are kind of innately like that. Um, John Coveney, I discovered is like, a really goofy guy. He writes this—like, oh my God—I tried to read his book and it's so academic and so heavy. It's a really good book but then you meet him in person and he's just cracking jokes all the time. So anyways, that was another thing I remember is we were doing very serious work, but it was also lighthearted and fun.

I feel what further contributed to this unique connection was the ability for participants not to be afraid to reveal their authentic, true selves. Also, through sharing their personal experiences they were able to unveil how they came to be who they are today. What this group was able to display at the workshop was how the personal and the professional collide together and how it

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affects who we as practitioners. Collectively, their experiences, personally and professionally, led participants to question the approach applied in dietetic practice and the need for transformation.

Morely describes here she began to question her practice:

It was all, *You tell me your story and I'll try and figure out of all the things I know about nutrition and symptom management*—and so on. Like, what *little tip* might be workable for you? And usually—they work pretty good. I learnt about working in partnership with families. And then you're reading, and I am still very, very interested in nutrition counselling approaches and how we acquire those as dietitians. I would read the literature and I would go, *Oh my god*, I so don't agree with these approaches. I don't agree with this *heavy-handed* kind of—and use of the term; *non-compliant*—like, that somehow people are *inherently bad* because they don't follow *my* advice? *They're not inherently bad, they don't have their homework done for a good reason*. Do you know what I mean?

Together, participants put forth an effort to inquire the conventional approaches in dietetic practice and how those approaches support or hinder the wellbeing of the people they provide nutritional support to. This collective energy recognized the need for dietetics to become more inclusive, diverse, and to ingrain socially just approaches to food and nutrition. What I feel is interesting to note here, is that although participants hailed from different countries and regions all over the world, they cooperatively agreed dietetics was a profession that was in need of a push to grow and become a more diverse with critical approach towards the practice. Coveney shares how he came realize that although participants had their own unique experiences, they could each relate to each other through their innovative approaches of doing dietetics in this way:

Um, I think what was the energy that was created in an ongoing fashion as we started to realize that we were in fact connected by these new ideas for dietitians. I'm remembering that Jacqui had just published a book, *Longing for Recognition*, as a way of looking into certain angles in the profession. So, there was quite a bit of material that had already been worked over that was able to be given some degree of recognition as we move through the workshop. So, that was great—I mean, I suppose it was great kind of meeting like-minded people. And also starting to connect up the dots so the people—I mean, most of the people there at the workshop were women—some of them with very strong ideas about feminism, and that was really very enriching. It was very good.

Coveney expresses how these individuals shared new ideas for RDs, which provoked a change in the program itinerary. On the second day of the workshop given the connection participants felt and the topics discussed, rather than adhere to the program outline, participants agreed to use the last day together to create an unplanned course of action, as further explained by Coveney:

"Do we need to do this? Is there a something else we should do?" Simply before we even landed on the term *Critical Dietetics*. So, we decided that instead of following the program we were actually going to spend that time writing a declaration—we were going to crown this event by saying that, "We believe that, we endorse—" And so the whole thing broke up into a small group session. I can't remember who was facilitating it, poor thing—because they were probably expecting something else. So, we all worked in groups and then we came together and fashioned *The Declaration* that you see. It changed several times, but there were some key ingredients that stayed there.

One was—and this was very important, that we were not in the process of disregarding—(phone ringing) —or in any way criticizing mainstream dietetics. We agreed that mainstream dietetics is the result of a lot of hard work, especially by women. And we were not in the business of kicking this you know —into the grass. That we acknowledge that where we are today is the result of a lot of hard work for recognition, a lot of hard work for status—which are important in any profession—but that, we would like to compliment that with another way of looking at the things that the profession could be taking notice of. So, that kind of remained—the idea remained throughout the workshop. And then it was kind of, "So what are we going to call this?"

So, I was aware of a number of groups that were kind of "break-off" from other mainstream professions—so psychology has *Critical Psychology*, gerontology has *Critical Gerontology*, you would be able to find *Critical Sociology*, so these are organizations that have kind of looked at themselves and said, *Where are we going with this? What sorts of assumptions have we made here?* And have used that as a springboard to then develop an understanding of psychology or gerontology or something like that. So, that's how *Critical Dietetics* started. I think Lucy had used the term earlier, but we—that was really at the Ryerson workshop, and crafting The Declaration that we endorsed the term, *Critical Dietetics*.

Coveney reveals how gathering a collective voice and creating a movement at the workshop was hope for those who cared about the continuation of prosperity and growth for the dietetic profession. It was recognized during that second day that each person had their individual experiences including discontents with profession, their education, and internship and that for

change to occur there would need to be a collective voice to carry that forward. Therefore, furthering the growth and expansion of dietetics had now become an objective of this new movement. Below I will further describe the intent according to workshop attendees of why *Critical Dietetics* formed.

The intent according to participants of why the movement formed, I feel, was partly a unanimous agreement in that participants felt that *RD* was prestigious title—and with that prestige came a privilege. As mentioned in Coveney’s statement above, “That we acknowledge that where we are today is the result of a lot of hard work for recognition, a lot of hard work for status—” Therefore, this prestigious status gives RDs the responsibility to explore complex questions related to health equity and improving human wellbeing. Aphramor describes the role of a RD in this way:

I think there's a period of time when it was just confusing— because like, *why weren't people interested?* Like, how do you get your head around that? And I think as well because I've never—like, when I finished my degree, I never thought I'd walk as a dietitian—I didn't. I only joined the professional organization because one of the professors encouraged me to. Everybody else had done it, and I just sort of did it because I'd been encouraged to. *I never imagined working as a dietitian.* I think maybe because—I've never imagined—I was too chaotic—I just didn't imagine. I didn't have this trajectory in mind. Which I had understand that from a trauma perspective—you know—if you don't envision a future—then you don't envision yourself working, you know—in the future. Or in that—it's not working, it was in that very particular uhm, I don't know, *socially regarded role?* I think that was more it—farming I could imagine myself doing. So, I think to start with, it was perplexing and just really frustrating—and of course even though I wasn't the youngest member, in terms of hierarchy, I was still a really junior

member of the team. I hadn't actually been in dietetics long. I've worked as a dietitian when it struck me that it was just terrible—I think it was also hard because of my own mental health was all over the shop. So, trying to hold it together and make sense of things and question things at the same time, *is hard going*. And also, because again I remembered thinking that, *However many thousand dietitians in the UK—Nobody else has got a problem with this? Nobody?* And then—so, THAT'S HARD! Like, you know that caused a lot of self-doubt. But then I would just remember—I would just think of what my clients have told me, and I was just like, *No I can't do it—There's something wrong—* you know? *I might be a minority voice—doesn't mean that I'm wrong*. I might be wrong, but it doesn't follow that I am. So, it was a hard thing to hold onto.

Above here Aphramor echo's how the status of a RD encompassed the reasonability to think critically about dietetics and its approach to practice. Furthermore, Aphramor described above how she felt frustrated and alone on her thoughts surrounding dietetic practice, and although other participants express feeling like misfits in the profession, coming together reveals how they felt alike in their questions and concerns about dietetic practice. Gord describes how she too felt about the role of a RD and how the becoming of Critical Dietetics had been a need she had been longing for, in this way:

Oh, to me it was like—it was like, being offered a glass of water when you're dying of thirst. It was a breath of fresh air. It was hope. It was like working and just knowing that there was so much better work that could be done in the profession.

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Recall how MacLellan previously stated above, “I noticed at that time—because we did a lot of member connections and member outreach that there were a lot of DC members who were not very happy with the way things were, and I remember thinking that the board of directors was not functioning the way it should be either.” Therefore, MacLellan earlier described how she began to recognize, that like Gord, there were many other RDs who were concerned about the dietetic profession. MacLellan shares how eventually through finding each other at this workshop they were able to form a collective voice to share the changes they desired to see in the profession:

I mean, Daphne and I had been working on dietetic education. I was really concerned about where dietetic education was going in Canada. It was bad enough before—I felt like it was going in a bad direction. But there were only a few of us and it was the few of us who ended up at Critical Dietetics workshop who were voicing our concern—everybody else seemed to be on board with the direction it was going.

So, at that time there wasn't a lot of voices, and you need more voices to make a difference—I mean, if you're in a room of a 150 people and there's three of you, you know, with descending views—you're not going to make much of an impact, which we didn't unfortunately. But I mean I still strongly believe in Dietitians of Canada. I think Dietitians of Canada is an organization that dietitians in Canada need and I'm hoping that at some point Critical Dietetics and Dietitians of Canada can work more cooperatively together. There's still a lot of I think uh, I think there's some fear among DC staff perhaps about Critical Dietetics and, too, that we formed this group to take down Dietitians of Canada. That was never our intent, we just wanted to see change and we wanted to see more inclusivity within the profession. I think we started to move in the right direction with Dietitians of Canada, too, we had a new CEO. Now unfortunately, she's left—I'm

not sure why. But anyway, she left for personal reasons so, we're looking for a new CEO. I'm hoping the new CEO will be open to cooperation.

As described by MacLellan above, there was discontent from within the profession, but there was also concern and fear among others that forming another professional association could negatively impact the first professional association (Dietitians of Canada). However, what participants originally desired was for Dietitians of Canada and the newly formed Critical Dietetics to support and work in tandem to improve and progress the dietetic profession. Below, Yarker describes how she understood the becoming of the Critical Dietetics and the intent of movement:

You know, nothing's perfect, right? So, it's important to—if you care about something such as our profession and how people are trained for our profession then we need to always be looking at it to see how we can improve. You know, both just in general but also as the world is changing, as society is changing and how can we meet the changing needs too. Yeah, I think that's absolutely needed you know, and that's not a negative about dietetics—that's just about anything in life—if you care about something, and if you think something is valuable then you want to make sure that you're doing it as best you can, so absolutely we need to be thinking about that. It's because I do value it, that we need to be looking at seeing if we're doing things in the best way.

Yeah, so I would say it's people who are looking at the practice of dietetics, including the training to become dietitians and looking at how we can improve—I think I would say, yeah.

Yarker reveals how the movement had originally formed from those who deeply care and wish for dietetics to maintain current and relevant in practice, adapting to current challenges inflicting the world. However, what I feel is that the advantage of having people in the room who were practicing dietetics from different areas from around the world is that it really gave insight into some of the possible future challenges that could potentially hinder the growth and progress of the dietetic profession. Thus, coming together was a not only a privilege to the profession, but also imperative to the future of dietetics

These founding members realized that if they wanted to change the profession to include more diverse forms of knowledge and to make the profession more inclusive that they themselves would have to start doing so. Here, Coveney recalls how founding members began to decide which elements the movement should take action in as a way to establish a voice in the dietetic community:

Yeah, and I think that was a really important part of the trajectory of Critical Dietetics because as things happen—that was the catalyst to creating the *Journal of Critical Dietetics*, or rather *The International Journal of Critical Dietetics*. I think that *The Declaration* was part of one of the volumes of the journal. So, a lot of things happened there—we decided we needed a journal, we decided we needed a name, we decided we needed a platform. All of those things came together at the Ryerson meeting and that's what we took away—it was very empowering. I remember feeling excited at this network of people who had come together with—I mean, the Canadians probably knew each other, and Lucy had known Jacqui beforehand, but all coming together for three days was just terrific! I've still got a photograph on my wall of the group of us together for that particular event, it was great!

With the beginning of a new group, a decided name, and the potential of an open-access journal, it was now apparent that this gathering was untraditional from formal workshops because it now recalled from participants as the beginning of a movement. Therefore, the workshops focus had now been shifted towards gathering a unified voice to determine the mission and future goals of this new coming movement so growth and change could flourish.

How participants felt and what they said happened after the workshop was described as, an event that needed time to digest, reflect upon, and question. MacLellan shares here how she felt after she returned home:

You've been in something so powerful and so emotional and so raw that you almost have to go away and process it before you can move forward. And I think that's the way a lot of us were thinking. I'm happy that people did step-up to participate in writing *The Declaration*, but I don't think anybody at that point was ready to say we're going to create an organization. Because a lot of us had been involved with organizations and knew how much work it was going to be. And yeah—I think people just weren't ready at that critical moment. We knew that we wanted to do something. We knew that we wanted to continue this, but we just weren't sure how.

...But I almost felt like I shouldn't have been there. That I didn't have the strength of conviction that those other individuals had and, too, I also didn't have the vocabulary that they had because a lot of them had been in social sciences, sociology in particular. And I began reading much more broadly than I been reading. But I was so taken up with the energy and conviction that these people had, that I knew I wanted to be a part of it somehow—and what's that going to look like—I didn't really know. So, I also had mixed

feelings. I also felt like a *wet dishrag*—as my mother would say—kind of wrung out, you know? (laughs) Because you know when you spend two days in such a raw environment, you're just exhausted, but I do remember being on the plane and falling asleep coming home because I was just, *whew—that was something!* (laughs)

MacLellan realized that being a part of Critical Dietetics was appealing to her, despite not knowing how the movement would develop and feeling unknowledgeable in the social sciences. Gord also describes her experience leaving the workshop and how she felt potential in the future of dietetics through this new formed movement:

So, at that time Critical Dietetics was—it was like, you know water in the desert. It was really something. And that particular conference, it was just incredible—just like-minded people coming together to talk about the horrors of the internship, the horrors of the whole internship process, what was missing in dietetics, how it could be strengthened. And really opening-up the whole concept of bringing in the social sciences and the humanities, and just making dietetics so much more meaningful in the world. I had never—I've never met professors like that. It was a really wonderful experience, yeah.

Gord had been seeking for a community of RDs who desired to improve dietetics. Prompting the profession to include studies from other disciplines was something she herself petitioned for, as she believed dietetics held so much more potential to the world. Gord left the workshop feeling astounded from meeting those who held ambition to transform and improve the profession. Yarker also describes her excitement after learning of new perspectives from individuals who presented at the workshop:

Yeah, I wasn't even familiar with that terminology before—like, the critical type of—yeah. Like I said, those are the sorts of things that being present there I wasn't familiar

with these sorts of world before so just sitting and listening to these people present on these sorts of topics, it was—as we talked about last time, I'm a curious person, I love to learn and so I was really—yeah, I trusted and was excited with what they would move forward but I didn't see—and I think—and I saw that Jen Brady has been involved since and kind of been with you know, was kind of under their—I don't know for sure the relationship, but it seemed she was more the student under their wings who then has evolved to be the leader, you know, like the next generation who's brought things forward. That seems to be from the outside what's happened but yeah, I saw that there were those people in the room who you could see would be like you know, taking the ball from here. So yeah, it doesn't surprise me that things happen, but I wasn't directly involved in anything. You know, I think I do believe that *The Declaration* was circulated so that we could add our names and we agreed to it or could suggest it as a recommendation, and so I was comfortable of course with what was written obviously otherwise I wouldn't have put my name to it, so.

Yarker recalls how she could see the movement thrive before it had even occurred, while Asada reflects on key components of how the movement successfully and unexpectedly grew out of the workshop:

It was incredibly small and intimate—usually you go to present your work and that's it, but this meeting had more of a—like, we're all here to create something together. Like, we're here to create this—where do we go from here? This *Declaration*, to commemorate the work—but then we all were very I think action orientated. And so that co-creation—the spirit of co-creation is something I rarely—I shouldn't say rarely, there had been cases,

but it's definitely not at scholarly conferences. It's at like different types of meetings(?)

But I don't think I've experienced a similar thing like that before.

The undertaking of a new movement was now celebrated and voiced through a key document called *The Declaration*, and although participants were aware that transformation within the profession would require much effort and work, what happened with *The Declaration* after the workshop was unanticipated and not what founding members were expecting upon their arrival home.

The Declaration

As mentioned above, it was decided by workshop attendees that the announcement of the movement would be communicated through the document titled, *The Declaration*, crafted at the workshop. Below Gingras describes the intention for the document as well as the response she was expecting to hear:

And then after the presentations were done, we kind of came to the action part of the weekend where we were deciding what to do—*what to do with all of this?* Like, it was clear things needed to change in dietetics, in the profession. And I had the register of the college of Dietitians of Ontario there, you know, I had all the people there that should have been there in terms of the regulators and people from Dietitians of Canada who were kind of policy makers and so this was a moment of potential, of revolution, of change, or transformation and what happened is we decided we were going to write the *Ryerson Declaration* and that was going to be—kind of a summary of what had happened that weekend, but a call to action for everyone else who hadn't been there. And we wanted the signatories—we wanted people to sign on to the *Ryerson Declaration*—well, that was incredibly problematic.

Gingras describes how it was unexpected for Ryerson to disapprove the attachment of their university name to *The Declaration* since the weekend workshop had turned out to be such a success. Adding Ryerson to the title of *The Declaration* was a way to proclaim where the workshop had been granted approval to take place. Below Gingras shares how she had been informed that her colleagues at Ryerson were conflicted about this announcement to the dietetic community:

So instead of the days after being met with kind of—congratulations and celebration and excitement, I was on the phone with people—with the university, who had heard that we were calling this the *Ryerson Declaration*, from the School of Nutrition—so, my own colleagues in the School of Nutrition at that university were refusing to have the university name attached to this Declaration. Because they didn't agree with me—they didn't agree with what were doing, they didn't participate, um and they certainly weren't excluded and so I was trying to convince—I was pushing to say, "We can call it whatever we want." And then the university administration got involved and said, "No you can't." And so that was basically that. And in the end—given what I now know about that person who our university is named after, I'm very grateful that we did not call it that.

...He [Ryerson] was the architect of the curriculum of the plan to remove the Indian from the child and so he mapped out the process of genocide. And now we don't even—we want to change the name of the university. So, in the meantime we're calling it "X-University" Those who are standing in solidarity with Indigenous colleagues and all of us who wish to have the name changed because of the harm that was caused in his name.

And so, yes as I wrote about in that chapter there's in retrospect much gratitude for changing the name and in the end it just became, *Critical Dietetics, The Declaration*. And that was what it needed to be, and it's much more inclusive anyway. And so—but it just

spoke to me, the power of resistance to change—to transformation, and just to maintaining the power of the desire to maintain the status quo.

The document, *Critical Dietetics, The Declaration* was later announced to the dietetic community and published in Dietitians of Canada's blog, *Practice* on December 3rd, 2009. As described in *Critical Dietetics, The Declaration*;

“Critical Dietetics is informed by transdisciplinary scholarship from the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. By contributing to scholarship, practice, and education, it strives to make visible our assumptions, give voice to the unspoken, embrace reflexivity, reveal and explore power relations, encourage public engagement and diverse forms of expression, and acknowledge that there are no value-free positions. Through these principles, Critical Dietetics will engage with the ever-changing health, social, and environmental issues facing humanity” (2009).

Although The Declaration has been a controversial piece since it was published in 2009, it is still discussed and conversed about in educational institutions among students and educators as an evolutionary moment that would broaden and advance the profession of dietetics. Here Morely describes how the Declaration is discussed in her lectures today:

But I have them [students] read a little section [of *The Declaration*] and then let's just pause and let that sink in, okay—then on to the next person—pause, and let that sink in. And we do that. And I said, "So here's what I want you to know—this document is very controversial." And they go, *Why? Like, there are multiple knowledges. People live complicated lives. We need to draw on other areas of study. Why would you argue with*

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any of those things? Right? This is the students I teach today. I agree with them—
absolutely. *Why would you argue with any of these things?*

Since its founding, Critical Dietetics has grown and expanded into a non-profit organization which has attained many achievements since its establishment in 2009. Below I will share founding members memories of the events that have occurred throughout the growth of the movement.

Three of the main events discussed by participants that evolved World Critical Dietetics into an organization included, *The Declaration*, *The Journal of Critical Dietetics*, and ongoing worldwide annual conferences. The events are elaborated below in how participants understand these events and how they advanced the development and emergence of WCD. Here Gingras describes how she first saw the growth of the movement:

I don't know that I would be able to have articulated the specifics, but yes. I had incredibly high expectation and I just believed that if we kept working together and kept pushing and kept trying new things—conferencing and journaling, that it couldn't help but have an influence and it hasn't surprised me or disappointed me.

... And so that weekend was one of the most transformational experiences in my professional and personal life as well. Yeah, soon after that we started the journal, two years after that we had the first conference, which I also received money to host in Toronto, and things have continued—persisted to disrupt ever since.

Gingras understood that the movement would further grow through gaining more voices through public outlets as mentioned above, which had successfully been achieved. Below,

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Coveney expresses in further detail how the movement continued its growth since its establishment and the approach they applied to gain members:

So, yes it was shortly after the workshop that the journal made an appearance and, too, shortly after the workshop the idea that we would have gatherings at regular moments, or the *International Conference of Critical Dietetics*, which is still up and running. I mean, Jill White hosted it in the USA a couple of years ago, yeah.

...Since the Ryerson workshop we've had them at the—there was an International Congress of Dietetics held in Sydney and we bolted an International Critical Dietetics conference onto that. Similarly, when Jacqui came to Adelaide to give an address [presentation] at a National Dietitians Conference, so we bolted Critical Dietetics onto that. So, wherever we could we tried to—instead of inviting people only for a Critical Dietetics conference we took advantage of people gathering anyway, and then created an opportunity for people to come and be part of the Critical Dietetics conference. So, that also happened in Granada—in Spain, there was an International Congress of Dietetics in Granada, and we bolted a Critical Dietetics conference onto that.

Coveney list the various places worldwide where they took advantage to publicize Critical Dietetics and as the movement began to grow and evolve so did its needs, which eventually came the decision to form Critical Dietetics into an organization, as described below by Asada:

Oh totally! I think it's what it needed [the movement evolving into an organization] because for a while it was—what ends up happening is like we have all these different initiatives like, the journal, the conference and you know, all these different arms. And if you don't make it a formal thing what ends up happening is people like Jacqui, who bless

her soul—ends up doing everything. And really I think—luckily like we're at enough to a point where you just needed to have more delegation of how the scholarly journal was going to be learned, who was going to run it, and how we were going to fund it. I think creating the board, and then the non-profit and just trying to come up with those different committees at least alienated who was responsible for continuation of each of those initiatives, because they're separate but they should all be running under the same mission, vision, and all of that. Aside from *The Declaration* we didn't have an updated mission and vision of which we were going to be doing all these activities. I think at least establishing those was important and forming that non-profit forced us to work on mission and vision.

Now that the movement had been established as a worldwide non-profit organization it was now possible that World Critical Dietetics could have a larger impact on making change happen. It was recognized that redefining the scope of dietetics is not a quick nor easy task. Gingras describes how Critical Dietetics was a foundation for those to invest in the long conversation towards justice and change:

I can't—part of me is still baffled by that. I know it intellectually to be true, what you're saying—*it's hard for people to change*. The other voice inside my head says, *But if it's hard well it's kind of*—for me it's so clear and simple; *If it's causing harm, it has to change*. And yet, you're right—it's hard! And so that's what I've been bumping up against much of my adult life, this sense of injustice and being honestly surprised every time when people don't react in the way that I expect them too. And so, I think that has softened a little bit, I'm becoming a little bit more philosophical about it. And Lucy

taught me this—we actually did a presentation on it, it's about the *long conversation*. So, when I first heard her talk about—*yeah, we're involved in the long conversation*—I thought she meant, the conversation up until now, but she actually meant the conversation up until now, and the one that's going to continue in the years and the decades to follow. It's a long conversation as in; It's all of our lives—this conversation for justice and change. And so yeah, I'm becoming a little bit more philosophical and trying to better equip myself for a long conversation, instead of a very bright, but short flame out, and then silence—because that doesn't do what's needed a lot of the time. It's about pressing on and persevering for years, years—for as long as it takes, and even maybe generations. Obviously, that's the case when it comes to anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism—these are now hundreds of years old injustices. So, we're here for it. We need each other through it.

Ultimately, these founding members understand that change will not just *unfold* itself and that this journey towards a more socially just practice would be a lengthy process. Today, World Critical Dietetics continues to make a global difference towards a more socially just practice and fairer world.

Global Theme 2: What Does it Mean to Be a Dietitian?

The second global theme, What Does It Mean to Be a Dietitian highlights the significance of WCD as an organization to dietetics and the role that it came to play in founding members' professional lives and identities. Originally, the significance of building WCD was to broaden and diversify the profession, including the body of knowledge and its approaches to

practice. However, the becoming and the establishment of the organization have shaped participants lived experiences personally and socially. This theme also includes the organization's intention and influence on the dietetic profession. The intent of establishing WCD was to develop the potential of dietetics through broadening the scope and practice of what the profession entails. Experiences within the profession that founding members faced during their education and career inspired effort to expand dietetics beyond its traditional role of hospital work to perpetuate growth in areas related to social justice, health equity, and advocacy.

This global theme comprises two organizing themes (View Figure 1. Global Themes 1 and 2). The first organizing theme, *Reflexing with Purpose*, describes how founding members recall and assess their past experiences. Through understanding and reconceptualizing their shared memories they were able to process a purpose and reason to inflict change within the dietetic profession. When asked how and why they decided to become a RD, the majority of participants said that before beginning their studies they did not know what a RD did, and thus, held no preconceived ideas about what it means to be a RD. However, not having a pre-set notion about what RDs do allowed them to be more open to what an RD could do. I assert that by reflecting on how and why participants became a RD provided the opportunity to recall what they first imagined what dietetics could be.

The second organizing theme, *The Push for Transformative Practice* describes participants' feeling that once they were a RD, they felt compelled to shift and change the profession through taking action. Making effort to further grow and expand dietetics led participants to gather together to co-create the organization known today as WCD. The establishment of WCD was intended to transform the future of dietetic practice and essentially, what it means to be a RD. These two themes entwined together shows how founding members of

WCD understand and conceptualize what it means to be a RD and the actions they took to create a new vision for the profession and what it means to be a dietitian.

Organizing Theme 2.1: Reflexing with Purpose

Reflexivity is defined as the process of examining and looking inward at the self, including our thoughts and behaviors while bringing consciousness to “the cultural, social, linguistic, and economic origins of one’s own perspective and voice.” (Patton, 2015, p.70). Reflexivity is a core tenet of WCD (Brady & Gingras, 2019). Participants understand how coming to know what they know, including their idea of what they initially thought being a RD may mean, affected their future career as an RD. Although founding members are reflexive throughout their interviews, as they shared their memories it seemed that they had been engaging in reflexivity even before entering their career and prior to the initiation of the movement. Participants share moments where they recall questioning dietetic discourse and power relations within their work environment. Therefore, what this theme illuminates is how participants’ memories, or reflexive thoughts throughout their education and career, influenced them to further develop what being a RD can mean.

Before participants had entered into a dietetic program, they held ideas about what they thought being a RD involved. They first thought a degree as an expert in food and nutrition would include many professional avenues including entrepreneurship, leadership, government and policy positions. However, it was realized only after they had begun their studies that they knew very little about what the profession involved. Participants describe here how they were surprised and disheartened as they entered practice. Asada begins with sharing how she wanted a professional career but did not know RDs mostly work in hospitals:

I went into dietetics completely not knowing what it was at all, I just had learned that it was a professional license and to me that sounded really good at the time because I wanted some kind of professional job security, I guess. So, I applied for the program, I think as I was—I applied and was accepted to the dietetics program as I was leaving for a year abroad in Tokyo. So, I applied not knowing anything about it. I didn't know there was an internship involved. I didn't know—I basically had done zero research, but that's how I kind of stumbled into it. When I came from abroad is when I learned like, *what even does a dietitian do?* I had no idea that they worked in hospitals. I just knew that I wanted to study food and nutrition. That was all I knew, and I knew it was some kind of professional degree.

Identifying dietetics to be a professional career in food and nutrition influenced Asada to pursue the study. Even though she was not knowledgeable about the process of becoming a RD and what the role involved, her interest remained. Asada was not alone in how she approached the study of dietetics. Gord also came across nutrition and the study of dietetics with little prior knowledge of what the degree involved before entering the program:

Yeah, well I had no interest in being a dietitian. When I went into dietetics, I didn't even know what a dietitian was. I was interested in preventative-health/preventative-medicine. What we would now call, *health promotion*. But at the time I didn't even know that I thought of it as terms of *preventative-health*. You know, at the time there was a lot going on in food; *Diet for a Small Planet*, Frances Moore Lappé. People that were writing books about alternate ways of eating. The way that we ate—my contemporaries at the time, is very much how we're talking to people about eating now, but it was quite counter

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to the mainstream way of eating—which you know, where I grew up was meat, potato, and vegetable. So, I had an interest in how people ate and nutrition.

Gord reflects upon how her interest at the time resided in exploring how diverse approaches to eating can influence sustainable food systems and improve health. However, prior to entering dietetics Gord was unaware that dietetics did not teach or provide much literature on food policy and environmentalism. It seems as though entering dietetics as an area of study and being uninformed of what curriculum is comprised of, including its practice, was not unusual. How is it that the practice of dietetics is so unfamiliar and foreign to those interested in approaching the field? Little research has been completed on dietetic professionalization and how an individual becomes a RD (Lordly & MacLellan, 2012). However, studies do reveal that students often enter into the educational process of becoming a RD with a broad interest in food, nutrition, health, and helping people (Lordly & MacLellan, 2012; Hughes, & Desbrow, 2005). If dietetic education does not recognize and explore students range of interests in food and nutrition, it dismisses future opportunities and areas that dietetic professionals could be involved in.

I feel the profession needs to be better at acknowledging students' passions and understanding their pursuit in becoming a RD, of which previous literature has also recognized (Lordly & MacLellan, 2012; Hughes, & Desbrow, 2005). Acknowledging students' early interest of becoming a RD can help bring RDs into many diverse professional arenas while displaying to others what our practice can do in varied areas related to food and nutrition.

The public is often unaware that RDs are well suited to be involved in many diverse roles related to food and beyond a traditional clinical role (Buklis, 2019). Until the latter decades of the 20th century, in most cases becoming a RD meant completing a degree in home economics. MacLellan, who entered the degree program in home economics did not think of becoming a RD

before entering her studies, and like many others, she did not know what a RD did. Below MacLellan describes how she considered herself to be a deviant from others who entered the profession of dietetics.

—I always say that I became a dietitian through the back door because when I did a home economics degree at the University of Prince Edward Island and in my fourth year I started to apply for dietetics and the chair of my department, who I considered to be my mentor told me I was “*too smart to be a dietitian*”—I’ll never forget that.

It’s just because that set me off on a completely different path (laughs). Which you know, reflecting back on it, you think, one comment from one person can completely change your career trajectory. So, I thought, okay if she doesn’t think I should be a dietitian, then I guess I won’t be a dietitian.

To be honest, I had no idea what a dietitian did. And we had only barely touched on the idea of being in nutrition in any of our courses. We did have a clinical nutrition course and I know she talked about dietitians and dietitians work but at that point I wasn’t really thinking about it. So yeah, for the life of me I don’t know why she said that because—I think maybe she had it in her head that there were certain people in the program that should go on to grad school and there were certain people that should go to dietetics. And she put me in the other path—that woman is still alive. I don’t know how old she is now but she’s an amazing woman. She became a senator—a Canadian Senator at one point in her career. So, I mean she was a person that I really looked up to. So, when she told me that I just said, “Okay well, guess that’s what I should do.”

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MacLellan notes how her mentor had influenced her career path and how even till this day she is unsure of why her mentor would deter her from becoming a RD. To Debbie, saying that she was “too smart to be a dietitian” made her think that dietetic work was inadequate or held insufficient purpose. However, MacLellan still ventured to become a RD. Perhaps the purpose of MacLellan’s mentor saying that she was “too smart to be a dietitian” propelled her into taking a back door approach to explore specifically what a RD did not do. Only through this approach could MacLellan understand what a RD could do. Because of this, MacLellan was able to turn her efforts as well as her career trajectory into a whole new meaning of what it means to be a RD. As a result, MacLellan’s efforts were effective. In her role as a RD she held various positions, which included the Department Chair of Applied Human Sciences at UPEI, Dean of Science, and the President of the University of Canada in Cairo, Egypt. MacLellan also recently received the highest recognition from Dietitians of Canada; *The Ryley-Jeffs Memorial Award* (Atkinson, 2021; Dietitians of Canada, 2022).

Previous research has shown that people see RDs as “food police”, in that their job is to tell people “do not eat that, eat this.” (Devine, Jastran, et al., 2004). Maybe this misunderstanding of a RD's job of telling people “what not to eat” and “what to eat” has created a limited idea of what RDs can be and what they can do. To further clarify—dietetics is a profession, not a job. MacLellan demonstrates along with other supporting literature that the dietetic profession should include leaders who flow towards career positions outside the traditional clinical role (Brady & L’heureux, 2021; Capra, 2012). If RDs revealed their various qualifications such as, their management skills, their strengths in communication and collaboration, as well as knowledge in ethics and social responsibility with and among professionals from other fields, people would gain a stronger understanding of the role’s RDs can stand in. However, this would imply that dietetic

education needs to include knowledge on the privilege and power RDs have in leadership roles, advocacy positions, and working with interdisciplinary teams, so students to feel confident in their exploration of a fulfilling career path. Below MacLellan continues to recall her untraditional process of becoming a RD.

—and really, I wanted to be doctor to make my dad proud, really. I didn't have any particular yearning to be a doctor and so I was pretty easily swayed when my roommate, who was in home economics would come back to our room and she was showing me what she had been learning, right? And I was so intrigued by the nutrition courses—and I thought, wow this looks really interesting and practical—something hands on. I thought, okay this is something where I can see kind of a future of some kind. So, I switched into home economics. I still have the letter that I wrote to my father—it's hilarious—explaining to why I switched into home economics. I knew he would be disappointed, right? Because let's face it, home economics—except maybe in the beginning, didn't have a very good reputation and it was like, *Becky Home-Ecky* and *The Cookie Ladies* and basically going to university to get a husband, and you know all that kind of stuff.

Home economics being framed as a program tailored to keen, domesticated women was frustrating to those like MacLellan. It was application of the knowledge that encompassed the essential elements of traditional household skills that was valuable to learn for MacLellan. As dietetics was initially a part of home economics, MacLellan was not wrong about the value of practicality in basic food and nutrition skills that came from the study of home economics. Because food and eating is something everyone does and is a basic function for living, the varied expertise

and range of possibilities for a nutrition professional or RD seemed to be an appealing factor that remained among participants who entered the field of study, as also described by Coveney below.

I became interested in food partly because I'm a glutton, and partly because I had become very interested in what you might call, *cuisine*. I was very interested in food worlds. You know, I would read books by authors like, Elizabeth David, Jane Grigson, and Alan Davidson. Which were recipe books to a certain extent but also contained a lot of information about culture. So, I became fascinated by the role of food in its cultural setting, but I didn't have a vocabulary to kind of help me work that out. My interest in food was very much around a kind of gourmet/gourmand cuisine level, you know? I taught myself how to make mayonnaise and things like that and I taught myself some basic cooking skills. I think I even made a soufflé or two, but it was that that took me in that food direction. And the only way to explore that side of things in England at that time was hospitality. Hospitality would have allowed me to develop interest there. There's no such thing as a degree in gastronomy or anything like that. So, that was where the fork in the road was—I had to decide whether I was going to become a chef or whether I was going to go into the science of nutrition. (laughs)

Coveney's interest resided in understanding the social and cultural utilities of food, which led him to study dietetics. While he could have studied hospitality, it was not the entertainment of guests and food service skills that he was trying to acquire. Coveney wanted to learn about what foods were accessible and traditional to cultures and the techniques used to create them. However, dietetic studies tend to focus more on how diet and foods are connected to disease and conditions (Jacobs, & Tapsell, 2007). Coveney came to the realization that a large knowledge gap existed in

human nutrition. Alongside Coveney, research has also recognized that “nutrition is environmentally, socially, culturally, and historically bound” (Palermo et al., 2021 p. 253). Dietetic professionals stress the need to move nutrition research away from positivist approaches and towards the more social, cultural, economic, and geographic influences on food (Palermo, Reidlinger, et al., 2021 p. 253). While in addition students also feel they would benefit from a stronger knowledge base on intercultural complexity of food and nutrition, rather than simply focusing on single nutrients (Palermo et al., 2021; McArthur et al., 2011). The call among practitioners and students to gain a stronger understanding on the social and cultural factors that intersect with nutrition illuminates how dietetics needed to shift into research and skills that encompass a more diverse scope of knowledge. My only concern is that when does this shift move into action? And how can dietetics expand as an interdisciplinary study in where it balances both the social and natural sciences?

The complex web of factors that influence nutritional intake such as the social, economic, and cultural impacts became important for founding members to bring into dietetic discourse. However, another component recognized was the individual or personal experiences with food and how it impacted their own lives. Aphramor shared how her thoughts around food affected her mentally and physically

And so, one version [why I studied dietetics] is that I was struggling with food and eating myself. Although I didn't, I had not—I understood I was struggling, but I haven't been able to articulate it to myself. I did a lot of running, like competitive running. And I would just explain it to myself as, I need to be thin to win, basically. So, I think there was something around there. I had always been interested in food politics and farming and

nutrition science but I didn't know the term *food politics*. If I had, maybe I would have done that but I didn't have any awareness of that.

Aphramor recognized how she was influenced to pursue dietetics as a way to better understand herself and how she used food to control aspects of their life. Another point voiced is the broad areas RDs could be a part of such as, food politics. Aphramor reveals how food and nutrition are in fact, political. However, Fraser and Brady (2020) report that RDs are hesitant and uncomfortable engaging in policy change and advocacy. Like, Aphramor, another participant whose personal experience with food influenced her decision to become a future RD was Morely.

So, what I thought was—what really appealed to me the more I learned about nutrition was how much you can influence so much about your body and therefore, the kind of life you can have through the health of a body—though nutrition. Not related to weight, but just general health and vitality—I love that. So I went, "ha-ha-ha, mom. I guess you're not right about that. You can have control over your body." And my friends who were dietitians have said to me, "You know Cathy, that's about this far away from an eating disorder." And I went, "No, I don't see it that way at all! I just see it as of all the things in the world we can have control over—there's not much, but we can have control over the food that goes into our body." And I probably live by that today.

For Morely, a sense of agency—the ability to have power over one's own behaviours and gain stability through personal food choices was personally meaningful and motivated her to study nutrition. It also seems that gaining a stronger understanding of individual behaviours that impact people's food choices appealed to Morely. Gingras also shares how her personal experience with

food influenced her to seek out further knowledge on nutrition and skills to assist others in their struggles with food, health, and wellbeing.

Well, I had Crohn's disease and I was seeing a naturopath and he was introducing me to different ideas. My Crohn's was, it was pretty much—it was very severe and so I was always interested in fitness, and health, and eating, and then when I had Crohn's disease it kind of distilled everything into this more kind of immediate emergency—I needed to really pay attention. And I thought that, even though I was still seeing a naturopath, I thought that becoming a dietitian, I would be able to learn how to help others with this struggle. And I'm not saying that my nutrition interventions were helpful with Crohn's because I had to have a bowel resection and since then I haven't had any pain, but I always had to pay attention to what I eat. And so, just those moments in my early twenties, late teens just distilled for me, the fact that I wanted to—I was already preoccupied with it myself and so I wanted just to learn more and to be able to help others. Like, so many of us that bring us into the profession—I was this—personal interest, but then, if I'm learning all these things, how can I use this knowledge to help others? So, that's when it started—and I went to—I applied a couple of times to get into the nutrition department at UBC [University of British Columbia] and finally I did, and I became aware of the terrible inequities in becoming a dietitian and that opened up a whole other pathway for me.

Gingras' personal interest to study food and nutrition became a way for her to learn how to help others. Initially she wanted to gain knowledge on how to provide nutrition education and support for those with chronic disease and illness. However, Gingras then began to observe how

those without medical conditions can experience a struggle in their personal relationship with food. Interestingly, Gingras also encountered that many within the profession suffer from disordered eating or trying to maintain a thin ideal:

And you know, the other thing that happened to me during that internship, Nikita is—I started thinking—and this is where that seed was planted for me. I started thinking about how much time and energy we as nutrition students and now interns were putting into keeping our bodies fit. So, the pressure—the body image question. My friend and I were doing aerobics, we were running ten k's [kilometers]—intern friend of mine, and I thought, Hm. What—and then we were also being asked to do the weight management. And something just clicked for me. I'm like, *There's something going on here about the timely investment in our own bodies, and how we feel like we need to keep other people's bodies thin and help them to be thin, and what was going on.* And so, for my rounds—we have to do these rounds as interns where we present on something. So, some people present on TPN solutions [total parenteral nutrition solutions], some people present on Vitamin B1, some present on selenium—and well you understand what I'm saying. And all I wanted to present on was body image among dietitians. I looked for a questionnaire and that opened me up to meet different people who were asking similar questions in the profession. And looking at how what we learn teaches us to be these weight management experts and how that might not be so great and, too, maybe it stems from our own body image issues. And so that's where that started for me. And yeah, it was true—there was a lot of resistance to talking about body image among the preceptors. I remember getting very harsh comments on the feedback, because you know, as an intern—it's all about feedback.

Interviewer: You mean presenting the idea that you were interested in doing body image?

Yeah, well and I did that for the rounds. Even though I was told, *“This isn’t scientific. This isn’t relevant. This isn’t part of our job. Why are you interested in this?”* And I just said, “I’m just am, I just want to do this.” So I asked everyone to fill in these survey questions about assessing their body image and yeah, I remember the comments from one of my colleagues was like, “I wish I didn’t have to spend so much time and energy working on my body, to keep my body thin.” And I’m like, “Yeah, it’s not fun. Why are we doing this? And why are we telling other people to do this?” *I wasn’t marked very favorably* from my supervisors on that, and I thought, *Okay this is striking a cord with people.* This isn’t an acceptable issue and whenever I got that kind of feedback it made me want to dig in deeper. *So, that basically sealed me in.*

For Gingras, the discomfort RDs had when questioned about thinness and their bodies became a reason for her to further explore the profession in depth despite the resistance received from her superiors. This excerpt also reveals how Gingras was navigating towards progressing dietetics by engaging RDs to become reflexive and assess their biases and assumptions. Gingras understood for the profession to move forward that RDs would need be reflexive of their behaviors and how it affects their practice. Therefore, the above excerpt where Gingras questions, *Why are we doing this? And why are we telling other people to do this?* captures the essence of how Gingras became reflexive in her thinking of what the future of an RD means. And although her mentors did not feel comfortable engaging in the questionnaire, Gingras felt these questions were important to ask to gain a stronger understanding of the profession and the direction dietetics was moving

towards. Research indicates that professionalism—a vital aspect of health care which increases quality of patient care, requires reflexivity (Dart, McCall, et al., 2022). Additionally, health care practitioners emphasize reflexive thinking as self-directed learning that can progress professional growth and motivate one to continuously improve on the care they provide (Bartel et al., 2019; Koshy et al., 2017). Reflecting on our own behaviors and how they relate to practice is necessary if we want to improve and evolve as practitioners, including our approach in nutrition counselling surrounding disordered eating and weight management. One of the encounters Gingras had within the profession included Asada who elaborates on a time when her health was at risk with the ongoing use of laxatives:

Yeah, so when I joined the program—the nutrition/dietetics program at UBC—I told you I was accepted while in Tokyo. So, when I came back the program had completely serendipitously paired me with her, so she was sort of my mentor in the grad program. The other serendipitous—the reason why I call it serendipitous, is because in Tokyo I had partly developed a mini eating disorder, because they have horrible body stuff over there. And so, I was like routinely taking laxatives because that's what everyone did, and I thought that was normal to try and stay skinny. And so, when I came back and started talking to Jacqui—Jacqui was at the time, running her own practice out of a wellness office. So, I remember going to her wellness office, which was like, this totally zen, spa-like area across from Gabriola Island. And Jackie was—instead of being my school mentor, where she was supposed to be mentoring me in school, she was kind of mentoring me—like, being my therapist and helping me get out of these very harmful dietary practices that I had picked up in Japan. Which kind of saved me and me realize, in

fact that this is not normal—to try and lose weight using laxatives. So, I met Jacqui really early on and she has saved me in many ways.

Above Asada reflects how she valued Gingras' guidance during the time where she struggled with her body image. Gingras being well versed of the unspoken expectations students and RDs feel to maintain a thin or slender body shape to fit into the nutrition expert role (Matusik, Aneta, et al., 2022). Through Gingras's prior research on dietetic students and their bodies she was aware of the support students need before they enter practice (Atkins & Gingras, 2009). Generally, body weight is often seen as a choice that can be regulated through food, diet, and lifestyle (Mahn & Lordly, 2015). Therefore, if RDs cannot maintain a lean figure people make the assumption that they are not competent in doing their job. This could be because in Canada health is understood as a personal responsibility (Minkler, 1999). Moreso, approaches on how to educate those on the complexity of body weight and health are not often taught in dietetics. Currently, undergraduate dietetic courses weigh more towards the applied sciences and much of the curriculum revolves around chemistry, biology, statistics, and anatomy. Dietetic education prides itself on the science of nutrition. And while there is value in understanding the physical properties of food, students sought after content that involves understanding eating disorders and disordered eating, which includes the psychological connections to food and health (Hirschhorn, 2018; Huye, 2022). Gord shares how when she first entered dietetics she persevered through the applied sciences to get to topics that were more relevant to her understanding of food and nutrition:

Well, there were about one hundred of us in the first year and of course I was older than them, but I just got lucky and I found a small group of students that you know, we became friends and we became a study group. So, they helped me get through the biochemistry and all the sciences that we had to do. The microbiology, and et cetera—

which I found really, really, really hard, but they helped me get through it and I was quite comfortable in the social sciences, and we took women studies and sociology, and that came very naturally to me. We ended up—there were four of us. One of the other girls was a mature student like me and then there were two younger students. So, we just formed a good study group and that really helped me get through and you know, I was different than the other students, but mostly I liked being at Ryerson—I liked it there a lot.

What is interesting is that even though Gord felt challenged with the heavy amount of science in the dietetic program she did not let them become obstacles on her journey of becoming a RD. And like Gord, participants agree that they were naturally intrigued by studying the social and cultural connections to food and nutrition. Yarker speaks here about how the scientific knowledge was heavily reinforced and strengthened her dietetic education. However, she recalls how it was the global and economic perspectives of food that piqued her interest in her undergraduate degree.

So yeah, I would say that I had a very strong undergraduate degree. Very strong teaching in clinical aspects, physiology, biochemistry, research methods, statistics, the—I can't remember what it was called, but the cooking class where we learn about the science of food and cooking. My favorite class there was cultural aspects of food, which was amazing, so it talked about different cultures around the world and how that influences people's food ways and how the food ways influence the people, so that was a fantastic course. Yeah, so I would say that I had an amazing undergraduate experience that way.

Although Kristen values the applied sciences, she emphasized that what really added value to her learning was gaining knowledge on global and cultural food systems around the world. However, as RDs, should we not have comprehension of the food people around the world have access to? For example, if a client from India went to see a RD for nutritional guidance and wanted to know of healthful foods to eat in India, as a RD the optimal approach would be to source foods that they would be accessible in India. Additionally, as Canada is ever-increasing as a multicultural population where more than one in five people are born outside of Canada (Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). Therefore, RDs should have a strong understanding of others individual's culture and values from around the globe and how it impacts their food choices (Mahajan et al., 2021) I will further illustrate how the cultural comprehension of food is necessary in dietetic education through Asada experience of how dietetic students are educated on foods such as rice and butter:

And just being horrified when it—I had white rice instead of brown rice. I had butter, because we eat butter, and just feeling kind of ashamed/confused that everything that I had learned—I'm blanking on the word I want, but just from my family and culture not aligning with what was the Canada's Food Guide, basically. You know, and just thinking, *Was it wrong? Is this bad? Is this going to cause disease?* Like, um yeah. And then not realizing until years and years later what was wrong with that. Like, this teaching that was completely void of people's culture, or histories, or um, all of that stuff—so, that's how I sort of started to see the cracks in what I had been educated in, professionally. And a lot of the reason why I really decided why I never wanted to do nutrition counselling again, because where I was counselling, you know, Vancouver and the city of Burnaby is very diverse and a lot of South Asian, Southeast Asian cultures and, you know, nothing I was trained to do in my undergrad or internship was—I shouldn't say nothing, but a lot of

the nutrition counselling was not appropriate for—and then I also wasn't given the tools as well to do that effectively. Yes, I could do tube-feed or a TPN [total parenteral nutrition]. That I thought was helpful, because folks are in a coma, and they can't eat, and they need nutrition, so um, you know, making sure they had the right protein to get through their next surgery was really critical and, I felt like it was worthy of my time, but a lot of the other work—

Unfortunately, Asada's experience of feeling ashamed of her ethnic background due to the lack of cultural diversity in dietetics is a common experience among students. In a previous study, four of the six African American students who were interviewed said they at times felt uncomfortable with the lack of diversity in dietetic education (Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). Gord below provides a personal experience that further supports the need for increased diversity in dietetics:

I remember even as a student coming home basically in tears just feeling like—even being Jewish at the time, which these days seems like nothing. But it was so alien to me the way they related to each other. I just felt like I stuck out like a sore thumb, I really didn't like the way they were with each other—that would have been in the late eighties, the early nineties—I just really didn't like them at all, the organizations; Ontario Dietetic Association, The Dietitians of Canada.

What Gord reveals about being a student in dietetics and its associated organizations is how the profession lacks heterogeneity (Siswanto et al., 2015). And although the racialized population in Canada is predicted to reach 22.3 million people by 2041 the profession remains

underrepresented in people with ethnocultural backgrounds (Statistics Canada, 2022; Siswanto et al., 2015) For RDs to progress in the modern world it is crucial to bring in knowledge that reflects the challenges that we are facing today, which includes the ranging needs of a demographically changing society (Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). However, by failing to include course content that educates students on the various and/or traditional foods that are a part of people's cultures and history, dietetics will remain being known as a cooking profession for women (Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). Therefore, for dietetic education to include more knowledge on how to support others from diverse cultures and provide successful nutrition counselling there must be influx of diverse and migrant students who enter the profession (Curry, 2000; Siswanto et al., 2015). First of all, there are a few reasons why diversity in dietetics is underrepresented. Research suggests that often minority populations do not enroll into dietetics partly because the established standards for acceptance into internship are intense, high, and can be financially straining (Siswanto et al., 2015; Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). Therefore, because internship is difficult to achieve it makes it challenging to accomplish diversity in the profession (Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). Even those of non-diverse backgrounds from Canada speak of the difficulty and competitiveness involved in attaining internship. Below Morely describes the lengthy process of applying nine times to obtain a placement:

So, I'll start with *how* I became a dietitian and deal with *why* afterward. How? I attended the University of Guelph from 1975-1979 doing a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Human Nutrition. I was not a strong student at all because I got what I wanted when I went to university which is to move away from home and get to meet new friends. So, I had a really fun time, but I had also gone to a high school—an open concept experimental high school where we didn't have things like midterms and finals, like they

just didn't exist. So, I didn't do very well at university because it was all midterms and finals—I didn't do very well so, that made it very difficult for me to get a dietetic internship. I applied nine times over three years and finally got an internship at the University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton. But then, very lucky for me because I was living in Vancouver at the time—I got a call from Vancouver General Hospital that somebody had just been accepted into dentistry so they had an opening.

Morley's effort to obtain an internship position had been strained by the education she received in high school. What she thought was rather unusual was that her interpersonal skills, and years of volunteer work with families seem to count for nothing on her internship application. Although grade point average can be a strong indicator of future success, assessing areas beyond a student's grade marks is crucial (Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). Morley continues to describe how she felt uninformed of how internship was received and based primary on scholarly performance:

No, we were in this room I remember, and people were coming and talking about their internships. I guess it was just a given; you finish this degree you'll get one, I guess. Right? Like, you have a choice to go wherever you want to and you apply and they'll take you. I had no idea how competitive it was (laughs). So, then you look at what are they looking for; *volunteerism*—well I had taught ballet from the time I was about maybe twelve—all through high school and into university. That's what I was doing, that was my contribution. That's a lot of families—a lot of children to connect with and their parents and so on.

So, I thought that would be really good, you know? A demonstration of how well I did and I did very well at that. Because ballet is complicated, and you have to make the body move in certain ways and use different muscles and stuff like that. So, working with a child around getting their body to move that way and having that kind of control like, that's a lot of coaching, right? And I was good at that. Anyway, none of that counted, that doesn't count, that's not really experience working with people—that was the point of view, right?

Morely was not wrong in her understanding that knowledge and skills in working with individuals and their families were not only beneficial to being a RD, but necessary. When interns are selected primarily on academic achievement, we dismiss choosing RDs that can connect and guide people in a compassionate and empathetic manner. Therefore, recognizing valuable volunteer and work experience can build a more diverse profession (Siswanto et al., 2015). Additionally, building a diverse profession of RDs can help connect and bridge a relationship with people from various populations (Suarez & Shanklin, 2002). Below, Coveney further reiterates how he felt when he heard about the competitive nature of internship in Canada:

It just sounds *inhumane* that there's lot of competition for these very few places. And when we had our first get-together in *Beyond Nutritionism* some people were recounting their experience—and crying, still upset by how uncivilized that process was for them and how it tortured them because they failed getting the first year and then they had to try again. It was ghastly.

The internship practical has been for the most part a high-stress, overly competitive process where students can have as low as a 47% chance of obtaining a placement (Hutchins, Winham, Fellows et al, 2021). Students may be able to have a Bachelor of Science in Applied Human Nutrition, but without completing an internship, they cannot become a RD. As mentioned above, this causes rupture to the growth of diversity in the profession because it confines dietetics to a limited number of placements, which overall reduces our scope of practice and what RDs can achieve as health practitioners. Thus, to progress the profession, RDs agree that moving forward involves re-evaluating the current process of how we educate and train future RDs (Ruhl & Lordly, 2017).

Next, I will elaborate on the effect internship had on RDs once they entered the field. In this section, participants open up and describe their experiences as fresh RDs. Upon the eagerness to explore the potential and privilege of being a RD they came across challenges, but also opportunities for growth and development in areas related to nutrition and dietetics. As Asada began her career as a professional, she came to question how her education and work influenced her approach to counselling patients as a RD in this way:

—when did I start to realize? That's a really good question. Probably as I started my internship and as I was working. When I actually got into a clinical setting and I started working and I just realized like, *things*. As I said, there are aspects of the work that are really great and meaningful and then otherwise I just felt like, *What am I doing here?* Like, my very first counselling experience was with a guy—I will never forget this—he had gotten in a car accident and his jaw was wired shut—and I mean, think of how awful that is. So, I was sent to go in there to counsel him on a liquid diet, which is important, because he needs nutrients now that he has to drink there's—but like, he was literally

still—and often I had this with the patients who had just had heart surgery, like they were literally still bleeding through their sutures and totally hopped up on pain meds. And bleeding. And here I am trying to counsel them on like, "This is how much protein you're going to need to get and here's—" You know, "Be careful for—" Just like, *not the right time and place*. I just remember thinking, *There has to be a better time*. Like, they're looking at me bleary eyed, still on heavy medication. So, just experiences like that where I just felt like, *This is so useless what I'm doing. I'm not helping them. There has to be a better way to do this*. I just remember thinking that a lot, like, *There has to be a better way*.

Asada's internal feelings of how to provide care were challenged by how her work and education prepared her to counsel patients. Feeling ill-equipped in nutrition counselling skills is a common experience among young professionals (Cant & Aroni, 2008; Fraser & Brady, 2021). Unfortunately, RDs feel they've obtain sufficient education on where to source and extract nutritional knowledge, but minimal skill development is involved in how to provide supportive and ethical nutrition counselling (Cant & Aroni, 2008; Fraser & Brady, 2021). Yarker shares her experience of the learning curves she had to overcome when it came to counselling an Indigenous community in Vancouver, which further contributes to the literature on how RDs struggle in ways to effectively bring in socially responsible approaches into the work that they do:

Yeah, so my first job as a dietitian was managing a diabetes prevention program for—in Vancouver's downtown, East side in an Indigenous health organization. Again, very steep learning curve and very eye opening. Yeah, both for awareness around the history and the experience of Indigenous peoples in the area, you know, what we now call *Canada*. I

didn't know all of that history so, that was a lot to learn as well with my kind of *fledgling counselling skills* and now working with a population who have a lot of challenges—very high rates of mental health concerns, very high rates of substance abuse, very de-poverty, and so yeah—and then as well as just managing a program and being responsible for a program and kind of that like, business operation. Like, the organizations operations but this actually is business operations, it's within a small non-profit. And being responsible for finding funding, making hiring decisions, budgeting decisions, and what activities we'll undertake and that in order to fulfill quite broad mandates and then reporting back and all of that was new.

The approach and manner of how we provide nutrition counselling is crucial. I feel what Asada and Yarker are alluding to is how RDs need to go beyond simply just telling their clients what to eat and also attend to the extrinsic factors, such as the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) that influence an individual's nutritional intake. Below Gord reiterates through reflecting on her first job after graduation of how the SDOH often impacted the women she worked with at Healthiest Babies Possible:

Well, I started at—it's a hospital in Toronto called Bloorview Children's hospital for children with—you know, it's a residential care for children with severe physical disabilities. I did that for about a year I believe and then moved into a maternity leave. They were both maternity leaves, that's how you got jobs at that time—that was your way in with Toronto Public Health, *Healthiest Babies Possible*. And I did that for almost a decade.

That was a very incredible experience—*Healthiest Babies Possible*. I think if that program were running now in the same way; it was a home visit program with women who were at high-risk of giving birth to low birth weight to babies. I think we would have had better supports because it was a very grueling job to see woman, after woman, after woman, who are struggling in a pregnancy and often it was the Social Determinants of Health. It was nothing to do with any inadequacy on that women's part. But I got to meet women from all around the world, in their homes for five, six, seven, eight visits during a pregnancy, and one postnatal and that was—I learnt so much from them, but I find it very hard emotionally. It was very bruising and there weren't supports in place.

Gord recalls what a compelling experience her first position as a RD was at *Healthiest Babies Possible*. However, it seems that participants knew through their counselling experiences that factors related to the SDOH were influencing their client's and/or patient's health. I think that participants felt that not addressing or advocating for these determinants was somewhat unsettling and unethical. How do RDs bring in the SDOH into their practice?

Currently, in dietetics there is often minimal understanding around the SDOH and how to engage in social justice and advocacy (Dennett, 2020; Fraser & Brady, 2022). The reasoning behind this is because there is no foundation or framework available that outlines social justice and advocacy roles for RDs (Fraser & Brady, 2022). Gord's struggle with the profession seems to be surrounding how RDs were positioned to engage with inequities and social injustices. Below Gord further reveals her discontent on how RDs should be advocating for structural and systemic change:

I was trying to find other work—I was so disheartened with what was going on in public health. I always felt that there was this amazing staff of 1500 people that were really wanting to make a difference and that they were really sent out to work with sort of their hands tied behind their backs. And I was so disheartened with the nutrition program and the nutrition managers, and I found them so conservative and so uh, I was so fed up with them.

It is important for RDs to understand that they have a responsibility to use their knowledge to advocate for factors beyond an individual's control can influence their health and wellbeing (Fraser & Brady, 2021). It is also unethical for RDs to know systemic barriers exist that prevent people and populations from healthy and sustainable food systems and not use their skills to support and address these issues. Furthermore, for future nutrition counselling practices to be successful, it is necessary for RDs to acknowledge that healthy eating is not always a choice for many. While some RDs think that taking action to change inequities on a structural or systemic level is more so a political choice rather than a professional responsibility, I think that RDs need to recognize the privilege of their position as an RD and realize they have a real opportunity to make changes that address the health disparities that exist in the world.

It seems RDs lack acknowledging the privilege they have in their position to influence systemic and structural inequities (Fraser & Brady, 2022). Aphramor states below how it was recognized that the privilege of being an RD was that it was a highly influential role in healthcare. This realization came to Aphramor because before being a RD, Aphramor was a patient in a mental health advocacy program. Later on, Aphramor became a RD and had felt the difference of treatment received at first as a patient, and then later in the role as a “dietitian”:

And the first job that I applied for was in uh, it's called—so it's an advocacy in mental health—*mental health advocacy*. And the post was for somebody who would use the mental health system. Yeah, so I don't quite know what the language is that you'd use in Canada—uh, *survivors advocacy*? you might use. I remember thinking, If I don't get this I'll never work—right? I just didn't rate what I had to offer, really. And when I did that—like, it was in this post—the rubbish that people were talking—*it was extortionary!* So, people would really—people with a lot of power in the system; psychiatrists, social workers would just sit there in these meetings, and I would just think, *What a load of rubbish!* What was *really, really, really* fascinating—so, I did get a lot more confident when I was doing that post, and I think I just began to understand that I had something useful to offer—sit, thinking, or organizing things, or whatever it was. And then I also got a post—but that was part time that job. And I got part time work as a community dietitian—and what was really fascinating was how differently I was treated in the same week—both in the health service, depending on my role.

Aphramor states how there is power and privilege within the role of being an RD power to effect health advocacy work and structural inequities. Therefore, yes, the power that comes with being an RD includes advocacy responsibilities, but this is also to be seen as a privileged responsibility. Another participant who acknowledged the opportunities of work that exists in being RD was Coveney. Below Coveney recognized that as an RD he could lend his nutrition knowledge to the developing country, Papua New Guinea. Coveney shares his story about his first position as a nutritionist where he travelled over 13,000 kilometers to Southeast Asia to jumpstart his career in a country he knew nothing about.

Yeah, so I did my undergraduate degree and my state registration exam in the UK—the University of Surrey and then when I graduated, I wanted to travel. My wife and I have done quite a bit of travelling in Europe and we agreed that when we finish study that we would travel...

So, these are organizations that place people in roles in developing countries. My wife and I were posted to Papua New Guinea (laughs)—I'm laughing because looking back it just seems so bizarre. We had no idea where New Guinea was when we were told we were going there. I knew that there was a Guinea somewhere in Africa and I thought, *Oh well perhaps I can come home for Christmas*—but anyway that wasn't possible because Papua New Guinea is nowhere near Africa, and so we took this posting and it took us to New Guinea where I was a nutritionist for a whole province. And Melonie first of all worked in a medical laboratory at the hospital, then kind of worked with me, then ended up working as a teacher in the high school. So, we spent two years in New Guinea—

John shares how becoming a RD enabled him to travel and work abroad, while the privilege of his position permitted him to be trusted to provide nutritional guidance to those of a different culture and social structure. Although Coveney was first unaware of where his first job was located, he recognized that there was honor in being a health support for those of an entire county.

The experiences that participants had throughout their education and career allowed them to see that there were indeed gaps in the dietetic profession. However, these gaps were not seen as obstacles, but rather an opportunity to grow and further develop the dietetic profession—and then later, they *pushed* to bring a more diverse and socially just practice into the profession. Through taking the liberty in their position as RD's, described below are the ways founding members began

to initiate action to transform practice. I will now move into the second organizing theme, The Push for Transformative Practice and highlight areas where these RD's made a difference in their practice.

Organizing Theme 2.2: The Push for Transformative Practice

In the first organizing theme, founding members share their memories of their education and career that they have reflexed on (See Figure 1 Global Themes 1 and 2 Diagram). I believe these recalled memories have been significant life events for them because they see them as the reasons why they felt the profession needed to change. Participants took action in finding answers to the questions they had reflected upon, by furthering their education through earning a graduate degree. They then put effort with their newfound knowledge to expand and develop dietetics while practicing as an RD. Below I elaborate on how participants make meaning out of their experiences as a RD and what realizations they arrived to about the profession of dietetics. Through their realizations, they engaged in making change happen. Thus, this theme elaborates on how founding members started taking action to reform the shape of dietetics.

Gingras began to push for transformative practice by first deciding to expand her knowledge base. When patients started questioning her expertise as she entered the field it made her self-reflect and wonder, *what do I know and how am I so sure of what I do know?* Below Gingras shares when she realized that she would need to further her education:

Yeah, that was during internship. When actual humans started talking back to me—the patients started talking back to me and saying, "What makes you think you know anything about what works?" Ah, I needed that so badly—to be humbled that way. And the more complicated things became the more interested I became in it. And that's when I decided I wanted to go back to school. So, I did an internship, despite all odds—I got an

internship at Royal Columbian Hospital, in New Westminster, on the coast near Vancouver. And I decided not long after that, I would apply to do my master's degree at U of A [University of Alberta] because I just wasn't finished learning. Despite the thought that I knew what I needed to know to do my job now for the rest of my life (laughs) I quickly learned that I knew pretty much, very little. I knew very little.

Gingras' experience throughout internship gave her new insight into her future career as a RD which motivated her to return to school to obtain a master's degree. Likewise, Asada shares a similar experience in that she was unsatisfied with her experience working in a hospital setting. And like Gingras, Asada was interested in exploring opportunities where RDs could make a difference. Below Asada describes how she decided to search for options through continuing her education through graduate school:

I was really discontent with my experience as a clinical dietitian. I felt like I wasn't—well A. I completely hated the internship process—I think that's pretty um, universal but—so, I didn't like the internship process. I started working as a clinical dietitian, which I shouldn't say I hated the whole thing. There are lots of aspects of it that I enjoyed, and I made some really great colleagues who I'm still in touch with and when I go back to Vancouver, I still have coffees and dinners with these dietitians that I worked with ten years ago. So, there was great things that came out of it, but I was just really frustrated with a lot of the clinical practice. I could kind of see my future in like, my career trajectory and I just wasn't seeing where it was going to go. I wasn't really inspired by my options, I guess because, I was twenty-four at that—I was young and I wanted to do challenging things and, too, I kept trying to start pilot programs at Burnaby hospital, where I was working. People in the surgical program were calling me the 'troublemaker'

and it wasn't rewarded that I was trying to do new things. It was frowned upon and so, that's how I found out about—I started looking for graduate programs. I was terrified—no one in my family had gone to college, let alone doing a master's program. In fact, many clinical dietitians that I was working with discouraged me from perusing a master's degree, which looking back I'm like, horrified at that.

You know, why would you discourage a twenty-four-year-old person from pursuing higher education? And their reasons were, if you stay as a clinical dietitian, I think you only get paid twenty-five cents more an hour, or fifty cents more an hour if you come back—but I was like, I don't want to come back! That's the whole reason I'm doing this! (laughs) And you know, they're like, "Well think about—you have a year lost in salary, plus you're not going to make that back because you're not working enough." Anyways they were just making this economic argument with me about why not to do it—but there was one dietitian who had left Burnaby hospital and had done her PhD—Jen, uh oh—it wasn't our Jenna [Jennifer Brady]. Shoot, her last name starts with A—anyways doesn't matter. She was my soul inspiration because she was the one who like, got out. And I was like, "Wow, you can get out and do other things besides be in this hospital?" So that was really inspiring to me. And so, I look to her a lot for guidance and she helped me look for graduate programs and do all those kinds of things—because I think when you're the first child to go higher education, you don't have role models to guide you, or it's not assumed that you're going to do higher education.

Asada opens up about how she initially desired to explore the broader realms of dietetics in hopes to advance the profession through new research and program development. However, her

exploration to go beyond the traditional clinical role and look into initiating pilot studies, or small-scale research projects was not welcomed in her role at the hospital. It had been difficult for Asada to find support from employees to engage in exploring knowledge gaps that RDs are well equipped to do. Therefore, Asada went on to pursue a master's degree. Gord also shares her discontent with work as a RD in public health, so much so that she states that she had to leave dietetics. However, returning to further her education through a graduate degree opened her mind to areas unexplored in academia. With her newfound knowledge, Gord's excitement to re-enter public health and inspire change had been renewed.

Anyway, I got accepted into OISE [Ontario Institute for Studies in Education] and that's when I did my Master of Education and then I got my mind blown by all the scholarly work that was being done and I felt that I didn't know what it was—and that really changed things for me. Then I came back to public health—I left dietetics, although I still was very involved with nutrition at public health, but not as a dietitian—more with students and staff orientation, and e-learning, and different projects I worked on. But that masters, I was already fifty. I was about fifty years old or so, and that really changed things for me so—

Gord describes how deepening her knowledge through graduate school motivated her educate students and her work team at public health. While she reveals that she had left dietetics, Gord also reinstates how she remained to be very involved with nutrition. I don't think it was Gord's desire to leave dietetics. It seems that Gord wanted RDs to be involved in areas that would change and progress equal access health equity. However, her role in public health as a RD did not provide her the opportunity to do so, leading her to complete a masters in health profession

education. What I feel needs to be illuminated from the statements above is how participants first initiated making change through furthering their education through either a masters and/or doctorate degree. Participants agree that learning beyond the positivist and epistemological knowledge that dietetics is rooted in that they were able to better understand the social world and how we practice as RDs. As participants proceeded throughout their graduate studies and extended their knowledge, I feel there were two things recognized; 1) That dietetic education attends to positivist epistemology, and for the profession to prosper and develop, transdisciplinary research and education was imperative and 2) That through applying what they had learned throughout their masters and doctorate studies and putting it into practice, they had a way to enhance and contribute to future dietetic discourse. However, participants would soon begin to realize that bringing in new knowledge and expanding the breadth and depth of dietetics would not be a quick nor easy task. I will elaborate further below on how participants struggled to make change happen through their ambitious endeavors.

Recall above how Asada stated that while working in clinical practice that she had been called a ‘trouble-maker’. Interestingly, before participants began to coalesce and connect as a movement, many of them were of were referred to—or were dubbed as *troublemakers*, *renegades*, or *rabble-rousers* in their profession. Therefore, prior to the founding of Critical Dietetics, their motive to influence change in dietetics was understood as an act of rebellion. Below Gord describes how she was perceived and overlooked by her employers in her attempt to get RDs to engage in social justice and advocacy work:

So, I was considered a bit of a *renegade* at Public Health. I had talked to the nutrition managers about sort of letting us loose in the community to do social justice work, food advocacy work—to do the kind of work I thought we were really well placed to do. To

really go into neighborhoods where there were community activist who were working on issues around poverty and really work with them around food security. Of course, they just said “no.” and instead we just did these sort of cookie-cutter presentations around healthy eating and stuff like that. But at one point I just got a chance to co-teach a course of community health to fourth year Ryerson students and I met Esther Ignagni, who ended up being a professor in Critical Disability at Ryerson. What I learnt from her was that everything I was experiencing and feeling as sort of an embodied knowledge was in the literature. She, of course being an academic person showed me the literature around the determinants of health and health equity.

She taught me in that—those few months that we taught together, from her lectures that I listened to—she really exposed me to the whole world of the literature. Which I've always really tried to bring into my classroom teaching—to make sure that students know that there's a whole world of academics and many of them are activist as well as scholars who study, research, and construct knowledge around the very issues that you might be working in the community around. And that's often around the determinants of health, health equity—and of course what through the pandemic is really being brought to light around race, and class, and uh, the kind of disparity that systemic racism that's been around for so long. So, I really owe her a—Jennifer Welsh from Ryerson and Esther Ignagni from Ryerson. So, you meet certain people in your life that are very generous with their power and with their knowledge. It was at that point that I understood that what I was experiencing at work—that there was a language and there was a lot of people thinking about it. In England too, there was Marmot and different people like him who had been writing about health inequity and social determinants of health. And that Public

Health, in Toronto—although there were people who knew that and were trying to put that into practice by enlarge—we were behind. We hadn't caught up, yet.

Although those in public health at the time did not see the relevance of RDs being involved in social justice and food advocacy work, Gord discloses how the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the inequalities that exist in health care. However, educational tools to redress inequalities are lacking in research literature and specifically, dietetic discourse (Fraser & Brady, 2020). Furthermore, understanding and acknowledging how inequality forms and its impact on individuals and groups of people does not necessarily help progress social justice (Brady & Gingras, 2019). Plainly put, it is not beneficial to simply complain about social injustices that exist and then decide to do nothing to change them. Critical Theorist and philosopher, Paulo Freire calls *praxis* the process of reflection and action to inspire social transformation (Freire, 2012; Brady & Gingras, 2019). As participants reflected and re-examined the profession through their experiences, they understood that to transform into a socially just practice, action would be required. To be active in progressing dietetics participants quite literally practiced the process of praxis through their career positions since minimal know-how on how to advance social justice in dietetics existed (Fraser & Brady, 2020). However, they were not revered or respected for their acts in making movement towards delineating what social justice and advocacy can look like in dietetic practice and exploring how it intersects with nutrition and health. Here is an example of how Morely experienced personally that an RD's position had its own limitations in conducting research at medical institution.

What I didn't realize is that there was this unwritten code that meant only physicians who worked there were allowed to apply for these grants. So, I kept saying, "We should apply

for this." So, then we had this workload measurement system, where every fifteen minutes you had to log in and say what are you doing. So sometimes, the model was—we had offices—kind of like the one I'm sitting in right now, only this is much nicer and cozier. And people were booked into see you—an hour appointment because that's how long it took to talk to people, and so sometimes people would cancel, or they would pass away, or they'd be hospitalized so they weren't coming. So, in all of that time what I did was, I read journal articles, I read about fund opportunities, I started working on proposals—I started doing research type of work. And so, I get called into the office this one day, I remember very clearly, in July 2005.

And I was called into the office with the person I reported to, who was our manager, who was somebody I had been a preceptor for when they were an intern. So, that person said, "I want to go over your workload record with you." And I went, "Okay." Found out I was the only dietitian in the whole frickin group who was actually logging in and doing what I was asked to do—was keeping track of my time. So, this person said, "You are spending twenty percent of your time on research and that's not your job—your job is to see people and their families and provide nutrition counselling. That's your job." And I went, "Okay I get that, but I also have times of the day when I'm not one hundred percent busy doing that—I've done all my charting, I've done all my screening, and so I spend my time in a manner that I think is responsible." And so, "Yeah, well that's just not your job. Your job is to—" I don't know the language in Nova Scotia, but in BC it's; A Dietitian 1, 2, 3, 4, 5—so it's your rank. And so, "You're a dietitian one, and you're doing things that are for a dietitian three, and you're not allowed to do that." And I went, "I have PhD, what do you want me to do? Leave my brain at home?"

Morley's excerpt above illustrates how limiting RDs to stay confined to their assigned job duties and tasks when they are well versed to engage in research and advocacy work only inhibits the professional status and growth of dietetics. Justifying reasons for RDs not to engage in research can be limiting because RDs who explore opportunities to deepen dietetics knowledge base can utilize this information to have available to draw upon when necessary. Secondly, it expands dietetic discourse through objectifying the different ways food and nutrition intersect with health and wellbeing. Furthermore, I feel that disabling RDs from exploring the depths of food and nutrition inhibits them from feeling a sense of belonging to the profession and creates a less diverse dietetic community. Below MacLellan describes how she began to recognize the importance of RDs feeling included and connected to the profession to which they belong:

I remember going to my first DC conference and seeing everybody in a suit and I didn't own a suit, so I thought in my head, oh next conference I got to wear a suit. You know, you go to conferences now and you don't see people in suits. It's much more relaxed and I think back then for some reason there was a big disconnect between the members and the organization. And I think it was Daphne, and Shawna, and Cathy Morley, and Jacqui Gingras and a few several others that got involved with the association. And I'm not saying that this is all our doing, but we pushed hard for that gap to close. Because we started to see people—well especially when the colleges started—we started seeing people drop their Dietitians of Canada membership because it was no longer required to be a dietitian and for us, very important to have that professional organization. And I had seen the demise of the home economics association. The Canadian Home Economics association—it just died. And I didn't want that to happen to the dietitian's association.

So yeah, I think we might have been thought of as a little bit of *rabble-rousers* at the time. (laughs)

MacLellan discusses how she observed the dietetic organization strive for uniformity and conformity in how members presented themselves. However, MacLellan and colleagues recognized that the standard dress requirement at conferences would only further detach RDs from feeling as if they belonged to the profession. And as a result, it would produce less diverse and inclusive community of professionals. The culture of dietetics is currently known as a non-diverse community of white, cisgendered females (Krishna, 2020). Some research agrees that wearing business suits can contribute to building a competent and respected profession (Morris et al., 1996). However, to normalize RDs presenting themselves in suits only further contributes to the ideology of what RDs should look like.

Effort to “close the gap” MacLellan and colleagues felt between themselves and the organizing bodies aligned with Freire’s praxis—in that they were not only analyzing social structures, but taking initiative to transform them (Freire, 2012). Interestingly, their efforts to build a more inclusive and diverse profession was misunderstood as problematic attempts that would only harm the profession, rather than progress it. To cite Einstein, “The right thing is not always popular, and what is right is not always popular.” However, Critical theory calls these efforts “beautiful consequences” in that it can bring us closer to a society of freedom and justice (Brookfield, 2005). Embodying a socially just practice and profession requires a need to develop a strong understanding of how dietetics and its discourse was constructed. Therefore, RDs must examine dietetic education and deconstruct its hidden assumptions while exposing its

inconsistencies and contradictions. Below is an example of how MacLellan describes her curiosity to dissect what the term *client-centeredness* means as a professional standard through research:

So, I found that really, really interesting and that's what kind of prompted me to think, okay well what is *client-centeredness*? What does that mean to people? Because it was in our—I think it still is in our professional standards document—that we practice in a client-centered way. But I kind of had this niggling notion that people had their own ideas of what that was, and that's basically what I found out. That there really is—I was trying at a definition of client-centered practice, and I couldn't. And I tried. I did a Delphi survey, which is a really interesting research method. I was just going to do the Delphi survey, but when then I collected that data I noticed that there was a discrepancy between how people were rating the question, Like you generally said, "in client-centered practice I listen with empathy to my client." Or something like that. And they would rate that on a one to five—like one, never. Five, always. And then there was a space for comments. And what I started to see was in a lot of the questions. There was a discrepancy between how they were rating it—they were rating very highly, but then in the comments there seemed to be some hesitation—some uh, qualifications around that, right? That "yes, I want to be client-centered, but I don't have enough time with people." or "Yes, I want to be client-centered, but they have to do what I tell them to do, in order to be better." So, that's what did—in-depth interviews—

Through initiating research on dietetic terminology that is recurrently embedded throughout dietetic standards of practice, MacLellan was able to evaluate the assumptions behind

the term *client-centeredness* and define a stronger understanding of what that word means to practitioners. As evidence-based research is the foundation of dietetic discourse, I feel RDs should be cognizant of where and how their knowledge was constructed. Therefore, acknowledging that RDs are also researchers, we should continuously re-search the education, including its terms and language that we use to disseminate information. Manore & Myers (2003) state that RD's are to "apply, participate, or generate research to enhance practice" (p. 109). Therefore, with all the variation that is possible for dietitians to engage in, apply, and generate how is it that there are so few opportunities for internship placements that students could be a part of? Perhaps more engagement in these areas would prevent RDs from feeling unfulfilled in their job. Below Coveney describes below how RDs can feel as if their work is boring. When I myself feel that there are heaps to examine, analyze, and explore in the field of food and nutrition.

But when I was a dietitian, I was struck by a number of things; One, was that in order to get into the program because of placements—numbers that you can enroll in the program are limited. So, the entry score for admission to a dietetics program is pretty high—so, you get very smart people just by virtue of them having to achieve a high mark for admission, whether it's from high school or somewhere else—they have to perform really high. And I was struck by the fact that these students that we were admitting were super smart and yet actually, you didn't have to be super smart to be a dietitian, you know? You didn't have to have kind of qualifications that many of these people had. And it was just because the number of places is limited, then the only way that you can really filter people is through their scholastic achievements—so that kind of struck me. And I think what happened there was, when I started to scratch the surface of clinical practice—the frustration that then emerged from people saying, "I did all this study and all I'm doing all

day is really humdrum stuff." The dissatisfaction with the work that dietitians were doing kind of welled up, and out would come all this dissatisfaction with the practice of dietitians. And so, I was very interested in that. And when I worked in Western Australia, I formed a little group of people who would meet regularly to kind of try and talk this through. All of this is to say that when I went to the conference in Toronto, *Beyond Nutritionism*, which seemed to be about this dilemma, if you like. *We seem to be so narrowly focused in our practice and we don't seem to have the opportunity to look beyond there, but there's heaps of stuff beyond there that we need to be mindful of.* And that I think was the most engaging factor that seem to join us all up—that we knew that dietetics was much bigger and bolder and, too, much more insightful for than what we appeared to be doing.

First, I feel it is necessary to highlight how Coveney took initiative to gather a group of individuals in Western Australia to discuss how those in the profession were dissatisfied in dietetics. Through collective gatherings, Coveney was able to understand that the narrow discourse of dietetics was a disservice to those who put in high efforts to obtain their education. From my understanding, what RD's desired was to explore and research the many realms of food and nutrition that essentially had led them to study dietetics to begin with (Lordly & MacLellan, 2012). And although Coveney recalls how academic achievement is used to determine students' ability of obtaining a placement and becoming an RD—it is important to consider that only selecting students based on academic achievement would breed RDs who may be book smart, but not necessarily compassionate or skilled in effective communication—a critical component to the work of RDs. Below Gord not only explains the need for compassionate care in dietetics, but she

also describes how broad dietetics as a health profession can be. That is, it is not only food and nutrition knowledge that dietetics encompasses. As a health profession, RDs also need to learn how to operate as a team as well as understand how food and nutrition intersect with health and wellbeing:

I think being a team player is really critical—interprofessional practice—nobody operates alone in a health care setting, so you've got to be able to get along with other allies and professionals, the medical profession, the nursing profession, you have to be able to communicate well. I'm a really strong believer in care, and compassion, and empathy, and I think you can teach that. And even keeping up with the literature—sometimes I worry that students aren't encouraged enough to delve into literature and see what people are thinking about around the world and not just in their own particular setting. And all the critical issues that you know—I developed my course around, which has just taken off now with the pandemic, and all that's come to light with health and equities—so, all those issues. You know, there's almost nothing on disability even though the percentage of people disabled in Canada—I don't know the statistic off the top of my head.

Gord highlights how topics such as interprofessionalism, compassionate care, disability studies, and global changes overlap into dietetic education and practice. Research agrees with Gord in that “dietetics operates within a web of connections formed by the context in which practice occurs” (Tapsell, 2019, p.3). Therefore, dietetic discourse would require a breadth of knowledge that is interprofessional, interdisciplinary, and inter-sectoral (Tapsell, 2019). These concepts are important in dietetic education because 1) Interprofessional practice provides education on how to communicate and coordinate effectively with other health care workers to ensure RDs provide the

best care possible. 2) An interdisciplinary approach involves utilizing knowledge from other disciplines and is necessary as the skills and knowledge vary broadly depending on the setting the RD is working in. And 3) Inter-sectorial practice can support RD's in understanding how social factors connect to health inequities and provide direction on their role in social justice advocacy. These concepts are only recently gaining acknowledgement in health care and need to be further integrated in dietetic research and education (Tapsell, 2019; Fraser & Brady, 2020). Gord recognized the complexity of dietetic work and was able to successfully weave these themes and topics into her course work while working as graduate professor. Like Gord, Morely also aimed to better prepare future practitioners for the type of work they would experience in the field through becoming an educator:

That's why I ended up with the job I have right now as a professor because I wanted to end my career at least having some influence over some young lives of people who wanted to be dietitians before I retired. I wanted to have the opportunity to pose some of these thoughts about our privilege that we have entering into the lives of—not just some people are traumatized—everybody is. It's not like trauma is confined to a certain someone and we get to define what trauma is. I believe everybody—you don't consult with a dietitian unless there's some trauma going on in your life. I don't care who you are—you might be an Olympic athlete; you might be a brand-new mom—it doesn't matter. To me there's something that's—I learnt just recently that there's two really important questions; *why this and why now?* I've learnt this from my social worker friend who is also a dietitian. Um, why this issue, and why now? Right? And that just puts everything I've ever done right in place. I go, *Yeah, why is this person coming to see me about and why are they doing that right now?* It's so important.

Morely describes her insight of how RDs have a unique opportunity as professionals to gain an understanding of the complexity of people's lives through utilizing an interdisciplinary approach. Morely gleams insight to how trauma influences our relationship with food. And as a result, people often approach RDs when something in their lives become turbulent, believing that often there is an underlying reason as to why individuals decided to reach for nutrition counselling. In recognizing that often what we grapple with in life has an effect on our food choices, it should be acknowledged it is a privilege for people to be ready to open up and share details about their personal lives with RDs. However, for RDs to progress as professional nutrition educators, RDs require further resources and knowledge in providing guidance to others, and this includes, but is not limited to education on trauma, disordered eating, food equity, food sovereignty, and social justice to help support and understand what could be inhibiting that individual's health and wellbeing (Joy & McSweeney-Flaherty, 2022). Without digging into the root cause of people's food behaviors and the culture we live in, RDs limit their practice and their profession.

In recognizing the connected web of topics that intersect into food and nutrition, participants began to understand the best way to address these concerns and reshape the practice of dietetics was through establishing a movement. Over a decade after its establishment in 2009, today WCD is an organization that is still known to be progressive, innovative, and a research informed strategy to peel open and into the depth of the profession. Below I will expand on how establishing a movement created the potential to change and transform what it means to be a RD.

As the world progresses and transitions so will all professions, this includes the dietetic profession. World Critical Dietetics began as a movement to transform and progress dietetic practice and education. The intention was not to direct attention to practice that was inept or wrong.

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The intention of WCD was to glean insight on elements of food and nutrition that could be fueled by dietetic knowledge and discourse. Of course, it seems wrong to move forward without reflexing back on how the intent of the movement was first questioned and why WCD experienced a challenge being welcomed by the profession. Thus, as I move into sharing how participants see WCD, I initially begin with sharing Yarker's thoughts on how the word *Critical* in World Critical Dietetics was initially perceived and questioned but remains to be an irreplicable term to the organization.

That word, *Critical* right—you think of *criticism* and so then you feel defensive. I think that's a very natural reaction and I was somewhat uncomfortable with the word Critical Dietetics at first too, just because I wasn't familiar with that practice of having critical aspects of a field and that those critical aspects is not that they're trying to tear down the field, *it's that they are passionate about the field and so they want it to be practiced in the best way possible—and so it's a group of people who think about how to do this the best.* And so once I think, if people learn that that's what it's about then you know, I think many people would be open to that, but as I said, just that word *Critical*—you think of *criticism* and then you're like, Well I am a dietitian so I need to defend myself, or I do train dietitians so I need so I need to defend what we do. Ah, but I think that's just a natural human thing. And then yeah, the organization Critical Dietetics is going to say things differently than the organization Dietitians of Canada, and I don't think that's bad—I mean like, there's two different perspectives—okay? Sure. And as far as competition—I mean, they're completely different in nature so I don't know—I don't see any competition there, but I guess if people come from a scarcity mindset, or I don't know. I mean, whenever there's anything new, I guess the established is going to worry

like, *Oh is this competition?* But that's not anything to do with what Critical Dietetics had any nature of—so, I think maybe if people didn't know what it was, maybe there might be that initial like, Ooh—you know? But if you then just find out what it's about it's like, *Ohh*, then there's, *This isn't criticism, and there isn't the competition*. So, I didn't ever see anything like that and in fact I thought it was fantastic that um—I think at first then—like some of the first Critical Dietetics conferences and that would often happen at kind of the same time as the Dietitians of Canada, just because dietitians were travelling to one place to meet together and so then would use that opportunity. I thought being, you know my whole presentation was on, Being Strategic—I was like, That sounds pretty strategic to me, like if they've already travelled across the country to the same place.

Yarker recalls how those who initiated WCD as a movement were passionate and deeply cared about the future of the profession. Therefore, those who perpetuated the WCD movement believed that for dietetics to maintain current and relevant, in the evolving world, that it was important to acknowledge various viewpoints and perspectives related to food and nutrition. Incorporating other viewpoints and perspectives would mean that the profession would need to become more inclusive and diverse. And although WCD had established a dire need to diversify the profession in 2009, ten years has passed and yet research still indicates that white students are almost four times more likely to become an RD than students of an ethnic minority (Riediger et al., 2019). This lack of diversity in dietetics results in limited paradigms and ways of knowing within dietetics (Riediger et al., 2019; Ng & Wai, 2021). Additionally, it reflects inequity within the dietetic profession. Founding members like, Aphramor recalls how WCD recognized the importance in addressing inequality and undoing racism in dietetics:

it's a group of people who are critiquing dietetics in order to make it sort of fairer and safer for everybody. And I would say that I think it's emerged from dietitians working within academia. And it reflects the fact that it emerged from within academia. And increasingly there's practitioner voices and also importantly there's a real attention to undoing racism in the profession.

I feel what is important to notice here is how WCD formed from those who strive to make dietetics a respectable and well-grounded profession as possible. Aphramor also brings attention to how WCD formed through those who gained further education and bravely spoke up about how dietetics could progress through a undoing and reforming the profession. In my mind, this is the reason why WCD was born out of academia. Through a collective voice, these scholars could affect students and practitioners to populate a more diverse profession and dietetic identity through unearthing how historically systemic and structural racism can affect our direction of growth. The College of Dietitians of Ontario states the role of a RD includes reducing “health inequities and protect human rights; promote fairness and equitable treatment” (2019). But still little knowledge and literature exists on how to address these concerns within the profession (Ng & Wai, 2021; Fraser & Brady, 2019; Brady, 2020). Therefore, as Gingras states below, WCD came together as a way to educate health practitioners to acknowledge and engage in social justice advocacy.

I would say that World Critical Dietetics is a group of people who are dedicated to social justice and we take our home as dietetics, but it's so much broader than that, in that it does really start with relationships regardless of profession and we know that those relationships are what gives us life and hope, possibility for change and so, that's how I would describe World Critical Dietetics—as an evolving, emerging force in the social justice field and health.

Gingras foresaw how field of food and nutrition was broad and after over a decade later many other practitioners are beginning to understand that working with the best evidence requires research from various disciplines (Tapsell, 2019). Therefore, Gingras sees WCD as base for those within dietetics, but also a space for those who reside beyond practice that could provide knowledge from other positions to the profession. Participants see how voices from various disciplines and bodies of knowledge are necessary to elicit a systemic and structural revolution in the food and nutrition world. Below Coveney reiterates how in fact diverse knowledge is specifically necessary in our profession as we have seemed to simultaneously combine two matters into one area of study.

I think it's worth acknowledging that—okay, that what we now call nutrition and dietetics represents two quite different trajectories. But one is dietetics—No, let me start with nutrition. So, nutrition is a science of food and one that we understand today was really developed in the mid-nineteenth century principally by people like Wilber Atwater and Carroll Rüdiger and Bongoid in Germany. This understanding that the body comprises structures and metabolic process which largely depend on food and after that there were the discoveries of the vitamins and the minerals, and we're still on that journey. Did you know that about ninety-eight percent of what's in food is currently unknown? We only know about two percent of actually the ingredients in food. It's now being called, *Dark Nutrition*

I could send you a paper where all of that is explained—that nutrition is—anyway, that's the trajectory of nutrition, but dietetics actually goes back a long way before that—a long way before that, back to the Ancient Greeks. Because dietetics isn't about food in that

way, it's about the way in which different elements of life are brought together to enhance one's wellbeing. Later dietetics becomes quite prescribed in the way that we know it now—if you're sick, you eat this. If you're trying to protect yourself from sickness, you eat that. So, the bringing together of nutrition and dietetics is really bring two quite different cultures together—quite different cultures. And I don't think we understand that as fully as we should know that. So, nutrition gives us the science, dietetics gives us a mode of living.

...A certain mode of living was endorsed in Ancient Greece and how that was transferred to Rome, and that then influenced what happened at the birth of Christianity and that influenced what happened in the Medieval period. So, at each of these moments eating correctly was understood differently. And then you get the arrival of the science of nutrition and how that emerged in the Industrial period and that is how you are eating correctly today, according to nutrition and scientific principals—that's how, that the register for eating correctly today. And that nutrition is actually quite powerful because it has a language, which while people won't know about amino acids, or fatty acids, or things like that—on the surface they do have an understanding.

What Coveney illuminates above is how dietetics is ultimately a created language in itself which proposes an understanding to how food can enhance health and wellbeing. Coveney explains how nutrition relates to the science of food, including its vitamins, minerals, and metabolic processes. And RDs are deemed to understand both the scientific knowledge of food along with expertise on how to educate those on the nutrition of food through a clear and effective manner. Coveney further alludes to how dietetics and nutrition have ultimately been merged into

one area of study ultimately revealing how RDs still have much to explore and become involved in. Prior research has also identified that there are many parallels between our understanding of nutrition and health and that dietetics needs to broaden its scope to explore its many areas and opportunities (Graham, 2020; Morgan et al., 2019). Therefore, to go beyond the scope of what RDs have traditionally done for work generates the possibility to expand how RDs are understood as a profession, to people, and to other professionals.

Ultimately, through questioning founding members about their educational and career experiences that have traditionally remained unasked, the significance of the theme *What it Means to be a Dietitian* is not to explicitly define what a RD *is* or *does*. Participants recurrently stated in their interviews that they initially did not know what a RD was and through their studies and professional positions they decided to challenge this question and invigorated action to 1) Preserve the profession and 2) Grow and progress dietetics as a profession that advocates for food and nutrition through ethical and socially just principals. Through their actions, it was not participants intent to redefine the term *dietitian*. Rather, their actions aimed to propose to the profession the many areas that RDs could take a part in. Recall that as the world is everchanging and evolving, so should the dietetic profession. As I conclude this research thesis and my findings through oral history, I find that what is necessary to understand about WCD is how the organization acknowledges that as nutrition researchers and practitioners, RDs today stand in many overlapping roles. Therefore, inquiring *What it Means to be a Dietitian* is intended to remain as a question that should be ongoing and continuously asked. As the profession persists to maintain its position in the world, through WCD, dietetics will continue to transform and transcend into different areas yet undefined.

Providing education on food and nutrition that attends to the social, cultural, and systemic inequities informs how RDs practice and research. Thus, for WCD, maintaining a critical perspective of how we approach practice and how it will transgress is imperative to its growth.

Conclusion

Through this research thesis I have explored WCD using oral history for which I conducted two-part interviews with eight participants who attended the BN workshop in 2009 at X university. Two global themes emerged from my research. The first theme, *To be is To Become* elaborates how and why World Critical Dietetics came to fruition and evolved into a non-profit organization. At its core, theme one captures a feeling shared by many participants—that WCD was formed as outsiders in the profession came together and coalesced into a movement that aimed to transform the future of dietetic education and practice. The second global theme, *What Does it Mean to Be a Dietitian* provided the opportunity to explore what being a RD means to the participants of this study. Through questioning assumptions about epistemological approaches in dietetic education and committing to action, participants collectively were able to invigorate the profession by establishing a voice in the dietetic community through WCD. Through theme two, I was able to uncover that participants questioned themselves what being a RD means. This is a question that has no finite answer. The intent of provoking for an answer, is the answer itself—that the question should be continuously asked as a way to consistently progress and improve the profession. As the world itself is everchanging and advancing, so should the profession of dietetics. Therefore, the question, *What Does it Mean to be a Dietitian* will always be unanswered to maintain the growth and prosperity of the profession. What this currently means is that we as dietitians should be reflecting upon the historic and traditional practices of the profession while aiming to bring more diversity, inclusion, and equity in the profession through informative and non-violent

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communication. Dietetics stems from science, but to progress and rise-up, the profession must be re-rooted in social justice approaches that advocates for health equity. World Critical Dietetics is a pioneer in that the organization has given structure to bringing social justice into dietetic education and practice. However, this is an undertaking that requires collective effort, patience, and persistence. Therefore, future collaboration and community engagement within and outside of the profession is of utmost importance.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A:

Interview Guide

Part 1: Oral History of Critical Dietetics Interview Guide

1. How and why did you become a dietitian?

Possible prompts:

- Where and when did you attend university?
- Tell me about your university experience in dietetics?
- What influenced your decision in deciding to attend the dietetic program you chose?
- Did you obtain any prior degrees, diplomas, or any other post-secondary education prior to enrolling in dietetics?
- What did you expect your dietetic education and training might be like?
- Did you complete internship? If so, where and when?
- Tell me about your experience of internship.
- What made you want to become a dietitian?
- What did you expect being a dietitian would be like?
- Did you consider any other areas of studies other than dietetics, if so, what were they?

2. Tell me about your career path after you became a dietitian

Possible prompts:

- Tell me about your first job as a dietitian. How did your career unfold from there?
- How did you feel about being/having the role of a dietitian?
- What did you like or enjoy about being a dietitian?
- When did you feel moments of fulfillment in your role as a dietitian?

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- What, if any, challenges did you face throughout your career?
- How did you overcome these challenges?
- Were your expectations of being a dietitian realistic or accurate?

Part 2: Oral History of Critical Dietetics Interview Guide

3. Did you have any remaining thoughts from the last interview?

Possible prompts:

- How did you feel after the first interview?
- Is there anything you thought about after the first interview that you would like to add?
- Is there any other issues or topics that you feel were not addressed in the first interview?

4. Tell me about your involvement in the Beyond Nutritionism workshop that was held at Ryerson University in 2009.

Possible prompts:

- How did you hear about the Beyond Nutritionism workshop at Ryerson University?
- Do you remember what lead you to participating in the beyond nutritionism workshop?
- What do you remember about how you felt in the lead up to the workshop?
- What do you remember of the workshop in 2009?
- Did you know other colleagues at the workshop?
- Do you remember how you felt leaving the beyond nutritionism workshop?
- Do you have a most memorable moment about the workshop?
- What do you think precipitated the Beyond Nutritionism workshop? What need was it filling?

CD and their involvement:

THE ORAL HISTORY OF CRITICAL DIETETICS: WHAT HAS BEEN LEFT UNASKED?

- What do you recall about the founding of CD?
- What were your thoughts and feelings about the founding of CD?
- How would you describe WCD to a colleague?
- How has WCD influenced you as a dietitian?
- What did WCD have to offer for you, personally and professionally?
- What has your involvement in WCD meant for you personally and professionally?
- What drew you to become and maintain involvement with CD?
- How has the WCD movement developed since the workshop in 2009?
- What impact on the profession generally do you think that WCD has had since its beginning in 2009?

Future of CD:

- Tell me what you see for the future of Critical Dietetics?
- What do you think WCD can offer the future of dietetic practice?
- Challenges/Advantages?

APPENDIX B: Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History **Interview Abstract**

Interviewee(s):	<Cathy Morely>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#1
Interview date:	<Part I, May 6 th , 2021 Part II, May 12 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<Cathy Morely> was interviewed for Part I – May 6th, 2021 and Part II – May 12th; [...].

Cathy Morely describes the importance of humanizing the dietetic profession and the relevance of teaching students how to be human with other humans along with her frustrations of privilege being wielded heavy handedly. Cathy growing up in Southern Ontario attended an experimental high school where subjects such as economics, politics and geography were taught in a connective way as opposed to subjects being taught as separate entities. Although she enjoyed the atmosphere and education gained through attending an experimental high school, she soon realized that the lack of tests and exams in high school ill-prepared her for university. After struggling with her grades through university, like many dietetic students, Cathy was unaware of the competitive nature of the program and the internship process but was persistent in completing her degree. After graduating from the Applied Human Nutrition program at Guelph University she held a strong desire to leave the sexist environment she grew up in and venture out to Vancouver with a colleague. Quickly after she began working as a diet-aide at Burnaby General Hospital she applied nine times for a dietetic internship and accepted an intern position at the Vancouver General Hospital. After completing her internship, Cathy was invited back as a dietitian at the Vancouver General Hospital but was interested in working at the British Columbia [BC] Cancer Agency across the street. Soon after Cathy became a dietitian at the BC Cancer Agency and although she loved working with families, she felt the position upheld limitations to what she could do as a dietitian who was earning a PhD. Excited to apply her educational skills to practice and research and to find a work environment where she was valued for her knowledge and education, Cathy left the Cancer Agency and then became interested in teaching at a university. After inquiring the university in Vancouver and receiving a pessimistic perspective that her PhD studies *wasn't a thing*, she decided to invest time into her own personal interests which included taking a course in textile arts and attending film school. Soon after Cathy was offered an opportunity to teach at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia where today she teaches second, third, and fourth year students on the complexities of illness, gender identity, and being a human working with other humans while maintaining passion and an investment into listening to peoples stories, changing the narrative and asking, What counts as knowledge?

Abstract written by and date: Nikita Rose, July 22, 2021

APPENDIX B: Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History **Interview Abstract**

Interviewee(s):	<Charna Gord>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#1>
Interview date:	<Part I, April 22 nd , 2021 Part II, April 27 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<Charna Gord> was interviewed for Part I - April 20th, 2021 and Part II - April 27th; [...].

Charna Gord expresses her feelings and thoughts surrounding dietitian’s roles in social justice, advocacy, and activism. Coming from a family where education and change came from within, however Charna grew up during the anti-establishment era and was determined to make social change without secondary education and left high school. Charna worked various jobs, became involved in social justice political movements and then decided to either pursue law or nutrition. Unsure of what a dietitian was and the competitive process of becoming a dietitian Charna enrolled in the food and nutrition program at Toronto Metropolitan University to learn more about preventative health and medicine but was surprised how abstract and disconnected nutrition science was educated in the curriculum. After working for doctors specializing in environmental illness Charna decided to open a private practice clinic and applied for her internship with Dietitians of Canada. Charna discusses her emotionally taxing year as an intern and why she believes the competitive nature of dietetic internship and how it sets students against each other is contrary to what we would want as a profession. Her time spent working in public health involved rich experiences working with women from all over the world and who were new to Canada. Lacking the language to voice her embodied and professional experiences of health inequities, while Charna was co-teaching a health community course at Ryerson she met other educators who were generous with their power and knowledge and introduced her to terms that led her to articulating what she was experiencing. Unimpressed with dietitians roles in public health and always believing dietitians could hold stronger roles as food advocacy and social justice work led Charna back to school to earn her masters of education at OISE at University of Toronto. Founder and organizer of WCD, Jacqui Gingras became influential in Charna’s Masters Research Paper which later resulted in Charna’s involvement in Critical Dietetics. Charna expresses how CD was like being offered a glass of water when you’re dying of thirst and like water in the desert. She continues to describe how today’s World Critical Dietetics is what can make dietetics *beautiful*, as rather than cynical and biomedical.

Abstract written by and date: Nikita Rose, July 22, 2021

APPENDIX B:
Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History
Interview Abstract

Interviewee(s):	<Debbie MacLellan>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#1
Interview date:	<Part I, April 20 th , 2021 Part II, April 27 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<Debbie MacLellan> was interviewed for Part I - April 20th, 2021 and Part II - April 27th; [...].

Debbie opens up and shares her experiences becoming a dietitian through the “back-door” with a career in “untraditional dietetics”. In earlier years, Debbie became intrigued by the practical knowledge in studying home economics through her roommate at University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI). As she approached her final years of her undergraduate degree, she was unsure whether she should pursue dietetics or her masters. Advised by her mentor that she was too smart to be a dietitian and would be better suited for a masters, Debbie seeked out to complete a master’s degree at University of Alberta. After having an awful experience as a master’s student, she then started working as a lab technician, and then a food service supervisor at the Providence Hospital in Moose Jaw hospital where she found her passion and expertise come into play—working with people. She earned her dietitian status through working under a dietitian at the hospital for two years and then after having children her family decided to move back to Prince Edward Island (PEI). Debbie’s first job on the island was working at a long-term care home but after getting involved with the PEI Dietetic Association and hearing about an opportunity to teach at UPEI in the home economics department she took advantage of the moment and became a professor. Throughout her time working at the university, Debbie went back to attain her PhD in nutrition resulting in new ways of thinking and different perspectives. Debbie’s experiences along with her knowledge and passion for dietetic education has led her to become heavily involved on the Board of Dietitians of Canada as well as the organization, World Critical Dietetics. Debbie’s discusses how her research on establishing the standards for Patient-Centered Practice influenced her to become further invested in critical aspects of the profession and her involvement with World Critical Dietetics (WCD). Debbie speaks about her experiences as both a Board member with Dietitians of Canada and WCD. She opens up and reveals her opinions being a part of both associations and the difficulties she has experienced in trying to achieve collaboration between the two associations as well as her efforts in advancing the profession for future practitioners.

Abstract written by and date: Nikita Rose, July 10, 2021

APPENDIX B: Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History **Interview Abstract**

Interviewee(s):	<Jacqui Gingras>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#8>
Interview date:	<Part I, June 9 th , 2021 Part II, June 16 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: North Okanogan, British Columbia, Canada Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<Jacqui Gingras> was interviewed for Part I - June 9th, 2021 and Part II - June 16th; [...].

Jacqui Gingras, founding member and organizer of the Beyond Nutritionism Workshop held at Ryerson University in 2009, where World Critical Dietetics first began to emerge. Jacqui shares her early experiences with food and nutrition growing a farm and her determination to further learn the scientific aspects of nutrition through the Dietetics program at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Prior to graduation, as Jacqui entered the practical component of her education a transition occurred as she started talking to people and listening to their stories. Jackie began to question if the knowledge she had to offer was valuable to helping the people she was working. Soon after the completion of her internship she applied to the master's in nutrition program at the University of Alberta because she felt like she wasn't finished learning and to also gain a better understanding of how to improve patients health and wellbeing. Quick to recognize a need for weight-inclusive practice far before the term *weight-inclusive* had been broadly applied Jacqui started a private-practice, counselling women who were struggling with eating issues. Through auditing a women's studies course Jacqui's approach to practice began to transform as she initiated her first scale smashing, getting the medica involved and her first diet book shredding. After her masters Jacqui quickly returned to Vancouver to continue and build her private practice but shortly after considered starting a PhD. The hinges flew off the door as Jacqui entered her PhD program at UBC. Through the faculty of education at University of British Columbia and her influences from past professors, Jacqui wrote an auto-ethnographic novel for her dissertation titled, *Longing for Recognition*, explaining the personal complexities and challenges she and her colleagues faced in dietetic education and practice. Jackie's interest grew towards how we educate dietetic students leading her to attain a position as a professor at Ryerson University. Jacqui dived headfirst into research and writing grants feeling as if she found her calling digging deeply into unwanted unknowns of the profession. One of these research grants included a three-day workshop called, *Beyond Nutritionism* which brought thinkers from around the globe together where soon after the movement Critical Dietetics began to emerge and then develop into what is known today as the organization of World Critical Dietetics.

Abstract written by and date: Nikita Rose, July 28, 2021

APPENDIX B: Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History **Interview Abstract**

Interviewee(s):	<John Coveney>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#6>
Interview date:	<Part I, June 3 rd , 2021 Part II, June 8 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: Adelaide, Australia Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<John Coveney > was interviewed for Part I - April 20th, 2021 and Part II - April 27th; [...].

John Coveney, dietitian and professor at Flinders university in Adelaide Australia reflects back on his career trajectory of being a nutritionist and a dietitian in various cultural settings. With a high interest in food and cuisine John came to a fork in the road when deciding what to study. Being a glutton and curious about food worlds he thought about studying hospitality but then decided to move into nutrition as the work hours in hospitality were “very uncivilized”. John applied to the University of Surrey for Nutrition and Dietetics and was unaware of the opportunity to become a dietitian but pursued dietetics as there was little work for straight nutritionist. Upon the completion of his degree John and his wife decided that they would travel which led him to landing a position in North Australia, Papua New Guinea. John discovered he had no idea where Papua New Guinea was and when he landed in the province of Mendi he found himself thinking, *My god—what’s happened? Where have we ended up?* John worked for two years with Papua New Guinean’s by promoting local foods, teaching new skills, and mapping levels of malnutrition in children, however he later found himself questioning if what he was doing was actually beneficial to the people of Papua New Guinea as he began to observe the Western lifestyle creeping into village. John later worked in Australia doing clinical and community work and then received an offer to work at the children’s hospital in Sydney. While at the children’s hospital John enjoyed how the medical and surgical team admired and relied on dietitians as opposed to other hospital experiences where he heard that dietitians were people who brought sandwiches to team meetings. John continued his career in child nutrition and then worked in policy with the government where he created a popular newsletter called *The Child and Antenatal Nutrition Bulletin*. John continued to write by publishing a book called, *Food, Morals & Meaning* through his PhD which later sparked the interest of Dr. Cathy Morely who insisted John would be an ideal international discussant at the Beyond Nutritionism workshop in 2009. Throughout his career John has observed how dietetics is obsessed with weight-loss and forms of therapy that reflect weight-loss making dietetics seem as if it’s a *one-trick pony*. John describes how he believes that there are many ways of looking at the language people relate to food and how the language of food can be a part of well-being.

Abstract written by and date: Nikita Rose, July 28, 2021

APPENDIX B: Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History **Interview Abstract**

Interviewee(s):	<Kristen Yarker>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#7>
Interview date:	<Part I, June 9 th , 2021 Part II, June 16 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<Kristen Yarker> was interviewed for Part I - June 9th, 2021 and Part II - June 16th; [...].

Kristen Yarker, a private practice dietitian located in Vancouver, British Columbia discusses her career path as a nutrition graduate from the University of Guelph. Kristen’s interest in food and nutrition started at the early age of sixteen as an athlete, leading her to apply to the University of Guelph due to the strong program in sports nutrition offered there. Kristen didn’t see herself becoming a clinical dietitian, nor a food service dietitian and always had an idea that as a professional she was more likely to do something more fringy and unusual, which guided her to mentors and dietitians who were trailblazers and doing something cool within the profession. Therefore, during her undergrad she did not seek out an internship position understanding how competitive the internship program was and graduated with an undergraduate degree in nutrition. A year of graduation Kristen found herself wanting to gain further knowledge on research and considered teaching in academia and then applied to the Master of Science in Human Nutrition at the University of British Columbia. Kristen soon discovered that the master’s program was very different than her undergraduate experience and that academia was not for her, however she then realized that she still had the opportunity to become a dietitian and that it would open doors for her career leading her to gain an internship with Dietitians of Canada. After completing her internship Kristen worked in various community and public health settings where she gained experience working with Indigenous health organization putting her knowledge on social equities to practice. She later became the Regional Executive Director for British Columbia for Dietitians of Canada and advocated for the foray into social media. Kristen’s education and professional experiences resulted in steep learning curves where she would seek knowledge from mentors and colleagues from the Beyond Nutritionism workshop who influenced the idea of *being comfortable with the uncomfortable*. After her position with dietitians of Canada she decided to open a private practice and counsel and help individuals and families with food, nutrition, and well-being. Kristen met Jacqui during her masters and maintained contact throughout her career. Kristen discusses the aliveness she felt during the workshop and her thoughts on why dietitians need an organization such as World Critical Dietetics that is consistently looking at how we can improve dietetic practice and education.

Abstract written by and date: Nikita Rose, July 29, 2021

APPENDIX B: Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History **Interview Abstract**

Interviewee(s):	<Lucy Aphramor>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#4>
Interview date:	<Part I, May 19 th , 2021 Part II, May 27 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: Shropshire, England, United Kingdom Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<Lucy Aphramor> was interviewed for Part I – May 19th, 2021 and Part II – May 27th; [...].

Lucy Aphramor describes and expresses how professional and personal experiences are connected with culture and identity. Born in Manchester, United Kingdom Lucy was seeking to move away from the city and enrolled at the University of Surrey to study Nutrition and Dietetics because of their interest in food, politics, and farming. Lucy connects an understanding of life events by reflecting back and opening up about the personal struggles with eating, competitive running, trauma, and identity. Seeking liberation and evading personal struggles, after completing university Lucy departed India and then to Hong Kong investing time into earning a permaculture certificate and doing sports nutrition while living on a farm. Throughout her seven year stay in Hong Kong Lucy also spent time running marathons and baking muffins, bread, and flapjacks but later began to reexperience depression leading to a return to England near the University town where Lucy had completed her undergraduate studies. Upon the return to England Lucy started running a small-holding/market garden and then decided to enroll in a literature course at the university, however the idea that it came in the form of a ‘women’s studies’ course completely derided Lucy as little knowledge was known on academic field of feminist studies. Quickly understanding that the arena of women’s studies draws upon feminist and interdisciplinary knowledge including critical theory was a shifting moment for Lucy as this new-found liberating knowledge gave a better sense of understanding her own personal past experiences with food and trauma. Critical theory then began to infuse Lucy’s writing and poetic-self allowing her to draw connections between different theories existing to uphold binary thinking, white-supremacy, and colonial frameworks. Lucy’s powerful poetry soon influenced the need to speak at a conference believing that anyone who has something to offer has a right to be up there independent of their title or credentials. Lucy was also seeking to find her people and found Jackie Gingras through searching with the two words: *dietitian* and *feminist*. Lucy found Critical Dietetics had the ability to feel connected and speak up when in doubt. Lucy strong bias and vision for social justice includes reading science fiction, being comfortable with being weird, and sharing voice and story while disarming relationships that support division, binary thinking and a mind/body/society split.

Abstract written by and date: Nikita Rose, July 22, 2021

APPENDIX B:
Interview Abstracts

Baylor University Institute for Oral History
Interview Abstract

Interviewee(s):	<Yuka Asada>
Interviewer(s):	<Nikita Rose>
Collection:	< <i>Oral History on World Critical Dietetics: What has been left unasked?</i> >
Project (where applicable):	<Project>
Interview #:	<#5>
Interview date:	<Part I, May 26 nd , 2021 Part II, June 4 th , 2021>
Interview location:	<Interviewee location: San Diego, California, United States Interviewer location: Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada>
Recording medium; duration:	digital audio file [or, in rare instances, “analog audio tape”]; <#.##> hr.; digital video recording [as appropriate]

Abstract

<Yuka Asada> was interviewed for Part I – May 26th, 2021 and Part II – June 4th, 2021 [...].

Yuka Asada shares and reflects on her experiences studying dietetics, internship, disordered eating as well as her career as a clinical dietitian. Prior to Yuka attending university, Yuka found interest through food and nutrition from her family. Her uncle ran restaurants, her father a pastry chef who trained in Europe preparing pastries and her mother cooking traditional Japanese foods, Yuka grew up in an environment where the entire day evolved around preparing meals through preparing, procurement, and gardening. Yuka became interested in further learning about the science of food and nutrition enrolled into the Dietetics Program at University of British Columbia. Yuka valued that dietetics was a professional degree in food and nutrition, however she was unsure of what a dietitian did. Excited to learn more about the scientific, evidence-based, “proper way to eat.” While in her studies, Yuka became to feel ashamed and confused because the way that she had experienced preparing Japanese and European food with her family did not align with Canada’s Food Guide. Yuka found herself thinking, *Is this bad? Will this cause disease?* Yuka later experienced further discontent during her internship and her career as a clinical dietitian being labeled as a *troublemaker* and then decided to make the brave move to leave her clinical position and enrolled in the master’s program at Ryerson University. While pursuing her masters Yuka’s master’s chair was Jacqui Gingras who encouraged Yuka to do a PhD while also helping yuka rebuild her relationship with her body from habitually taking laxatives after her a year in Tokyo. While a masters student Jacqui invited Yuka to participate in the Beyond Nutritionism workshop leaving Yuka feeling excited that she wasn’t alone in her experiences, but also that there was a possibility for change in dietetic practice, education, and research. Since 2009, Yuka has maintained involvement with World Critical Dietetics (WCD) and recently over the past few years as the vice president. Yuka expresses her ideas for further developing WCD since the establishment has grown from a movement to a non-profit organization and believes WCD can have the potential to influence educational systems on a policy level for students who experience disordered eating and can also reshape accreditation and educational standards in the United States and Canada.

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