Gender Responsive Care-Discussion and Reflection

**David Stanley** 00:00

The question is, what do you think that the blue bird represents for Charles Bukowski? You know, the blue bird, when you think of it, it's small, it's vulnerable, it's sort of perceived as feminine. So it's that side of him. That's that really feeling part, that vulnerable part that got him to Yeah, exactly. It's that part that he wants to keep hidden. So he says he's hurt and his pain. Exactly. himself, his emotions. Exactly. It's sort of he's making that split and part of himself and part of himself he's hiding away. And that bluebird is his inner child. These are all great. So yeah, you guys all you got Charles Bukowski. Yeah, that's exactly. It's sort of that vulnerable part of who he is. What is his relationship to the Bluebird? Or is it a positive one? Is that one of shame? Do you think he has a good relationship with the bird? Or is it kind of problematic? I think, yeah, problematic. As he's ashamed of his emotions, yeah, his relationship with a little bit of good and a little bit of bad. I mean, they seem to get along, he kind of takes them out at night. But if you think about, I pour whiskey on him, and inhale cigarette smoke, you know, he's exposing this, this bird to all of these harmful things that birds should probably not be exposed to. So in some ways, he's like, he's honoring the thing. But in another way, he's also treating it inadvertently, in his effort to hide it, he's treating it really badly. Yeah, he acknowledges its presence and has values in it, but shame and not letting it out. Exactly. So he really likes this thing. It's just that he's hiding it and sort of doing all these bad things to keep it underneath. So what is his fears about the blue bird? What does he fear most? Yeah, you might fear that the bird is gonna go away that the bird is going to die, letting people know that the birds even there, what's that going to do to my reputation? You know, I'm this badass, excuse me, my language, this bad, a.. poet. And I've built my whole reputation on being this like gruff misogynistic, my whole reputation is built on this whole thing of being this, like this but I have this vulnerable part, which speaks to the opposite of this idea that I'm portraying out there. If you notice this, he said do you want to blow my book sales in Europe, because everybody finds out about this, I'm not going to have the same cash that I did before. I'm not going to be able to have the same influence, people are going to look at me differently. And they're going to look at me differently in a way that hurts my ultimate goals, which is to further my career. How does he cope? And what strategies is he using in order to cope with sort of having this thing, liking this thing, but at the same time, fearing that other people are going to see it? Oh, you did mention going to the bartenders, going to sex workers, I assume. Or, you know, he set the horse and the bartenders never know that he's in there. Yeah, unhealthy skills, drinking, someone said in the chat, his addiction to alcohol, withdrawal from real connection. Exactly. And that's why I love this poem so much because it breaks through. It explained, this poem explains everything that I've talked about in this training up to this point, but does it in such a beautiful way that you can really connect with that experience? Alright, so how would you work with him to support his recovery? So let's say this guy's in your office? Like? What kind of strategies would you take when working with a man who kind of has this, which I think a lot of men find themselves in this situation? Like, what strategies do you think you would use to support? I think one thing that I would do with someone like this, is acknowledge that dichotomy and say, a must be really difficult, it must be hard to be that person, to have this little bird that you love so much. Yeah, somebody named the bluebird that could very well be something that you do is name it, like, acknowledging it, give it giving it a name to it also helps and make it more real. So I think we were willing to share, alright, sharing his poetry during his sessions with, exactly, that would be a wonderful way to access because you're going through his own poetry. Provide resources and connect to additional services and community, mostly listen, yeah, so all of these are great, great things that you can do in that situation. I think for me, you know, acknowledging how difficult it must be to be in that situation, we have this bird, you know, and you're trying out, you love it, but you don't, you want it to thrive, but at the same time, you can't bring it out. Maybe expanding those times when he feels safe. You know, instead of just only at night when nobody's around? Can we experiment with taking the bird out and see what happens during other times of the day. So maybe you're not learning to let the bird out completely. But maybe we can kind of look at other opportunities that you might have to do that in a safe, safe way. So yeah, all of the comments that I'm looking at in the chat are great, and I think gives me hope because I think people actually kind of get the essence of what the poem is about.

**David Stanley** 04:44

Now I want to do a quick poll just before we're kind of at the end. So I'm going to do if I can bring up the poll. We can look at the results. So yeah, true gender norms, expectations are shaped the way individuals tend to cope with trauma, that is true, great. Three of the most common reasons why, right most people looks like shame, fear and lost sense of masculinity. That's true. Sometimes it might be lack of interest, because it may not be relevant to them at that point in their life. So you may see but generally it's usually shame, fear or loss sense of masculinity that a person might not report being victimized. They may just want to, you know, maybe it wasn't maybe we perceive it as traumatic but they don't. Maybe they just, you know, kind of recovered really quickly and easily. But generally, it's the fear, sense of loss of masculinity. Again, good. Question number three, it's men and women, they experienced the same levels of compassion, they just express it and experience it in different ways.

**David Stanley** 05:43

And lastly, we do, when I work with men, and I think this should be a standard of working with men in recovery, is that if you want to get serious recovering from your trauma, and getting into a recovery community and recovery period, you need to stop, you need to make a commitment to non violence towards yourself, towards other people. So all of the last question, and number four, it should, it's everything under here. So you commit to non violence towards women, children, other men and yourself. And that's the commitment that we asked men to make when they come into treatment. Because what we know is that violence often results in further escalation into a substance use disorder. So a lot of men act out because of those vulnerable feelings and might do something violently towards themselves or someone else and then feel bad about the way that they handled the situation. And then because they feel bad about both the situation and the way they handled the situation, they often turn to drugs and alcohol to cope. So what we find is that the commitment to non violence actually can help men build safety in their lives and safety among the people, other folks who are in their lives.