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Abstract

Peering through the keyhole: people, policies, and procedures of the Sudbury Women's Centre, a grassroots feminist organization

While at the Sudbury Women's Centre I realized I needed to contextualize my experiences at that organization. Because I spent only ten hours a week at the centre, I was only able to experience a portion of what the centre has to offer—it was like I was looking through a keyhole and seeing only a small fraction of the whole room that is behind the door. Upon that realization, my focus then turned towards understanding what it means for an organization to identify as a 'feminist grassroots organization'. I did a close reading of the Policies and Procedures Manual for the Sudbury Women's Centre, and Fighting for Roses: A Herstory of the Sudbury Women's Centre. These texts work to establish a sort of collective identity shared by the staff and volunteers of at the centre thus creating a workplace culture which values all women. Although my experiences at the centre introduced me to some of the tensions the centre deals with, I was also able to discover that it is imperative for the Sudbury Women's Centre to empower and respect all women— regardless of their history, race, or lifestyle —both inside and outside of the centre's doors.