

This an edited version of our formal grievance that was sent to Karen Tronsgard-Scott at the Vermont Network. We have redacted last names of staff and former staff, all names of board members (in accordance with our personnel policies), and the names of community members/partners who have contributed to this grievance.

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

To: Karen Tronsgard-Scott, Executive Director of Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

From: The Entire Staff of HOPE Works, Inc.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

- I. Racism, Homophobia/Queerphobia**
- II. Emotional abuse/manipulation**
- III. Lying/Evasion**
- IV. Retaliatory Leadership**
- V. Ineffectual Leadership/Organization Administration**
- VI. Blocking Employee Organizing Pertaining to Workplace Conditions & Issues Impacting Service Users.**
- VII. Condoning abuse**

Introduction

We, the staff of HOPE Works, fear retaliation when this document becomes known to Cathleen Barkley and/or the HOPE Works Board of Directors. Cathleen Barkley has both arbitrarily threatened termination and actually terminated individuals for ‘insubordination’ (as defined by Cathleen Barkley). This patterned behavior has been co-signed by the HOPE Works Board of Directors. We have a loss of faith in Cathleen Barkley’s ability to lead this organization, her ability to center survivors, or her desire to facilitate a work environment that feels safe to all staff. We shared our unanimous crisis of confidence with the HOPE Works Board of Directors and they chose to prioritize Cathleen Barkley over the wellbeing of staff and survivors. The staff of HOPE Work is choosing to whistleblow on Cathleen Barkley’s toxic, manipulative, abusive, retaliatory, homo/queer phobic, and white supremacist leadership style.

“When we dare to speak in a liberatory voice, we threaten even those who may initially claim to want our words. In the act of overcoming our fear of speech, of being seen as threatening, in the process of learning to speak as subjects, we participate in the global struggle to end domination. When we end our silence, when we speak in a liberated voice, our words connect us with anyone, anywhere who lives in silence.” –bell hooks

**Please note that since August 2018 HOPE Works staff have been audio recording communications and meetings with Cathleen Barkley and Board members in order to document our experiences of harm and discrimination and further demonstrate our assertions. We also have been saving emails, screenshotting text messages from Cathleen Barkley to staff, and collecting formal letters from past staff under Cathleen.

I. Racism, Homophobia/Queerphobia

Cathleen Barkley utilizes racism and homophobia/queerphobia to maintain power. This patterned behavior includes but is not limited to: tokenization, removing queer, trans, and BIPOC people from positions of leadership when their opinions are in conflict with hers, terminating queer staff without cause, and refusing to intervene in overtly racist communications between Board and staff members of color that she is first party witness to. Black, Brown, queer/trans, and LGBTQ staff routinely fear for their jobs under Cathleen Barkley's leadership.

- a. **September, 2015:** Sarah [REDACTED] was hired in August of 2015. Within one week of her hire she was asked to hire an Americorps who would report to her. In the hiring process, Cathleen Barkley impressed upon Sarah [REDACTED] that she felt a specific man of color candidate should be hired, not because he was qualified, but because he was a person of color. Sarah [REDACTED] voiced concerns of tokenizing and hiring someone who she would have to spend a lot of time training and educating before they would be prepared to participate in the work even at an entry level, and in response to this was told by Cathleen Barkley that identities mattered more than experience in this position and ultimately her opinion was silenced and the hire was made. Within one week of the hire, the AmeriCorp member withdrew from his position citing concerns that he had been hired into an organization that was ill-prepared to confront its own internal racism. **[Source: Narrative from Sarah [REDACTED]; appendix 1]**

- b. **Spring 2016:** Cathleen Barkley declares that content displaying support for Black Lives Matter cannot be posted on the HOPE Works social media. Her argument is that racist people (ie. those who would feel alienated by Black Lives Matter messaging) need to be

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

able to feel comfortable receiving services from HOPE Works. The counter argument from staff-- that black and brown people are harmed by violence at significantly higher rates and that solidarity with anti-oppression movements of all sorts is the only way to liberate our culture from the violence that we hear about every night on our hotline--was resoundingly dismissed by Cathleen Barkley. [source: Narrative from Sarah

[redacted] appendix 1]

c. **May 2016:** [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted] by Cathleen Barkley on group email chain, “Please do not send any emails regarding this situation.” In a private meeting, Cathleen tells Elle [redacted] it is inappropriate for [redacted]

[redacted] [source: screenshot of email from Cathleen; appendix 22]

d. **June 2016:** After Pulse nightclub massacre, queer staff are shaken and heartbroken. The queer-identified staff and queer-identified AmeriCorps member claim an impromptu affinity space to share their horror and grief; another conversation is planned by our AmeriCorps member with all invited to make space for grief and its impact on our daily work and jobs. Cathleen Barkley sends an angry and top-down email saying only she, her

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

designee, or a Board member can call such a meeting, and prevents the meeting from occurring. [Source(s): Sarah ██████ narrative appendix 1; emails from Cathleen Barkley to ██████; appendix 2]

- e. **May 2017:** Cathleen Barkley unethically and very publicly fires a queer staff member (Employee X for the purposes of this document) for insubordination, citing choices that included attending Take Back the Night after having worked a full week of hours. Cathleen Barkley's decisions are completely inconsistent with how HOPE Works says it will support staff in taking 'corrective' actions to improve their work. Employee X files an unemployment claim, after being denied the opportunity to quit and save the organization some money, and the DOL finds that Employee X was fired without grounds. [Source(s): DOL documentation; former staff narrative appendix 1, Employee X documentation, appendix 3]
- f. **December 2017:** Elle ██████ is removed from the Coalition Directors meeting. Elle ██████ believes she is removed because she showed support for Pride Center of Vermont against the wishes of Cathleen Barkley, as Elle ██████'s support for Pride Center's inclusion was a point of private tension for Elle ██████ and Cathleen Barkley. Public reasons given for Elle ██████'s removal is that it is hard for Elle ██████ to represent the agency within a meeting where she holds less power than peers, but recent conversations before removal were about Cathleen Barkley's unhappiness that Elle ██████ was not pushing back against the Network office's new directions re: inclusion and Karen Tronsgard-Scott's applied learnings from a Move to End Violence fellowship.

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- g. **Between the months of January and July 2018:** Cathleen Barkley receives technical assistance (TA) from multiple sources on best practices regarding services for queer/trans survivors and survivors of color. Despite receipt of this TA (including from major federal grantors), she ignores recommendations and actively roadblocks changes to the organization that would improve services to these communities). TA sources include but are not limited to: the Pride Center of Vermont program audit, the Consolidated Youth Grant, and the SADI roundtable dedicated to addressing racism within anti-violence organizations. [REDACTED] from the Pride Center e-mails Jas [REDACTED] and Mercedes [REDACTED] to express her disappointment that HOPE Works erases their QTPOC identities. The Pride Center audit does not move forward in any of the ways prescribed by the audit recommendations. Additionally, Cathleen sends her notes from the SADI roundtable to all staff. Her notes demonstrate that she has an understanding of how to manifest and lead an anti-racist organization. Despite this understanding, Cathleen continues to marginalize Black and Brown staff. **[See Also: Ineffectual Leadership]** **[Source(s): email(s) from [REDACTED], notes from Cathleen Barkley documenting her time at the SADI Roundtable; appendix 4.]**
- h. **March 29, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley expresses concern in private to Elle [REDACTED] around an activity being put forth by Jas [REDACTED], a Black trans employee and Lucy [REDACTED], a white queer employee that is intended to generate conversations around “power” (with regards to position and identities). This activity is prompted by The Network reaching out to Elle [REDACTED] to facilitate such a workshop. It is collectively decided by Lucy [REDACTED], Jas [REDACTED], and Elle [REDACTED] that it is necessary for the individuals with

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

the least/lesser amount of power within the organization to facilitate such a workshop. As such, Elle [REDACTED] removes herself as a facilitator and communicates to the Network that Jas [REDACTED] and Lucy [REDACTED] will be facilitating. This expression of concern from Cathleen Barkley appears to have the goal of preventing the activity and resulting conversation(s) from occurring.

- i. **April 5, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley attempts to prevent Mercedes [REDACTED], a queer Black employee from utilizing culturally specific practices in a workshop for queer and BIPOC youth.

- j. **April 10, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley expresses concern and personal hurt feelings around a workshop (“Creating Liberated Organizations”), scheduled to be run by Jas [REDACTED], a Black trans employee and Lucy [REDACTED], a white queer employee at the upcoming All Network Institute, and intended to address and facilitate conversations around white supremacist, patriarchal, queer/transphobic and toxic leadership patterns within nonprofits. This expression of concern by Cathleen Barkley has the impact of causing Lucy [REDACTED] and Jas [REDACTED] to fear whether following through on this workshop has the potential to impact their employment status with the organization. Jas [REDACTED] in particular fears retaliation.

- k. **May 1, 2018:** Board member [REDACTED] comes to a CCT (Cultural Competency Team) meeting and angrily chastises staff for “trying to change the entire organization.” When staff of color respond to her in educational ways, sharing their own experiences of feeling removed from the power centers at HOPE Works, and how it affects their ability to feel

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

like they are welcome, belong within the movement, have all the information necessary to do their jobs, or have a voice worth hearing, she digs her heels into her view that staff don't understand or appreciate Cathleen Barkley or her role. Cathleen Barkley says nothing during the meeting, and does nothing to stop or temper Board member [REDACTED] words and outward aggressive attitude towards staff--especially trans and Black & brown staff members.

- l. **August 21, 2018:** In the course of the staff communicating with the Board around finding a time to meet to seek Board assistance with Cathleen Barkley's leadership [at this time the Board believes the purpose of this meeting is to talk about a compensation complaint-- a result of Cathleen Barkley having misrepresented to the Board what the staff had initially come to her about], Board member [REDACTED] accidentally sends an angry email about Kiona [REDACTED] (one of HOPE Works two Black Program Directors) to the entire staff. The racial microaggressions and racism present in her tone and words in the email are shocking to the entire staff. Lucy [REDACTED], Jas [REDACTED], and Elle [REDACTED] all send responses to Board member [REDACTED] and the rest of the Board. Board member [REDACTED] emails in response saying that "he hopes things don't get taken out of context by staff." **[Source(s): emails from Marilyn [REDACTED] and staff; appendix 5]**

- m. **August 22, 2018:** Board member [REDACTED] writes a follow-up email to staff, refusing to take accountability for the implications of her words (and effectively continuing to blame Kiona [REDACTED] and the rest of the staff for causing her to send the email in the first place), and instead expresses "I hope the Board and staff can put aside misinterpretations

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

of communications on both sides and work together productively to achieve the mission of HOPE Works.”

- n. **August 22, 2018:** That same day, Jas [REDACTED], a Black employee, responded to Board member [REDACTED] email explaining in detail what about her initial (and subsequent) email was racist and concerning to staff, and did not receive a reply or acknowledgement from Board member [REDACTED], any other Board members, or Cathleen Barkley. Jas [REDACTED] sends an e-mail to rest of staff describing how they fear for their livelihood. **[Source: Email from Jas [REDACTED] to staff; appendix 6]**

- o. **October 9, 2018 :** After an Audre Lorde quote was shared on social media by a Black staff member, Cathleen Barkley blocked staff social media administrators (two Black staff and two white staff, although it is collectively known that the bulk of social media content is generated/posted by the two Black admins) from being able to post on our social media. Within the subsequent discussion, she stated it was required that those queer Black & brown voices “make the connection” and explain why social media content pertaining to Black, brown, queer, and trans people is relevant to our organization when posting it. When prompted for an explanation, Cathleen Barkley initially refused to meet to discuss, but eventually agreed to join the staff meeting that was presently happening when Jas [REDACTED] (one of the Black social media admins) sought her out personally upstairs. After she arrived at the meeting, she at first tried to blame the removal of administrators on the Board who were telling her to “manage things more tightly.” She initially expressed agreement with the Board’s position on this matter. But then later in the conversation she walked that statement back/made it clear that she

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

actually had the discretion and had made the choice to remove people. After staff explained for over an hour how her choice was overtly racist and silencing she eventually shared the new social media passwords. After the meeting, Cathleen Barkley texted Jas [REDACTED] the new passwords and said “sorry for the whole mess in the first place.”

[Source: Instagram post dated 10/07/18, text messages from Cathleen Barkley to Jas [REDACTED] dated 10/9/18; appendix 7]

- p. **December 4, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley informs staff that [REDACTED], Board co-chair, will be visiting the building to assess the green space in order to make a vote on the proposed access road. Jas [REDACTED] informs Cathleen Barkley that Board member [REDACTED] presence at the building creates a poor work environment for them as Board member [REDACTED] directed racist comments at Jas [REDACTED] at a combined board/staff meeting October. Cathleen Barkley uninvites Jan from the building and does not engage any further in the conversation. **[Source: emails from Cathleen Barkley; appendix 8]**

II. Emotional abuse/manipulation

Cathleen Barkley has demonstrated a leadership pattern over her 12+ years of directing HOPE Works that includes a disturbing degree of emotional abuse and emotional manipulation of staff-- both of individual staff members and of the staff as a collective. This abuse/manipulation includes but is not limited to: chronic gaslighting (denying things she has said and done, situations brought about by her actions, etc., despite the consensus of all but her on what the truth is/was), using claims of burnout to avoid accountability for her actions and engagement in “difficult” conversations, forcing staff in collective and individual interactions to emotionally care-take for her in the aftermath of situations where she has objectively caused harm, and manipulating staff into conforming to her agenda(s) by inducing feelings of guilt, shame, and humiliation among staff.

- a. Cathleen Barkley repeatedly shares, with numerous staff, that she wants to leave HOPE Works. Kiona [REDACTED] recalls Cathleen Barkley saying that she did not want to work at HOPE Works any more during her first meeting with Cathleen Barkley after being hired in 2010. Cathleen Barkley shared the same sentiment with Jas [REDACTED] during their first 1:1 meeting in 2017. Cathleen Barkley says the same thing to Mercedes [REDACTED] in her first meeting in January 2018. Many former staff reference Cathleen Barkley’s wanting to leave as an overarching theme of their time at HOPE Works. **[Source(s): letters from former staff; appendix 1 & 9]**

- b. **June 26, 2018:** HOPE Works has a staff retreat where Cathleen Barkley asks to disengage from the collective work time where staff can work through our backlog of

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

tasks that have been “parking lot-ed” due to not having enough time to deeply engage in change at HOPE Works. Whenever the staff retreat conversation reached a place of deciding on an actionable step, Cathleen Barkley repeatedly spoke about her high levels of burnout and the conversation on making an action plan would halt. Finally, Cathleen Barkley said that due to her extreme burnout, she couldn’t engage in any of it, but she was willing to step aside and support the staff who wished to do this work for the sake of being successful, effective, and efficient in their roles and for the sake and strength of the agency’s mission. ‘Don’t center me, leave me behind--I’ll catch up if I am able to’ was the prevailing sentiment of Cathleen Barkley. These statements, and Cathleen Barkley’s deep resistance to participating in collective organizational efforts was extremely disheartening, frustrating, confusing and disappointing to staff. Even more so, after learning that these same statements had been used by Cathleen Barkley in previous staff retreats to avoid participation or accountability in her work. Nonetheless, with that agreement secured, the staff moved forward and scheduled three weeks (spread out from July 17th to August 17th) to focus proactive staff efforts on the collective work that had been piling up in the name of “never enough time”.

- c. **August 10, 2018:** Staff initiate a conversation about our Board of Directors, inquiring as to how they operate, and how new members are recruited. The primary goal of this conversation is to begin to discuss how to move towards a Board of Directors that better reflects the community our organization serves.¹ Cathleen Barkley responds to this

¹ For context, our current Board membership is **majority male-identified**, with an *average* age of (guessing) **mid 50’s**, **89% white**, **100% cisgender** and **89% hetero/straight**. No Board member is a known past service user; it is unclear if any have ever accessed any victim services from any agency similar to the one we operate. If one member of the Board left the Board would skew older and become 100% white and hetero. Matching this with our service users (majority under the age of 24, 85% female-identified, within a city which is only 85% white). Also for context, in every one of our HOPE

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

conversation by being openly angry, emotional, lashing out, and defensive. Cathleen Barkley has what she later described as a “melt down,” expressing that she no longer wishes to be at HOPE Works and that the only thing keeping her from leaving is that “she has no ways to feed her kids” (despite it being known that her salary is more than \$20,000.00 higher than the next-highest-paid employee, and more than the two advocates’ salaries combined). This time, staff push back on how Cathleen Barkley’s ‘melt-downs’ only appear when staff ask her to engage in diversity conversations, and how it feels like she uses emotional outbursts to pump the breaks on actions towards doing our work or being in relationship to each other in new and different ways, towards a more productive, inclusive future. Cathleen Barkley’s only substantial response to the naming of this dynamic is an equally emotionally manipulative statement that “this is why she can’t be vulnerable with staff about her feelings and personal life.”

- d. **August 14, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley, when asked by staff in a meeting to engage more authentically in intersectionality work at HOPE Works (for the benefit of queer, trans, and BIPOC service users, as well as staff members), responds that she is too burned out to focus on anything but planning her own exit from the organization. Any productive conversation on this matter is shut down by her emotional requests to center her personal needs. Mere hours later, Cathleen Barkley sends an email to all staff, stating she is “110% committed to creating new pathways for staff to interact/report to/work with/relationship build with the Board of Directors”, and is willing to “engage fully in the process of creating a written document to the Board”. Cathleen Barkley also shares within her email: “I am actively transitioning from my role at HOPE Works, a process that may take up to

Works Strategic Plans from 2013 onward having a Board of Directors whose membership mirrors the community we strive to serve is stated as a goal/subgoal.

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

a year or potentially more. Please know that this is a process that has been underway for many months/years...” [Source: email from Cathleen Barkley to Staff; appendix 10]

- e. **August 23, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley sends an e-mail to all staff apologizing for her half-cleaned out office and any uncertainty it has caused. She states that she and the Board are committed to providing her end-date as soon as possible and that she hopes to provide a large transition window for the new executive director [Source: e-mail from Cathleen Barkley; appendix 11]

III. Lying/Evasion

Cathleen Barkley has a patterned behavior of expressing to staff her desire to vacate her position as Executive Director. While her burnout may be genuine, Cathleen utilizes her burnout to avoid accountability, avoid conflict and dialogue, and to justify harming staff and the organization.

This behavior dates back at least 9 years. Cathleen's penchant for lying and avoiding accountability does nothing more than destabilizing the organization, harming staff, and harming survivors.

- a. Between the years of 2009 and 2018, Cathleen Barkley vacillates between commitment to her role as an Executive Director, and emotional expressions of exhaustion, apathy, and a desire to leave. Over the years, it has become clear that however genuine her tearful declarations of burnout might be in isolated moments, there is a distinct pattern of evasion of leadership accountability, avoidance of conflict or dialogue, and intent to weaponize her burnout as a means of justifying harm to staff and the organization. It has become clear that saying she wishes to stay one moment and wishes to leave the next-- regardless of the intent-- has the impact of emotionally and professionally disorienting staff, destabilizing the functioning of our organization, and eroding trust in our Executive Director. The following is a documentation of these respective conflicting statements:
 - i. **2010:** Shortly after Kiona [REDACTED] is hired, she (Kiona) recalls Cathleen Barkley expressing in a one-on-one meeting that she (Cathleen) no longer wished to work at HOPE Works. This feels odd and disorienting for a brand new staff member.

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- ii. **Fall 2016:** During Lucy [REDACTED] and Sarah [REDACTED] first and second staff meetings, Cathleen broke down and stated that she was burnt out, no longer wanting to be in her role, and has been avoiding parts of her job that she did not enjoy. She states that she could not figure out how to get through it. Cathleen Barkley jokes that she avoids telling people where she works and instead says she teaches art at a college. [source: Sarah [REDACTED] narrative; appendix 1]
- iii. **Fall 2016:** Cathleen informs all HOPE Works staff (minus Sarah [REDACTED]) in 1:1 settings that she applied for a job at a local institution and was interviewing for the position. In a staff meeting she informs staff that she was offered the job and did not take it. She states that she knows she needs to vacate her position at HOPE Works, but is not ready to do so. [source: Sarah [REDACTED] narrative; appendix 1]
- iv. **September 2017:** In her first meeting with Jas [REDACTED], Cathleen informs them that she is burnt out and working towards leaving.
- v. **January 2018:** In her first meeting with Mercedes [REDACTED], Cathleen Barkley informs her that she is burnt out and working towards leaving.
- vi. **June 26, 2018:** During a conversation about how to go about working towards substantial internal and programmatic changes at the organization, Cathleen Barkley expresses being too exhausted, overwhelmed, and burned out to do this work, and that we (the staff) should just “leave her behind.”
- vii. **Summer 2018:** Cathleen Barkley applies and gets offered a job at another nonprofit in the area. She tells Elle [REDACTED]; Elle believes, infers, or is told by Cathleen that Cathleen wishes her to keep this information a secret.

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- viii. **August 10, 2018:** During our summer collective work time, in a meeting block dedicated to discussing our Board or Directors and how they operate (with an undercurrent of the conversation being that we need to discuss ways to evolve our current Board and their function to meet our agency’s strategic plan and best practice service provision), Cathleen Barkley has what she later described as a “melt down,” expressing that she no longer wishes to be at HOPE Works and that the only thing keeping her from leaving is that “she has no ways to feed her kids” (despite it being known that her salary is more than \$20,000.00 higher than the next-highest-paid employee, and more than the two advocates’ salaries combined).
- ix. **August 14, 2018:** When confronted in another meeting with the ways in which her personal resistance roadblocks necessary work at HOPE Works, Cathleen Barkley acknowledges the truth in this and states that she is putting all of her available energy and resources “towards leaving,” and that is why she is emotionally and professionally unable to engage in the depth of change work being discussed and put forward by staff.
- x. **August 16, 2018:** In another meeting with just Kiona [REDACTED], Lindsay [REDACTED], and Elle [REDACTED], where those three staff relay from the entire staff several recent/top grievances against Cathleen, Cathleen acknowledges “I’m toxic [for HOPE Works], “I know I am.” She expressed looking forward to no longer working at HOPE Works, and that staff is deserving of receiving a fair end date from her. At this time, she shares that she is considering an informal succession date of August 2019. **[Source: written minutes from this meeting typed by Kiona [REDACTED]; appendix 12]**

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- xi. **August 20, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley writes to all staff to apologize for the impact of her actions in recent months, and among other things states “I am confident that this transition can move forward respectfully, thoughtfully, as smoothly as possible, and most importantly guided by our commitment to the people we serve.” [Source: email from Cathleen Barkley dated 08/20/2018; appendix 13]
- xii. **September 26, 2018:** In a conversation with Lilah [REDACTED] and Kiona [REDACTED], Cathleen Barkley communicated (among other things) that she is confused about “most/all issues being raised by staff,” that she does not have an end date and does not want to provide one, and that she does not think it would “be in the best interest of HOPE Works” for her to leave. [Source: email from Kiona [REDACTED] to other staff memorializing the conversation Cathleen Barkley had with her and Lilah [REDACTED]; appendix 14]
- xiii. **September 27, 2018:** Lucy [REDACTED] writes to the Board in an attempt to have them consider one final time what staff are up against with Cathleen Barkley continuing as our Executive Director before they are scheduled to vote on how to proceed with her employment in the upcoming days. The staff tells the Board at this time that Cathleen is sharing that she would be “very worried for HOPE Works” if she were to leave right now. Lucy [REDACTED], with the voice of the staff behind her, summarizes that “there would be no reasons to communicate such a dire statement unless intending to intimidate staff.” Staff pleads, through this email, once again that the Board provide an end date for Cathleen Barkley. [Source: Email from Lucy [REDACTED] dated 09/27/2018; appendix 15]

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- xiv. **October 1, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley shares with two staff members that she doesn't understand what the issue is. Staff share their frustration with Cathleen's words, and highlight all the ways staff have been asking for what they want and need from their leadership, including in writing, in private conversations, in small conversations, and in three weeks worth of full staff conversations. Cathleen again shares that she wishes to leave her role (even though we heard later that by then Cathleen had already re-committed to the Board her desire to stay, contradicting what she said on October 1).
- xv. **October 6, 2018:** In a joint meeting between Board, staff, and Cathleen, the Board shares that they are committed to Cathleen as the Executive Director, and Cathleen shares that she in turn is committed to the role. Staff express confusion, and share the conflicting statements Cathleen had made just days earlier.
- [Source: Meeting notes of Board meeting]**
- xvi. **October 9, 2018:** During a conversation initially regarding social media policies, Cathleen gives the staff the message that she doesn't know if she can continue at HOPE Works, and she doesn't know if "it" [ie. the immense harm and turmoil that has transpired since July] is fixable, or if she has what it takes/is willing to fix it--directly contradicting herself in the Thursday Board and staff meeting.
- xvii. **October 15, 2018:** Staff receive an email from Board co-Chair [REDACTED] telling staff not to contact the Board again [about these issues with Cathleen Barkley]. Once Cathleen has secured the break off of communication between staff and Board members, she immediately returns to hinting she might leave HOPE Works and is unhappy at HOPE Works--the one thing Board members assured staff they wouldn't have to experience anymore.

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

xviii. **October 18, 2018:** Cathleen tells Elle [REDACTED] in a private meeting that she can't leave HOPE Works because she is sure the Board would just hire someone "even worse."

b. **December 7, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley attempts to distance herself from staff regarding their communication with the Board about the proposed access road. Despite stating on the 6th that she wanted to be "with us" in our opposition to the road and despite her participation in crafting a letter soliciting survivor feedback--Cathleen Barkley proceeds to gaslight staff via email. She states via email that the email that we sent out to survivors potentially violated Vermont law and the HOPE Works confidentiality agreements. This gaslighting is in direct response to the feedback she received the day before from the Board (Cathleen Barkley relays to Kiona [REDACTED] on the 6th that the Board had "hurt feelings" and feared for their reputations). Everything she says in this email is in direct conflict with what she said to Kiona [REDACTED] and Lucy [REDACTED] the evening before. She proceeds to make false accusations that staff has "disparaged, publically shamed, and threatened" board members via social media. She then sends a follow-up email threatening to terminate any and all staff who attempt to send communication to the Board or community regarding this issue of the access road.

IV. Retaliatory Leadership

Cathleen Barkley has a history of terminating and/or threatening to terminate, restricting the work responsibilities of, or publicly chastising/humiliating those who fight for more equity, inclusion, and transparency within the organization. The individuals who are most often targeted by Cathleen Barkley are queer, trans, and/or BIPOC.

- a. July 10, 2018:** Through email, Lucy [REDACTED] and Elle [REDACTED] hear official word from Cathleen Barkley that September's meeting will be their last Cultural Competency Team (CCT) meeting as co-facilitators. It is noted by both facilitators that this announcement comes at a moment of CCT being in a place of new and sustainable action and momentum towards the inclusion and equity goals of the committee and the mission of our organization. We realize that once we started to brainstorm actionable steps Cathleen Barkley stepped in and said the time was up for the co-facilitators leading this work, and she was going to appoint two new facilitators, and the last meeting where the current co-facilitators could lead the work would be September 2018. Cathleen Barkley does not move forward in appointing any new facilitators from this moment through the present (5 months).
- b. October 18, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley makes several staff feel their jobs might be on the line as a result of whistleblowing [to the Board]. Elle [REDACTED] is specifically told on 10/18 that her disagreeing with Cathleen Barkley in front of others is unsustainable. Elle [REDACTED] states that she is meeting and exceeding the duties of her position but that it sounds like her job is on the line right now. Cathleen Barkley does not refute that

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

statement. Later on in the conversation she says it is Elle [REDACTED]'s job to present a united front with her and be groomed for leadership one day. While Cathleen Barkley telling Elle [REDACTED] that not engaging as a “united front” with her was an untenable situation occurred within a private meeting, she said similar things about Elle [REDACTED]'s role at the agency in a public staff-board meeting. [SEE ALSO: **threatening staff with termination**]

- c. **November 27, 2018:** At an all staff meeting, Cathleen Barkley tells staff that they can reach out to the Board through a letter if staff does not trust Cathleen Barkley to represent staff and survivor needs to the Board of Directors regarding the proposed access road. Staff perceives this as a permission to reach out to the Board, if necessary.
- d. **December 7, 2018:** Sam [REDACTED] wakes up to an email from Cathleen listing the ways in which Sam [REDACTED] needs to improve her work performance. Sam [REDACTED] was present the evening before for the (Cathleen Barkley approved) reach out to survivors. Hours later, Cathleen Barkley corners Sam [REDACTED] in her office asking her who posted about Eric Farrell/the land deal on social media. Sam [REDACTED] responds that this did not happen on any HOPE Works account and that she does not keep tabs on staff's personal accounts.
- e. **December 8, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley threatens to terminate all staff for insubordination in response to staff compiling community feedback regarding a potential HOPE Works partnership with local developer Eric Farrell. Cathleen Barkley implies that staff organizing against the proposed road will lead to termination. She states that the staff

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

might have violated Vermont law in their solicitation of survivor feedback regarding the land deal. She CCs the board on her threat of termination. The staff is left to think that the Board has cosigned this threat, despite the Board's insistence that they have no hand in staff hiring/firing decisions. [see: **Co-chair's response to the firing of Employee X Appendix 3; Cathleen Barkley's threat to terminate all staff Appendix 16]**

V. Ineffectual Leadership/Organization Administration

Throughout Cathleen Barkley's time as Executive Director at HOPE Works, there have been numerous instances of questionable decision-making, avoidant leadership, ineptitude and silence in moments of need, willful ignoring of the needs, desires, and opinions of staff and services users, and choices made in isolation that have harmed and endangered our organization, its staff, and the people we serve.

- a. **2008 to present:** Approximately 20 staff leave in frustration, and only three staff request exit interviews with Board to share Cathleen Barkley's problematic behavior and how it affected them.

- b. **Fall 2010:** Executive Assistant [CD] to Cathleen Barkley must contend with the discovery of embezzlement by a staff member, and HOPE Works being in the red on budget/payroll. Cathleen Barkley's response is to lock down and control all information regarding finances at the organization. CD is repeatedly asked to accomplish financial work tasks in secret in order to keep the organization functioning. **[Source: letter from CD/former staff; appendix 17]**

- c. **August 10, 2018:** Staff initiate a conversation about our Board of Directors, inquiring as to how they operate, and how new members are recruited. The primary goal of this conversation is to begin to discuss how to move towards a BOD that better reflects the community our organization serves. Cathleen Barkley responds to this conversation by being openly angry, emotional, lashing out, and defensive. She has a self-described

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

‘melt-down’ mid conversation. She talks about not wanting to be at HOPE Works anymore, and how the only reason she can’t leave is she wouldn’t be able to feed her children or pay her mortgage (despite it being known that her salary is more than \$20,000.00 higher than the next-highest-paid employee, and more than the two advocates’ salaries combined). This time, staff push back on how Cathleen Barkley’s ‘melt-downs’ only appear when staff ask her to engage in diversity conversations, and how it feels like she uses emotional outbursts to pump the breaks on actions towards doing our work or being in relationship to each other in new and different ways, towards a more productive, inclusive future. Cathleen Barkley’s only substantial response to the naming of this dynamic is an emotionally manipulative statement that “this is why she can’t be vulnerable with staff about her feelings and personal life.” **[SEE ALSO: emotional abuse]**

- d. **August 13, 2018:** In follow up to a conversation about the lack of diversity and active recruitment on our Board of Directors on 8/10/18, Cathleen Barkley sends an email to all staff stating that she has concerns about staff reaching out to the Board through a letter to discuss the Board make-up and their recruitment practices. Cathleen Barkley also reaches out to Elle [REDACTED] directly and verbally reprimands her for sharing opinions and perspectives in the 8/10/18 meeting that Cathleen Barkley perceived to be in contradiction to her own opinions of the subject of the Board.
- e. **August 14, 2018:** Staff directly name and question Cathleen Barkley’s resistance to participating in conversations about the Board, and Cathleen Barkley acknowledges that “you have dragged me into this kicking and screaming” (“*this*” being actionable work

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

toward equity and change within the organization and on the BOD). When asked to engage in intersectionality work at the agency, Cathleen Barkley repeatedly says she cannot do this work because she is putting “all her energy into leaving.” Cathleen Barkley says that she is “just so done” and “doesn’t have the energy for anything other than planning [her] exit.”

- f. **August 16, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley, in a meeting with Kiona [REDACTED], Elle [REDACTED], and Lindsay [REDACTED], states that she knows she is toxic for HOPE Works. She shares that she does not want to do her job anymore, and that she has an informal succession date of August 2019. She confirms the painful truth of Kiona [REDACTED] saying that she recalls Cathleen Barkley talking about leaving her job since the day she (Kiona) started at HOPE Works--nine years ago.
- g. **August 23, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley communicates through email with staff, saying, “The Board and I are committed to providing my end date to the staff as soon as possible. My hope is to provide a large enough window of time for a smooth transition for the new ED, but certainly no more than a year or less [sic].” [Saved documentation: email from Cathleen Barkley; appendix 11]
- h. **October 6, 2018:** In a collective meeting including the entire staff and the entire Board of Directors (minus one member), Cathleen Barkley states that she is fully committed to her job as Executive Director. She tells staff that she wants to stay in her role and that she is rededicating herself to the role after being re-inspired by a rally she attended. She states that the staff are radical but she is “willing to listen” [to new ideas on how to do our

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

work]. Within this meeting, staff stated plainly and repeatedly in front of Cathleen Barkley to the Board that Cathleen Barkley is an abusive, manipulative, and ineffective leader who is not capable of leading our organization at this time. Throughout the duration of this meeting, HOPE Works' three Black staff members were on the receiving end of repeated racist statements/statements that demonstrate racial bias. Cathleen witnessed these interactions and later acknowledged them, but did not intervene while it was happening.

- i. **November 6, 2018:** A survivor is accused of stealing an intern's wallet. A staff member--following HOPE Works current protocols and practices--reaches out to Cathleen Barkley for guidance on what to do. Cathleen Barkley suggests breaking the survivor's confidentiality by filing a police report would be an obvious and appropriate next step. The intern breaks confidentiality, gives the name of the suspected survivor to law enforcement, explains the services that survivor was accessing at the time of the potential theft, and gives details to the police on the future of the survivor additional victim services. Two staff (Kiona [REDACTED] and Kristine [REDACTED]) intervene to pull our work back within VAWA standards again. They cut off these actions (e.g. they call the police officer and disinvite them from coming to HOPE Works to catch the survivor in the midst of her accessing her private victim services--which she had a right to access as a victim of sexual assault. Per best practice guidance provided by NNEDV, they reach out to the survivor to tell her her confidentiality has been broken to law enforcement). They do this best practice intervention [by VAWA standards] behind Cathleen Barkley's back/without Cathleen Barkley knowing it for fear that Cathleen Barkley will continue to

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

direct staff or the intern to act knowingly against VAWA standards. **[Saved
documentation: screenshot text messages from Cathleen Barkley; Appendix 18]**

VI.

VII. Blocking Employee Organizing Pertaining to Workplace Conditions & Issues Impacting Service Users.

Since Summer 2018, when staff began working in concert to address ongoing issues within HOPE Works and lay groundwork for deeper changes to the organization, staff have grown increasingly fearful that expressing dissenting opinions from Cathleen Barkley, discussing change work, naming racism within our organization, etc., could lead to disciplinary action or termination. There is a precedent for termination without cause at the organization (particularly in the case of those engaging in the above actions), and as staff have become more organized in their dissent and vocalization about their working environment, an increasingly under-fire Cathleen Barkley has grown more threatening and retaliatory in her leadership choices.

- a. **October 18, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley makes multiple staff feel their jobs might be on the line as a result of whistleblowing-- Elle [REDACTED] is specifically told on 10/18/18 during a supervision meeting that her disagreeing with Cathleen Barkley in front of others [ie. staff] is “unsustainable.” Elle [REDACTED] states that she is meeting and exceeding the duties of her position but that it sounds like her job is on the line right now. Cathleen Barkley does not refute that statement. Later on in the conversation she says it is Elle [REDACTED]'s job to present a united front with her and be groomed for leadership one day. While Cathleen Barkley telling Elle [REDACTED] that her not being a “united front” with her was an untenable situation occurred within a private meeting, she said similar things about Elle [REDACTED]'s role at the agency in a public staff-board meeting. **[SEE ALSO: Retaliatory leadership]**

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

b. December 5-7, 2018: After staff mobilize to garner community/survivor/service user input regarding a potential development proposal being put forward by the HOPE Works Board of Directors (a staff effort initially encouraged by Cathleen Barkley, who claimed to be concerned about the way the Board of HOPE Works was moving forward as of 12/05/18), Cathleen Barkley threatens termination of the entire staff for insubordination. The events leading up to this threat are as follows:

i. **December 5, 2018:** Cathleen Barkley shares with four staff that the majority of Board members have officially voted to suggest a counterproposal to sell 31' of HOPE Works side yard to a land developer--in the face of opposition from HOPE Works staff, and in the face of (late) opposition from Cathleen Barkley. Cathleen Barkley alerts these staff of this development at the agency's annual Phone-a-Thon (just staff present at the time). Staff mobilize to save HOPE Works' resources from their Board's decision, which has the potential to harm survivors, negatively impact service provision, create a community backlash and negative press about HOPE Works, negatively impact donor giving, take away our free vegetable garden space (planned to be used in 2019 to provide free food to survivors in need), remove our healing fire location, and lose our strip of green space that we rely on to add privacy and confidentiality for survivors accessing services at our building. In full transparency with Cathleen Barkley, staff spend the night reaching out to survivors for their input on the potential impact(s) of HOPE Works losing our side yard where support and services are provided. During this evening, Cathleen Barkley provides verbal and non-verbal affirmation that this effort to reach out to service users and the greater community is welcomed, appreciated, and needed.

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- ii. **December 6, 2018:** To follow up with her oral communications and attendance at an impromptu strategy meeting, Cathleen Barkley emails all staff early Thursday morning, puts in writing financial details of the counter proposal, and the names of Board members of who voted which way. She thanks Kiona [REDACTED], Lucy [REDACTED], and Jas [REDACTED] for gathering community and survivor feedback. She sounds committed to the work of ending the Board’s faulty decision-making. She does not share that there are any ‘business information’ details within her email that it would not be allowable to share. **[Source: two emails from Cathleen Barkley to staff dated 10/06/18, appendix 19]**
- iii. **December 7, 2018, 4:00PM:** [REDACTED], Board Co-chair, sends a response thanking staff for the email and attached letter, and says, “the Board will certainly rely on all the information that can be obtained.” He also questions how staff knew about the details of the counter proposal, and claims staff do not have all the information. He says, “the Board does appreciate and accept the opinions and concerns of the community and staff” in a sentence that is mostly just describing the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board. Within this correspondence, however, the brown staff member who sent the email is called “confrontational” and the tone of both the initial staff letter and survivor feedback are called “inappropriate.”
- iv. **December 7, 2018 5PM:** Cathleen Barkley emails Board to clarify that it was she who provided the details of the counter proposal to the staff, and apologizes to the Board for errors in the information she provided to staff. **[Source: email from Cathleen Barkley to staff dated 10/07/18, appendix 20]**

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- v. **December 7, 2018 6:30PM:** By now 10 more letters from survivors have been sent to staff in the same vein as the first 34. In the spirit of continuing to send along ‘all the information that can be obtained’ and as the Board ‘appreciates and accepts the opinions and concerns of the community’ (and since staff promised to do this practice for the Board in the first email sent to them), Kristine [REDACTED] sends the next round of survivor input to the Board. In it, we disclose that Cathleen Barkley has been sharing details of the land deal with staff for over a year--as a counterclaim to the Board’s assertion that staff do not know the details of the deal. We reiterate that staff did NOT share conflict of interest concerns in the email going out to solicit input on the land deal--as a counterclaim to the Board’s assertion that we did so. We also call out the Board’s language regarding Jas [REDACTED] as one more example of racial microaggressions towards staff of color. [Source(s): [REDACTED] email to all staff, and Kristine [REDACTED] email to Board dated 10/07/18; appendix 16]
- vi. **December 7, 2018: 6:40PM:** Cathleen Barkley emails staff. She states that the first letter sent to the Board “has served to further divide the organization” and she threatens that “sharing confidential business information” both was against our “obligations as employees” [staff cannot find such language or even meaning within our personnel policies] and suggests that staff have broken Vermont law. She does not name the Vermont law staff has allegedly broken. She blames staff for “violating the conflict of interest strategy that the Board has set for themselves” [although how staff actions could violate the strategy that the Board has set for themselves remains to be seen.] Although Cathleen Barkley, as Executive Director, clearly set up this toxic dynamic for the organization, she

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

ends her email with “The fracturing of HOPE Works has to end immediately” and threatens it “will not be tolerated”.**[appendix 16]**

- vii. December 7, 2018, 7:00PM: Cathleen Barkley sends an additional email to all staff in response to Kristine [REDACTED] email including an additional set of letters from community members/service users/survivors regarding proposed development plans: “Kris and HOPE Works Staff, Let me be very clear when I state this. The survivor feedback has been received and will be considered when the Board meets. Anyone sending a follow up communication to the Board or the community regarding this matter without consulting with me first will be terminated for insubordination immediately.” **[appendix 16]**

VIII. Condoning abuse

Cathleen Barkley has condoned abuse throughout the year of 2018 by acknowledging how our Board of Director perpetuates racism in their consistent targeting of staff of color. Despite Cathleen's acknowledgement, she takes no action. Additionally, staff learns from a community member how Cathleen's leadership has impacted them.

- a. [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] sexually harassed by [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] shares with [REDACTED], that [REDACTED] had made inappropriate comments to her. [REDACTED] tells [REDACTED] that she reported this to Cathleen Barkley who did not take her concerns seriously. Around the same time, [REDACTED] receives a complaint from Cathleen Barkley regarding [REDACTED] work. [REDACTED] meets with Cathleen Barkley and [REDACTED] where they complain about [REDACTED] work ethic and attitude and ask about the process to terminate her [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] being in an environment in which she was being sexually harassed, [REDACTED] pulls [REDACTED] from HOPE Works. [REDACTED] a few weeks later, proceeds to contact [REDACTED] to set up a meeting to talk about [REDACTED], during the meeting he persistently sexually harasses [REDACTED]. Following the meeting, he continued to do so via Facebook messenger. [REDACTED] reports that she kept all of this to herself because she felt that Cathleen Barkley would not believe her after [REDACTED] witnessed the way that Cathleen Barkley “had [REDACTED] back” in their previous meeting about [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] reports that she has avoided all personal and professional contact with HOPE Works since [REDACTED]. **[saved documentation: letters from former staff/community partners, appendix 21]**

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

- b. 2018:** Throughout the last year staff of color (Kiona [REDACTED], Jas [REDACTED], Mercedes [REDACTED]) are on the receiving end of racial microaggression and outright racism from Board members both in-person and via email. Cathleen acknowledges she has witnessed these microaggressions and racism from Board members towards Black and brown staff members (Cathleen acknowledges this multiple times, in group settings); however, when staff ask her to take action in regards to Board members who have perpetuated racism she chooses to do nothing.

Addendum to formal grievance

I: Racism, Homophobia, Queerphobia

V: Ineffectual Leadership/Organization Administration

VI: Blocking Employee Organizing Pertaining to Workplace Conditions & Issues Impacting Service Users.

On 12/12/18 at 11:05 am: Cathleen Barkley terminated Lucy [REDACTED], a queer employee, without warning on the grounds of “insubordination.” The specific reason given for her termination was that when presented with the information that she had shared allegedly disparaged and shared private information regarding the HOPE Works Board of Directors and a potential development deal on social media, Lucy refused to adequately acknowledge harm done. Lucy [REDACTED] was instructed to leave the premises within the hour. She was given zero time to wrap up ongoing services with 30+ service users. Lucy comprises fifty percent of our advocacy services. It is important to note that HOPE Works has no social media policy, as Cathleen Barkley has repeatedly expressed that she has zero desire to police employee’s personal social media accounts. An official complaint has been made with the NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) as it is the staff’s belief that Cathleen Barkley violated Lucy [REDACTED] right to engage in protected concerted activity and terminated her employment to intimidate all staff. Additionally, staff believe that Lucy was singled out for termination because she was the “safest” person to fire as she is “just” a queer white woman and not a queer or trans person of color.

The events leading up to her termination were as follows:

On 12/6: During the annual phonathon, Cathleen Barkley shared with Jas [REDACTED], Kiona [REDACTED], Sam [REDACTED] and Lucy [REDACTED] that she was concerned with the pace at which the Board was moving towards a deal with Eric Farrell (a known local developer), and that she was concerned they were rapidly moving towards a majority vote. When asked, she said that collecting survivor/service user feedback could be a compelling influencing factor for the Board, and that she was fully on board with staff reaching out to the community to collect input. Lucy [REDACTED] drafted an email to service users, which she read to Cathleen Barkley and the other staff present (Kiona & Sam), and everyone, including Cathleen, approved the email. In the writing of this email, Lucy asked Cathleen if it’s okay to “name” that the board and staff were in conflict over this decision. Lucy received affirmation that this was okay from everyone at the table, including Cathleen Barkley. The e-mail was then sent out and Cathleen Barkley, and all other staff (including Cathleen) were BCC’d on the e-mail for them to forward to their own community/service user networks.

On 12/6 at approximately 8pm: Lucy [REDACTED] screenshot and shared the post of another employee on her private Instagram “Story” giving a generalized overview of the development conversation happening between HOPE Works and Eric Farrell. Other staff also shared these posts on their personal Instagram “Stories”. These social media reach-outs were intended to share necessary and time-sensitive information with the community with the intention of providing a pathway for our community and service users to be able to lend their voice, opinion, and needs to this irreversible business/development decision that had the capacity to profoundly impact survivors, staff and our services. These posts also had the intention of

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

representing the collective concerns of the entire staff. Staff X, Staff Y, Staff Z, and Lucy [REDACTED] additionally engaged in private Instagram conversations relating to this property development issue. Additionally, multiple staff were aware of and approved of Lucy [REDACTED], X, Y, and Z posts on social media.

On December 7, at 6:40pm: Cathleen Barkley emailed all staff to reprimand them for the approved email containing community/survivor feedback that they had sent to the board. In this email she alleged that “sharing confidential business information” was a potential violation of HOPE Works policy as well as Vermont law, and she also identified that it had come to a Board member’s attention that a staff member had posted about the potential development on social media in a way that was allegedly disparaging. Cathleen Barkley threatened that if any staff shared further information with the community-- through email, social media, or otherwise-- there would be immediate disciplinary action, including termination.*

[“In addition, it has come to my attention that a board member was alerted about a post on social media made by a HOPE Works’ staff person. The post was made on a HOPE Works staff member’s personal social media account and disparaged the board and its motivations. Conducting personal attacks against board members (or anyone) is antithetical to the values that HOPE Works stands for and will not be tolerated. Moreover, the topic of the disparaging post involved the disclosure of the same confidential business information. Any further use of social media that is defamatory or that shares confidential business information not otherwise available to persons outside of the organization will be considered a violation of HOPE Works policies and is grounds for disciplinary action, including termination.”]

***No social media posts pertaining to this issue were made by Lucy [REDACTED] or any other staff member after this threatening email from Cathleen.**

On December 11, approx 12PM: At an all staff meeting, staff disclose to Cathleen Barkley in a group setting that a large number of them posted the same post as Lucy [REDACTED] on social media.

Despite this, Cathleen Barkley chooses to single Lucy [REDACTED] out in a private meeting (Lucy, Kiona, and Cathleen Barkley present) to discuss the issue further. The conversation ends in an “unsettled” place. During this meeting, Cathleen was aggressive and refused to provide a reason as to why this meeting was taking place. During this meeting, Cathleen disclosed that she nor the board member in question saw the post in question. Kiona, Lucy’s supervisor, stated multiple times that there had been no policy violation and that the conversation being had was incredibly inappropriate and unethical. Cathleen acknowledges that no policies were violated. Additionally, in this meeting Cathleen stated that her goal of the meeting was to make sure that Lucy can “think differently about [her] behavior going forward” and for Lucy to address the hurt feelings of the board. Upon being asked by Kiona, Cathleen refused to answer why only Lucy was being held accountable.

Evening of December 11: Lucy [REDACTED] receives another invitation to a meeting with Cathleen while with a survivor. Lucy and Kiona believe that this meeting is Cathleen disclosing which Board member was surveilling Lucy’s private social media.

The previous meeting ended with Cathleen stating that she “knew” that she should be empathetic to Lucy’s feeling of fear around being surveilled and what that brings up for Lucy as a survivor of sexual violence. Cathleen stated that she would need to give permission to do so but stated that Lucy could

Formal Grievance against Cathleen Barkley, Executive Director of HOPE Works, Inc.

“figure out” who the Board member was because he is the youngest person on the board.

Morning of December 12: Lucy is terminated (Kiona [REDACTED], Lucy [REDACTED], and Cathleen Barkley present). Cathleen Barkley throws the termination letter at Lucy. She is given an hour to vacate the building. [see: termination letter]

December 12-Present: Cathleen Barkley does not communicate anything to staff (including that Lucy [REDACTED] is no longer an employee of HOPE Works). There is no communication from Cathleen Barkley on how to provide victim services after HOPE Works loses 50% of its capacity to provide victim services. These include but are not limited to:

1. How to alert volunteers on our hotline that Lucy [REDACTED] is no longer a referral for survivors
2. How to address coverage holes in the weekend on-call schedule. Cathleen is currently covering Lucy [REDACTED] scheduled weekend shift and staff has immense concern about her ability to provide safe and culturally competent advocacy to survivors.
3. How to communicate to UVM that advocates will not be able to fulfill the recent contract signed by HOPE Works as a result of understaffing (thus impacting the ability of UVM survivors to have access to a confidential victim advocate after January 1st)
4. Any clarity about how to move forward

December 12: Lucy [REDACTED]'s friend who unknowingly shared the information with Board member [REDACTED] apologizes to Lucy for the unintended impact. She shares that she was concerned as a community member about the development deal and shared her concerns with a friend who then shared this with Board member [REDACTED].

December 13: Cathleen Barkley removes all HOPE Works social media presence from the web (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook), further silencing the voices of the BIPOC staff who run those accounts. She continues to further erode staff's confidence by then deleting her own personal accounts. Staff fear for organization's well-being