**[Catharine Hydon]:** I want to now turn to a bit of a conversation around the educator's role in this process of supporting identity, because I do think that a lot of people here will be thinking, "OK, that's great, "and I've got to explore that in some more detail "because it's just a tiny start of that conversation. "but what do I do?" "What is my role in making this happen?" "Am I... Should I be really very active in that space or should...? "How should I support and scaffold children's learning in this space?". And I think it also helps us to be a bit clearer and more certain about some of the ways in which we can effectively do that support. So maybe, Jen, you could help us in the first instance, sort of linking some of that theory that you've managed to capture and think about what it might look like in terms of an educator's professional journey as well.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** OK. I'm glad you landed on educator's professional journey, Catharine, because I think that is absolutely essential to all of the VEYLDF outcomes. It's a case for me of putting your own oxygen mask on before you assist others. And I think possibly something that we don't do often enough is reflect on what these outcomes actually mean for us. Um... Slight apology - you might hear my dogs complaining in the background.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** [Laughs]. I think we're used to that now. We have other creatures joining us on every...

 **[Jen Mitchell]:** It's the new normal.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yes it is. Yes. Keep going. Part of your identity. [Laughs]

**[Jen Mitchell]:** That, in fact, was a good segue into what I wanted to say, because we're all suffering a massive upheaval to our sense of identity at the moment, whether you've got people in your family who might have lost their jobs or people that you can't visit who are really... normally really fundamental to who you are, even if it's just you can't go to your favourite shops or your favourite cafes, all those bits and pieces that make up who we are and who we...you know, what we understand about ourselves have been massively disrupted, OK? So I'm actually really pleased that we're talking about identity at the time that we are, because, you know, we can talk about learning all day if we want to, but I think COVID-19 has really showed us that there are some things that are even more foundational than that, just about knowing who we are and knowing our place in the world, that if they're not strong, we feel really, really destabilised. And it's not just about COVID. It can be...you know, if you think about yourself and think about those different statements in the model for a minute. So, think about "I know who I am". "I value who I am". "You know who I am". "You value who I am". "I know who you are." "I value who you are." All of those things. Just think about them with a...you know, to what extent they're true for you. And hopefully most of them are, to a greater or lesser extent. But also think about what was it that made you able to say that? You know? Who taught you something or who said something to you, or what interactions and experiences did you have in your lifetime that have brought you to that place where you do know who you are and you do value who you are? And it could be family, friends, role models, colleagues. It could be things that you've read, things that you've done. There are also things that can affect your sense of identity the other way. So, it might be that there were some of those statements that you weren't so sure about, and it might be that there were negative influences on your sense of identity that have come into your life as well. And this is an interesting thing about this outcome, because when we talk about learning, we tend to think of it as a one-way street. Like, you can't learn less, you know? You can not learn as much as you might want to, but you're always going the same direction. What we found with the sense of identity is it can actually go both ways. You can have a weakened sense of identity if you don't get those positive experiences or if you get negative ones. So I guess rather than calling on the theory, Catharine, I'm actually calling on people to think about their own learning journeys, how you developed your strong sense of identity, what that looks like, what its components are and then think about from there, "OK, well, what does a learning journey towards a strong sense of identity look like for each individual child who I work with, "and what resources does that child have to call on to build that strong sense of identity?”. Because it's not going to be the same journey for every child, just like each and every one of us probably thought of different influences when we thought how our strong sense of identity came together. Each and every child that you work with is going to build their identity from very different things. And that's so exciting for you as a curious...hopefully curious, reflective professional to say, "What are the building blocks? "What are the resources? What can I do for each child?" And, "What an incredible environment that I'm doing it in," you know? How does this changing world that we're in, offer not only challenges to that sense of identity, but maybe some really rich opportunities?

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Indeed, yeah.

**[Jen Mitchell]:** Yeah.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** I think that's really powerful, Jen. I think it's a really interesting time for us to reflect on our identity. I mean, there's lots of conversations around professional identity going on, and we know that that's, um...you know, emerging all the time. We're having many conversations like that. And, you know, wouldn't it be great to take a moment or two in a professional learning context, in a staff meeting to ponder some of these things? I know lots of you were busy talking about, you know, things around temperature checking and washing hands and everything, but after you've done that, talk about some of these other components. 'Cause, like, I do...I agree with you.

It's very, um...you know, meaty. There's lots of things to talk about.

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