

# HEALING JUSTICE



Image: Designed for the ACLU of Southern California

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“Life, inexhaustible, goes on. And we do too. Carrying our wounds and our medicines as we go.”

- Alice Walker, *Reading BARRACOON: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”*

## I. Our Voices: What is Healing Justice?

- “healing justice...identifies how we can holistically respond to and intervene on generational trauma and violence, and to bring collective practices that can impact and transform the consequences of oppression on our bodies, hearts and minds.”

-Cara Page and the Kindred **Healing Justice** Collective

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“We do this work to lift up and politicize the role of health and healing in our movements as a critical part of the new world we are building...

...We are learning and creating this political framework about a legacy of healing and liberation that is meeting a particular moment in history inside of our movements that seeks to: regenerate traditions that have been lost; to mindfully hold contradictions in our practices; and to be conscious of the conditions we are living and working inside of as healers and organizers in our communities and movements.

We are building national relationships and dialogues to cultivate knowledge and to build reflection and exchange of our healing, transformative and resiliency practices in our regions and movements.”

-Bad Ass Visionary Healers Collective (Bay Area)

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## II. Self-Care Assessment

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization*. Norton.

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself these days.

When you are finished, look for patterns in your responses. Are you more active in some areas of self-care but ignore others? Are there items on the list that make you think, "I would never do that"? Listen to your inner responses, your internal dialogue about self-care and making yourself a priority. Take particular note of anything you would like to include more in your life.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

- 3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
- 2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
- 1 = I barely or rarely do this
- 0 = I never do this
- ? = This never occurred to me

### Physical Self-Care

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention (physicals, etc.)
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Get massages/physical healing therapies which support my sense of well-being
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
- Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothing that I like and makes me feel good about myself.
- Take vacations
- Other:

### Psychological Self-Care

- Allow myself to be curious
- Allow myself to be a novice, student, or learner at something
- Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet

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- Make time for self-reflection
- Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings
- Have my own personal psychotherapy or mental health care plan and practice
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to work
- Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
- Attend to minimizing stress in my life
- Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Experience day trips, mini-vacations, or excursions which are strictly for my enjoyment
- Other:

## Emotional Self-Care

- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in my life
- Give myself affirmations, praise myself
- Love myself
- Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- Allow myself to cry
- Find things that make me laugh
- Express my outrage, concern, and vision for social change
- Other:

## Spiritual Self-Care

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time in nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish my optimism and hope
- Be aware of non-material aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing
- Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
- Meditate
- Pray
- Sing/Dance/Create Art
- Express creativity, inspiration, or purpose through activities that I find satisfying
- Experience wonder or awe
- Contribute to causes in which I believe
- Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music
- Find beauty in everyday things
- Celebrate milestones, accomplishments, or simply anything that brings joy
- Other:

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## Relationship Self-Care

- Schedule regular dates with my partner, spouse, or significant other
- Schedule regular activities with my children
- Make time to see friends
- Call, check on, or see my relatives
- Spend time with my companion animals
- Stay in contact with faraway friends
- Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holidaycards
- Allow others to do things for me
- Enlarge my social circle
- Ask for help when I need it
- Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
- Other:

## Workplace or Professional Self-Care

- Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- Take time to chat with co-workers
- Make quiet time to complete tasks
- Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Set limits with clients and colleagues
- Balance my workload so that no one day or part of a day is “too much”
- Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- Get regular supervision or consultation
- Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise, time off, reasonable hours and schedule)
- Have a peer support group
- (If relevant) Develop a non-stress area of professional interest

## Overall Balance

- Strive for balance within my work-life and personal life
- Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

## Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to My Life

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Commitments to Self:

1. I will begin
2. I will do more
3. I will pay more attention to

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## III. *Pair Share Reflection & Discussion:*

How do these reflections on healing justice and personal self-care assessments inform how we organize and build movements? How does “how” we do the work impact our sustainability as movements and resiliency as movement builders? How do we build a movement that centers healing and not harm?

## IV. *Community Closing Circle: I Practice Liberation By \_\_\_\_\_*

Please share one (new) practice that you will begin or re-commit to in the spirit of integrating healing justice into your work as an organizer. Please use the sentence above as a prompt and fill in the blank with only a single, short phrase.