Healing justice

Generational and present-day trauma from experiences with state and other forms of violence deeply impacts those working in movements for social justice. Healing justice is a response to this trauma, lifting up practices that support wellness and safety to our sustain our community and movements. There is no template for healing justice work. It needs to emerge out of real people in real time, grounded in community and place. Organizations and movements need access to healing practitioners with shared experience; in turn, practitioners need to be able to sustain themselves and their work.

Applying a healing justice framework requires rethinking organizational infrastructure, human resources, budgeting, safety and security, and supervision.

- Build your budget with a timeline and pace that is realistic and includes room to expect the unexpected (it’s just inevitable!)
  - Working remotely and/or with a new team always takes longer than you anticipate
- Bring on skilled healing practitioners to bring practices grounded in the context and experience of your participants
- Ensure the program has a gentle pace and includes informal ways for activists to engage, unwind, and connect

Create a warm, welcoming, and intentional space! Whether virtual or in person, the way we invite people in makes a difference. This means being mindful of the amount of time and energy we are asking folks to give. Below are some examples of strategies we've used in the past to consider.

Before the event

- Cap virtual meetings at 90 - 120 minutes and make sure there are breaks
- Make sure sessions are engaging and use different learning methodologies
- Share program and logistics information well in advance so participants can make plans to be fully present in your space
- Create a plan for responding to and addressing issues or crises that could arise unexpectedly at the event

At the event

- Designate a wellness room that participants can access at any time during the convening.
- The wellness room should be stocked with a variety of offerings for folks to take advantage of and to contribute to, such as:

    - Essential oils
    - Poems
    - Different art and sensory materials
    - Tarot cards Paper with designs or mandalas for coloring
    - Yoga mats
    - Pillows or comfy chairs for folks to relax
    - Prompts for reflection
    - Local art
- Create an altar as a sacred space for honoring ancestors and elders in our movements in the event space or wellness room
- Designate a silent room and make ear plugs available for participants with different sensory sensitivities
- Make sure sessions are engaging and use different learning methodologies
- Assign a care team to support folks on site with special needs or challenges that arise
    - Make a plan with the care team about how they can best support folks in the moment so they feel prepared and know what resources they have to offer
- Consider bringing in mental health professionals (could even have someone available virtually for one-on-ones)
- Build flexibility into the schedule to allow the agenda to adapt based on emergent needs that arise from the group

Follow up

- Make sure the discussions and resources shared during the event are accessible to participants after
- Review reflection and evaluations so that we can build on learnings from the event for the future

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