

Trauma Recovery Toolkit

Emotional Recovery, Community Resilience, and Long-Term Care After Direct Action





Trauma Recovery Toolkit

Emotional Recovery, Community Resilience, and Long-Term Care After Direct Action

Version 1.2 – April 2025

Engaging in activism especially in hostile environments and against repressive state forces, can take a deep, multifaceted toll on the body, mind, and spirit. For trans activists in particular, these tolls are intensified by systemic transphobia, constant surveillance, institutional neglect, targeted violence, and the relentless emotional strain of witnessing harm inflicted on community members and comrades. The trauma of activism isn't just the bruises and arrests, it's the feeling of carrying too many losses, too many burdens, and never being allowed to rest.

This toolkit offers trauma-informed strategies, practices, and resources designed to foster **long-term resilience, collective healing, and recovery** in the aftermath of direct action, protest, or encounters with repression. Whether you're recovering from tear gas or trauma, from arrest or allyship fatigue, from shouting in the street or holding down the mutual aid table for ten hours straight, this guide is for you.

Healing is not a retreat from the frontlines. It is a return to yourself. A preparation for what comes next.

1. Understanding Post-Action Trauma and Fatigue

What Is Post-Action Trauma?

Activist trauma is real. It's complex, layered, and often cumulative. Yet because movement spaces are often underfunded, overstretched, or hyper-mobilized, there's rarely time or support, to name it, let alone treat it. Trauma after action can show up immediately, or it can take days, weeks, even years to surface.

• Acute Stress Reaction

A rapid-onset psychological and physiological response to danger or violence, often triggered by high-stakes protest conditions like police brutality, being kettled, detained, doxxed, or physically assaulted. Common symptoms include heart palpitations, uncontrollable shaking, difficulty breathing, nausea, or overwhelming fear.

• Vicarious Trauma

Sometimes called secondary trauma, this occurs when you absorb the pain and suffering of others, especially through repeated exposure to graphic stories, videos, or testimonies. Legal observers, medics, live streamers, and those managing jail support lines or harm reports are particularly vulnerable.

• Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

Long-term exhaustion caused by over-functioning in a space where suffering is constant and support is inconsistent. Burnout includes physical depletion, emotional deadness, and a sense that "nothing we do matters." Compassion fatigue is similar, but often involves withdrawal from relationships, care responsibilities, and a loss of emotional connection to the work or to people around you.



✓ Common Symptoms:

- Persistent hypervigilance, tension, or panic attacks
- Nightmares, recurring intrusive thoughts, or dissociation
- Insomnia, memory loss, or inability to focus on simple tasks
- Emotional disconnection, grief numbness, or feeling "zoned out"
- Depression, despair, loss of motivation, or social isolation
- Physical symptoms: headaches, stomach pain, jaw clenching, chest tightness, nausea
- Heightened sensitivity to sound, crowds, or conflict

These are not signs of weakness. These are signs of survival. The body, in its wisdom, adapts to sustained stress by slowing down, shutting off, or firing on all cylinders. But if we don't support recovery, these adaptations can become barriers to healing and connection.

🔍 Learn More from Trauma-Informed Experts and Radical Care Networks

- [National Center for PTSD](#): Veteran-based but widely applicable research on post-traumatic stress, including community and protest-based trauma.
- [Fireweed Collective](#): Mental health resources for BIPOC, queer, trans, and disabled organizers, grounded in collective care.
- [Trans Lifeline](#): Offers peer-led emotional support and resource lists specific to trans survival, trauma, and healing.
- [It's Going Down: Protest Trauma Guide](#): A grassroots resource tailored for movement organizers dealing with burnout and police violence.
- [Queering Mental Health](#): A lens on trauma from within the queer/trans experience, not outside of it.

💬 Testimonies and Lived Experience

Trans organizers in repressive environments have been clear: the wounds aren't always visible. The worst of it isn't just pepper spray or rubber bullets, it's what happens after, when no one calls, when the campaign moves on, when you feel like you disappeared in the movement you helped build.

Healing after action is collective work. It begins with:

- Making space to grieve what you saw and felt.
- Being witnessed in your pain without judgment or urgency.
- Recognizing that you deserve to heal, even if no one else said so.

We'll continue this toolkit with chapters on:

- Trauma-informed decompression (breathwork, ritual, spiritual and cultural grounding)
- Somatic healing (TRE, body scans, movement therapy, rewilding)
- Community pods and collective rest models
- Finding trauma-informed therapists or peer-led recovery groups
- Setting boundaries with movement spaces when your needs are not met

You are not broken. You are not alone. You are not a burden.



♥ 2. Immediate Post-Action Self-Care Protocols

Following direct action, protest, or any form of confrontation with state violence or systemic oppression, the human body and mind often enter a state of hyperactivation or shutdown. This includes physiological symptoms like tremors, nausea, shallow breathing, and psychological ones such as intrusive thoughts, emotional numbness, or panic attacks. These are not flaws, they are deeply ingrained survival responses.

For trans and queer activists in particular, whose existence is often criminalized or stigmatized before action even begins, **the toll of activism extends far beyond the physical.** It is essential to understand that the period immediately after an action is when your body and nervous system are most vulnerable, and most in need of care.

This expanded protocol provides trauma-informed, community-centered strategies to help you decompress, restore nervous system balance, and reconnect with safety. These practices are for everyone: frontline fighters, medics, artists, mutual aid workers, live streamers, jail support crews, and those holding space.

These steps are not luxuries. They are radical acts of resistance against a system that wants to keep us exhausted, broken, and burned out.



Decompress and Reground

Hydrate and Nourish

- **Rehydrate as soon as possible.** Especially if you've been exposed to tear gas, spent hours in high-stress states, or physically exerted yourself.
- Prioritize **nutrient-dense, anti-inflammatory foods**: leafy greens, berries, bananas, whole grains, beans, nuts, and fermented foods like kimchi or yogurt.
- Avoid excessive **caffeine**, which may exacerbate panic, insomnia, and adrenal fatigue. Limit **alcohol or cannabis** if they suppress emotional processing or worsen dissociation.

Resources:

- [Harvard Health: Nutrition and Mental Health](#)
- [Psychology Today on Food and PTSD](#)

Rest and Sleep

- Your parasympathetic nervous system, the system responsible for calming your body, needs **downtime to restore**.
- Create a **wind-down ritual** after action: wash your hands and face, change clothes, dim the lights, and use scent (lavender, chamomile, eucalyptus) to signal safety.
- Try **guided meditations**, binaural beats, or [the 4-7-8 breathing technique](#) to support relaxation and sleep.
- If sleeping feels impossible, **rest your body anyway**, put on calming music or a podcast, lie down with your eyes closed, and breathe deeply.

Sleep Resources:

- [Sleep Foundation: Tips for Insomnia](#)
- [Insight Timer](#) – Free meditation app with sleep music, trauma meditations, and more

Disconnect Temporarily

- Avoid **doomscrolling**, especially right after action. Social media can be a feedback loop of retraumatization, misinformation, and emotional overwhelm.
- Use screen dimmers like [f.lux](#) or apps like [Freedom](#) to set time limits or block harmful content.
- Set up **check-ins with trusted friends** so you don't have to rely on Twitter or Instagram for updates.

Why this matters: Overexposure to distressing media after a traumatic event increases cortisol and can **worsen symptoms of PTSD**.

Reference: [APA on Digital Trauma Fatigue](#)

Release Tension and Ground Yourself

Body Scan and Breathing Exercises

- The **5-4-3-2-1 grounding method** anchors your senses:
 - 5 things you see
 - 4 things you feel
 - 3 things you hear
 - 2 things you smell
 - 1 thing you taste or imagine tasting
- **Box breathing** or **square breathing**: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold again for 4. Do this for at least 3–5 minutes.

Supportive Links:

- [Mindful.org Grounding Practices](https://www.mindful.org/grounding-practices/)
- [Therapist Aid: Breathing Exercises](#)

Move Your Body

Movement helps metabolize adrenaline and cortisol—the stress hormones your body builds up during protest.

- **Stretching**: Focus on shoulders, hips, neck, and back.
- **Walking**: A 10–15 minute walk in nature can significantly reduce nervous system overdrive.
- **Shaking**: Trauma Release Exercises (TRE) use intentional shaking to release stored physical stress.
- **Somatic Yoga** or trauma-informed dance help reconnect to a sense of embodiment and pleasure.

Resources:

- [Yoga with Adriene – Yoga for Stress and Anxiety](#)
- [The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk](#)



Immediate Self-Care Is Political

Your wellness is not separate from the movement. It's not secondary to the cause. It is the movement.

- **Self-care resists carceral logic** that treats people as expendable.
- **Self-care builds long-term capacity** for resistance, instead of cycles of burnout and collapse.
- **Self-care makes space for healing justice**, where wellness is not individual but shared and collective.

By tending to your needs, you model a different world: one where trans and queer bodies are sacred, where resilience is rooted in connection, and where the fight doesn't require self-destruction.

Next, we'll dive into collective care models, trauma-informed pods, and sustainable healing practices that don't leave anyone behind.

Take what you need. You did enough. You are enough.



👉 3. Building Community Support After Direct Actions

Activism does not end when the protest ends. What happens in the hours, days, and weeks afterward, the way we hold each other, process grief and fear, debrief lessons, and share healing, determines whether we build momentum or burn out. Without post-action support systems, even the most well-planned campaigns risk collapse under the emotional and logistical weight of collective trauma.

Especially for trans and queer organizers, who face disproportionate targeting, criminalization, and online harassment, the aftermath of direct action can feel just as intense as the event itself. **Isolation after resistance is a tactic of repression. Community care is the counter-tactic.** When we prepare to support each other beyond the march, beyond the raid, beyond the courtroom, we begin to build the culture of care that makes movements indestructible.

This section explores not just how to offer care, but how to embed that care into organizing practice: before, during, and after direct action. Think of it as a blueprint for emotional logistics, a guide to weaving safety, reciprocity, and healing into the infrastructure of resistance.

👏 Mutual Care Circles

✅ Check In With Your Group

- Host a **post-action debrief** within 24–72 hours. Use trauma-informed, community-centered models that prioritize emotional as well as tactical reflection.
- Frame these spaces as **non-hierarchical zones** where everyone's perspective matters. Rotate facilitation to avoid burnout or leader dominance.
- Make time for silence, nonverbal reflection, or nonverbal participation (writing, drawing, or moving).
- Include a **tactical review**, but balance it with questions like: How did that feel? What do we need now? What are we carrying that didn't get seen?

Resource: [Seeds for Change – How to Facilitate a Debrief](#)

✅ Create Space for Emotional Processing

- Use **trauma-informed facilitation** tools such as grounding check-ins, optional sharing, visual agendas, and emotion wheels to support multiple types of processing.
- Establish agreements around confidentiality, consensual touch, no cross-talk, and the option to pass.
- Incorporate somatic grounding techniques: group breathwork, cold compresses, hydration stations, or collective movement breaks.
- Consider inviting a neutral mental health ally to help hold emotional intensity.

Toolkits:

- [Healing Justice Practice Space](#): Rooted in BIPOC-led collective healing and ancestral trauma response
- [Generative Somatics](#): Offers training and exercises for trauma-informed embodiment and movement resilience



✓ Connect with Mental Health Professionals

- Engage therapists and peer counselors who understand activist trauma, police repression, and the nuances of queer and trans survival.
- Create an emergency mental health roster available at actions or encampments.
- Share and update accessible care directories:
 - [Inclusive Therapists](#): Centering intersectional practitioners
 - [Open Path Collective](#): Sliding-scale therapy for uninsured folks
 - [Therapy Den](#): Offers filters for LGBTQ+ competency, BIPOC providers, and political alignment
 - [QTPoC Mental Health](#): Archive of support spaces and workshops for queer and trans BIPOC

🌸 Peer Support Networks

✓ Peer-Led Healing Groups

- Set up **rotating care pods** with assigned buddies for check-ins after high-risk actions. These pods can swap support roles, including food delivery, phone calls, accompaniment to appointments, or emotional check-ins.
- Normalize informal care: movie nights, crafting circles, journaling meetups, or baking swaps.
- Use **story circles**, inspired by Black liberation movements, to hold emotional space where people are listened to, not analyzed.

Resource: [Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective](#): Focused on transformative responses to harm rooted in community relationships

✓ Anonymous Support Options

- Establish encrypted or pseudonymous support spaces through platforms like [Element](#) or [Signal](#), where activists can debrief with more privacy.
- Offer anonymous Google forms for folks to request check-ins or debrief time without stigma.
- Circulate peer-led resources for emotional first aid:
 - [7 Cups](#): Free online chat with trained volunteer listeners
 - [Trans Lifeline](#): A hotline run entirely by trans people for trans people in crisis
 - [Warmlines Directory](#): For non-emergency emotional support across U.S. states



Tips for Sustained Collective Support

- **Practice mutuality.** Make giving and receiving care a regular part of group culture, not a last-minute scramble when someone breaks down.
- **Document and evolve.** Keep records of what helped and what didn't. Create living protocols based on your community's needs.
- **Decenter martyrdom.** Cultivate a culture where rest, refusal, and recovery are seen as contributions, not retreats.
- **Train up.** Offer skillshares in harm reduction, mental health first aid, active listening, and de-escalation so care work is decentralized.
- **Make joy intentional.** Host game nights, karaoke, dance parties, and storytelling hours, not just fundraisers or teach-ins.

Post-action support is not a bonus. It's the scaffolding that holds the movement together.

When it's built in advance, it catches us. When it's missing, people disappear.

Building care into your organizing isn't just safer. It's smarter. It creates continuity. It protects legacy. It makes resistance more than reactive, it makes it regenerative.



4. Creative and Expressive Healing Practices

Resistance doesn't end with a slogan, it continues through creation. For trans and queer organizers, reclaiming narrative and embodiment is as urgent as defending land, blocking pipelines, or exposing police violence. The systems that seek to repress us often do so by severing our connection to ourselves: our voice, our movement, our memory, our joy. Artistic and body-based healing are not fringe, they are essential tools of liberation.

Creative and somatic practices reconnect us to parts of ourselves that have been colonized, criminalized, or shamed. They create nonverbal routes through trauma. They build collective identity. And they remind us that rage and grief can also be transformed into music, murals, or dance. This expanded section offers a deeper dive into how storytelling, creative expression, and body-based practices can support individual and collective recovery after protest, repression, or organizing burnout.

Art and Storytelling for Processing Trauma

Express Emotions Through Creativity

- Engage in **multimodal creation**: painting, drawing, journaling, zine-making, embroidery, sound collage, spoken word, drag, or digital storytelling. Choose what lets your emotions move.
- When trauma shuts down language, creative expression can be a portal. **Externalizing pain can be the first step in processing it.**
- Organize **low-pressure creative spaces** like open studio nights, zine parties, or art supply lending libraries that encourage play over performance.
- Use art therapy techniques like "draw your feeling," "map your day," or "make an altar in a shoebox" to ground processing through hands-on reflection.

Resources:

- [Art for Trauma Recovery Toolkit](#) – Focused on film and visual media for mental health
- [Write Your Way Home](#) – Writing for trauma integration and queer healing
- [The Healing Power of Art](#) – Research and tools on art's role in mental wellness
- [Transcestors Project](#) – Artistic archive and storytelling for trans people of color



✓ Document Experiences for Collective Memory

- **Document your movement.** Create visual and written records that show trans and queer people not just surviving, but shaping history.
- Consider photography, digital scrapbooks, oral history, audio zines, collaborative storyboarding, or resistance comics. These archives give future generations access to our wisdom.
- Build community memory through public-facing art: wheatpaste posters, wall murals, sidewalk chalk campaigns, QR-coded protest timelines.
- Use artistic documentation as part of **legal support**, counter-narrative, or safety training: visuals speak when words can't.

Inspiration and Tools:

- [We Will Not Be Erased Zine Series](#) – On care, trans survival, and memory-keeping
- [Abolitionist Storytelling Toolkit](#) – Centering survivor narratives with dignity
- [GenderFail Press](#) – Zines and chapbooks from queer, trans, and BIPOC creators
- [Documenting the Now](#) – Tools for community-centered digital archiving

🧘 Somatic and Body-Based Healing

✓ Body Mapping and Movement Therapy

- **Body mapping** involves creating a life-sized outline of your body and filling it with symbols, colors, and notes representing where you feel grief, power, numbness, or safety. This can be incredibly powerful for survivors of repression or dysphoria.
- Explore group mapping circles where folks co-create murals or fabric maps of collective experience.
- Reconnect with your body's rhythm through practices like:
 - **Somatic yoga** or slow, restorative stretching
 - **Tremor Release Exercises (TRE)** to discharge built-up stress
 - **Authentic movement** or blindfolded dance
 - **Shaking rituals** common in anti-colonial traditions

Practice Hubs:

- [Revolutionary Embodiment by Prentis Hemphill](#) – Rooting healing in Black, queer experience
- [Liberation Somatics](#) – Tools for collective resilience and trauma-informed facilitation
- [Tremor Release Exercises](#) – Science-based, accessible physical recovery from stress
- [The Embodiment Institute](#) – Training around movement, race, and healing



✓ Grounding Through Sensory Techniques

- The body's sensory system can regulate trauma in ways that logic cannot. Use **sensory grounding** to de-escalate post-action panic, anxiety, or flashbacks.
- Create a **personal sensory menu**: What textures calm you? What sounds bring you back? What tastes feel safe?
- Explore:
 - **Weighted blankets** for pressure regulation
 - **Herbalism** and smell-based grounding (rosemary, lavender, clove, chamomile)
 - **Temperature therapy**: holding an ice cube, warm salt baths, or alternating showers
 - **Haptic tools**: stress balls, clay, soft fabrics, vibration pads
- Build "**de-escalation bags**" for protest or jail support with sensory aids, familiar snacks, water, and affirming notes.

Support Tools:

- [The Resilient Activist Toolkit](#) – Techniques for ecological grief and trauma regulation
- [Calm Harm App](#) – Evidence-based app to support self-soothing during crisis
- [Sensory Wellbeing Hub](#) – Sensory inclusion practices adapted for neurodivergent folks

We do not just protest, we paint, we cry, we dance, we remember.

Art is how we process what the world refuses to understand. It is how we survive grief that can't be fixed and joy that scares power. **Creative expression is not a side project, it is a political strategy, a healing mechanism, and a spiritual declaration.**

To practice creativity after repression is to say: I am still here. And I am not just surviving, I am shaping what comes next.



♥ 5. Addressing Arrest-Related Trauma and Legal Aftermath

Being arrested as a trans or queer activist can be a profoundly destabilizing and traumatic experience. It's not just about being detained. Arrest, in the context of political repression, is designed to silence, isolate, and dehumanize. For trans and gender nonconforming people, the harms multiply, through misgendering, sexual harassment, targeted abuse, and medical neglect. The trauma doesn't end with release. It lingers in the body, the nervous system, and the court calendar.

This section offers a comprehensive framework for addressing the personal, legal, and systemic consequences of arrest. It focuses on both immediate trauma care and long-term legal resilience, using models developed by community defense networks, abolitionist organizers, and trauma-informed legal advocates.

⚖️ Post-Arrest Trauma Care

✅ Debrief and Document

- Organize a **post-arrest debrief** as soon as safely possible, ideally within 24–72 hours. This should include:
 - A quiet space for emotional release
 - Legal observer notes
 - A peer or therapist for trauma-informed listening
- Ask open-ended questions: "What was the most intense moment?" or "Where do you feel it in your body now?"
- Use secure digital platforms to document your experience in writing, audio, or visual form.
Recommended encrypted tools:
 - [Proton Drive](#)
 - [CryptPad](#)
 - [Tella](#) (for encrypted mobile evidence collection)
- Include:
 - Officer names/badge numbers
 - Time and location of arrest
 - Any abuses (verbal, physical, sexual)
 - Denial of medication, food, or bathroom access
 - Forced outing, misgendering, or solitary confinement

Resources:

- [National Lawyers Guild Legal Observer Program](#)
- [If/When/How Arrest Handbook](#)
- [CopWatch Medic Collective Toolkit](#)
- [Jail Support Documentation Guide \(Zine\)](#)



✓ **Prioritize Medical Care**

- Even if injuries aren't visible, prioritize a medical checkup. Many protest-related injuries (strained joints, dehydration, PTSD symptoms) don't show immediately.
- Document physical trauma with:
 - Photos (include timestamp and ruler for scale)
 - Medical reports
 - Testimony from jail support or witnesses
- If you were denied hormones, meds, or gender-affirming care:
 - File a written grievance
 - Contact trans-led legal orgs for civil rights support
 - Reach out to community medics or sliding-scale clinics for follow-up
- If you were touched or searched inappropriately, name it—even if you can't report it. Healing begins with witnessing.

Supportive Links:

- [Trans Lifeline's Name and ID Change Resources](#)
- [GLMA Healthcare Directory](#)
- [National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)
- [Black and Pink](#)
- [Healing Justice Practice Space](#)



Legal and Emotional Aftercare

Connect with Legal Advocates

- Contact legal defense collectives immediately. Even if no charges are filed, **preemptive legal support matters**.
- Create shared calendars, encrypted legal chats, and a “court day buddy system.”
- Partner with:
 - [National Lawyers Guild](#)
 - [Civil Liberties Defense Center](#)
 - [Partnership for Civil Justice Fund](#)
 - [Law For Black Lives](#)
- If you're organizing large actions:
 - Arrange a rotating **jail support crew** in advance
 - Have designated **bail fund managers**
 - Share legal resources via QR codes at protest sites

Provide Trauma-Informed Advocacy

- Assign support roles for court appearances:
 - Drivers and emotional support buddies
 - Food drop-offs
 - After-court processing meetups
- Create **trauma-informed court toolkits**:
 - Include grounding tools (stones, scent vials)
 - Printed affirmations
 - Explainer sheets for courtroom anxiety
- Offer **trans-specific support**: court accompaniment for gender presentation, legal name use, and protection from transphobic treatment.

Toolkits and Guides:

- [Survived and Punished](#)
- [Mutual Aid Legal Toolkit \(Disaster Relief\)](#)
- [Beyond Do No Harm: Legal Edition](#)
- [Court Support Zine \(The Base\)](#)



Safety Planning for Future Actions

Action-Readiness Protocols

- Create **action briefings** that include:
 - What to say (and not say) if arrested
 - Emergency numbers written on your body or arm
 - Medication disclosure letters
 - Personal pronoun and gender affirmation cards
- Set up an **encrypted Signal or Matrix channel** for real-time jail support coordination

Aftercare Infrastructure

- Normalize a **post-action aftercare checklist**:
 - Who got arrested?
 - Who needs housing for the night?
 - Who is retraumatized and needs quiet?
 - Who needs food, weed, laughter, or silence?
- Make aftercare an **organizing role**, not an afterthought. This is what keeps people in the movement.

Know Your Rights:

- [ACLU Protester Toolkit](#)
- [Emergency Legal Kit from The Frontline](#)
- [Transgender Law Center: Post-Arrest Guidelines](#)

Arrest Is Not the End

The state wants arrest to be a wedge. A deterrent. A silence. But we make it a threshold, into deeper solidarity, into smarter resistance, into broader care.

Every person arrested is a story of resistance. Every trauma processed is a piece of reclaimed power. Every support network built is a refusal to let empire win.



6. Long-Term Healing and Resilience Strategies

Healing from repression isn't just about immediate recovery, it's about constructing long-term systems of care, support, and collective resilience. For trans and queer activists, surviving violence isn't rare, it's routine. The deeper challenge becomes: how do we continue the work while preserving our health, honoring our spirits, and keeping our communities intact? Burnout is not a badge of honor. Isolation is not strategy. Rest is not retreat. It is through intentionally building infrastructure for emotional, physical, and spiritual resilience that we shift from surviving to thriving.

This expanded section presents comprehensive strategies for maintaining movement vitality. From embedding rest into organizing, to celebrating joy as political practice, to building enduring care webs, these are the practices that let us grow movements with longevity, depth, and humanity.

Sustainable Activism and Restorative Practices

Build Rest Into Organizing Structures

- Schedule regular **rest cycles** into campaigns: off-weeks, retreats, grief days, and sabbatical months. Name them as movement policy, not optional extras.
- Normalize taking time off without apology. Develop leadership models that support absence, encourage delegation, and welcome people back without shame.
- Treat **trauma-informed scheduling** as a core part of operations: buffer heavy actions with decompression space, and account for bodies that need slower timelines.
- Create community rest hubs: drop-in spaces for naps, herbal tea, massage circles, and unstructured calm.
- Use digital tools ([Notion](#), [ClickUp](#), or [Asana](#)) to create collective calendars that prioritize rest periods alongside key actions.

Resources:

- [The Nap Ministry](#): Revolutionary frameworks for rest and reparations
- [Rest for Resistance](#): QTBIPOC-centered rest and mental health collective
- [Healing Justice Lineages](#): Frameworks for movement-sustaining care



✓ Celebrate Collective Wins

- Build **celebration rituals** into your organizing cycles: closing ceremonies, dance nights, victory meals, art builds, or storytelling fires.
- Recognize even the smallest victories, surviving a protest, stopping an eviction, holding the line, as part of a larger narrative of resistance.
- Use celebration as a tactic to counter despair. It's a practice of honoring presence, relationship, and growth.
- Archive these moments: create photo books, zines, oral histories, anniversary events.

Sources of Inspiration:

- [Resistance Through Rituals](#)
- [Embodying Joy Zine \(Healing Justice Project\)](#)
- [The Joy Report by Allied Media Projects](#)
- [SisterSong's Radical Rejoicing Toolkit](#)

✧ Develop Long-Term Peer Support Networks

✓ Sustained Community Check-Ins

- Establish **care pods** or solidarity webs that meet monthly, not just in crisis. Use them to track wellness, redistribute resources, and hold space for grief or joy.
- Incorporate **emotional mapping tools** to assess capacity and identify unspoken needs.
- Rotate support roles: cooking, rides, court support, listening, conflict mediation, harm repair.
- Use simple platforms like [Signal](#) or shared [Google Forms](#) to gather updates on needs, mood, and availability.
- Anchor pods in **transformative justice principles**: shared responsibility, consent, accountability, and growth.

Toolkits and Models:

- [Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective](#): Pod-building for long-haul care
- [Transform Harm](#): Directory of tools for building mutual aid and community support
- [The Revolution Will Not Be Supervised \(Zine\)](#): Radical peer support principles
- [Strong Feelings Pod Mapping](#): Tools for mapping your network of support



✓ Mutual Aid and Care Exchange

- Create **long-term mutual aid infrastructure** that doesn't depend on crisis or disaster cycles. Design aid models that are consistent, culturally relevant, and accessible.
- Build community fridges, shared childcare cooperatives, hormone supply redistribution, disability access funds, or mental health resource libraries.
- Form circles for financial planning, anti-capitalist budgeting, housing collectives, and collective ownership of land, vehicles, or tech.
- Connect your local efforts to national mutual aid support like:
 - [Mutual Aid Disaster Relief](#)
 - [JustFund](#): Participatory grantmaking platform
 - [OpenCollective](#): Transparent community funding infrastructure
 - [Buy Nothing Project](#): Resource sharing via hyperlocal networks

Skillshare Topics:

- Consent-based caregiving
- Timebanking and labor exchanges
- Digital mutual aid mapping
- Legal name change and ID support clinics

📌 Building Resilience Into Movement DNA

- Embed **resilience checkpoints** into your organizing rhythm:
 - Weekly wellness check-ins
 - Movement anniversaries
 - Debriefs after trauma or loss
 - Return-to-movement rituals for those rejoining after burnout
- Celebrate elders, sabbaticals, departures, and restarts. Turn transitions into ceremonies.
- Institutionalize collective memory: store learnings, process failures, and map emotional legacies.
- Invest in **healing leadership development**, supporting activists to build organizing skills alongside emotional regulation, embodiment, and trauma recovery.

Remember: Resilience is not rugged individualism. It's not "gritting your teeth." It's a network of reciprocal relationships and living systems that adapt, stretch, and regenerate over time.

Every care web, every break taken, every meal cooked for a comrade is a piece of infrastructure. It is political. It is sacred.



7. Resources for Healing and Trauma Recovery

Access to trauma-informed resources is a cornerstone of collective survival and movement sustainability. Activists, especially those from trans, queer, disabled, BIPOC, and otherwise marginalized communities, often bear the brunt of systemic violence while holding up their own people. Whether you're reeling from a direct encounter with state repression, witnessing traumatic harm, or living under chronic stress, the ability to access healing resources that reflect your identity and values is vital.

This guide has been expanded to serve as a living, shareable infrastructure document. Use it to build out healing pods, mental health toolkits, rapid-response collectives, and safety protocols in your organizing space. Bookmark it. Print it. Zine it. It's yours.

Immediate Crisis Support

Trans Lifeline — (877) 565-8860

- Peer-to-peer support line operated entirely by trans people, for trans people.
- Provides microgrants for name changes, support for incarcerated trans folks, and mutual aid for transition-related needs.
- Will not engage in nonconsensual active rescue, such as calling police or emergency services, which is especially important for those fearing carceral or medical violence.
- According to hundreds of public testimonials and independent reports (2016–2024), Trans Lifeline is **widely regarded as the most trustworthy and affirming crisis support for trans individuals**, particularly those who have faced harm from traditional hotlines.
- Users consistently praise its emotional validation, political awareness, and grassroots accountability model, though some note long wait times due to high demand and limited funding.

7 Cups

- Free and anonymous chat support with trained listeners, available globally.
- Includes mental health self-help guides, journaling tools, and group discussion boards.
- While useful for those needing general support between therapy access, **7 Cups has received mixed reviews from trans users**. Some report positive experiences with individual listeners, but others note a lack of consistent trans-affirming training, misgendering, and inadequate moderation in public spaces.
- As of recent user reports (2022–2024), there is **no formal trans-competency certification or accountability mechanism** for listener conduct. Use with awareness and consider peer-led alternatives for identity-affirming support.



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- National crisis line accessible in the United States 24/7 via phone or text.
- Formerly advertised as LGBTQ+ inclusive, but recent policy shifts under the Trump administration have raised concerns about its safety and affirming practices for trans individuals.
- Reports of nonconsensual emergency wellness checks continue, use with caution, and consider alternatives like warm lines or peer-based support first.

Warmline Directory

- A state-by-state list of emotional support lines not tied to emergency services.
- Many warmlines are staffed by peers with lived experience of mental health challenges, some with specific training in LGBTQ+ support.
- According to trans users in various activist and peer networks (2022–2024), warmlines are **generally safer than 988** and **less likely to trigger involuntary intervention**, but effectiveness can vary by state.
- Some states offer LGBTQ+-specific or trauma-informed warmline options, **always check who staffs the line and their training before disclosing sensitive information**.

If you or someone around you is in immediate danger or has already attempted suicide, call 911 or your local emergency services. This guide prioritizes alternatives to state intervention wherever possible, but in life-threatening emergencies, emergency medical response may be necessary for survival. Ensure your safety first.

If someone has attempted suicide and is conscious and breathing:

- **Ensure safety first.** Remove any remaining means of harm (e.g., pills, weapons, sharp objects).
- **Do not leave them alone.** Stay present and calm; tell them they are not in trouble and that they are not alone.
- **Seek emergency medical care.** If possible, bring them to an urgent care or ER with a trusted advocate to explain what happened.
- **Use harm reduction, not panic.** If 911 must be called for medical assistance, explain clearly that the situation is medical, not criminal. Say: "We need help for a medical overdose attempt. They are breathing and conscious. Please send EMS only."
- **After stabilization:** help connect the person with a trauma-informed support system, not just hospitalization. Use peer support, community mental health, or trans-affirming crisis care where possible.
- **Take care of yourself, too.** Supporters are often deeply affected by suicide attempts. Debrief with someone you trust.

See the Mental Health and Trauma Resources section below for affirming post-crisis providers and peer-based support.



Mental Health and Trauma Resources

Therapy for Black Girls

- Directory of Black women therapists across the U.S. with culturally competent, trauma-informed care.
- Offers blog posts, podcast episodes, and discussion spaces for navigating healing as a Black woman or femme.
- While it has not made trans-affirmation a central feature of its platform, **some transmasculine and nonbinary users assigned female at birth report finding support here**, especially when therapists are sought based on trauma and cultural alignment.
- That said, **explicit trans-affirming filters or accountability mechanisms are not currently advertised**, so trans users are encouraged to vet providers individually or consider directories like [Inclusive Therapists](#) if seeking gender-centered care.

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)

- National network supporting queer and trans AAPI communities with mental health resources, healing spaces, and organizing tools.
- Hosts healing justice workshops rooted in language access and cultural specificity.
- While some trans AAPI users report finding solidarity and affirmation through local chapters, others note that trans-inclusion varies by region and organizing partner.
- **As of 2023–2024, there is limited documentation of standardized trans-affirming practices across all programming**, and some users report barriers related to gender binary assumptions or uneven leadership representation.
- Recommended for culturally specific organizing support, with an encouragement to inquire locally about trans-competency frameworks in place.

Healing Justice Network

- Movement-based mental health support collective offering curricula, workshops, and digital tools for community care.
- Focuses on vicarious trauma, spiritual protection, boundary work, and burnout recovery.
- Trans participants report generally positive experiences, particularly in BIPOC-led and disability-centered workshops. Healing Justice Network's facilitators are often described as affirming and aware of trans-specific needs, though not all programs are trans-exclusive.
- Some feedback (2022–2024) highlights the need for clearer accountability protocols in larger coalition spaces. Recommended for community-based care with moderate to high affirmation depending on the local context and facilitator.



National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network (NQTTN)

- Peer-led initiative providing direct funding, therapist directories, and workshops by and for QTBIPOC practitioners and clients.
- Offers a mental health fund for those seeking affirming care with limited resources.
- **Widely praised by trans users across activist networks and mutual aid circles** for its focus on gender-affirming, culturally grounded therapy.
- Many users report positive experiences with the therapists found through NQTTN, particularly noting its alignment with abolitionist values, community accountability, and trauma-informed frameworks.
- As of 2023–2024, it remains one of the most trusted directories for trans people of color seeking therapists who understand systemic harm and identity-specific trauma.

The Trevor Project

- Crisis intervention and suicide prevention platform tailored to LGBTQ+ youth.
- Offers 24/7 support through chat, phone, and text with trained crisis counselors.
- Includes resource guides, research publications, and youth organizing support.
- However, **some trans users have reported mixed experiences**: while many find the services helpful, others cite issues with misgendering, lack of trans-specific training among crisis workers, and a nonconsensual emergency response policy that may call authorities.
- As of 2023–2024, **the platform remains a vital but imperfect resource**, especially for youth in acute crisis, trans users should assess their needs and consider alternatives like Trans Lifeline for identity-centered support.

Fireweed Collective / The Icarus Project

- Radical mental health collective offering peer-led, anti-carceral support spaces and education.
- Provides downloadable zines, webinars, and mutual aid resources centered on disability justice and collective healing.
- Trans users have generally expressed strong appreciation for Fireweed's explicitly trans-affirming approach, especially its grounding in collective care and abolitionist values.
- Workshops and peer groups are often reported as safer and more welcoming than clinical alternatives, with specific attention to trans trauma, psychiatric survivorship, and neurodivergence.
- Some users note that sessions may fill up quickly due to limited capacity, and that deeper engagement often depends on participation in their mailing list and seasonal programming cycles.



Inclusive Therapists

- National directory of intersectional and trauma-aware mental health providers.
- Allows searches by cultural focus, modality, identity, and accessibility.
- Trans users have widely reported positive experiences, citing the platform's clear trans-affirming filters and inclusion of providers with lived experience.
- Therapists listed often describe themselves as anti-oppressive, trauma-informed, and LGBTQ+ competent, with many offering services tailored to trans and nonbinary clients.
- While some users note geographic and cost limitations in finding a perfect match, **it remains one of the most trusted mental health directories for trans people**, especially those seeking culturally specific and non-pathologizing care.

Sins Invalid

- Disability justice-based performance collective and movement-building hub.
- Offers political education on healing, grief, and trauma from a disability and sexuality liberation perspective.
- Trans participants consistently report feeling seen, represented, and affirmed within Sins Invalid's frameworks, which explicitly center queer, trans, and disabled people of color.
- Workshops and performances emphasize lived experience and body sovereignty, with a strong focus on resisting ableism and transmisogyny.
- As of 2024, it remains one of the most celebrated cultural organizations for trans disabled creators and is regularly cited as a model of intersectional healing praxis.



Legal and Advocacy Support

National Lawyers Guild (NLG)

- Provides legal support for protests, mass mobilizations, and civil disobedience.
- Legal Observers program, jail support training, and litigation resources.
- Regional chapters often host Know Your Rights clinics and political prisoner support.
- **Trans users generally report positive experiences** with NLG legal observers and support systems, particularly in urban areas with established chapters. The organization's public commitment to gender justice and its history of supporting LGBTQ+ defendants has been noted as a strength.
- That said, **some trans users have noted inconsistencies in sensitivity and training depending on the region or chapter**, and recommend asking directly about trans-specific support when seeking assistance.

Lambda Legal

- National legal organization advancing the civil rights of LGBTQ+ people and everyone living with HIV.
- Offers legal guidance, litigation resources, and state-specific legal FAQs on identity documentation, workplace protections, and healthcare access.
- **Trans clients report generally positive legal outcomes**, especially in litigation involving ID changes, employment discrimination, and insurance denials for gender-affirming care.
- However, trans users and partner orgs have raised **ongoing concerns about institutional prioritization**, including slow response times, underrepresentation of grassroots trans demands, and a tendency to prioritize high-visibility cases.
- As of 2023–2024, Lambda Legal is recommended for formal legal strategy and policy impact, particularly when used in collaboration with smaller, trans-led legal collectives who focus more on rapid response and mutual aid legal support.
- Trans clients report generally positive legal outcomes, especially in cases involving ID changes, discrimination, and healthcare access.
- However, some trans users have raised concerns (2022–2024) about bureaucratic delays, prioritization of high-profile cases, and limited grassroots accessibility.
- Recommended for formal litigation and policy support, particularly in tandem with local trans-led advocacy groups.



American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

- Legal powerhouse defending constitutional and civil rights.
- Provides legal support in areas such as protest rights, gender identity protections, immigrant defense, and reproductive autonomy.
- Also hosts robust resource libraries and state-specific action campaigns.
- **Trans individuals report mixed experiences** depending on the chapter and type of case. While some have received strong legal defense in areas like school discrimination and ID laws, others have noted slower response times and a perceived lack of urgency for trans-led or grassroots issues.
- As of 2023–2024, the ACLU remains a key player in strategic litigation but is best used in conjunction with trans-led legal support networks to ensure culturally competent care and community accountability.

Transgender Law Center

- Trans-led legal and policy advocacy organization with a focus on intersectional, racial, and economic justice.
- Offers legal helplines, guides on immigration, housing, workplace safety, and incarcerated trans people's rights.
- Hosts the Positively Trans (T+) and Black Trans Circles initiatives.
- Trans users widely recognize the TLC for its grassroots advocacy and consistent inclusion of trans voices in leadership and programming. Reports from 2020–2024 describe positive experiences with its legal resources, especially in ID changes, housing rights, and immigration defense.
- Some users note that while helpline access can be delayed due to high demand, the organization maintains transparency and community accountability. It is considered one of the most trusted legal advocacy groups for trans people in the U.S.

Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC)

- Specializes in legal defense for radical environmental, social justice, and anti-fascist organizers.
- Offers security culture trainings, know-your-rights guides, and representation for those facing felony protest charges.
- Trans users have shared positive experiences with CLDC's legal trainings and defense work, especially in activist spaces involving environmental and antifascist actions.
- While not a trans-specific legal org, many of its staff and volunteers have demonstrated cultural competency and solidarity with trans defendants.
- As of 2024, it is considered a trustworthy resource for protest-related defense, especially when paired with more trans-focused legal advocacy for holistic support.



Survived and Punished

- Organizing collective working to decriminalize survivors of gender-based violence.
- Offers toolkits for supporting criminalized survivors and advancing decarceral feminism.
- Trans survivors have reported strong alignment with Survived and Punished's abolitionist and anti-carceral values, particularly around resisting gendered state violence and criminalization.
- Peer feedback (2021–2024) indicates the organization's materials and frameworks are **frequently used by trans mutual aid groups, especially for navigating post-incarceration support and trauma healing.**
- While not trans-exclusive, its focus on survivor-led advocacy and decarceral solidarity has made it a highly trusted resource for trans people facing criminalization due to self-defense or survival strategies.

Every act of care, every connection to these resources, every support system you help build is part of our collective resistance. Healing does not happen alone, and no one heals in isolation. Distribute these tools widely. Translate them. Share them across your networks. Build them into your actions and into your culture.



8. Emergency Post-Trauma Checklist

Trauma doesn't follow a timeline, but care can. This post-trauma checklist offers a structured, community-rooted way to support yourself and others in the wake of a high-stress event, such as a direct action, protest, raid, hate crime, detention, or witnessing harm. Whether you're recovering from police brutality, a triggering arrest, or bearing witness to trauma inflicted on your community, this guide emphasizes collective healing, harm reduction, somatic restoration, and trauma-informed care practices. This is not a one-size-fits-all timeline, it's a toolkit that adapts to how you and your people move through recovery.

Immediately After the Action (0–12 Hours)

I. Decompress Physically and Emotionally

- Prioritize **safety** and **sensory quiet**. If possible, retreat to a calm, low-stimulation environment.
- **Hydrate**, eat nutrient-dense food (protein, salt, fat), and warm your body, trauma impacts metabolism.
- Try immediate grounding practices:
 - [5-4-3-2-1 sensory grounding](#)
 - [Box breathing](#): Inhale, hold, exhale, hold, 4 counts each.
 - Touch textures: hold cold metal, warm tea, clay, or grounding stones.
- Let your body move: gently shake, stretch, tap your chest or thighs.

II. Limit Retraumatization

- Avoid doomscrolling, livestreams, or social media breakdowns of the event.
- Ask a trusted friend or pod member to summarize key updates or flag needed responses.
- Curate your info environment, use media filters, block triggering hashtags, and take space offline.

III. Connect with Trusted People

- Reach out to at least one grounding connection.
- Use peer hotlines like:
 - [Trans Lifeline](#) – no nonconsensual rescue
 - [Warmline Directory](#) – peer-based emotional support
 - [7 Cups \(with caution\)](#) – general anonymous emotional support
- If available, request a check-in buddy or trauma-trained comrade.



✓ 24–48 Hours Post-Action

IV. Debrief and Externalize the Experience

- Debrief with your pod, affinity group, or trauma-informed facilitator.
- Choose a quiet space and use prompts like:
 - What sensations are still in your body?
 - What did you need in the moment that you didn't get?
 - What feels unresolved?
- Use a variety of formats:
 - Journals, voice memos, peer interviews, anonymous forms
 - Debrief templates via [CryptPad](#) or [RiseUp Pads](#)

V. Document the Incident (Securely)

- Record the timeline, names, badge numbers, vehicle IDs, and key witnesses.
- Photograph injuries and damages. Store securely:
 - [Proton Drive](#)
 - [Tella app](#)
- Share only with legal teams or encrypted, trusted circles.
 - [Signal](#) and [Matrix](#) preferred for secure messaging

VI. Assess Physical and Mental Health

- Get a physical exam if injured, even if adrenaline masked it.
- Use self-assessment tools:
 - [MHA Screening Tools](#)
 - [Post-Traumatic Stress Self-Test](#)
- If experiencing flashbacks, insomnia, or disassociation, flag them early and create a care plan.



✓ One Week and Beyond

VII. Access Long-Term Healing Resources

- Connect with trans-affirming, trauma-literate providers:
 - [Inclusive Therapists](#)
 - [National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)
 - [Therapy for Black Girls](#)
- If clinical care is inaccessible, explore peer and low-cost models:
 - [Fireweed Collective](#)
 - [Open Path Collective](#)
 - [Peer Support Spaces](#)

VIII. Engage in Creative and Somatic Processing

- Trauma lives in the body, let it move. Explore:
 - [Body mapping](#)
 - Zine-making, protest art, blackout poetry
 - Radical journaling, rage dancing, nature immersion
- Host a collective storytelling ritual or oral history session.

IX. Reintegrate Intentionally

- Avoid pressure to "bounce back."
- Re-entry checklist:
 - Am I resourced?
 - Do I feel safe in my group?
 - Have I processed my anger/fear/grief?
- Schedule a sabbatical, shift roles, or become a wellness anchor if needed.
- Use ritual exits, farewell circles, movement gratitude ceremonies, or break letters.

🌱 Suggested Tools and Templates

- [Digital Debrief Template – CryptPad](#)
- [Mutual Aid Disaster Relief's Recovery Resources](#)
- [Icarus Project Zines](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid App](#)
- [Community Resiliency Model](#)

Trauma is not a flaw, it's a signal. And healing is not optional, it is the architecture of survival. We don't rebuild alone. We root, we rise, we repair.



9. Building Long-Term Resilience and Joy

Resilience isn't just surviving, it's growing, laughing, grieving, reconnecting, dreaming, and daring to imagine in the face of systems that were never meant to hold us. Trans and queer communities, particularly those living at the intersections of racial injustice, disability, class oppression, and neurodivergence, have always led the way in defining new modes of survival. But mere survival is not enough. We are here to thrive. Our joy is not fragile or frivolous, it is insurgent, strategic, and necessary. It is our rebellion. It is our renewal.

This section offers a comprehensive, expanded framework for cultivating joy and sustainable resilience, not as a postscript to resistance, but as the foundation. It moves beyond individual wellness into relational, collective, and cultural practices that transform how we organize, recover, and build. By making joy, celebration, and healing central to our resistance, we create movements that are not only durable, but deeply livable.

Fostering Joy as Resistance

Create Spaces for Celebration

- Organize **radical joy rituals**: block parties, silent discos, rooftop film nights, public mural painting, intergenerational story circles.
- Celebrate each other with intention: name change anniversaries, first injections, housing secured, surviving trauma anniversaries, or spiritual milestones.
- Build joy as collective memory: document your wins through zines, podcasts, oral histories, or community archives.
- Make joy accessible:
 - Offer interpretation, childcare, sliding-scale meals, and sensory-friendly environments.
 - Partner with local vendors, artists, and disability justice groups to co-create the event.
 - Use solidarity fundraising platforms like [Open Collective](#), [JustFund](#), and [GoFundMe](#).

Resources and Inspiration:

- [Queer Joy as Resistance Zine](#)
- [Sins Invalid](#) – Performance project centering disabled, queer, and trans artists of color
- [Allied Media Projects](#)
- [Arts & Democracy Tools for Cultural Organizing](#)



✓ Practice Radical Self-Care

- Redefine self-care as **relational repair and spiritual hygiene**—how we stay present, resourced, and responsive.
- Develop care rituals attuned to body and environment:
 - Morning check-ins with yourself
 - Weekly affirmations or tarot pulls
 - Monthly boundary audits
 - Seasonal grief releases or ancestor altars
- Use culturally rooted and abolitionist frameworks to avoid co-opted wellness industry traps.
- Make space for refusal: turn off your phone, cancel a meeting, skip an action to rest. Build movements that celebrate saying “no.”

Care-Based Platforms and Guides:

- [Rest for Resistance](#)
- [The Nap Ministry](#)
- [Healing Justice Lineages](#)
- [BreatheAct Toolkit](#)

🤝 Community Care as Resistance

✓ Commit to Mutual Accountability

- Foster organizing cultures that **respond to rupture with compassion**:
 - Integrate trauma-informed practice and consent culture into everything.
 - Respond to harm with transparent processes, not shame.
 - Normalize emotional processing before public accountability.
- Build structures for relational health:
 - Pod check-ins
 - Conflict mapping workshops
 - Consent-based feedback cycles
- Create community agreements that include how joy and recovery are prioritized after crisis.

Transformative Tools:

- [Transform Harm](#)
- [Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective](#)
- [Just Practice Collaborative](#)
- [Resonance Network: How We Care Toolkit](#)



✓ Strengthen Solidarity

- Construct networks of **reciprocal resilience**:
 - Resource redistribution platforms
 - Rotating roles and care duties
 - Shared kitchen days and emergency housing pools
- Deepen political and emotional intimacy:
 - Host radical love feasts or “misfit family” dinners
 - Create collective astrology charts or dream interpretation circles
 - Build legacy projects that center Black, disabled, undocumented, and Indigenous trans lives
- Link joy to strategy: what sustains us becomes part of our long-term political calculus.

Organizing and Solidarity Ecosystems:

- [Mutual Aid Disaster Relief](#)
- [Showing Up for Racial Justice \(SURJ\)](#)
- [Strong Feelings Care Mapping Tools](#)
- [Radical Communes & Intentional Community Directories](#)

We are not meant to survive on scraps of peace or fragments of care. We are not meant to crawl to the finish line of liberation bruised, burned out, and alone. We are building worlds that will outlast empires. And that requires rituals of aliveness.

Joy is not a detour from struggle, it is how we stretch beyond it.

Make joy strategy. Make rest ceremony. Make celebration political.



Heal, Resist, and Rebuild

Healing is not passive, it is revolutionary. In a world that seeks to erase, isolate, and grind down trans people, especially Black, brown, disabled, undocumented, and low-income trans communities, choosing to heal is a refusal. Refusal to be broken. Refusal to disappear. Refusal to surrender. Our healing is not separate from our resistance, it is its foundation.

This guide provides an expanded framework for healing as both a personal and collective act of power. By anchoring ourselves in care, memory, cultural practice, and mutual survival, we don't just endure, we transform.

Healing as Resistance

Why Healing Matters in Liberation Work

- Systems of oppression thrive on our depletion: burnout, trauma, and despair serve empire.
- Healing reconnects us to our values, our people, and our capacity to dream.
- Resistance without healing leads to fragmentation. Healing allows us to regenerate, together.

Resources:

- [Healing Justice Lineages](#)
- [Fireweed Collective](#): Radical mental health rooted in disability justice
- [Rest for Resistance](#): QTBIPOC mental health and spiritual restoration

Building Resilience for the Long Haul

Tools for Emotional and Physical Fortification

- **Somatic Care**: Practices like grounding, body mapping, and trauma-informed movement (see [The Body Keeps the Score](#))
- **Community Debriefs**: Post-action healing circles, storytelling rituals, and somatic processing
- **Mutual Aid Pods**: Food, meds, transportation, shelter, and emotional first aid built into your network
- **Art as Medicine**: Zines, protest murals, spoken word, and grief shrines

Directories and Tools:

- [National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network \(NQTTCN\)](#)
- [Inclusive Therapists](#)
- [Strong Feelings Pod Mapping](#)



Protecting Spirit and Culture

Embodied Rituals for Rebuilding

- Create **ancestral altars**, candlelight vigils, or prayer circles for those lost to state violence and neglect.
- Honor grief publicly through **memorial art, trans liberation vigils, and radical rest spaces**.
- Reclaim cultural traditions and weave in queer lineages through:
 - Transmasc moon rituals
 - Afro-Indigenous land practices
 - Spoken-word healing circles

Examples and Resources:

- [Sins Invalid](#): Disability justice and embodied spiritual art
- [Queering Herbalism](#): Folk medicine and plant-based healing
- [Healing Justice Podcast](#): Rituals, grief work, and collective memory

Rise Together: Collective Liberation Demands Collective Healing

- No one heals alone. No one organizes alone. No one survives alone.
- We build power when we build systems of recovery, ritual, care, and accountability.
- To rebuild our world, we must heal in public, celebrate in community, and protect our futures together.

Take Action:

- Start a community grief ritual this month.
- Host a healing justice skillshare.
- Build a neighborhood care pod with trauma-informed roles.
- Pass this document to 3 trans comrades.

Because you deserve more than survival. You deserve healing that protects, resistance that restores, and joy that multiplies.

Legal Disclaimer

This toolkit is intended for educational and emotional support purposes. It does not provide clinical therapy or legal services. For medical or legal emergencies, consult a professional. All content is rooted in peer-led trauma literacy and trans-affirming community defense frameworks.

Copyright Notice

© 2025 Trans Army

Licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

No government, carceral, or commercial use permitted.

Share freely. Translate loudly. Rest like you mean it.