

**URGENT  
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AFRICA**

FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS



# **We Carry Generational Demands for Healing that will not Rest:**

An African Feminist Exploration of Healing  
Justice as an Analytical Lens and a Practice



# Analytical Lens

Structural violence: roots of trauma and harm



Social structures designed to stop certain individuals and groups from reaching their full potential

# Roots of structural violence



Psychiatric models that pathologize the experiences of activists



Denial of access to affordable, culturally specific and anti-oppressive health care



Violence against bodies that deviate from “acceptable” identities and sexual orientations



Justice-as-pain



The intensification and growth of extractivism, commodification and appropriation of land and environmental degradation

# Roots of transgenerational and collective trauma



Structural violence



Living under relenting threat and violence

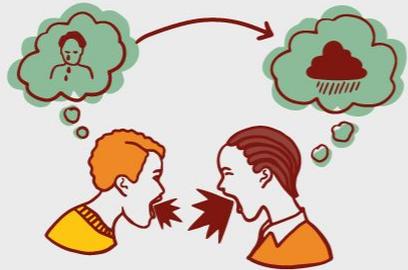


Carrying memories of generations of harm



Isolation of discredited narratives

# Manifestations of transgenerational and collective trauma



Anger, frustration, fear and hurt are expressed, often against other activists



Harmful coping mechanisms that activists resort to, to alleviate the “weight” of trauma



Feeling “born with a wound”

# Take a Break Breath Exercise



**Take a deep breath and notice how you feel in your body, and how the world around you feels...**

**Let our breath connect us in this moment – and hold ourselves and each other in solidarity through breath**

# Take a Break

## Physical Grounding Technique

- Place both feet flat on the floor
- Lean back and make note of the feeling of the chair under you and against your back
- Cross your arms over your chest
- Gently tap your shoulders, alternating one side at a time



# The Framework



Healing cannot be separated from  
the daily work of activism

# The Framework



Spaces that embody radical transformations



Alternative feminist eco realities



Centrality of land to healing



Centering the logic of community



Looking back and forward generationally to understand our context and experiences



Shifting the focus from symptoms to root causes in responding to trauma and harm



Healing as a way of recovering the wholeness that we lost



Recovering then embodying sacred teachings in ways of being



Accepting there is no one-size-fits-all approach to justice



Healing as a process not an event

# What could feminist political strategies for liberation look like if they centered healing?

Being in control of our triggers



Strengthening networks



Practices that cultivate sacredness



Addressing transgenerational and collective traumas that impact our movements



Ongoing reflection, learning, strategizing, discovering and applying



Centering the role of healers



Being in relationship with the earth

# What could feminist political strategies for liberation look like if they centered healing?



Feminist spaces that analyze structural causes of our traumas



Creating models of collective care and healing that can be replicated



Developing feminist leadership



Memory as resistance



Creating cultures of trust that allow us to question tenets such as 'safe space'