

PRACTICES FOR MOVING THROUGH GRIEF

As we mobilize to end anti-Black state violence, our bodies continue to be containers for more and more Black lives lost. Mourning is the open expression of your thoughts and feelings regarding the deaths and the people who have died. It is an essential part of healing. You've got to let the grief in and then let it go. Here are some practices to support that process:

- 1) **Listen to your body:** What is your body telling you and how? Where and how does your body communicate grief; a lower appetite, impatience, sadness, fatigue, hyper-vigilance? If you can identify your body's grief language then you can ask others to help hold it with you.
- 2) **Host a grief circle:** Trauma severs connection and dissolves safety. Host a grief circle with folks in your home or community space, or via phone or video chat to stay connected through trauma. Here's a simple structure:
 - a. Invite each person to bring an item to the circle that feels grounding; Build sacred space or an altar together with the items.
 - b. Introductions: Names, preferred gender pronouns
 - c. Share access needs
 - d. Intentions: Why are we here? What do you hope for?
 - e. Which ancestors do you want to call on for support and guidance?
 - f. How are you holding the toll of this moment?
 - g. Who do you feel connected to?
 - h. What makes you feel safe?
 - i. What's one thing you can do to practice safety & connection after this circle?
 - j. Be sure to leave with your item and carry it with you in the following days.
- 3) **A Meditation:** What does this moment need from me? What do I need from this moment? Take time share your thoughts, visions, and needs with others. Ask them to reflect this back to you periodically; a conversation or a simple text will do.
- 4) **Conduct a grief ritual** to access and work through your grief in a safe and constructive way. This is your sacred space and time to express your grief in whatever ways you need to do so, and can be done alone or with others. Just make sure to open and close the ritual, clearly marking the beginning and end to help you transition in and out of a different frame of consciousness. Here's one suggestion for a group grief ritual:

Create a circle with others somewhere where you have access to soil, or bring a vibrant plant to a circle you host in your home. Prepare a glass bowl filled with water. In three rounds, pass the bowl of water around the circle, each person responding to the following prompts by speaking into the water:

Round 1: "In this moment I feel or I am..."

Round 2: Speak the names of loved ones lost, or people we've lost to state violence

Round 3: "Today I am releasing..."

After you've completed the third round, take a moment and invite participants to meditate on how nature can support and hold us through challenging moments. Pour the water into the soil or the plant. Give gratitude to soil, water and each other.

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