



Setting Boundaries

Setting boundaries is important for both individuals and the team as a whole. Like explained in the comfort zones exercise ([find it below](#)), everyone has different panic zones, experiences and comfort levels. You might totally love asking someone to sign a petition, while another teammate freezes at the mere thought of approaching a stranger on the street. Having a discussion with each other about others' boundaries and hard “no’s” is integral to self-care, and helps people stay around for the long haul.

Self-care is an activity you do deliberately to take care of your mental, physical or emotional health. This is often done to relieve stress, but could also be to uplift a sad mood, or fix unhealthy patterns in your behavior (example: lack of sleep). What actions people do will look different to the individual. Self-care practices take trial and error to find the best fit for each individual.

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1. Defining Boundaries

1.1 Individual and Team Boundaries

Boundaries are natural for every person for relationships with others and other potential stressors in the world. Someone's personal boundaries are guidelines that you set to identify ways for other people to behave towards you and how you choose to respond when those guidelines are broken. Think of a boundary as a wall you put in place to protect yourself.

Each person may have different boundaries, and it is up to them to set it themselves. An example may be that after school you need alone time to recharge doing something that calms you down like reading or drawing. That's a personal boundary that you set for yourself based on your own internal queues. As you progress as a team, you should aim to communicate these boundaries, let individuals choose where they fall in a given activity or piece of work, and create respectful opportunities for teammates to find their own boundaries.

A great way to explore your team's boundaries is by doing [the Comfort Zones Exercise](#) together. There are three different states of comfort: *the comfort zone*, *the stretch zone*, and *the panic zone*. In your comfort zone, you feel safe and growth is limited. In your stretch or learning zone, you may feel a bit of discomfort but can still manage. This is where you do your best learning, overcome adversity and grow your best. The panic zone is where you feel too stressed, anxious or uncomfortable to do any learning and where you risk harm. Everyone's comfort, stretch and panic zones may be different, and that's ok. Sharing which zone you are in isn't meant to be a trick for getting out of work, but rather a tool to keep yourself safe, productive and learning.

One way to incorporate the zones into your team is through creating a team norm about it ([see the Team Norms guide for more information](#)).

Example Comfort Zone Norm: *We will communicate our own comfort zones with the work they do, and ask for, listen to and respect the panic, comfort and growth zones of others. Understanding people have different comfort zones helps us create safe roles and healthy expectations of others in our work.*

1.2 Set Boundaries Based on your Capacity Level

An important part of setting boundaries as you take on work is understanding your own individual capacity. Are you extroverted and thrive on social interaction, or are you introverted and need time away from others to recharge? Do you have extracurricular activities on the weekends or weekday nights? Do you need extra time for specific classes this semester? Understanding your own capacity will help you communicate to the team what you are able to take on, what responsibilities and roles you would excel at.

Example Communication Norms:

- ❖ Phone calls are ok but only if it is urgent, text or email otherwise.
- ❖ Digital conversations happen in a specific slack or other instant messaging channel.
- ❖ We will not contact a teammate about team related work after 8pm on weekdays, unless they consent.

Discovering out your own capacity and boundaries might be easy to some but challenging to others. As you begin working as a team, don't be afraid to take on new activities that spark joy, but be aware when you take on too much. If this happens, don't be afraid to tell your team. If you continue to take on a task, and continue to not do it despite your lack of capacity, this will ruin the trust you hold for each other on the team. Go back to the accountability norms you decided upon and tell the team your dilemma. Understand that maybe no one has the capacity to take on this task, and that maybe it won't get done. If no one can take on the task, reconvene as a team. The task you decided upon may be too large for your team's capacity level. Workshop other tasks or ways that it can reach your capacity level. Know that sometimes it's better to say "no" or "not now", then to say "maybe" or "sure" when you really lack the capacity to do so. Review the [Conflict Resolution Guide](#) for more info on what to do if you lack capacity for an action item or event.

If you take the time to reflect and understand your individual capacity, this will determine your overall team capacity. When you've decided on a goal and project plan, you'll need to compare the work involved with the team's capacity and comfort level. Say you set an amazing goal, perfectly in line with your shared purpose, and a host of fun activities to accomplish that mission. What if no one in the team can take it on, what if no one has time, what if no one is comfortable enough to do it? That means you need to change your goals or expectations of what you can achieve together. This is totally normal and does not have to deter from the awesome things you will do together. Having the hard but honest conversations about capacity upfront will save burden and headache later. The last thing you

want, is to pick a mountain that's too hard to climb, and give up halfway. That won't only be disappointing for team members, but can hurt the team's overall trust and cohesion.

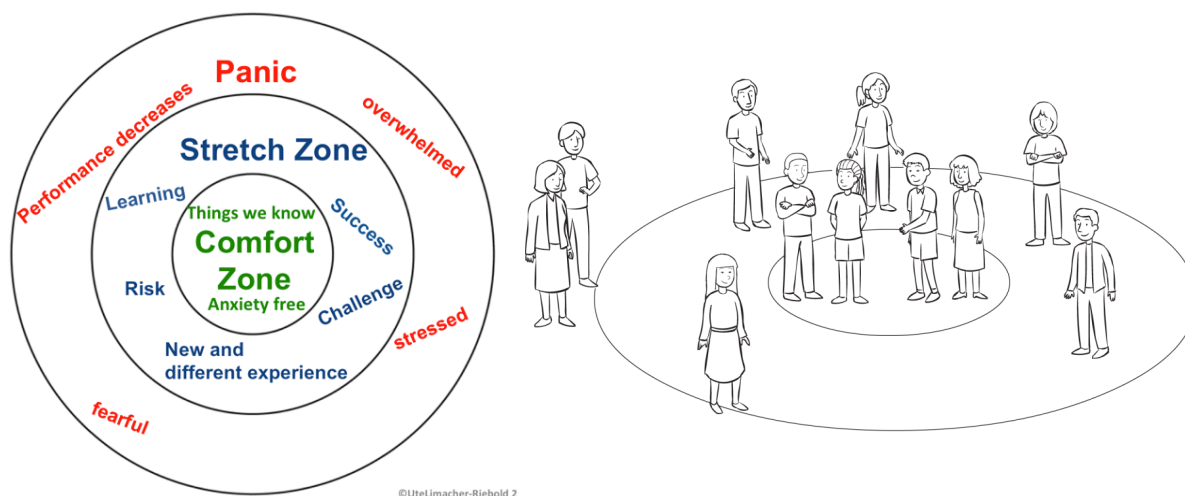
Personal and Team Capacity Questions to Ask Yourself:

- ❖ Does your team have a healthy process for setting personal boundaries around teamwork and participation of individuals?
- ❖ Is the team sensitive to the personal capacity of individuals, while acknowledging everyone has their own barriers and comfort zones and trusting each other to communicate their boundaries?
- ❖ Do you hold unfair expectations of others, based on your own conceptions of what someone 'should' be able to do, which may be true for us but not for others?
- ❖ Do you take into account that each teammate has their own unique life situation that may preclude them from the same level of commitment as other members? For example: part-time jobs, at home challenges, academic pressures, etc.
- ❖ Do you have a variety of roles with different levels of commitment, allowing members with differing capacities to get involved and choose their commitment without too much pressure?

2. Team Exercises

2.1 Comfort Zones

Materials: If meeting in-person, set up the space in advance. Use objects, such as ropes, pens, chairs, paper or anything else that is available, and make three circles on the ground emulating the image below. If meeting digitally, this can be done digitally over zoom if everyone is on one video camera and uses with coloured paper or hand symbols to show which area of the panic zone they are in. For those without video they could use the chat box with one word for each: panic, stretch, comfort. , chat box etc. For the coloured paper: red is for panic, green is for comfort, and yellow is for stretch. For the hand symbols: form an X with your arms/hands for panic, the okay symbol for comfort, and a seesaw hand motion for stretch (think “so-so”).



Facilitator explains:

You each have different comfort levels when it comes to different activities. The three circles on the ground here describe the three different states of comfort: the comfort zone, the stretch zone, and the panic zone. The idea here is if you're always in your comfort zone, you're not learning anything. It's important to get outside of your comfort zone, into what is called the stretch zone, to learn new things. But if you go too far, you'll enter the panic zone, where it will be hard to learn new things. These zones could apply to a range of activities, including participating in a team meeting, organizing an event, public speaking, etc.

Comfort Zone: Is where you are comfortable, this is things you know how to do, and it is anxiety free. “Easy and Breezy”

Stretch/growth zone: This is where there is some stress, maybe some discomfort and risk, but this is where you learn new things, face challenges, and grow.

Panic zone: This is where you are so stressed, overwhelmed or fearful that you don't learn new things, and your performance decreases. You might experience your fight, flight or freeze response.

In this exercise, you will be exploring which zone you fall in for a range of different activities. As you'll see, some activities that might be in your comfort zone will be in the panic zone of others. I'll say a few activities to start us off, but please jump in if you have one you would like to say to the group.

Examples, try to have some serious and silly ones to warm up the group:

Baking a cake for a friends birthday

Going to a networking event

Going to a family dinner

Skiing down a black diamond slope

Recruiting a student to join your club

Phoning someone you don't know

(15 mins)

2.2 Individual Boundaries

→ USE WITH: [Individual Exercise and Worksheet](#)

Purpose:

- ❖ To understand your own boundaries and capacity.
- ❖ To reflect on your own comfort, growth and panic zones.

Time: 5 - 10 minutes

2.3 Team Boundaries

→ USE WITH: [Team Exercise and Worksheet](#)

Purpose:

- ❖ To explore team members boundaries and capacity.
- ❖ To understand each member's limitations and what makes them comfortable.
- ❖ To choose and distribute roles based on member's boundaries.

Time: 15 minutes

3. Self Care

“Sometimes it’s as if working for social justice requires you to be a superhero--that we all have to be superman, or wonder woman. And, it’s sometimes perhaps implicitly seen as ‘soft’, or self-indulgent, to care about our own well-being. But it’s not!”

- Ella Baker School for Organizing

3.1 Self Care and Burnout

What is self-care? As one community activist puts it, “true self-care is not salt baths and chocolate cake, it is making the choice to build a life you don’t need to regularly escape from” (Health Collective, 2018). Self-care is often viewed as indulging oneself after completing a lot of work. It often relies on the capitalist assumption that buying products to “treat oneself” is the key to happiness. This guide will highlight the limitations of that simplistic notion of self-care. If that’s what self-care is to you, amazing, but it isn’t that way for many people and it shouldn’t have to be.

Activists face a very serious problem - lack of self-care. This is engrained in organizer and activist culture: the idea of taking time off when you're stressed and not pushing your own limits to make change in the world is strange to many and is even looked down upon.

Audre Lorde, a feminist and civil rights activist, said “caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political welfare.” Sometimes your sense of obligation to your work can become overwhelming. While commitment to a cause is admirable, and what drives many activists, overworking can be detrimental to an individual’s health and wellbeing and lead to burnout.

Self-care: the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.

Burnout: the state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands.

Common symptoms of burnout include:

- ❖ Feeling simultaneously unproductive and that everything is relying on you

- ❖ Feeling drained both physically and emotionally
- ❖ Disruption in sleep
- ❖ Recurrent illnesses like nausea or colds
- ❖ Negative or cynical feelings towards coworkers/peers/team members
- ❖ Being irritable
- ❖ Feeling unable to “get on top” of your tasks
- ❖ “Self medicating” with alcohol or drugs

Reflect on a time when you have pushed yourself too far. How did it feel, and what stopped you from properly taking care of yourself?

One of the biggest things that happens when you don't practice self-care is its exact opposite--self-blame. Let's be clear: if you experience burnout, it's not your fault. It's a consequence of trying to be too strong for too long and operating within a movement that doesn't have a culture of caring for its people.

That's why practicing self-care should be an integral part of your team's culture. It shouldn't be expected that everyone will have the same amount of capacity, or that their boundaries will be the same as yours. No one should be looking down on others because they can't take on something, since saying “no” is an essential form of self-care and love for oneself.

For some well-known self-care practices, check out the list below. Feel free to pick and choose the ones that work best for you. One way you can ensure you make time for self-care is including some of these practices into your weekly team meetings. Maybe open up the meeting with a short five minute meditation or mindfulness practice, a breathing exercise or writing positive affirmations for your week, or schedule a team hike. Discuss as a team the ones that resonate with everyone, and cycle through the list you create together. If everyone is comfortable, you can even have a roster where each person gets to lead or choose what self-care activity you do together. This allows everyone to share what makes them recharge and is a great way to bond with your teammates.

3.2 Self Care Practices

Self-care Practices	
Thank Yourself Often	<p>Show yourself some gratitude. Say a little thank you to yourself and then give yourself a few moments of silence, where you reflect on just how wonderful you are. Perhaps you might like to take a moment to just close your eyes and repeat to yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ I love you. ❖ You are amazing. ❖ Thank you for caring about me by doing _____ this week. ❖ I will always be here to listen to you.
Think About Everything You've Accomplished	<p>Just congratulate yourself. It doesn't have to be a big thing, maybe you just smiled at your neighbour and made them feel happy this morning, maybe you saved the world, it doesn't matter how big or small it is, just something you did that you should be thanked for. Ask yourself, what are three things you are thankful for today?</p>
Practice Mindfulness	<p>One way to avoid stress is to have a daily practice of asking yourself: "how do I feel today?" You will be surprised that some days, you will answer, "I feel stressed," and you won't have noticed it until you ask yourself the question. You might even say, "I feel frightened," or "I feel inadequate."</p> <p>At this first stage, you don't need to resolve the feelings, just let them surface. You will of course need to think through <i>why</i> you feel that way and how you can change those feelings at some stage, but step one is to own them; those feelings belong to you.</p> <p>If you're feeling stressed, try to muster the courage to talk things through with someone you know will not be judgemental, but who will act as an empathetic listener sounding board.</p> <p>Take time for yourself to relax and do things that bring</p>

	you joy. Add “time for me” to your calendar or planner.
Meditation and Yoga	<p>In meditation, one of your aims is to ignore the thinking part of your brain and instead to reconnect with what it feels like to be you at that particular moment in time. Meditation has evolved as a practice over thousands of years, and it seeks to reconnect people with their deeper self. Meditation is a tool that you might find useful to make you aware of how you are actually feeling.</p> <p>One form of meditation is practicing yoga. Yoga allows you to rebalance anxiety levels in your brain. It’s a practice that reconnects you with your feelings and emotions.</p> <p>For free meditations check out videos on Youtube (a list can be found here), or mobile apps such as Headspace or Calm.</p>
Take Control	<p>Another skill that can be learned and regularly practised to protect your mental health relates to taking control of your priorities. This can feel uncomfortable to begin with, perhaps especially for women, who are socialised to believe they must be always available and receptive to the needs of others. So, start small, make a little change by saying “no” when you feel overwhelmed, sit with it and see how it feels, and then try another and reinforce another boundary once any discomfort eases. This idea of “taking control” is that you are taking control over your own boundaries, priorities and capacities and not letting other people dictate that for you. Taking control is about finding what works for you.</p> <p>Here are a few different examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Being clear and honest about when your workload feels already at maximum capacity. ❖ Saying “no” when you can’t take on an extra task. ❖ Setting time limits on social media apps, or muting and turning off notifications. ❖ Limiting the number of meetings you attend in a month (being more selective about your priorities).

<p>Have Fun & Get Creative</p>	<p>Having fun and being creative seems simple, but it can dramatically improve your mood. Incorporate fun into your day, even when your schedule is jam packed. Find time to journal, draw, dance to music, read or whatever you find fun. Find time just for something you strictly enjoy that will help to expel your thoughts and feelings in a healthy way. Find what gives you joy or gets your creativity flowing and do it!</p>
<p>Go Outside in Nature</p>	<p>“Research in a growing scientific field called ecotherapy has shown a strong connection between time spent in nature and reduced stress, anxiety, and depression... Digging a bit deeper, it appears that interacting with natural spaces offers other therapeutic benefits. For instance, calming nature sounds and even outdoor silence can lower blood pressure and levels cortisol, the stress hormone, which calms the body's fight-or-flight response.” (Harvard Men’s Health Watch, 2018)</p> <p>The visual aspects of nature can also have a soothing effect, according to Dr. Strauss. "Having something pleasant to focus on like trees and greenery helps distract your mind from negative thinking, so your thoughts become less filled with worry." (Harvard Men’s Health Watch, 2018)</p> <p>When you have a chance, go for a walk during the day or on a weekend in nature. If this isn’t possible, find creative ways to recreate the outdoors inside or in your neighborhood. You could listen to nature sounds on Youtube, buy some indoor plants, draw different plants in a notebook, or open a window to get some fresh air. You could also sit under a tree in your neighborhood or find a nice location with a mountain view.</p>
<p>Exercise</p>	<p>When you continue to put yourselves into stressful situations, it can continue to build and build, making us anxious, irritable and depressed. The best way to think of it is as if you're a cup, and the stresses of life are water. If you continue to fill the cup, never turn off the tap (take time for yourself) or empty your cup, it will overflow and lead to burnout.</p> <p>An integral part of emptying your cup is getting rid of that excess energy buildup, which can be done with</p>

	exercising. In whatever form you choose, even if it's just a short walk, find time to expel your energy as often as possible. Do so in whatever way you enjoy. Doing an exercise you hate won't make you happy, so find the one that best suits your needs.
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3.3 Science Behind Stress Management

Science tells us there are three key sections of the human brain, which evolved at different times and serve different functions.

The primal brain--evolutionarily the oldest part of the human brain--is in control of your automatic self-preserving behaviour patterns. This ensures your survival and that of the species. It's also here that the "fight-or-flight" or "freeze" reactions are activated.

The Mammalian brain is the next evolutionary step and is responsible for your emotions. The mammalian brain is also the source of the value judgments that we make, often unconsciously, of right and wrong or good and bad. This part of the brain exerts a strong influence on your behaviour. This brain recognises danger and activates the Primal brain to fight, flight, or freeze.

The Executive brain is involved in higher functions such as reasoning, conscious thought and language. This is your thinking brain.

So to put it another simplified way:

- ❖ The Primal Brain is where your instincts are located.
- ❖ The Mammalian brain is where your emotions are located.
- ❖ The Executive is where you do your reasoning.

When your mammalian brain first identifies a threat, it doesn't pass that knowledge to your executive brain to debate what should be done, it simply alerts the primal brain. The primal brain immediately reduces blood flow to the brain, and increases it to the muscles. It secretes a range of hormones to heighten your ability to utilise massive amounts of energy, either to run or to fight. There are physiological changes that occur to prepare us for what's next.

There are evolutionary reasons for this, but the key thing to understand is that when humans are under threat they by-pass their executive brain. You can almost imagine for example, that if a car backfires, and you find yourself having ducked and only after you have taken this action do you become aware that it was just a loud bang. The brain deals with threats by acting to protect us first, and thinking later. The brain evolved to deal with immediate threats, such as predators. It didn't evolve to deal with the cumulative effect of months or even years of stress. Given the additional time, your executive brain takes over. It rationalises your condition and makes decisions, and unfortunately it often decides to ignore the stress and power on. This can leave your body in a permanent state of "fight-or-flight" or "freeze" readiness. We don't return to normal--which is why self-care practices are so important.

There is a saying that floats around a lot: 'if not you, who? If not now, when?'

It might be appealing as a rally cry to action, but it feeds the idea that there's a duty to be active--in this moment--and choosing not to be, is a failure. In actual fact, the answer to this question is pretty straight forward - it can sometimes be 'someone else!'

The world your team strives to create is one of cooperation, so rather than focus on the individual part that you feel you must play, you should keep sight of the truth that your work is more like a relay race, where you carry the baton for a time but inevitably pass it on and rest once you have made your contribution. **A reframing question to ask yourself is whether by not stepping back, are you stopping someone else from taking a lead?** This is part of the logic behind the common team norm "step forward, step back" found in the [Team Norms Guide](#). This is then you step back to create space for others, not just for them, but for yourself too. You'll build a stronger team when you can ebb and flow like a sea, with smaller waves coming together to build one big wave.

It would be counterproductive in a relay race to keep hanging on to the baton--it must be passed on, that's the goal. In organising, you're in the business of growing and developing leadership in ever-increasing numbers of people. To choose not to be active, to ask for help, or to pass on responsibilities can therefore be an opportunity to practise better organising by enabling others. You can actually become a better leader by doing so.

3.4 Team Exercise: Mindfulness Practice (Ella Baker School for Organizing)

Purpose:

- ❖ To practice self-care breathing and mindfulness exercises as a team
- ❖ To take a collective breathe together during a touch time or project
- ❖ To better understand and represent stress management for your team

Facilitator script:

Before you do anything more, I want us to spend a few minutes just exploring how you feel today. I know this may be a slightly different approach to most meetings, but will people bear with me? You're just going to take just a few minutes to be calm, be still, and register how you are feeling, right now in this moment, before the session starts.

So, start by making yourself comfortable and close your eyes. Sit with your back straight, your shoulders relaxed and your chin slightly tucked in, feet touching against the ground... and now notice how you are feeling today, in this moment. Maybe you feel rushed, stressed or worried, or maybe you feel relaxed and calm. Perhaps you feel a little self-conscious.

Whatever you feel, don't try to change it, simply acknowledge it. Now, give your stress levels a number from one to ten—one being totally relaxed and calm, and ten being very stressed or overwhelmed.

And, when you are ready, turn your attention inwards to your body and notice if you are holding any stress or tension. Maybe you feel tense in your jaw, your shoulders, maybe you notice discomfort somewhere in your body.

Just acknowledge any strain in your body and then as you exhale allow yourself to let go of these tensions completely. Imagine those tensions being blown away as you exhale. Try to feel your body begin to let go, noticing how good it feels to relax. Take as many breaths as you need to exhale any tension from your body.

Now come fully into this moment. Just let go of your to-do list, knowing that, right now, there's nothing you need to do, but simply try to become more present. You can do this by switching on your senses and practicing mindfulness... become aware of what you can hear in the room, just listen and notice... (pause)

Notice what you can physically feel, maybe warmth or cool, or how the chair supports your weight, or how your feet are supported by the floor... (pause)

Great. And now take a moment to notice what you can smell... just acknowledge with your senses what is happening in this moment and become more present.

And now slowly bring your awareness to how you are breathing... When you are ready, begin to slow down your breath, at your own pace... Taking a slow breath in... and a slower breath out... (pause)

Let's do a breathing technique called the ujjayi pranayama breathing, which is used in yoga, meaning the ocean breath. Restrict your throat and nose the same way you would to fog a pane of glass. This creates a sound similar to an ocean wave crashing on the shore. Ensure you are doing this completely through your nose when possible, as breathing through your mouth can trigger your fight, flight or freeze response in the brain.

Begin to inhale slowly through the nose, taking six seconds to do so, fully fill your lungs, fill your stomach. Hold for six seconds. Now exhale out the nose in six seconds, empty your stomach, your lungs. Hold for six seconds at the bottom of your breath. Now repeat, inhale for six...hold...exhale for six... hold. Repeat again.

Repeat for one to two minutes. Well done.

Ok, and now before you open your eyes, just notice now if your stress levels have come down from when you checked five minutes ago. Maybe you feel more relaxed, maybe the number from 1 to 10 is lower now?

Just notice how your body feels. (pause) Now open your eyes.

[Instruction: ask people to post in chat how that felt and whether or not they found their stress reduced. Remind them that they have spent just a few minutes doing this, and ask them to consider that even a few minutes can have a profound impact on your mental state.]

If you need further explanations on the ujjayi pranayama breathing technique, [use this video](#) as a guide.

4. List of Personal Boundaries

So far you have learned about self-care tips, boundaries and regenerative activism, but what happens when you are exhausted from the world around you? From the world outside of your work? The general self-care tips above should be something you cherry pick out what works for you, but they don't address the specific challenging feelings from coming to terms with what is happening in the world right now. There's an enormous amount of people suffering, and it can be hard to get away from what you see in your news feed. This is why it's important to set personal boundaries outside of work so you don't feel so overwhelmed. Pick from the list below to find what will give you healthy boundaries from the global problems you can't seem to get away from.

7 Boundaries You Can Start Right Away (Finding Steady Ground)	
<p>1. Make a conscious decision when and where you'll get news.</p> <p><i>Exercise: Write down which ones leave you passionate and which ones leave you anxious. Create a time in your calendar for checking news sources.</i></p>	<p>People see so many triggering, painful and depressing news stories, so much so it can be hard to keep track of it all. Being conscious of how much news, where it comes from and setting boundaries for when your taking in that information is incredibly important.</p> <p>Which news sources help you understand the world more fully, and which ones only leave you fearful and despairing? After getting your news, what works for you: moving your body, talking with friends, hopping onto social media?</p>
<p>2. Make human-to-human connections with another person and make sure you stay in motion.</p>	<p>Check in to share and reflect on how you are staying active in the climate change movement (like writing letters, volunteering, creating resistance art, working on virtual campaigns). When doing these activities are you connecting with others like your team members or people from your community?</p> <p>As you face increasing social isolation with COVID-19, you may have to work harder for this contact, and it is more important than ever. You need to get creative—with virtual dinner tables, phone calls, video chats, distance walking or</p>

<p>Exercise: Practice this daily to help you recharge, or set up a weekly check-in with a friend. Being able to vent, talk about creativity or personal experiences will help you feel less alone.</p>	<p>even writing! Whatever you do, you must resist social isolation as it will have a bad effect on your mental state.</p> <p>A natural response to conflict is to fight, flight or freeze. In the right context these instincts can lead to survival. Recognizing when you are frozen is important because the longer you stay stuck the harder it is to move, take care of yourself, and create change. Of course, the goal isn't just a fight, flight or freeze survival response, but linking that to bigger strategic actions. The support of others helps us do that.</p>
<p>3. Meditate or reflect on the world's injustices and those suffering, and learn to cultivate love.</p> <p>Exercise: Meditate or reflect by writing or drawing. Take a walk near trees or plants. Reconnect with the nature around you.</p>	<p>Learn to cultivate love. One starting point may be holding compassionate space for your own pain or the pain of those close to you. In that reflective space you can give yourself space to feel loss, grief, anger, frustration, helplessness, and conviction. Then hold your love and extend it beyond, to others you may not know who are also suffering. And lastly, take time to notice that this is not all of your reality: you may find joy with your friends around you, be surrounded by beautiful music or nature, and take delight in creation.</p> <p>Joy in the face of hard times is not a luxury, it is a necessity.</p>
<p>4. Read, listen to, or share a story about how others have resisted injustice.</p>	<p>Millions have faced oppression and injustices, and everyone can learn from them. Stories may be from ancestors, contemporaries in this country, or lessons from those around the globe who have faced severe and oppressive governments. The goal is to become a student of history so that you can take inspiration and deepen your understanding of how to struggle and thrive.</p> <p>To find stories, seek out elders in your community, activists who have been in the trenches, or people who have lived through injustice.</p> <p>Books (feel free to look for them at your local library):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Indigena Awry by Annharte ❖ Glimmer of Hope by The Founders of March for Our Lives ❖ Modern HERstory by Blair Imani <p>Videos (be aware these videos may show or talk about triggering events)</p>

<p>Exercise: Read, listen or watch a story on facing adversity and injustices. There is a list here, but feel free to search for others.</p>	<p>or content regarding systemic racism, and should not be viewed by everyone):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Invasion (18:19) - Story of the Unist'ot'en Camp, Gidimt'en checkpoint resistance. ❖ Intrinsic - A Performance by Climbing PoeTree (12:44) - Spoken word duo performance. ❖ Knock Down the House (1:26:39) - Four female candidates enter the 2018 race for Congress. ❖ Tweak by Marie Annharte (2:19)
<p>5. Be aware of yourself as one who creates and strives to create.</p> <p>Exercise: Once a week reflect on one thing you created and how it felt to do so.</p>	<p>Injustices breed passivity — to make us believe that things happen to us, events happen to us, and policies happen to us. To counteract this, you need to stay in touch with your sense of personal power. One goal is to see yourselves as people who create, whether it's cooking a meal, organizing a dazzling dramatic action, knitting a hat, making a sign, or playing the piano. You are more than passive recipients, and your humanity must be affirmed.</p>
<p>6. Take a conscious break from social media.</p> <p>Exercise: Set up a personal norm for when, how and what social apps you will connect with. Download apps to set daily/weekly time limits for social media on your phone.</p>	<p>Instead of browsing social media, fill your time with intentional and direct human interaction. You could take a full day or a week away from social media, but you decide what is right for you.</p> <p>The research is clear: staying on social media leads to more anxiety, more disconnection, and more mental distress. The exposure to graphic images and reactionary language often keeps people in their fight, flight or freeze response. That's not to deny the power of social media, but for your own wellbeing, you must find healthy boundaries.</p>

<p>7. Commit to sharing with others what's helping you.</p> <p><i>Exercise: Create a team norm to share once a month what has been helping you regenerate.</i></p>	<p>This is not a complete list, but instead a baseline for maintaining emotional well-being in hard times. These are small behaviors that can help generate new patterns and consciousness. Share this list with others and add your own to it, creating a commitment to health and building accountability as you strive for a better world. What others help you and/or would you want to try? What boundaries do you think you need?</p>
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5. Team Regeneration

Team regeneration is the practice of taking team time away from the goals you want to achieve to do self-care practices together. Doing self-care practices ensures that during stressful times, the team regenerates their energy reserves. This also helps your team feel more connected, especially during times when everyone is working hard on a project, and are less focused on checking in with one another. Taking time for team regeneration is rarely done in community organizing, simply because everyone is too busy or too focused on winning a campaign to take the time to breathe and reflect.

Team regeneration is a way to promote that self-care, set healthy boundaries and avoid burnout. Below are some exercises developed by Joanna Macy that will help you process emotions, vent about challenges, cultivate gratitude and exit a negative mindset.

5.1 Open Sentences (Macy, 2017)

Time: 30 minutes

Open Sentences is an activity for spontaneous self-expression. It helps people listen receptively as well as speak their thoughts and feelings frankly. If doing this activity in person, people sit in pairs, face to face and close enough to attend to each other fully. Digitally, each pair should be put into Zoom breakout rooms and given some time to do the exercise before coming back to the larger group.

Everyone refrains from speaking until the practice begins or they are in their Zoom breakout room. One person is Partner A, the other Partner B – this can be determined quickly by asking them to tap each other on the knee; the one who tapped first is A. Over Zoom it could be a show of hands, and whoever raises first will go first. A guide or facilitator will speak an unfinished sentence, for example, “my childhood dream was to ...”. Addressing Partner B, Partner A will then repeat the sentence, complete it in their own words, and using the sentence as inspiration, continue talking spontaneously for the time allotted. The partners can switch roles after each open sentence or at the end of the series. The listening partner – and this is to be emphasized – keeps silent, saying absolutely nothing and listening as attentively and supportively as possible.

Notes for facilitators:

Pair people together randomly. Give each pair 10 minutes in total to do this activity. If doing this in person, you should give a brief warning when they should be moving onto the next sentence. You could say, “take a minute to finish up,” or “thank you”. You could also use a bell as a signal to move on. Digitally, you could tell everyone to get through the sentences in 10 minutes, or if using Zoom, you could give a reminder every 2 minutes to move on to the next sentence.

When everyone is finished and you bring the group back together, do a quick debrief. Ask how it felt and how they feel now.

Below are some examples of open sentences; you can also create your own.

Open Sentences on Gratitude:

1. Some things I love about being alive on Earth are...
2. A place that was magical (or wonderful) to me as a child was....
3. A person who helped me believe in myself is or was....
4. Some things I enjoy doing and making are....
5. Some things I appreciate about myself are...

Open Sentences on Time

1. When I am in a hurry, my body feels...
2. When I am in a hurry, my mind is like...
3. Nowadays, I don't have time to...
4. Lack of time affects my relationships in these ways...
5. If I had all the time in the world, I would...

5.2 [Audio Recording to the Future](#) (Macy, 2017)

Time: 15 to 30 minutes

In facing an environmental or climate change problem, the act of describing it aloud to future generations heightens appreciation of what is at stake in the long term. This could be a project you are running as a team, or other group's campaign that you are helping with. The larger time frame deepens the sense of responsibility, stimulates creativity, and strengthens our resolve.

This practice is predominately used at a specific location to support a holding action against a specific threat, such as clear-cutting, toxic dumping, and hydraulic fracking. People pass a small recorder, speaking into it one at a time. They imagine they are recording a message to be found and heard in that place by people of a coming generation or century. Alluding to choices presently confronting them, they record personal messages to the future.

This process originated in New Mexico at an ad hoc People's Council about government plans to deal with radioactive waste by burying it. Activists were concerned about leakage and eventual human intrusion at the site. Up to that point public opposition to such plans expressed a position known as "NIMBY" (Not In My Back Yard). Other than protecting their own communities, the public by and large didn't consider the waste to be their responsibility.

"Let's imagine," Joanna Macey said, pulling out a small recorder, "that if we don't manage to stop the waste from being buried here, we could at least place this cassette here for future generations to find and listen to. What do we want to say to them?"

Passing the recorder around the Council circle, the men and women spoke into it with increasing urgency. "My name is George. I'm back in 1988 and trying to stop people from burying radioactive waste here. If they do and if you hear this, listen. Don't dig here, don't use the water, stay away! This stuff is deadly and contaminates all it touches. Take care!" As the words poured out, the future generations became more real and those present began to feel more responsibility for the wastes their own generation had produced. They felt a greater determination to protect the beings of the future by developing less dangerous alternatives than burial – such as monitored, retrievable storage. This is now, among citizen activists, the preferred strategy.

6. Going Deeper and References

6.1 Go Deeper

Mindfulness Exercises: [Resource 1](#), [Resource 2](#)

Mindful Breathing: [Resource 1](#), [Resource 2 \(1:52\)](#)

Body Scan: [Resource 1](#)

Meditation: [Resource 1 \(10:07\)](#), [Resource 2 \(10:06\)](#)

Yoga:

Resource 1: [Yoga for Stress: 3 Part Series \(approx. 30 mins long\)](#)

Resource 2: [5 Minute Yoga Sequence](#)

Resource 3: [10 Minute Self-care Practice](#)

6.2 References

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