

Toolkit for Organizing Self-Care and Group-Care



Organizing is incredibly important work. It can be exhilarating as well as exhausting. Most of the people in the Resident Action Project have personal experience with housing instability and/or homelessness, which can make it challenging to talk about these issues constantly. Putting ourselves on the front lines for justice requires us to promote both self-care and group-care.

Self-care is anything that meets the needs of a person in order to be physically and mentally healthy to keep organizing. Self-care is exactly what it says... self-care. You need to listen to yourself and do what replenishes you. Self-care looks different for every person, and it is important that the group respect whatever self-care practices people need to do without judgment.

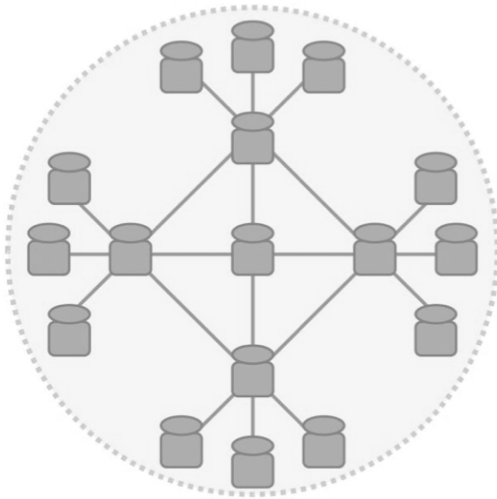
Self-care could include any number of things, but here are a few examples: taking some time alone during long meetings, drinking enough water, being able to doodle or do something with their hands during a meeting, eating certain kinds of foods, etc. One easy way that you can promote self-care within a group is to talk about it. At the beginning of meetings, you can have a group agreement that is simply "take care of yourself," and let folks know what you mean by that.

Similar to self-care, group-care can look many different ways. Group-care can be an intentional group space for people to care for one another through sharing and listening. Group-care can also be built into our leadership model to promote a healthy and sustainable group culture. Each meeting can start with a "check-in" for example where people can share briefly what's going on in their lives.

Investing in self-care and group-care will make your organizing more sustainable in the future. It will help to prevent burnout, spread out the workload, and build strong connections between the people who are organizing together, which is critical as we know that none of the solutions are going to happen quickly.

group-care

Group-care is way of being intentional about the culture in a group of people to make sure that everybody has the opportunity to care for themselves and one another.



A leadership team is a network. Everybody is connected to each other through relationships.

Three key elements of a leadership team are relationships, accountability, and commitment. These elements are the glue that holds the leadership team together. Read more about them on the next page.



group-care

Relationships: members are cared for

Caring for each other matters, and caring is a leadership practice. This requires that we act in ways that show care. That means that you pay attention to people. Be genuine and curious. Listen, and see the whole person. Motivate your peers, and pay attention to what they need. Ask yourself how you can respond to what they need and act in ways that help. Give people feedback on the things that they're working on. Caring begets caring.

What is one concrete way that you can care for your peers in organizing spaces?

Commitment: shared learning and fulfillment

We must be committed not only to the organization, but each other. Take people as they are, but don't leave them there. Help people see and build on their own strengths. Support and nurture leadership and growth in one another.

How do you show your commitment to others, and how do you want them to show their commitment to you?

Accountability: team is well coordinated

On a leadership team, everybody is connected by relationships and commitment to our mutual goals and learning. But what makes the structure work in a coordinated way is mutual accountability. Mutual accountability involves assigning roles, respecting boundaries, and following our values.

What does accountability look like for you on your team?

group-care

Here's a list of some ideas for how you can do group care.

- Check in with people regularly. How are they doing?
- Go to events together
- Share food with one another
- Send encouraging texts when you know somebody is about to go to a meeting or take action
- Do restorative activities together
- Learn more about your co-organizers. Can you carpool or help each other with childcare?
- Learn what skills and talents people have in the group, and see if they are willing to share. Is someone a yoga instructor? Does someone know how to make art?
- Have an appreciation circle
- Listen to each others stories
- Support people when they say no to taking on another commitment
- Learn about anti-oppression, identities, privileges, and oppressions
- Spend time with people outside of organizing spaces
- Do theater exercises together
- Do icebreakers enthusiastically
- Brainstorm ways that you'd like to care for yourselves and each other as a group!

Toolkit for Organizing Appreciation



"Thank you for Being."
Hill Cummings, Resident Action Project
leader

We appreciate everyone who has been involved with the Resident Action Project.

We appreciate all of the leaders of the movements that intersect with our work, of which there are many.

We appreciate everyone who wakes up every day with a commitment to justice.

One of the leaders in the Resident Action Project, Hill Cummings, often tells his peers "Thank you for Being." We frequently appreciate the work that each of us is *doing*. Hill asserts that it is also important to appreciate each other for simply Being. We are all showing up to this work with different ways of Being. We are doing justice to ourselves and others by recognizing that.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this toolkit, and to everyone who picks it up to look through it.

Onward, to action!