

Healing Justice Toolkit

DIGNITY AND POWER NOW!

Healing Justice Responders



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE JUSTICE TEAMS NETWORK

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Dignity & Power NOW

<http://dignityandpowernow.org/>

Justice Teams Network

<https://justiceteams.org/>



"We as a culture and society prepare for natural disasters."

The JTN is about preparing for the 'man made disaster of state violence' ...It will happen to one of our family members. It will happen to one of our community members. What do we set in place so we can respond rapidly, effectively and strategically?"

~ PATRISSE KHAN-CULLORS, CO-FOUNDER
BLACK LIVES MATTER GLOBAL NETWORK,
JUSTICE TEAMS NETWORK
FOUNDER, DIGNITY AND POWER NOW!



Dignity & Power NOW!

ABOUT DIGNITY AND POWER NOW

Dignity and Power Now (DPN) is a Los Angeles-based, grassroots organization that fights for the dignity and power of all incarcerated people, their families and communities. Founded in 2012, our mission is to build a Black and Brown led abolitionist movement rooted in community power towards the goal of achieving transformative justice and healing justice for all incarcerated people, their families, and communities.

“... we walk with [the families], and that is a long walk because while the story is in the media for a week, maybe two, for families, this is years and years and years. It never ends. The pain never ends.”

“As much as we need rapid response physically, [we] also ... need to deal with the trauma not only inflicted on families but also on the community.”

~CAT BROOKS, CO-FOUNDER
ANTI POLICE-TERROR PROJECT,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JUSTICE TEAMS NETWORK



OUR WORK

Is grounded in the principles of abolition, healing and transformative justice. DPN has a multitude of programs centered around activism that not only challenges many of the tools of state-sanctioned violence, but these programs are also aimed at healing its victims and re-invigorating its opponents.

Some of these many programs are:

- Leadership institutes for high school youth and people coming home from prison
- Leadership building through coalition work, including a coalition to end sheriff violence and to stop new jail construction
- Arts, health and wellness
- A rapid response team of healers
- A re-entry program inside Soledad State Prison
- The use of media as an educational component

Some of our immediate campaign foci include establishing comprehensive and effective civilian oversight of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and allocating the money from LA County's proposed \$3.5 billion dollar jail construction plan into mental health diversion programs and community resources.

WHAT WE DO

We understand rapid response as an important practice of building our communities' capacity to end a continuous and varying onslaught of state violence. Building strong community networks that can respond to law enforcement violence, support impacted families, and demand that our individual and collective resilience be upheld are all components of this visionary work. Doing so moves us closer towards replacing punitive and terrorizing systems with a society where the dignity and power of Black and Brown communities is unquestionably resourced and sustained.

Healing / Justice

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'HEALING'?

Healing: an ongoing process of mending as well as building power, resilience, and resistance to transform systems of oppression.



“The Healing Justice work at DPN not only responds to trauma but it also has created ongoing programming where families and directly impacted people have a place to land safely when trauma occurs. These are monthly and seasonal meetings as well as ongoing support that looks like therapy, massage, reiki, and most importantly, spaces where families can connect with each other and strategize together - organizing is a part of healing, too.

**~GUADALUPE R. CHAVEZ,
DPN DIRECTOR OF HEALING
AND WELLNESS**



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'HEALING JUSTICE'?

"Healing Justice is a framework that identifies how we can holistically respond to and intervene on intergenerational trauma and violence, and to bring collective practices that can impact and transform the consequences of oppression on our collective bodies, hearts and minds."

~ Cara Page

PRINCIPLES OF HEALING JUSTICE

Without healing there is no justice.

We understand that healing is a lifelong process and that often we never fully heal, especially when our loved ones are killed unjustly. We also understand that if we do not participate in a process of healing, the pain caused by state violence can overwhelm us as well as our communities. Holding these two truths we honor the need to be in healing processes, including the process of demanding justice for our loved ones.

Justice should address the whole person.

We acknowledge that systems of power and oppression impact our minds, bodies and spirit, therefore we have to address this impact on all three levels.

All minds and all bodies deserve justice.

In a system that targets people with disabilities and produces disabilities through violence, confinement and medical negligence and abuse, we must build a movement that achieves justice for all people; including those with physical and mental health disabilities.

Our work must be trauma informed and resilience-centered.

Trauma functions to create long lasting impacts on our lives. We must build practices and containers of resilience that not only support impacted communities in healing from harm but invite us to imagine and practice being in community without systems of harm.

Resilience is strategic.

We support the healing of our communities not only because we deserve wellbeing, but also because the power required to win our people's wellbeing is the power required to win all other visionary demands for justice.



HEALING JUSTICE AT RAPID RESPONSE SITES

Building Your Core Team

We refer to The Anti Police-Terror Project for a more thorough description of the **First Responders Core Team**. Listed here are the Healing Justice First Responders that DPN brings to a Rapid Response Site (location where an act of state violence has occurred):

- **LISTENERS (1-3)** - this could be a therapist, counselor or someone who has excellent listening skills, shows empathy and is relatable to the community. Ideally, the listener must speak the language of the community being served, i.e. Spanish, English, Creole, etc.
- **POLICE DE-ESCALATORS (1-2)** - Someone who has experience and/or is trained to serve as a liaison to the police. This role is extremely important - this person can literally help save lives because they are able to talk to the police and de-escalate the violence they cause to a person.
- **NURSE, DOCTOR OR STREET MEDIC** - whoever is available to respond. This person helps to address any physical injuries present and helps to determine the severity of the physical damage and whether or not the person hurt needs western medical attention.
- **OTHER PRACTITIONERS/HEALERS** - These folks make sure the community is taken care of on a spiritual and physical level. They carry medicine bags with water, snacks and spiritual tools such as herbal medicine, incense or sage and crystals. These folks are key to bringing Healing Justice to a space where trauma has just happened/is happening. Along with the Listener these healers help to shift the energy of the space by making sure everyone is being cared for in the ways that they need.



BUILDING YOUR NETWORK OF HEALERS AND REFERRALS

Nurturing relationships with Healers (see our recommended list below) is key to bringing healing justice to your rapid response work. Relationships take time so make sure your Core Team is constantly working on this. From our experience we have found that Healers find deep satisfaction when they share their work with communities targeted by state violence.

There are many different types of healing modalities that have a long history of responding to trauma, addiction, pain management and helping to move stagnant energy due to high levels of stress or trauma. Some of these are listed below.

List of potential Healers you can have on your team:

- ▬ Chinese medicine and Acupuncture - Bodyworkers
- ▬ Reiki/Energy Medicine
- ▬ Massage
- ▬ Therapists
- ▬ Talk therapists, or folks who are great at listening with empathy)
- ▬ Art, especially for children
- ▬ Movement - dance or yoga
- ▬ Sound Healing- Drum or Tibetan Bowls
- ▬ Nurses and western medicine practitioners/doctors
- ▬ Ayurvedic medicine practitioners
- ▬ Herbal medicine practitioners



Centering Healing Justice in Rapid Response work often means that the family's healing process will need to be supported beyond the moment of crisis. The more effort that is put into building a network of support prior to a crisis, the more ease you will have in finding support for the family long-term.

Connecting with counseling agencies, community clinics that center POC (people of color) communities, formerly incarcerated communities and other targeted communities is highly recommended.

Recommended Trainings

- Know Your Rights
- Street Medic
- CPR
- Any of the following skills: Conflict Resolution, Transformative/Restorative Justice Circles and Council – an indigenous practice of sitting in circle with one another to bear witness and build community

In other words
... “if you stay ready, you won’t need to get ready.”

“Everything that DPN has done has been a great help, such as a simple call to ask how we are doing or to invite us to healing and wellness programs. We enjoy and forget our sorrow by knowing that we are not alone, that there is someone who cares, and that is DPN through its activities and legal advices.”

**- JUAN CORREA, DPN
FOUNDING FAMILIES
MEMBER**



Trauma

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma: Any moment where the real or perceived threat to someone's safety – physical or emotional – overwhelms the body's natural ability to protect itself.

Understanding trauma gives us a vehicle to unpack how state violence functions. It also gives a concrete measure of safety to strive for in our work. Trauma is a product of powerlessness in the face of a threat. Whether the threat to our safety is “real” or not is less as important as whether or not we “perceive” a threat that we cannot defend ourselves from or escape. With this in mind, it is important that we enter into a rapid response scenario with both a clear purpose and clarity that we are stepping into relationship with people experiencing varying layers of power and powerlessness.

INCIDENTS OF TRAUMA

The following are all examples of moments that could cause trauma and would require a rapid response deployment:

- Being the victim of law enforcement violence or force.
- Witnessing an incident of law enforcement violence or force.
- Finding out your loved one has been harmed by law enforcement while incarcerated.
- Not being able to get in contact with a family member after they have been arrested.
- A medical provider arrives on scene and abuses their authority while tending to – or not tending to – someone who is medically unable to care for themselves is an act of trauma.



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience: The ability to bounce back from trauma and harm with renewed capacity and purpose.

We understand resilience as a process and practice that is built over time. It is very different from healing and it should not be assumed that healing is required to achieve resilience. Instead, we build resilience individually and systemically to create more possibility for healing in this work.

Trauma impacts the way we think, how we socialize, what we consider safe and unsafe, and our ability to connect with others. **Resilience** is measured by our ability to feel safety and create safety when we feel unsafe, to engage in connection with others, to practice connection after trauma has made it difficult, and to access joy in the wake of trauma.

The purpose of resilience is not to build the capacity to endure more harm.

We build resilience because we deserve safety, connection and wellbeing. We build resilience to be more skillful in confronting the systems that have harmed us, and to build the necessary power to end the traumatic nature of state violence.



The following are all examples of practices and conditions that generate resilience:

- Identifying practices that make you feel safe and integrating them into your weekly routine.
- The practice of sharing or retelling an experience of trauma in a safe environment, amongst others who have experienced the same harm.
- Seeking out healing modalities that are sensitive to your specific healing such as practicing meditation or Reiki if physical touch feels unsafe.
- Reducing the impact of potential triggers:
 - Writing down a list of triggers alongside a list of people you can contact to help you feel safe in those circumstances.
 - Always being with someone you feel safe with if you know being around law enforcement is unavoidable.
- Organizing to win demands that reduce law enforcement presence in your neighborhood, school or other public space.
- Engage in a healing practice after an action, mobilization or community event.

The following are projects of Dignity and Power NOW! that are designed to facilitate/increase wellness and the capacity for resilience:

Wellness Clinics

Held at various times throughout the year in rotating locations based on community needs. These free clinics are led by the Building Resilience team and provide entire communities with wellness services. Community members can visit the clinic and choose which stations they'd like to participate in at their own pace. Healing stations have included:

- Nurses, who engaged and answered questions about navigating the medical industrial complex.
- Reiki
- Community acupuncture
- Oracle card readings
- Massage therapy
- Meditative arts
- Drum circle
- Workshops: ayurvedic medicine, medicinal herbs
- Community altars building
- Local gardener and herbalists gifting plants

Apart from the above-mentioned modalities, the Wellness Clinics also provide listening stations, food and DPN Wellness Kits, which include homemade items such as bath salts, teas, salves, aromatherapy spritzers, aromatherapy rollers and aromatherapy pouches.

“Our goal is to create a container for wellness and support that is rooted in what the family wants to do, how they want to respond and if the family wants some sort of justice. We share what those steps can look like. Always at the center of our work we understand that our communities need to be well enough to self-determine their way through a healing process, and it is not just about getting ‘better’ but about building resilience and community.”

**~ MARK ANTHONY
JOHNSON, DPN BOARD
MEMBER**



Freedom Harvest

A monthly pop-up arts and wellness event held outside an LA County jail site. The Dignity and Power Now Building Resilience team of healers, artists, herbalists, organizers and volunteers provide artistic activities and offer various wellness services. Art and healing stations have included:

- Community acupuncture
- Massage therapy
- Reiki and crystal healing
- Live foot soaks
- Restorative yoga
- Flower bundles and flower crowns
- Silk Screen printing of abolitionist posters for families to take home
- Post card writing to loved ones inside
- Mobile art installations
- Live performances and art
- Poetry reading & writing
- Children's station
- Community altar

Freedom Harvest also provides DPN Wellness Kits, which include homemade items such as those listed above, music, and water and snacks including fruit and light refreshments. This intervention is intended to disrupt and offer collective balm to the traumatizing experience of visiting loved ones in jail. What started as a summer series in 2014 has grown into a popular year-long program.

Rapid Response Healing

Provided to the families of people whose loved ones have been killed in the jails as well as others experiencing a health crisis due to the effects of state violence. Most commonly, the Building Resilience team will reach out to families and individuals and provide them free in-home care at their convenience as well as follow-up care.



Street Rapid Responses

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE TO THE SITE

A Rapid Response Site is any location where an act of state violence has occurred. At DPN! we primarily respond to violence inside of L.A. County jails. We typically get calls from either a family member or a person with intimate knowledge of a situation - usually another inmate - with information about a death, violence, neglect, or what feels to the family like a “disappearance” of their loved one. When we receive these calls this is the protocol we have used:

“My brother Tomeko Tyler died in Pitchess Detention Center March 3, 2017. DPN has been by my side ... Their organizer is in contact with me and helps me get thru the process of grief. They check in on my family and we have participated in their health and wellness clinics . I can't imagine where I would be today with without Dignity and Power Now. My family and I are truly grateful ...”

**~ LESETA HAMILTON, DPN
FOUNDING FAMILIES
MEMBER, A STREET RAPID
RESPONSE THAT CENTERS
HEALING JUSTICE**



1. Conduct a preliminary assessment. Ask your team the following questions:
 - **WHAT** do we know about the situation so far?
 - **WHO** shared this information, do we have their contact information and are they willing to share more?
 - **DO WE HAVE FAMILY CONTACT INFORMATION?** If not try to find their contact information to reach out as soon as possible
 - **IF THE FAMILY REACHED OUT**, did we document their information and what they shared with us? See appendix for sample documenting form.
2. Check availability of core team. If a physical presence is needed at the jail site or another place the family needs support in:
 - **A TEAM** of 2-5 people is ideal to show up to a Rapid Response Site
 - **AT LEAST** 1 healer should be part of the initial team who responds to a situation
3. If the family is organizing a vigil, your Healing Justice Team can support by:



Centering Healing during trauma: Things to think about - offering the community the opportunity to create a healing space with them.

- Providing warm meals such as greens and beans; protein bars; hot/cold teas; and pre-made wellness kits with teas for anxiety, sleep support and grief
- Contact practitioners/healers for support (within the day of a reported incident)
- Bodywork, acupuncture, and therapy are the primary services that can immediately help the family begin to address the trauma on a somatic, mental, and physical level
- Set sessions for family in a comfortable, quiet, and safe space. We have used our office as well as done house visits for these services. Find out from the family what they prefer and lead with that.
- Prepare your emergency medicine bag
- Prepare a Wellness bag containing Aromatherapy Spritzer, Roll-on, or cloths with sweet smelling oils on them
- Sage or incense to spiritually/energetically cleanse the area



- Crystals have been used all over the world for thousands of years in healing work. A part of your preparation you may want to keep some of the following on hand:
 - **Rose Quartz:** stone of unconditional love and peace; valuable crystal for the heart and the heart chakra. Invites deeper healing and self-love; offers energies of calm and affirmation-popularly used in trauma or crisis situations.
 - **Lepidolite:** stone used to bring gentleness and healing to dis-ease, particularly emotional stress, depression, emotional dependency.; a calming and protective stone that supports one to “be in own truth,” free from influence, intimidation or negative energy from others; self-love.
 - **Lapis Lazuli:** brings harmony to the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies; affirms deep inner self-knowledge; provides protection against psychic or mental “attack”; also a truth-teller stone; stimulates throat and third eye chakras; encourages self-awareness; stress relief and gifts deep peace and serenity.
 - **Black Tourmaline:** a grounding and protective stone; protects against negative energies or entities, psychic attack, even electromagnetic smog; supports in grounding one’s energy to serve the purpose of dispersing tension or stress; clarity; supports movement and choice from a centered position.
- Flowers/Plant Bundles for grounding, protection. They are also good if children are around. Bundles can be held, worn or placed in a home or office. Recommended flowers and plants are anything you have access to; have not been sprayed with pesticides; and can be harvested without compromising growth. Some plants for protection include rue, white sage, rosemary, oregano, lavender and rose. (Healing and wellness are grounded in respect and the shifting of energy. Therefore, as a sign of respect, it is recommended that water and prayer be offered to the plant before harvesting it; basically, thanking it and asking for its assistance in this matter.)

WHEN YOU ARRIVE TO THE SITE

- 1. CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE OF TRAUMA**, i.e. who is present, what are the immediate needs of the people present, if the state is present (police, Emergency Response Team, firefighters, etc) assess and make a plan to intervene and interrupt any further violence from happening.

 - Build relationships and map out a plan with the family
 - Assess the needs and desires of the family. If they would like to go through government systems to achieve justice we share the process of what that looks like in Los Angeles County:
 - Working with the Office of Investigator General (OIG) and potentially using their Complaint process
 - Getting your local Supervisor involved
 - Connect with local organizations organizing against state violence, such as Dignity and Power Now

- 2. ASSESS AND BUILD THE CAPACITY OF THE FAMILY**

 - Provide Care and Support
 - Connect with Lawyers that we or other families have worked with
 - Connect with healers network
 - Coordinate support amongst families' immediate and extended network

- 3. ORGANIZE!**

 - Connect families to others who are fighting a similar fight
 - If in L.A. County, encourage them to attend DPN's monthly family meeting to strategize, build organizing power and heal together. If elsewhere in the state, reach out to the Justice Teams Network.





AFTER YOU LEAVE THE SITE

1. STAY CONNECTED!

- Stay involved in short-term and long-term work with the family
- Make sure the family is connected with the healing practitioners
- Provide additional resources for healing as needed
- Support organizing vigils as needed

2. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO!

- Make a self-care plan for yourself. Feelings of sadness, depression, hopelessness, anger, etc., should be looked at as energy. It is somewhat 'natural' for these types of energies to surround you after dealing with the traumatic incident of state violence, but it becomes unhealthy if these energies remain for too long. To 'remove' this energy from you, include using bath salts in your bath/shower to help clear your own 'energy fields'; stay hydrated; get plenty of rest; and stay connected to your loved ones.



"By centering healing justice as we support folks dealing with state violence,

we make the fight for justice more sustainable and it becomes not only a fight for justice but a reclamation of dignity in a holistic sense that encompasses our minds, bodies, and spirits.

We are building something really special, where we get to support the resilience and vitality of our members, because we all deserve and need that, especially in crisis.

It brings me great joy to see smiles, laughter, and moments of ease from our members who are dealing with one of the most painful experiences one can go through - violently losing a loved one at the hands of the state.

I look forward to growing even more comprehensive systems of care to support the healing needs of our members."

**- MELANIE MAGENTA,
DPN DEPUTY DIRECTOR HEALING AND WELLNESS**

APPENDIX

Healing Justice Reading

A Not-So-Brief Personal History of the Healing Justice Movement, 2010–2016
<http://micemagazine.ca/issue-two/not-so-brief-personal-history-healing-justice-movement-2010>

How to recognize a panic attack in self and others
<https://popit.io/what-is-an-anxiety-attack/>

Simple Breathing Exercises
<https://adrenalfatiguesolution.com/5-simple-breathing-exercises/>

Hosting a Process Circle
<http://www.thecircleway.net/the-process/>

De-escalation skills and tips
<https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/October-2017/CPI-s-Top-10-De-Escalation-Tips-Revisited>

Crystals for Trauma or C-PTSD
<https://traumacraft.wordpress.com/2016/02/07/crystals-for-trauma/>

List of Books and Websites

Dignity and Power Now!
<http://dignityandpowernow.org/>

Anti Police-Terror Project
<https://www.antipoliceterrorproject.org/>

The Justice Teams Network
<https://justiceteams.org/>

Black Lives Matter Los Angeles
<https://blacklivesmatter.com/chapter/blm-los-angeles/>

Black Lives Matter Sacramento
<https://blacklivesmatter.com/chapter/blm-sacramento>

L.E.A.N.
<https://www.lean4change.org/>

The Oscar Grant Foundation
<https://oscargrantfoundation.org/>

Love Not Blood
<http://www.lovenotbloodcampaign.com/>

Mothers Fight Back
<https://www.facebook.com/MothersFightBack2/>

Silicon Valley De-Bug
<https://www.siliconvalleydebug.org/>

Notes

This guide was written and produced in collaboration with Thandisizwe Chimurenga. It is the second guide that they have helped to produce with us and we are eternally grateful for their work.

DIGNITY & POWER NOW

Dignity and Power Now (DPN) is a Los Angeles based grassroots organization founded in 2012 that fights for the dignity and power of all incarcerated people, their families, and communities. Our mission is to build a Black and Brown led abolitionist movement rooted in community power towards the goal of achieving transformative justice and healing justice for all incarcerated people, their families, and communities.

[**http://dignityandpowernow.org/**](http://dignityandpowernow.org/)

JUSTICE TEAMS NETWORK

The Justice Teams Network is a statewide coalition of rapid response organizations across California that build infrastructure to support victims and survivors of state violence and mass criminalization.

[**https://justiceteams.org/**](https://justiceteams.org/)

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DESIGN AND LAYOUT: DESIGN ACTION COLLECTIVE