

# Self, Community and Spiritual Care

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# Outcome

The goal of the session is to address the effects of vicarious trauma and offer skills to addressing self, community and spiritual care.

# Meaning Making

## 'THE WHY

We are living through difficult times and must take care of ourselves and each other. As compassionate, empathetic caregivers we are at risk for vicarious trauma. Trauma is stored in the brain and so is healing. No one way to heal - modalities are connected.





## Making Meaning

### SELF-CARE

Not to be confused with current "wellness movements." Self-Care is the act of caring for your own basic needs. It is a way to support yourself during times of ease and times of struggle.

### COMMUNITY CARE

Focused on the collective. Caring for one another. This can be a large community or a community of two people. Humans are social creatures and the best medicine we have as Native people is each other.

### SPIRITUAL CARE

Utilizing resources from spiritual, religious, and/or cultural traditions to help people find a sense of meaning, belonging, purpose, and well-being. Supporting people as they cope with their life experiences.

A portrait of Audre Lord, a Black woman with short dark hair, looking slightly to the left. She is wearing a purple patterned top with teal floral designs. The background is a vibrant, pop-art style pattern with orange polka dots and yellow and blue floral motifs.

Audre Lord

[www.audrelordproject.org](http://www.audrelordproject.org)

» "CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE, IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION AND THAT IS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WARFARE."

# SOMETIMES SELF-CARE IS NOT MUCH FUN

not always bubble baths & pedicures



# SOMETIMES IT IS

Connect with Tradition



# Rest is REVOLUTIONARY

(from Characteristics of White Supremacy by Tema Okun)

- » Winter teaches us about rest. Time for story and making art. Time for dreaming and visioning. Time of the ancestors.
- » "Rest is a form of resistance and sleep deprivation is a racial and social justice issue." ~The Nap Ministry
- » Defies oppressive settler/colonial structures: sense of urgency, progress is more, written word as superior, fear, perfectionism, etc.







East - mental, knowledge, mind, water, spring, daytime, new beginnings, children & babies, where we start prayer/ceremony, tobacco

South - physical, wind/air, summer, plants coming alive, youth (teenagers/young adults), discovering purpose & direction, compassion, woman's direction, cedar

West - emotions, earth, autumn, adulthood, ripening & harvesting, endings, evening, courage, reminder that change is part of life, sage

North - spiritual, fire, Winter, time of elders, night, generosity, share stories and teachings, time of rest, remember our ancestors, sweetgrass

7 Grandfather Teachings (Anishinaabe)

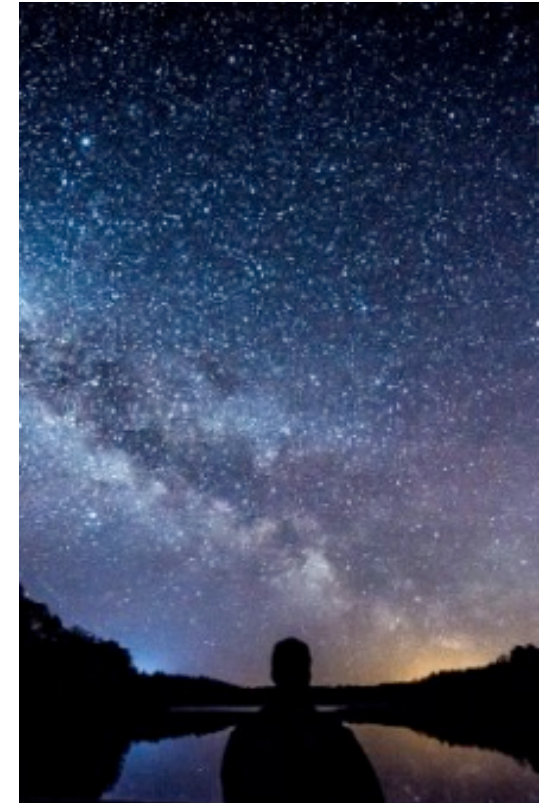
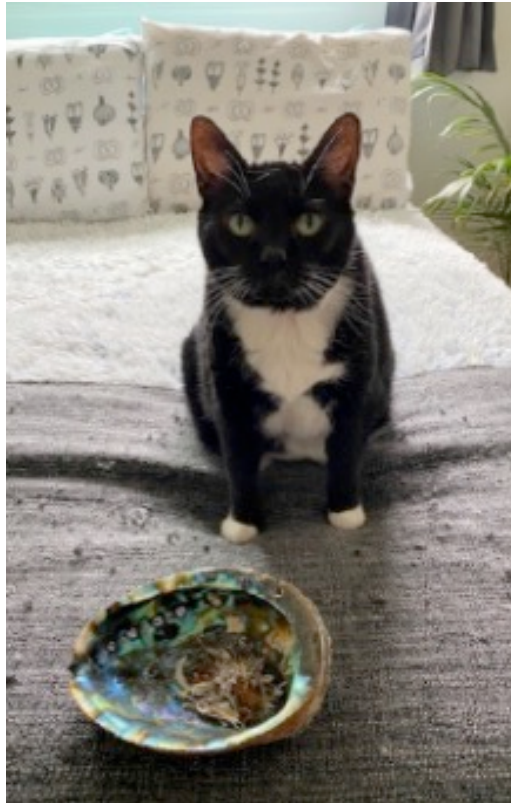
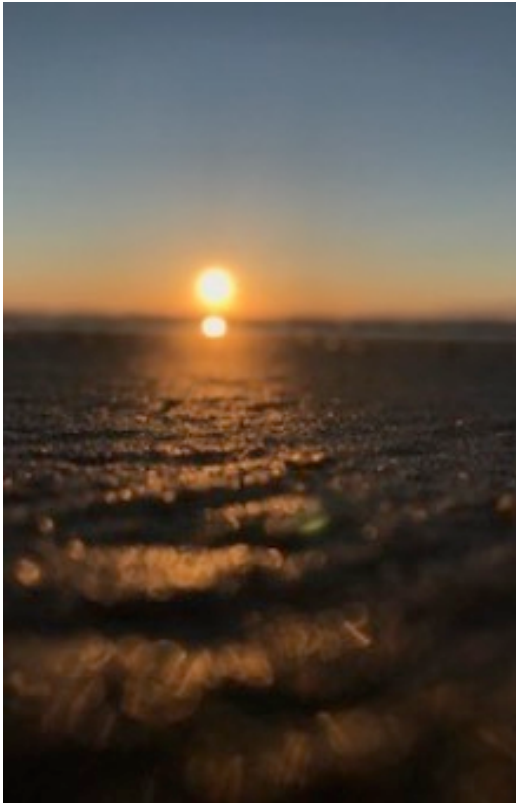
# A MODEL FOR SELF CARE

"SHOUTING 'SELF-CARE' AT PEOPLE WHO  
ACTUALLY NEED 'COMMUNITY CARE' IS  
HOW WE FAIL PEOPLE."  
~NAKITA VALERIO



# HEALING JUSTICE HEALING BY CHOICE

- » Past
  - » Confront our trauma & embrace our history Intergenerational Trauma
- » Present
  - » Release the pain
  - » Address current structures of oppression
- » Future
  - » Turn pain into action to benefit our communities Generative/Co-created future



# COMMUNITY CARE IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- Ceremony
- Talking Circle
- Mutual Aid / Indigenous Economies
- Justice Movements (Standing Rock, Mauna Kea, MMIWG2S marches)
- Cultural Gatherings/Events
- Intergenerational Connection Practice
- Learning traditional arts, dance, music
- Food
- Wellbriety group



# CONNECTION & BELONGING

## WE ARE LONELY

There is a loneliness epidemic. Loneliness & social isolation can be as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Especially true among youth and elders. Made worse by covid pandemic and the rise of social media.

## COMMUNITY = SURVIVANCE

Humans are social creatures and Native people often experience our sense of self, connection to the sacred, and sense of meaning through communal activity. Community is about possibility.

## BELONGING IS HEALING

A sense of belonging is essential to our well-being. It helps with depression, anxiety, and creating a strong sense of self. Belonging restore



# Spiritual Care

## IS:

- » For everyone - regardless of faith tradition or religious beliefs
- » A time to be heard, to be witnessed, to be listened to without judgement
- » Flexible - meets you in the moment
- » Time for exploration - purpose, values, ethics, interpersonal relationships, meaning, emotions

## » IS NOT:

- » Only for the religious/spiritual
- » A substitute for mental health care - though there may be overlap
- » Static - may be a new experience each time, will vary from person to person
- » Shared - confidential within the boundaries of professional mandatory reporting

# SPIRITUAL CARE TOOLS & PRACTICES (AKA GOOD MEDICINE)



## PRAYER/MINDFULNESS/CONTEMPLATION/MEDITATION

- » connect to a sense of wonder, awe, to something bigger than you. Prayer can be singing, smudging, talking, listening, breathing, dancing, drumming, ceremony, a hike. Mindfulness practice - focusing on breath or a word to return to the present moment.

## CREATE

- » write, paint, dance, sing, draw, bead, weave, plant a garden, make some babies, design a skirt, sew a new wardrobe

## » ANCESTRAL CONNECTION

- » they love you, they miss you, they prayed for you to be here, we are the descendants of survivors, they can hear you.

## SACRED SPACE

- » ceremony, church, temple, house of worship, altar building, time outdoors, visits to traditional sites, collecting first foods & plant medicines, on a sports field or court, In a barn, on a farm

## STORYTELLING/STORYLISTENING

- » story is medicine, we cannot tell stories without also knowing how to listen deeply, tarot

Combating an Epidemic of Loneliness. Harvard Graduate School of Education, Feb. 2021 <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/21/02/combating-epidemic-loneliness>

The Loneliness Epidemic. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Jan. 2019. <https://www.hrsa.gov/enews/past-issues/2019/january-17/loneliness-epidemic>

The Nap Ministry. Tricia Hersey (The Nap Bishop). <https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/>

Characteristics of White Supremacy. Tema Okun. <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html>

Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective, Cara Page. <http://kindredsouthernhjcollective.org/>

Legacy: Trauma, Story, and Indigenous Healing by Suzanne Methot <https://www.suzannemethot.ca/books/>

Wiyaxayxt / Wiyaakaa'awn / As Days Go By: Our History, Our Land, Our People - The Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla. Edited by Jennifer Karson <https://uwapress.uw.edu/book/9780295986234/wiyaxayxt-wiyaakaaawn-as-days-go-by/>

# Resources