



The National Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project

# ReShape Newsletter

*Working together to end sexual violence.*

## **Reshape: Healing Justice**

How do I know I'm doing enough?

As people who care about survivors of violence, while sometimes also being survivors ourselves, this is a tricky question. Sometimes, underneath this question is the fear that, not only are we not doing enough, we ourselves are also not enough.

This haunting feeling that we are somehow fundamentally flawed is often how internalized trauma and oppression manifest as shame. As survivors of violence, particularly childhood sexual violence, we may constantly question ourselves about this.

Am I enough? Am I doing enough? Am I good enough?

Women, gender non-conforming people, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income people, and many others are often taught that they aren't.

We are taught to question ourselves and not the world around us.

In this edition of ReShape, we highlight folks who remind us that we are enough. When we come together to share resources and support, we have the raw materials we need to create a world where everyone is valued. Whether it's expressed as disability justice, healing justice, emergent strategy, or not given a name at all, these survivor-activists are organizing, creating community, and finding ways to remind us that every person is enough.

We are enough to deserve care (in all the ways we need it).

We are enough to deserve love.

We are enough to deserve rest.

We are enough to deserve play.

We are enough to deserve safety.

We are enough.

So what does it look like to live from this place of enough-ness? What kinds of communities do we need to build to make this a more consistently lived reality? How can those of us with privilege honor our needs and enough-ness without harming or silencing others? While no one group or individual will ever be perfect—the ability to create and make mistakes is a gift of humanity—, there are groups trying to figure this out. The resources in this ReShape don't have all the answers, but they are all contributing to the search for more healing and justice in this world.

## **What would be possible for us if child sexual abuse survivors were supported by a whole community?**

As the founder and executive director of Firecracker Foundation, Tashmica Torok is trying to find out. This group “honors the bravery of children who have survived sexual trauma by building a community invested in the healing of their whole being.” They offer support groups, trauma-informed yoga classes, and pediatric medical advocacy. As one of the organizational grantees in the current Just Beginnings Collaborative, Firecracker Foundation is working with nine other organizations and eight individual fellows (including Amita Swadhin, highlighted below) to build a national movement to create a world free of child sexual abuse.

- Firecracker Foundation website: <http://thefirecrackerfoundation.org/>
- “Falling on Soft” blog post: <http://thefirecrackerfoundation.org/2016/11/22/falling-on-soft/>
- Just Beginnings Collaborative organizational grantees: <http://justbeginnings.org/category/organizations/>

## **What would be possible for us if child sexual abuse survivors could speak their truths at the intersections of race, gender, and sexual orientation?**

In 2009, Amita Swadhin pitched a new project to the Ping Chong Theater Company in New York. Together, they developed a recorded performance and educational toolkit about the lives of five child sexual abuse survivors. Now, as one of the eight Just Beginnings Collaborative individual fellows, Amita is working on a new project that centers the experiences of queer, transgender, and/or people of color who have experienced child sexual abuse.

- Ping Chong site: <http://www.pingchong.org/undesirable-elements/production-archive/secret-survivors/>
- Mirror Memoirs site: <https://mirrormemoirs.com/>
- Just Beginnings Collaborative individual fellows: <http://justbeginnings.org/category/jbc-fellows/>

## **What would be possible for us if all survivors of sexual violence were cared for?**

It is unfortunately true that some survivors of sexual assault are sent to jail for the ways they survive. And it is an unfortunate reality that some survivors of sexual assault experienced that assault at the hands of police or other law enforcement officers. Often the people experiencing sexual assault and incarceration are Black and Indigenous women, or other women and gender variant people of color. Mariame Kabe is an African American activist working to change this. Through multiple survivor support campaigns and her newest project, *Survived & Punished*, Mariame is calling attention to the ways the criminal legal system and law enforcement actually harm some sexual assault survivors.

- Article on sexual violence perpetrated by law enforcement: <https://www.theroot.com/it-s-time-to-listen-to-black-women-we-ve-been-talking-1830074000>

- Mariame Kabe and Kelly Hayes call for Transformative Justice: <https://truthout.org/articles/a-jailbreak-of-the-imagination-seeing-prisons-for-what-they-are-and-demanding-transformation/>
- Conversation between Mariame Kabe and Shiran Hassan about Me Too, Sexual Assault, and Organizing to End Sexual Violence: <http://inthesetimes.com/article/20613/incarceration-sexual-assault-me-too-rape-culture-organizing-resistance>
- Survived and Punished website: <https://survivedandpunished.org/about/>

## **What would be possible for us if we cared for the survivorship in all marginalized people?**

After Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, healers and activists, who were predominantly people of color, came together to provide collective care to each other. They created the group Kindred: Southern Healing Justice Collective and came to an understanding that taking care of people fighting for change is an important part of creating the change we wish to see. As Cara Page, one of Kindred's founders, reflects in an interview, "How can we as organizers not take a look at the long term effects of generational trauma not only on our lived communities but on our movement? We need to look at how we might be disassociated if you will from our responses, since we are ourselves survivors. How do we even begin the conversation? Lets first acknowledge the awareness that there is a level of trauma in the room that we want to name as a kind of collective consciousness of all of our movement. How can we move forward to make a better world if we're not understanding the impact of long term oppression?"

- Interview with Cara Page about Healing Justice and the Kindred Collective: <http://www.healingcollectivetrauma.com/cara-page.html>
- Not so brief personal history with the Healing Justice Movement: <http://micemagazine.ca/issue-two/not-so-brief-personal-history-healing-justice-movement-2010%E2%80%932016>

- Article on the context of self-care and community-care:  
<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/black-women-s-self-care-as-self-preservation/?fbclid=IwAR3VsfC3G4bLMe2u6f0-3NT8ZJnMU6XmgDIJeolg6nRcGSZHd4Cn4TXVtzw>

## **What would be possible for us if we collectively honored the wisdom and labor of people with disabilities?**

Lack of accessible spaces often means people with disabilities are excluded from anti-violence and social justice spaces. As a result, many of the ways people with disabilities organize isn't seen or valued in mainstream spaces. Disability Justice organizers Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Stacey Milbern, and Patty Berne, amongst many others, are trying to change that. Working at the place where gender, race, sexuality, class, and disability meet, these leaders are consistently doing the work of showing what truly inclusive social change movements can look like.

- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha Care Work book reading and discussion at the Disability Intersectionality Summit (with closed captions). Content note: this video includes the use of profanity:  
[https://youtu.be/d\\_OLSQKXqpw](https://youtu.be/d_OLSQKXqpw)
- Disability Visibility Podcast transcript (with link to audio recording):  
<https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Labor-Care-Work-Disabled-and-Queer-Femmes.pdf>
- Patty Berne's blog post on "What is Disability Justice":  
<http://sinsinvalid.org/blog/disability-justice-a-working-draft-by-patty-berne>

## **What would be possible for us if we fought for liberation in a way that also honored our healing?**

When Black Lives Matter developed a national infrastructure, they recognized the need to care for the overall wellness of organizers engaging in this mass mobilization work. As chapters emerged in response to high profile killings of African American people, spaces in which organizers could collectively grieve and tend to both their mental and emotional health inspired the creation of the Black Lives Matter Healing Justice Team. The resources created by the Black Lives Matter Healing Justice team are examples of resources created for and by a community thriving under threat of both interpersonal and communal violence.

- Healing Justice is How We Can Sustain Black Lives article: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/healing-justice\\_us\\_5899e8ade4b0c1284f282ffe](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/healing-justice_us_5899e8ade4b0c1284f282ffe)
- Black Lives Matter Healing Justice website: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/healing-justice/>
- Healing Justice toolkit: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/resource/healing-justice-toolkit/>
- Practice of belonging offered by Prentis Hemphill, former director of the Black Lives Matter Healing Justice network: <https://healingjustice.podbean.com/e/13-practice-reflection-on-belonging-with-prentis-hemphill/>

**What would be possible for us if we knew in a deep way that we were enough because we could recognize ourselves reflected in the broader landscape around us?**

In Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds, Adrienne Marie Brown offers various musings, some of her own and some of other influential leaders, on abundance, adaptation, relationship, survival, practice, and transformation. Drawing from the science fiction tradition of Octavia Butler, Brown invites readers into a view of the world full of possibility, promise, and belonging. She shows us how those wishing to create more justice in the world can draw lessons from the

fractal nature of different organisms and the cyclical nature of organic birth, growth, and decay.

Adrienne Marie Brown also shares many of her evolving thoughts on her blog and via podcast created with her sister, Autumn Brown.

- Additional resources on Emergent Strategy:  
<https://www.alliedmedia.org/esii/resources>
- Three lessons from Adrienne Marie Brown's Emergent Strategy book:  
<https://www.colorlines.com/articles/three-lessons-adrienne-marie-browns-emergent-strategy>
- Adrienne Marie Brown in conversation with the Healing Justice podcast:  
<https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/healingjustice/healing-justice/e/52729524?autoplay=true>

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