Mourning & Mental Health Playbook
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**Introduction**

This summer, the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab researchers worked in collaboration with community partners to create a virtual pandemic portal. The portal includes free and accessible resources that cover the topics of arts and alternative futures, mutual aid and solidarity, mourning and mental health, test and treatments, education, prisons, policing and surveillance, work, housing and neighborhoods, and hospitals and healthcare. The culmination of our research team’s work is the Mourning and Mental Health Playbook. This playbook features important resources that confront the experience of Black mourning, grief and mental health in the time of COVID-19 through articles, podcasts, racial justice organizations, and artwork by Black creators. This playbook considers the material realities of further marginalization that Covid-19 and concurrent racial oppressions—police brutality, medical health disparities, poverty, xenophobia, etc—exacerbate in Black communities through the lens of artistic expressions and scholarship. Through working with our partner organization Brown Hope, we have also included short mental health activities that we hope readers can share with their respective communities.

**Acknowledgments**

This project would not have been completed without the encouragement and aid from so many people. We are forever indebted to Professor Benjamin who has provided us with such a valuable opportunity to research and work with Brown Hope this summer, and also created a platform for us to share our work. Our sincere appreciation extends to Cierra Robson, who met with us weekly to discuss our ideas and helped us with every single logistic. We are so grateful for all of the black artists who shared their work with us for this project, and we encourage all readers to support these incredible black artists. Last, we would like to thank Cameron Whitten and Tracy Garrell from Brown Hope for collaborating with us as a community partner this summer, and we hope that this relationship will continue to grow in the fall.
Black Mental Health

Studies have long shown that Black populations in the United States experience greater rates of anxiety, stress, and depression—a statistic inextricably linked to what Black scholars, activists, and people have identified and embodied: the precarity of Black Life. Mourning and death are embodied through this precariousness. This is no less true at the intersection of the two pandemics of racism and COVID-19 which the world is being forced to confront in tandem. The convergence of these illnesses has not only taken countless Black lives, it has also presented many obstacles to mourning those losses.

Social distancing protocols have placed restrictions on physical touch and ceremonial funeral practices. Social media has been politicizing and depersonalizing individual Black death. Police are attacking peaceful protesters mourning victims of police brutality. As such, Black Grief in the time of COVID 19 can be characterized by a succession of interruption. At this point in time, there are too few spaces where Black people can mourn in-person, virtually, collectively, or individually. There are too few mental health resources to account for the recent surge in Black death due to the virus, anti-Black violence, and police brutality.

The stigma surrounding mental health in the Black community creates another hurdle for Black people to discuss openly and honestly about mental health. The following selection of artwork, articles, podcasts and organizations is meant to acknowledge the monumental impacts of the pandemics on mental health in the Black community and offer resources to address this issue on the individual and collective level.

-Haydon John
Wake Up.

Javon Stephenson aka SO4P

System gotta break up
The politicians stay frontin'
Wearing all that makeup
Clowns, tryna debate something
This is real life, so real people gotta...
Look, I don't wanna wake up
Knowing I ain't change nothin'
System gotta break up
The politicians stay frontin'
Wearing all that makeup
Clowns, tryna debate something
This is real life, so real people gotta say something
Choppers in my city, I'm afraid I might get sniped down
Tears all on my people's faces
Know they might get wiped down
Amplified my voice
Cuz I know they need me to pipe down
'Fo' someone hear the truth
Cuz with this pen, that's what I write down
Who gon' save the youth from all the trials and tribulations?
That boy don't need no juice
He need accurate education
You can't get it in schools
Where they stifle imagination
But I've always felt a movement brewing
In my generation
It's hard to understand it when they hide the information
But I'm grasping at the root of it
Word to Angela Davis

... This shit way bigger than inclusion
Black lives matter
That should never be confusing
And if we not fighting for all Blacks
We losing
This shit for Tony, iyanna
For Emmett and those cooped in
My people dying
I can't judge no looting
This for those that's studying
And this for those that's hooping..
This for the ruthless
And for those that's living roofless...
For those with disabilities
Still pushing through it...
I know it feels impossible
But, trust me we can do it
And I don't wanna wake up
Knowing I ain't change nothin'
System gotta break up
The politicians stay frontin'
Wearing all that makeup
Clowns, tryna debate something
This is real life, so real people gotta say something
X5

Full lyrics [here.](#)
All That’s Left
Alexis Green

“It’s impossible to eat enough if you’re worried about the next meal”

-James Baldwin

Their t-shirts marry the weight of the wind
Wedding bells crawl under the arches of their feet only to find that American and Confederate Flag share the same last name for a reason

Time is mispronouncing “I love you” again but somehow their footprints find it funny

Laughter and Speed Joy and Burning Black and Breathing – unions of the unlikely

There’s only so many ways a trail of mustard seeds can lead to nowhere

so let them run

It may be their last time
Articles & Podcasts On Black Mental Health

Reginald A. Howard, “Black Mental Health Podcast: Police Brutality and Mental Health.”
Host Reginald Howard speaks on the negative effects of police brutality on Black men’s mental health. He delves into different encounters he has had with the police and the need for informing our kids about these events. He talks about the traumatic aspect of these encounters and what it means for future generations of Black and Brown children.

Explores the finding that African americans and lower-working class ind. face sizeable disadvantages to receipt of treatment, even after controlling insurance coverage in comparison to their white counterparts.

H.E.R. Space Podcast, “Unapologetically Addressing Black Mental Health with Dr. Rheeda Walker.”
Hosts Terri Lomak and licensed psychologist Dr. Dominique Broussard invite Dr. Walker to discuss varying aspects of Black Mental Health both generally and during this pandemic period. They cover topics related to help-seeking and self-awareness, stigma surrounding mental health within the Black community, being there for one another. They also address what help-seeking looks like not only for adults but children as well.

Surviving the Coronavirus while Black: Pandemic’s Heavy Toll on African American Mental Health, Q&A with Riana Anderson, Assistant Prof of Health Behavior and Health Education (5/20/20)
In this transcribed interview, Riana Anderson discusses how mental health resources have been limited for African Americans forever. There are structural, interpersonal, and individual levels that affect the disparities. She also strongly notes that being black in America in of itself is a stressor that only black people face. She notes that due to medical racism, blacks sometimes stay away from health services. She offers some resources at the end of the interview.

Thomas Vance, “Addressing Mental Health in the Black Community.” (February 8, 2019)
This is a short article, but covers necessary information about mental health in the black community. Vance writes that black people strongly suffer with anxiety and depressions and inequities such as racism, classism, and medical racism play a large role. A study showed that black people are 20% more likely to experience serious mental health problems, and the statistics of black people who are homeless, in prison, and foster care only make mental health worse. Vance argues that both mental health needs to be incorporated into overall help and it is integral to find “cultural responsive mental treatment.”

Black Mental Health Alliance An organization dedicated to providing the educational tools and community forums to support the health of Black people.

BEAM The BEAM Collective provides toolkits for community leaders and activists to promote and facilitate community healing and wellness.

Oshun Family Center offers therapy for women, children, and families of color. It is founded by Saleemah McNeil who is a Black female therapist working to provide free therapy for Black and Brown communities.

https://whyy.org/articles/black-philly-therapists-are-raising-15k-to-provide-free-mental-health-resources-to-people-of-color/

AACT-NOW (African American Community Together NOW). Program founded under the National Alliance on Mental Illness New Jersey.

Mental Health Hotlines

CONTACT hotline:
For someone to listen: DIAL 800-932-4616
For Resources and Referrals: DIAL 2 1 1

CRISIS hotline (US and Canada): TEXT 741741

Domestic Shelters: WomanSpace (search by zip code)

National Domestic Violence Hotline: DIAL 1-800-799-7233

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
99 Problems

Sarah Duvivier

I got 99 problems but wearing a mask ain't one

@rarediamondzz
Justice Now
Sarah Duvivier
Black Mourning

Poet and essayist Claudia Rankine beautifully writes that the condition of black life is one of mourning.* Her article provides the historical context of the normalization of black death in the United States which ultimately becomes an unjust constant during the lived experience of being black.

Black mourning is often a collective and joyous activity through homegoings, celebrations of life, and funerals that include many people. However, due to the limitations of Covid-19, there has been a clear loss of physical space and in-person togetherness.

We hope that the articles and videos presented in this section help highlight the distinct experience of black mourning and show some of the creative virtual approaches to alternative collective mourning during this time. We are also so grateful to all of the artists whose works in this section answer the question "what does mourning look like to you and to your community?"

- Lauren Johnson

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Permanent Resident  
Ayoola Ogunyimika

Take me where  
sky meets sun, and  
sun kisses the earth

Goodbye

A tear leaps  
onto my cheek  
when I hear your

Name

I always wondered  
what happened when  
the moon goes to sleep

Aduke

How do I mourn you,  
when I don’t believe  
you’re gone

Rose petals  
laid to rest  
on gravestone

I find it beautiful  
that heaps of  
sadness can kiss  
your cheeks amidst  
a room of ghosts

And no one will see,  
no one will breath  
this burdened air

Fingertips as oars  
guiding water away  
from glass

Cracked door,  
Unshattered welcome  
mat

I’ve become acquainted  
to death as a visitor

He knocks and the  
door will always open

But why did you  
walk through  
to be his  
permanent resident
Bearing Thru It

Mawhyah Milton
If tomorrow they take me
put me in chains,
and take my voice away
A legal slave—
Tell them my name is Ngakiya.
To say my name.

If next week, they spot me,
claiming I hung myself
From the crooked branch of a cherry tree;
tell them I love and was happy
that I had family I’d never leave
who will say my name.

If next month they take me,
to disappear from the gaze of the sky
having you all question where
or why?
know that I didn’t run,
I’m just in a place I can’t find
let them search by my name.

If next month they hold me down,
to overpower me,
exploring my skins
to seek what lies beneath my gowns;
let me be silent a while
but help me to say my name.

And if next year their bullets pierce me
or my neck lay crushed,
pinned between the ground and their knee,
or choking in their hold on me,
or I die in their custody,
I need you to say my name.

Let them shout it to the skies
So God can hear them clearly,
A collective voice
Crying for the justice of a voice
Taken too soon.

let their tongues curl around each syllable
and don’t let them dance around the consonance—
force their teeth to sink into
the beauty of each sound
of my name.
Biting into the sweet fruit
turned bitter
because I’m no longer around
to eat and dance with them.

Let them know it was my grandmother’s name!
mother from Mecca, from God.
Shout it into the thin American air
Until you become breathless, like I once was.
Breathless
And watch it’s spirit soar
golden under the blazing sun
silver, in the cool moonlight.
Ngakiya, raging forever.

And let the fire rage too.
Let it rage forever.
Burn down buildings,
So that my soul can have light to guide it,
Up, up.
And take from the world what you will,
So that your heart is full
And so mine can be full too,
Up, up, away, away.

Say my name
And let it live on,
Because I could not live with it.
Articles & Videos on Mourning

This video centers on Isaiah Owens who is a funeral director in New York. Owens explains his difficulties as a funeral director during this pandemic, as he is having a hard time keeping up and is turning people away. He is putting his life on the line daily. He has also come up with some creative approaches, like having zoom calls during funerals.

This article examines the intentional re-framing of the coronavirus narratives to place the onus of spreading the virus on Black pathology to leave gaping disparities between impact on different communities unacknowledged.

Fort grew up with parents that ran a black funeral home (they performed memorial services by Whitney Houston, Amiri Baraka, and Sarah Vaughn), and for his PhD at Princeton he focused on black mourning. In this piece, he writes that for the black community, death is often a celebration of life. He discusses the deaths of friends that have died from the virus along with friends who have died from police brutality. The mourning extends past losing people as well, as he writes that we are also losing opportunities like employment. The funeral home also hosted a protest for the 45 inmates that have died from the virus in New Jersey.

This article addresses the impact that mourning and bereavement has on children’s ability to cope through future losses. It highlights the ways in which mourning can lead to mental illnesses like depression and anxiety for children. This is very relevant to today when black children have not only been exposed to losses of loved ones to the pandemic but also to the global losses of black people to police brutality.
Articles & Videos on Mourning


This paper provides a useful, though broad, framework for understanding some of the ways Social Networking Sites (SNS) are used as a means to process and or communicate bereavement (SMM or Social Media Mourning). By identifying four ‘casual conditions’ of SMM: Sharing Information; Discussing Death with other people who are mourning; Discussing death with the broader community; and Commemorating and Continuing Connection with the Deceased, these researchers describe 3 methods of communication through which people activate SNS to grieve (One way; two way; and immortality communication). This article may be useful to draw ties to Social Media Mourning as it pertains specifically to the Black Lives Matter Movement.


Peterson traces Black funeral traditions to its roots in mourning rituals for slaves known as homegoing ceremonies. He posits that mourning rituals are an essential part of the Black identity because Black people are particularly and perpetually vulnerable to death in the US. Despite the millions of Black bodies impacted by the virus, there has been no attempt by the nation’s leaders to recognize or mourn the losses experienced most directly by marginalized communities.

Claudia Rankine, “The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning,” June 22, 2015.

A black mother/friend of Rankine coined the phrase “The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning,” and the article explains the unjust ways in which black lives are killed. Throughout the piece, Rankine contextualizes death, as she was born in 1963 (church bombing in Alabama) to her present moment of 2015 (Charleston bombing). She also goes through a vast history, first discussing slavery and the writing about Emmett Till whose mother allowed photographs to be taken as a form of collective mourning, and she intentionally did not grief quietly. That is different from the mother of Michael Brown, as she argued that her son was not an orphan body that everyone needs to look at. The article emphasizes that Black Death is normalized and Black Lives Matter advocates for black lives by “aligning with the dead” and giving black bodies recognition.
Articles & Videos on Mourning

In this opinion piece, Stafford directs his attention to the politicization of Black maternal grief and how it is used to mobilize the movement against police brutality. While the image of a mourning mother is valuable to a cause, it threatens to co-opt and fetishize the trauma of those women, barring them from the privacy of grief and healing.

Stanley writes about “homecomings” which symbolize celebration and respect during funerals. She historically contextualizes black death from slavery to civil rights, as black death was a source of business and black funeral directors were often millionaires. They also elaborated funerals in detail in the Civil Rights Era. However, Stanley noticed that black funeral homes are disappearing in the 21st century.

Writer Claire Wilmot reflects on the loss of her sister to brain cancer, and the isolating effects of the public sphere of grief produced by social media for people on the periphery of the loss. Wilmot makes the distinction between mourning (a behavior) and grief (an internal emotional experience) and suggests that social media mourning has an entirely impersonalizing effect on the person who is deceased while obscuring the messiness of the private quality of grief. Wilmot brings nuance to the discussion of the impact of SMM and is particularly relevant to the way in which Black AfterLives are being activated in the public sphere.
Imprisoned in Perplexity

Jennessa Burks
Etcetera
Daquan Strickland

They treating Black Death like etcetera, etcetera etcetera
Etcetera.
They treating Black Death like etcetera
but I ain’t never even heard a name
I ain’t been able to tear right
Since Tamir rice
He was playing cops and robbers
Then the coppers went and got’em
Twelve pulled up on that nigga like he wasn’t 12
I ain’t saying he one of y’all but still think of yourself
Kill kids no bother just hop out and spray lead
Black boy cant play robber but can sure play dead
It’s the land of the free but the prison be privatized
So we making dollars off of black fathers we sabotage
scared of black capital but love making blacks capital
KKK on the streets but we jaioing the black radical
I don’t see a single prisoner that I’m better than
Instead I see my fellow man
Mlk said I ain’t speaking enough
And that I gotta be an extremist for love
Moderate is right but extreme is what’s getting it done
Plus the other side extreme
if we play the middle
they decide where we lean
I slanged a little
if a die on a scene
Don’t mind me
I’m Demonizing my experience
And expediting the narrative
Taking kids and I’m jailing’em
A racists paraphernalia
Starts and ends with the systems that be declaring us
Beneficiaries of the obituaries that bury us
Numb us call us young thuggers or harriets
Tear us up
Exceptional or degraded
Fair enough
Isn’t going to save us
So I’m gearing up
Look a pig in his mit
Like you scared of what
But you scared of us
We should’ve died
But we survive
And save paper
They lied and said we haven’t tried
Since slave labor
And you eat it up
Cops treating blacks like they pussy so they beat it up
Can’t jog through the street and not expect to die
Exercise my right? But no right to exercise

They treating Black Death like etcetera etcetera etcetera etcetera

They treating Black Death like etcetera but I ain’t never heard a name
Nine Black Roses
Nadia Ralston
ARTIST FEATURE

Rtxstjlee
Black Grief

Grief is a quiddative process that comes in five stages, as identified by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler, which serves as a catharsis for individuals suffering through loss. These five stages are described as: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. I also identify grief as a process that comes with the prospect of hope because it ends in the acceptance of one’s loss which paves the way for individuals to have positive cognitions of themselves and their loss.

Through grief, individuals are better able to process and accept the reality of their loss, in whatever way that loss appears. In the Black community, grief is both a collective and individualistic experience. It is intersectional. Grief can be infringed upon by the societal and racial stigmas associated with it. Archetypes like the Strong Black Woman hinder Black women from accessing mental and physical spaces to grieve according to our own needs. For Black men, the fallacious association between weakness and vulnerability inhibits them from processing and expressing their emotions.

I truly hope this section inspires and emboldens you to take ownership of your grief. Stop comparing it, embrace it, and be patient with yourself for grief holds no boundaries nor special formula. Grant yourself permission to grieve as your heart desires. It is indeed a catharsis.

- Faith Iloka
Light Through the Blinds

Jolien Louis

I miss the mornings
I guess when you let the days fade
And your heart turns to a different shade
The world will simply forget you.
I miss the sun crawling across my skin
As it creeps across the pale sky.
The last time I woke up in the morning
Was when I watched her die.
I miss the fresh warmth of the sun's rays
When the beams tickled my skin as a reminder
That I am loved.
I don't know how to live without her.
I hope I can
Wake up in the morning soon
I'm tired of watching my body exist as
Nothing deep into the afternoon
Today was the first time I woke up
And the sun shined the way it used to
But the rays got cold once I remembered
How much I miss you
Rtxstjlee
Who Tells The Stories of Dead
Ayoola Ogunyimika

Who tells the stories of the dead?
Gravestone,
gravesite,
burial,
tears,
dead roses,
remembrance.
Life must move on.

Will wails inked in blood serve as epitaph?
Maybe then
doves can
visit us
peacefully
in sleep.

Mahogany wood, lined with red velvet cloth. Interior white as a ghost.

An open
casket for
a mother
to cry into.
Who writes her story?
READ MORE...
Is my skin a crime?
Sarah Duvivier
Articles and Podcasts on Grief

Fernanda Echavarri, “The Coronavirus Has a Disparate Impact on Black Grief, Too.”
This article discusses the ways in which Black and Brown people have been significantly impacted and experienced great losses to COVID19 as compared to their white counterparts. It harkens on the ways in which Black grief has always been disregarded and/or vilified by the media and white supremacists. It also talks about what collective mourning looks like now, in a time when individuals must social distance.

Zandria Felice Robinson, “The B-side of Blackness SEARCHING IN SOUND FOR THE LOUDNESS AND QUIET OF MOURNING.”
An instance where Robinson writes about black grief is when they state, “I tried to spread my legs across the width of the bench to distribute the grief evenly between my two feet, swollen still from the Racist Sugar that had killed me, and leaned deep and forward, like I was gone do Ailey’s Revelations.”

A call for collective grief, especially because the conditions for anyone grieving at this moment are far from normal. Glaude asks for public mourning days or public rituals. This collective grief looks past race, gender, sexual orientation, and any aspects of identity and instead asks all Americans to grieve together.

Dr. Joy Harden Bradford, Session 162: Processing Our Collective Grief.
Podcast with Dr. Joy Harden Bradford and guest Dr. Robinson. Robinson shares that 2020 is the year of grief, which is a universal experience that is unique to everyone. It includes losses and symbolic losses, such as loss of safety, loss of routine, loss of milestones, loss of control, and loss of identity, and the body still grieves regardless of the trigger.
Articles and Podcasts on Grief (cont.)

There is also secondhand trauma through consuming police brutality content that is causing vicarious traumatic responses. An obvious debate is the issue of being together versus being safe in this constant isolation. Robinson asks which rituals can we still engage with and what is their purpose, as it is integral to reimagine and honor and memorialize. The mental health aspect of the pandemic is clearly prevalent, so listening to one’s body and being intentional about our decisions is crucial at this time.


In this post, Hersey affirms that one can grieve both for things that once were, as well as things that never existed. Taking moments within one’s week to grieve is essential to the spiritual process of healing. She offers small channels through which the reader might engage in this work, including starting a “Grief Jar” and trying out poetry prompts.


Addresses the impact of police brutality and the COVID19 pandemic on the mental, physical, and emotional health of Black mothers. The post delves into the risks that racism and bias poses on Black people and their well-being/ sense of safety and stability.


In this short article, author Jemar Tisby unpacks the familial metaphors which Black people use to describe and embody grief and loss. Nodding to both personal and national responses to Black Death by police brutality, Tisby articulates the monumental depth to which Black people feel collective pain.
Mawhyah Milton
Nocturnal
Julian Price

He is afraid of the dark
When light refuses to stimulate his retinas,
So too is his sense neglected;
His guide through the night
Is candlelight
Because what better way to counter fright
Than with open fire
He stands frail against the moons wail
Howls haunt him, spirits taunt him
Tales of what can go down
on this desolate, yet Urban teetered trail
Entrance him,
compliments to the department;
His superiors saturate his soul
In the ill will of killers and constituents
At sundown
So when your son comes-
Up goes the glock
That’s dawn of a new day
Dreaming of details blurred like
Memories, of your baby boy bathing
Frolicking with friends
Or better, still breathing;
Yes the good days
Before he was swallowed
And spit into that shallow grave

How dare they dirty him
In sin and pigs
He was so innocent
But he belonged to the dark of day
Like your daughter
2 feet shorter, a firecracker like her father
A beam so bright
You may forget she dwelled in the night
But she’d remind you
Her call belonged to the crickets
And street cats
She never catered
to the disaster of midday
A creature of dusk and diligence
You could tell by her tusks;
A beast of wisdom
Poached for her private property;
The price you pay for raising royalty
Is the eminent threat of theologians
And thugs alike
threatening your throne
With heinous fornication
And flashing lights
Beware, he will snatch your stars
In broad day to avenge his fallen flame
"Wiped Away"
Nadia Ralston
LOST: Umbrella

Jolien Louis

I’d love if it was true:  
I’m here for you

But no

Because right now as I listen to my mother’s labored breathing  
I hear nothing but radio silence  
White noise from the other side  
My phone lays unlit and motionless

Those here for me are currently  
Drinking to enter a softer plane  
Smoking to get things off their brain  
Fucking to feel no pain

And I listen to her breathing

I want to dump the words of my heart  
Into their inboxes  
But I know what a burden that could be  
To the unweighted mind

I want to cry into their arms  
Tears falling into their laps  
But I know what a burden that could be  
To the unweighted mind

My thoughts sit heavy on my shoulders  
The weight grows as the silence rings

She’s breathing funny again  
My nose has gone runny again

Exhaustion feels like a cloud  
But the rain does not pour  
Instead I lie awake  
Wondering who would hold an umbrella  
If I asked
Black Healing

Healing refers to the specific processes of repair and restoration that typically occur after the recognition of trauma or harm. Healing is a non-linear and often variant process for many but the elements of Black racialization add special nuance to the topic of Black Healing. With special recognition of the ways that systematic racism in mental health disparities impacts Black communities and their engagement with traditionally western forms of healing—medication, therapy, surgical interventions, etc.—we hope to highlight Black, Indigenous, and alternative healing resources in this next section.

From introspective affirmations, reclamation of voice and autonomy, dance and musical expression, mindfulness yoga & spiritual nourishment, to communing with nature and others; there are a ton of healing practices that can aid in repairing and restoring your mental health. Often these practices will be used in conjunction to promote more holistic healing.

– June Philippe
I am enough
Sarah Duvivier
PICTURE BLACKNESS
Mawhyah Milton
Healing Hearts
Jennessa Burks
Articles & Podcasts on Healing

In this essay, Prof. Benjamin makes the argument that White Afterlife, second chances, is threatening to Black Life. The baptism-like manifestation of White AfterLife works in partnership with the condemning nature of Racial Debt and the expenses of both Black Life and Black Death. Using the metaphor of reproductive systems, Prof. Benjamin analyzes the ways in which the maintenance of BlackAfterLife/Networks of Kinship is vital to combating the recursive chain of Black Death.

Sherell McArthur & Monique Lane use a Black feminist pedagogical lens to imagine “a viable intervention alternative to traditional methods of educating Black girls.” With their illumination of the specific practices of politicized ethic of care and space and place for healing, McArthur & Lane established applicable healing frameworks for Black populations, specifically for restoring Black girlhood in antagonistic institutional spaces.

Healing is a practice of turning away from the politics of disposability, control, and punishment; it’s a returning to our bodies and to one.” In this essay Barbara Sostaita explores the abolitionist healing practices Black and Indigenous communities of the past and present in a call for a return to ancestral healing in “creating freer futures in the now.”

Bowden’s TedTalk was inspired by a conversation she had with her 74 year old mother who noted. Bowden begins with spoken word and then leads into a conversation about black women’s healing. Since black womanhood and resistance work so hand in hand, she notes that many black women didn’t know they could have therapy and didn’t know they could even cry so instead laugh at things that are actually traumatic. She emphasizes that although the black woman’s burden is deep, it is integral to heal and feel. Before helping children, black women have to heal themselves first. She encourages black women to move forward by putting self-care first and having the courage to unpack and heal from trauma.
This article speaks to a spike in anxiety and depression for blacks after the death of George Floyd (conducted by CDC). There is a serious need to address where trauma comes from. There is also a video with activists that shares that it is psychologically taxing to be black in America everyday, and they give tips about how to cope. They share to
• Be aware of your body- know what it’s like when it is calm
• Don’t believe the “should” = too much pressure
• You’re allowed to rest
  ○ Black women tend to overwork (questioning if I’m doing enough all the time)
• Reframe your thoughts
• Lean on your community

Dr. van der Kolk describes trauma and the ways in which the body responds to trauma and triggers of those events. During his speech, van der Kolk notes that, “for real change to take place, their body needs to learn that the danger has passed and live in the present,” which I found really striking because for Black people, that trauma never ends. The trauma left upon us from racism, white supremacy, police brutality, health disparities, etc, leave us fearful for the systems that reinforce such harms against us. And those systems, unfortunately, continue to prevail against us

Black Girls Heal
Organizations & Other Resources

**Safe Black Space**
Safe Black Space is the umbrella under which various services are offered to address people of African ancestry’s individual and community reactions to cultural and racial trauma. Currently, it has two main components: Safe Black Space Community Healing Circles and Emotional Emancipation Circles (EECs℠). It will expand to include Safe Ally Spaces and Safe Black Green Spaces: Grandmas Backyard.

**ShutDownSTEM**
#ShutDownSTEM is an initiative from a multi-identity, intersectional coalition of STEM professionals and academics taking action for Black lives. ShutDownSTEM, Particles for Justice and VanguardSTEM are in close collaboration, and working together to create lasting change. These efforts build on—and would not be possible without—the long history of Black activism, scholarship, and leadership in the fight for Black lives.

**The Underbelly**
Internationally recognized yoga teacher, body positivity advocate, and author of Every Body Yoga, Jessamyn Stanley guides you through understanding and mastering yoga. This site offers a free trial with informative yoga tutorials for students at every level.

**Good Grief Detroit**
Founded by Espy Thomas. “Where Do Black Women Go To Grieve?”, is a social bi-weekly support group that offers a safe space for black women to process their grief.

**Heal Haus**
Heal Haus is a membership service with a week-long free trial that provides unlimited live Yoga and Meditation classes. Heal Haus operates out of Clinton Hill, Brooklyn in a space that is designed to inspire community while providing an accessible and fresh approach to the wellness aesthetic.

**Dive in Well**
“In 2019, we gathered over 100 leaders and influencers in the wellness space for intimate salon dinners across NYC and LA entitled "Diversity in Wellness," with the mission of working towards a more inclusive industry. We create meaningful opportunities for change-makers to facilitate on and offline conversations as a catalyst for change and accessibility.” Dive in Well is a developing dinner series that has expanded their offerings to both offline and online experiences, resources, and tools to empower both consumers and participants who believe in soul-centered wellness so we may all be well.
Harriet's Apothecary.
We all come from a colonized history that created healing and healthcare based off of values, systems, and laws that punish, kill, and displace people of color. Especially folks of color who are seen as physically, emotionally, and mentally different. Care has been commodified based off of who is “healthy” and who is not “healthy” and who is worthy of care based on race, gender, sexuality, disability, immigration and class. Under capitalism, people are considered material goods. People matter to the point to which they can produce, consume, or be owned.

Healing justice takes a bold stance and names the impact of this violence as real, seen and remembered. Our work moves from this lineage and framework. We hold healing justice as an evolving framework that re-centers the role of healing, safety and wellness inside of liberation-based movements. Healing Justice is informed by economic, gender, racial, reproductive and disability justice movements.
What Juneteenth Means to Me
Danielle Samake

As difficult as my journey in India was, I am grateful for it. It taught me that my Blackness is under attack on virtually every corner of this Earth, that if I don’t love myself, this world never will. It impressed upon me the value of Black love, which I’d observed up close in the relationship of a dear Zimbabwean friend I’d met through my NGO placement and her Ghanian boyfriend. It taught me to use my voice. To REALLY use my voice. To shout my presence from the rooftops and the rafters, to shout to any ear that will listen.

I AM HERE. MY ANCESTORS WERE HERE. MY COMMUNITY IS HERE.

This Juneteenth, I remember those who came before me. I remember my ancestors, the Black community’s collective ancestors. I remember the 65,000 African students currently living and studying in India, who are subjected to the horrors I experienced daily over much longer periods of time—many for ten years or longer. I remember my Grandmother, Minella, and her sacrifices. I remember the progress we have made thus far. I remember the progress we have yet to make. I remember George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Tony Mcdade. Oluwatoyin Salau. I remember Masonda Ketada Oliver, a Congolese student and French teacher who was murdered in New Delhi, India in 2016 for the “crime” of trying to hail an autorickshaw. I remember Ahmaud Arbery. I remember Trayvon Martin, who if God spares my life to see my 19th birthday in two months, I will be two years older than when he was brutally murdered. I remember Eric Garner. Michael Brown. Tamir Rice. Amadou Dialou. Sandra Bland. So many others. So many others.
Tobi Ajayi

"I am a Thug Black Man"

The looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you.

"Bring back the death penalty and bring back our police!"

"Justice for George"
Inner Engineering
Chisom Achinivu

Inner Engineering
The masterpiece is never ready but the pieces can always be found
The pieces, misconstrued and twisted, yet manage to work even if it’s minimal
The two main engines work together but seemingly they butt heads
One struggles along, fixing pieces as it goes,
   Requiring new management and new improvements as she goes along
Cause you see the molten lava meant to make it steadier and more efficient doesn’t strengthen it the same way in which the upper engine is strengthened
   Weakening and covering under each dose of scorching hot and ancient lava
Coming cyclically to try and strengthen,
   But chipping away at each part
She chugs along screeching with rust, and with each faulty screw coming undone, the main engineer comes to fix with its wrench
   But this time the wrench is too small
   The screw too loose and too large
   The screw begins to jiggle and wiggle
The main engineer tries to find new screws
   Hoping just hoping to strengthen in time before she starts to fall apart
   But she knows the main screw must be there to keep her going
   She allows herself to have her main screw replaced
   But the new screw can never fit the hole of the main screw
The main engineer scrambles to place the old screw back in
   But she is falling apart
   Smaller screws jiggle and wiggle their way out
   She is still chugging along
   The main engine stops to try and get her back in tune
   The main engineer comes and tries to stop her
   She keeps chugging
   The last screw is holding on
   Jigging its way out
Slowly
   Slowly
   Slowly
   Both the engineer and the main engine come
   The engine tries to pour more lava to try and stop her from exploding
   But the main engine comes and kicks in double time to stop the engineer but
   as the main engine kicks in,
   A click, clank, a jiggle and jank, is heard
The last screw begins to reach the floor
The #Stayhomeproject
Saharra Dixon

Opening:

THE TROUBADOURS

(A voiceover; possible animation with words comes across the screen) Once upon a time there was a person by the name of Miss Rona.

This person, Miss Rona, was very aggressive in her behavior.

She came suddenly and wrapped everyone under her skirt.

Her skirt was so big that it covered the entire town; The town was scared.

... Scared because they couldn’t leave their houses, and it made them sad.

Their houses were widely spread apart, and it was very dark inside their homes.

The people in the next town over heard their pleas and thought they were overreacting.

(together) .....We thought they were overreacting

(Earthquake...A sudden sound, perhaps like traveling through a tunnel and then a sudden BOOM or CRASH)

THE STUDENT

(Taking to her TikTok/Instagram. Lots of notifications pop up from friends to show she’s actively on the phone) What...just...happened? I am lost, confused, and terrified. I wasn’t expecting it to happen so fast... I thought I had a couple of more months, forget it— who am I kidding— years for reality, for adulthood to become this tragically real. You know I am still in shock! No, seriously, I am. Doing my best to keep it together... read the news...find the truth from wrong... stay alert and participate in my future; But it is exhausting. I am drained, and I just want to be myself - isn’t it my right? To be young, to be careless? To explore... make mistakes... not cleaning up their messes? You know politicians...the rich... Men with power?

I love being home, I can be my authentic self here, but this was my senior year... I had so many hopes for graduation, you know? I am telling you: "I was definitely angry at first because we had goals we were going to reach. Especially as a senior, my last season was cut short, so in the beginning, I was really sad about it."
If you feel moved or if you resonate with the work of any of these artists, please consider donating to them directly using their handles provided below!

Featured in Black Mental Health p. 5-11

JAVON STEPHENSON AKA. SO4P
"Wake Up." | p. 6

Bio
Brooklyn rapper SO4P first caught attention as a collaborator of DAP the Contract, Roaring NICE, Kamaria Woods, and Toneraps. Getting a degree in Theatre Arts & Performance Studies from Brown University provided him the clarity to dive deeper into music, and the background to explore his creation and performance through a more practical lens. SO4P grew up in Canarsie, in a Jamaican household on a block full of West Indians. From an early age, he was influenced by the sounds of Reggae, Gospel, classic R&B, and the many other rhythms of his people. Starting with prose and poetry, he transitioned to songwriting and experimenting in all the forms of art he could. SO4P’s music pays homage to his many backgrounds, and follows the evolution of his life’s perspective. Adding to his own worldviews, he frequently collaborates with artists and producers from the South and Midwest, in addition his New York and Rhode Island connects. He notably shares exclusive music with his supporters via Audiomack, Soundcloud, and Bandcamp, in addition to his presence on major DSPs.

Handles
Cashapp; $SO4P
PayPal; https://www.paypal.me/so4p

ALEXIS GREEN
"All That's Left" | p. 7

Bio
Alexis Green, MFA Candidate, with a concentration in poetry, is spoken word artist from Irvington, NJ. Alexis has performed on many stages throughout her career, and through the use of social media, her poetry has captivated many notable members of the community such as Ezekiel Azonwu, Yvette Nicole Brown, and Yusef Salaam and Raymond Santana, of the Exonerated 5. Her passion for social justice issues has caught the attention of former TMZ host Van Lathan, and lead to multiple guest appearances on The Roland Martin Show. Alexis’s love for God, poetry, and people is what she attributes to her continuously growing success. Alexis Green is an artist, who is living in her truth, sharing her gift, and walking with God to fulfill her purpose.
SARAH DUVIVIER
"99 Problems" | p. 10
"Justice Now" | p. 11
"BLM" | p. 16
"Is my skin a crime?" | p. 30
"I am enough" | p. 38

Bio
I am a Haitian-American graphic designer. I am currently working as a freelance designer and illustrator in the NJ/NY area. I graduated from a private university in Michigan with a Bachelor in Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design in 2019. My passion is in creating intriguing works of art that tell a story, make you smile, or get you inspired. Easily finding inspiration amongst the "mundane", and pushing myself to go further is what I do every day.

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Featured in Black Mourning p. 12–25

AYOOLA OGUNYIMIKA a.k.a Her Silence | a.ogunyimika@yahoo.com
"Permanent Resident" | p. 13
"Who Tells The Stories of the Dead" | p. 29

Bio
I am currently a 4th year student at Temple University pursuing a degree in English (concentration in Creative Writing) with the intentions of going to Medical School. I’ve used writing as a source of comfort from a very young age and continue to strive to grow as a writer. I have performed various pieces before attending Temple University and I am currently in a student-run poetry collective on campus called Babel; this collective has given me the opportunity to perform my work in Philadelphia. I come from a Nigerian background and implement many of my cultural elements in my writing. I also work through many various art forms such as dance, singing, drawing, and painting (mostly as hobbies). My interest in medicine comes from my advocacy work with the Sickle Cell Association of New Jersey; I intend to become a Hematologist and provide care for people suffering with various blood disorders.

Handles
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Venmo: @Ayoola
MAWHYAH MILTON | mawyah@gmail.com,
She/her/hers
"Bearing Thru It" | p. 14
Untitled | p. 33

Bio
Mawhyah Milton is an artist and designer from Birmingham, AL. They graduated from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2015 with a BFA in Illustration. For years, they struggled to find their “voice”, until they slowly discovered who they were themselves. Now they live in New York and uses their artwork, concepts and style to display their bold, loud and colorful self and make sure things that are ignored get a second look.

Handles
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NGAKIYA CAMARA | ngakiyacamara@gmail.com
she/her/hers
"her name" | p. 15

Handles
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JENESSA BURKS | JennessaArt@gmail.com
she/her/hers
"Imprisoned in Perplexity" | p. 20
"Healing Hearts" | p. 40

Bio
Jenessa is a self taught artist based in Central Massachusetts. Art is a passion which she uses to express her emotion and amplify her voice. While her works include mixed mediums she works primarily in acrylic to create art pieces intended to capture the beauty, strength, and resilience of BIPOC. Too often they are missing from art spaces. Jenessa hopes her creations bring joy to others who may experience the void of being unseen and awareness to those who hold the privilege and fulfillment of being seen.

Handles
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CashApp: $JennessaBurks
Donations: https://checkout.square.site/pay/5955d394-84c3-42da-b186-0be07639a810

DAQUAN STRICKLAND | daquanstrickland@gmail.com
he/him/his
"Etcetera" | p. 21

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NADIA RALSTON | nralston@princeton.edu
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"Nine Black Roses" | p. 23
"Wiped Away" | p. 35
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RTXSTJLEE | rtistjlee8@gmail.com
Untitled Pieces | p. 24;25;28
Bio
I've battled with anxiety and depression most of my adult life, I believe it stems from a multitude of reasons, from the loss of a sister at an early age and never being able to fully understand or cope with it, to the emotional loneliness and doubt I dealt with in my time in the military, or simply just the idea of always failing and never accomplishing my goals. I was never one to express my emotions or [experiences] with anyone [other than] my parents; the pain I've been through in my life and the fear of one day giving up on myself was always something I looked at as a weakness, so it was something I never shared or expressed completely. I use my music and my painting as an outlet to pour that fear, pain, and mental state that I deal with everyday, to help me overcome that feeling of failure and the idea of giving up. What you see/hear in my work is never something that can be judged or based on one perspective, but more so something you have to think about and understand, which is what I go through in my own mind everyday. Trying to think and understand my emotions why I feel one way or why I can’t overcome certain things that I just choose to live with, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that because it makes me stronger and it makes me the man that I am. I'm still here, fighting everyday with my demons, with that thought of failure and pain, but what keeps me going is my hunger to move forward and grow, be better than what I am and look towards what I can be. As a young Black man in this world, I was born with a chip on my shoulder that I never knew was there until society brought it to light and try to diminish who I am as a person. We were made to be the leaders, powerful, inspiring, and honorable. What we go through in our lives and within our own spirits is a testimony of what our ancestors had to endure for us to continue on, its so that we bare that pain and show that we can also overcome the injustice, racism, and lack of appreciation we [experience]. No matter what inner demons we may face alone..we will all stand together and go through our struggles together. I'm sharing my music and my paintings so that I may shine a light on my brothers and sisters, as a symbol of how I continue to bare that pain and fight for our struggle, and with all of my demons I still strive to be greater than what I am viewed as.
**JOLIEN LOUIS** | jolien.louis14@gmail.com  
she/her/hers  
"Through The Blinds" | p.27  
"Umbrella" | p. 36  
**Bio**  
Jolien Louis is a native New Yorker, working towards her BA in Theatre at the George Washington University. Her written work surrounding grief and loss honors her mother, Naomi Robinson. Before her mother’s passing, Jolien promised Naomi she would never stop writing.  
**Handles**  
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**JULIAN PRICE** | japrice3@uncg.edu  
he/him/his  
"Nocturnal" | p.34  
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**Featured in Black Healing  p. 37-48**

**DANIELLE SAMAKE** | dsamake@princeton.edu  
she/her/hers  
"What Juneteenth Means to Me" | p. 45  
**Bio**  
Danielle Samake is a Freshman at Princeton University. A committed activist, her passion for Human Rights and justice inspires her writing took her to India on the Novogratz Bridge Year Program. She is currently a RISE fellow with the Pace Center.

**TOBI AJAYI** | oajayi@princeton.edu  
she/her/hers  
Untitled | p. 46  
**Bio**  
As a British Nigerian, I was primarily exploring themes of diasporic circulation, my multifarious black identity, and how my sense of self unfolds across multiple geographies. My work has always utilized maps in some way or another. Each map comes with its own story. While they are often read as unbiased, practical tools of geographic accuracy, they are visual manifestations of political hegemony, and colonial practices. The pain that the images carry is rooted in, but not restricted to, the land such tragedies occur on. Through the process of creating these compositions, I am able to work through my grief and confusion. The images are often heavy, layered, and complex, a direct reflection of my chaotic feelings. I like to believe there is something to be found in each of them.  
**Handles**  
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Website: https://tobiajayi.work/
SAHARRA DIXON | saharra.dixon@gmail.com
she/her/hers
"The #StayHomeProject" | p. 48

Bio
Saharra Dixon is a Community-engaged Theatre Artist and Certified Health Education Specialist from Atco, New Jersey. Her work focuses on health and wellness in the arts, particularly the performing arts. She received her MA in Applied Theatre from NYU and BS in Health Behavior Science from University of Delaware. The attached play piece is from a community-based participatory research process exploring what it means to stay home and return to a new normal amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. She led a 3 month process that culminated in an ethnodrama titled The #StayHome Project. On behalf of the co-investigators of the process, we are thrilled to share our experience and findings with you in the form of a play. You can watch The #StayHome Project on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvYW20C3UjI

Handles
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Venmo: @Saharra-Dixon
Community-Building Discussion Guides

The following series of activities and conversation outlines are meant to foster spaces for communal healing and care in the face of the pandemics and the lack of resources for Black communities. First, we will outline standard practices you might use as a facilitator for creating a safe, virtual environment for participants to engage in important discussions about self and community in a meaningful and vulnerable way.

Setting Community Guidelines:

As a facilitator, it is your responsibility to create an atmosphere of safety, openness, and honesty. The first opportunity to establish that space is introducing yourself and setting community guidelines. After you have introduced yourself with your name, pronouns, and your role as facilitator in this session, ask the following question to the group:

What does safety mean to you all? Write your answers in the chat.

As the answers come in, read them aloud. You may ask clarifying questions and welcome live comments from the participants. Wrap up the discussion by summarizing the main points to the question ‘What does safety mean to you all?’ and affirm that the following activity and discussion will be grounded in these practices of safety and respect.
Opening Exercises:

Every breakout session activity should begin with introductions and an icebreaker. Here are some examples:

**Standard Intro:**
Name/Pronouns

**Icebreaker Questions:** What brings you to our activity today? Who is the last person you called? What is your song in rotation right now? What is your go-to self-care routine?

**Icebreaker Activities:**
- twist on a circle of affirmation (5 minutes): The facilitator will ask questions to the entire group, and if the participant agrees with the statement they can use the raise hand feature (in person this would usually be coming to the middle of the circle and high-fiving, but has to be adjusted given our current state) The questions usually start as pretty basic ones, such as raise your hand if you have a dog, have a sibling, but can become deeper as the ice breaker progresses.

Main Activity/Discussion:

The activity worksheets in the following section are formatted to include the Title, Duration, Summary, Materials and Directions. Be sure to skim the activity before you host the Zoom session, so you are prepared with any materials you might need for your role as facilitator.

After you do the rounds of introductions, explain the activity or discussion you are about to have by sharing the Title, Duration, Summary, and Materials. Always make space for participants to ask questions.

As you go through the activity, make sure to move at a manageable pace while being conscious of the 20 minutes allotted to each activity. If you are running out of time, use your own discretion to decide what parts of the activity to do and which parts to leave out. But, in the spirit of fostering a safe environment which includes allotting time to process the discussion, always make time for a debrief.
Concluding Questions and Wrap-Up:

The concluding questions is the moment for everyone to process the activity that just took place. It is a good time to remind people of the community guidelines, so they may feel comfortable sharing their experiences of the last 20 minutes. Some activity sheets will offer specific questions to begin the debrief discussion, but here are some general prompts to keep in the back of your mind:

- What did you all learn?
- Did anything surprise you?
- What did you talk about?
- Would anyone like to share what they wrote down?

If people are hesitant at first, offer to share your own reflections of the activity or discussion. At the end of the debrief and discussion surrounding the concluding questions, each activity will end with a wrap-up.

Wrap-Up: Thank everyone for contributing to the space and remind everyone of any upcoming events.
**Activity: Mindfulness Origami**

This activity centers mindfulness while allowing participants to engage in hands-on crafting. The practice of mindfulness is interwoven with Japanese cultural art practices in group camaraderie for this virtual activity.

**Materials**
sheets of paper, headphones, origami designs sheet (should be emailed to participants prior to meeting), mindful meditation music

**Break-Down**

**Opening Exercises:**
- Introduction and Icebreaker
- Explain the origami activity. Drop the link to the origami design sheet in the chat for convenience.

**Main Activity**
- Group folding event to be accompanied by mindful meditation music
  - Encourage participants to chat with a buddy after the folding session.

**Concluding Questions/Debrief**
- Would anyone like to share their design and a little bit about how they’ve felt about folding origami?

**Wrap-Up**
**Activity: Oral Histories & Proverbs**

"Only a fool tests the depth of the river with both feet"

This activity allows participants to choose a group theme and create a proverb based on that theme. Calling on the centuries old African traditions of oral history telling and collection, participants are asked to work in community and ponder their lived experiences to craft advice for all of life’s complicated situations.

**Materials**

*None*

**Time Break-Down**

**Opening Exercises:**

- Introductions: Name/pronouns
- Icebreaker: If you have a favorite proverb, would you be willing to share it with the group?

**Main Activity**

- Ask participants to choose a theme from those listed below
  - Healing; Loss; Affirmation; Love; Community; Mindfulness
- Ask participants to start thinking about the power of healing through story-telling. Ask if they have any experiences that they feel have been proverbial. Encourage participants to chat in breakout rooms of 3-4 people to develop a group proverb based on the theme of the session
- Each group will share their proverbs with the larger group after discussions.

**Concluding Questions/ Debrief**

**Wrap-Up**
Discussion: Relationships & Communication

This would take the form of group discussions and introspection surrounding people’s relationships with themselves and loved ones. It also touches on how these relationships have been impacted by the pandemic.

Materials
None

Time Break-Down

Opening Exercises:
- Introductions: Name/pronouns
- Icebreaker: What brings them to Power Hour & Who was the last person they’ve called.

Main Activity
- Guiding Questions:
  - How have our relationships with our loved ones been impacted by the pandemic?
  - How can we intentionally invest in our relationships?
  - How can we grow together through that investment?
  - How has the pandemic affected the ways we communicate?
  - How can we love ourselves better during this time?
  - How do we communicate our needs to loved ones without feeling burdensome?

Concluding Questions/ Debrief

Wrap-Up
Discussion: Mindfulness Tools

This session will focus on mindfulness and building community through a breathing exercise, small group sharing session, and final group discussion to bring together resources.

Materials
None

Time Break-Down

Opening Exercises:
- Introduction: Start with a breathing exercise for the entire group. There are different breathing exercises available on this website, and some include sitali breath, lion’s breath, and humming bee breath.

Main Activity
- Small Group Discussion: Prior to joining breakout rooms, have participants reflect on the ways they have been coping over the past few months. When entering the small group, have each participant share a song, a podcast, a recipe, a book, or anything that has helped them during these tough times, and discuss its particular significance to others.
- Large Group Discussion: Have one participant from each small group summarize the tools that their group members shared. Through sharing your screen, create a large list of resources that includes all of these books, podcasts, recipes, etc. This is intentionally built by the entire Power Hour community itself.

Concluding Questions/ Debrief

Wrap-Up
Discussion: Loss, Grief & Healing

This session will center around grounding ourselves in our grief, coping mechanisms, and sources of release. It serves as a reminder to be patient with ourselves, our minds and our bodies. To openly process our experiences with loss these past few months, since the onset of COVID, and highlight the strength in communal grief and healing.

Materials
None

Main Activity
• Introductions
• Begin with the question: “In times when I have needed an outlet (someone to vent to, a shoulder to cry on, process my emotions with) I go to ________

  ○ Allow people to share who they wrote down and why.
  ○ Relate this to the power in communal healing. The strength in being able to confide in others, grieve alongside others, and feel as though we have safe spaces where we can unload without feeling burdensome.
• Define the key terms: Loss, Grief, and Healing
  ○ What kinds of losses have people experienced over the past few months & what coping strategies have you used to overcome your grief?
    ■ Would you identify these strategies as healthy or destructive for your mental health? Why?
• Question: How patient have people been with themselves these past few months? Do you find yourself wishing things were back to “normal”... However that looks/looked for people?

Concluding Questions/Debrief
• What are 3 things you are grateful for today?

Wrap-Up


Discussion: Love & Values

This serves as a discussion starter that allows people to share their thoughts on love & their values. It also allows people to reflect on their engagement with love (self-love, platonic, and relational).

Materials
None

Break-Down

Opening Exercises:
- Introductions and Icebreakers

Main Activity
- Facilitator poses the following questions to get a general sense of how people feel about love (attendees can respond through a poll or using the thumbs up feature on zoom).
  - “I know what it feels like to be loved”
  - “I have been in spaces where I did not feel valued” “I know how I want to be loved best”
  - “I value affirmations from others”
  - “I believe that money can buy love”
  - “I feel I can communicate with people about how I want to be loved”

Concluding Questions/ Debrief
- Open discussions about what questions came to mind for people while responding to the polls.
  - Did anything strike them?

Wrap-Up
Team Bios

Faith Iloka '21

My name is Faith Iloka and I am a senior in the African American Studies Department at Princeton University. My passion for working in the Mourning & Mental Health team of Ida B. Wells JUST Data Lab is rooted in how personal and salient this work is to me. My work, as is embodied by this playbook, highlights the ways in which we as a community, can grieve and heal from past and present trauma through art, music, and our voices. This project, from our collective research to the submissions we received, has allowed us to curate a space to further these conversations surrounding Blackness and mental health. I truly hope these resources inspire and serve us all in our individual and collective healing journeys. Stay safe everyone!

Haydon John '21

I am Haydon John, a senior in the Department of Anthropology pursuing certificates in Urban Studies and Theater. From hearing the experiences of my family and peers, and reflecting on my own experience of the COVID 19 pandemic, it became clear to me the disparity between the systemic violence against the black community and the resources available for Black folk to resist, to heal, and to be. My gravitation towards working with the Mourning and Mental Health team within Ida B. Wells JUST Data Lab originates from a desire to offer the space, resources, artwork, and community strengthening activities to facilitate healing on a communal and individual level. I hope this playbook begins to fill that gap.
**Lauren Johnson ’21**

My name is Lauren Johnson, and I am a senior in the African American Studies department. Working on this project has truly been a source of healing for me, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity. I have learned about so many new resources that I can use as a black woman, and the stories and artwork that were submitted have both touched and inspired me in insurmountable ways. I hope that this playbook is a beginning archive of sorts for black scholars and black artists who focus on black mourning and mental health, and I am optimistic that it will continue to grow.

**June Philippe ’20**

My name is Fedjounie (June) Philippe, and I am an alum of Princeton’s Spanish & Portuguese department. My engagement with Black mourning, mental health, and healing is both personal and political. Working with this project has allowed me to contribute to the centuries long process of re-imagining support and caring for Black communities while allowing me the opportunity to learn and connect with other Black folk though some many different mediums. I hope this playbook can live on as a testament to all the care work being conducted in our communities for our communities.
Thank you

From the bottom of our hearts, The Mourning and Mental Health Team of Ida B. Wells JUSTData Lab would like to say thank you! Thank you to the wonderful artists who submitted their works. Thank you to Professor Benjamin for giving us this opportunity.

We truly hope this playbook assists you in any way that it can through your mental health journeys and coping during this time. Through all the loss, grief and mourning, we are constantly healing.

Take care,
Faith, Haydon, Lauren, & June