

A still life composition featuring a cup of coffee, autumn leaves, a knitted sweater, and a gift box. The background is a light, neutral color. In the top left, there is a small, dried autumn leaf. In the middle left, a white ceramic cup filled with a light brown liquid sits on a woven, brown wicker tray. To the right of the cup is a single, large, yellow autumn leaf with dark spots. Below the cup and leaf is a portion of a cream-colored, textured knit sweater. In the center, a white gift box is wrapped with natural twine and adorned with a dried, feathery plant stem and a small, white, cotton-like flower. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, dried pine cone and another autumn leaf.

Autumn 2021

Mapping Onward

a healing-centered journal presented by TraumaVenture

Mapping Onward



editor's note



Welcoming you to our Autumn Issue —

It has been one year since publishing the first issue of MappingOnward. As I shared then, the idea for MappingOnward came into being in March 2020. It was the first month during the pandemic lockdown, and, like everyone, I was navigating my feelings during this global phenomenon.

Having considered the role of phenomenology in meaning-making for my dissertation, I applied the same framework into creating this online journal. As a doctoral student, my work situated traumatic memory in social value creation and how post-conflict entrepreneurs in post-war Liberia were utilizing business ventures as healing agents. I wondered then and as I do, how can our professions serve as an instrument for moving forward after critical incidents or life-altering events in our lives.

In this issue, I dive deeper into the name MappingOnward. I share the intentionality behind its name and the meaning behind it. My hope is that as you read these pages, you get to consider ways to move forward, one day at a time.

As I look toward 2022, in the coming issue of MappingOnward, I will share conversations on grief-informed advocacy, gun violence, and therapeutic jurisprudence that I have been a part of this year. I look forward to sharing much more with you. Stay tuned...

I hope the pages in this issue help support your imagination for a new day from today.

Curated with love and wishing you well-being,

Cecilia

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Cecilia M. Cardesa



Mapping Onward

a reflection

By Cecilia M. Cardesa

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Mapping Onward, a reflection

From 2003 to 2006, I was a community organizer working on immigrant issues out of a church basement in Wilmington, Delaware.

Through our work, which often included candlelight vigils, demonstrations and meetings with lawmakers, we were able to effect institutional change from a faith-based perspective.

It was through that work that we humanized immigration, human trafficking, worker conditions, and more.

It was through that work that I first encountered Franciscans.

It was also through that work that I was elected to serve as Chair of the Racial Justice Committee with the Young Professionals (YPs) arm of the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League.

As YPs, we walked around Wilmington during "Get Out the Vote" campaigns, and registered individuals to vote; hosted tables at parks; spoke with barbers; knew every bodega and taqueria in town.

It was during those days that we, as YPs, would sign our advocacy emails with: "Upward and Onward".

Those three years proved to be pivotal and life-turning in my life; on a personal and professional level.

Ever since those days, I have reflected on the word Onward many, many times in my life.

In times of despair, anxiety, and fear, what did upward and onward mean for me?

What would it take?

How could I go forward?

What would that look like for me?

Many years later, I was listening to one of Tom Petty's songs where he sang:

"It's time to move on, time to get going...

What lies ahead, I have no way of knowing...".

For me, the lyrics helped put into words what faith had meant for me over the years. Faith that things will work out. Faith in my intuition to trust myself when I had to venture out into the unknown. Hope.



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Growth after Trauma

"We've learned that negative experiences can spur positive change, including a recognition of personal strength, the exploration of new possibilities, improved relationships, a greater appreciation for life, and spiritual growth. We see this in people who have endured war, natural disasters, bereavement, job loss and economic stress, serious illnesses and injuries. So despite the misery resulting from the coronavirus outbreak, many of us can expect to develop in beneficial ways in its aftermath." Growth After Trauma by Richard G. Tedeschi in Harvard Business Review (July-August 2020)

I do not know whether growth is a process or an outcome. What I do know is that they are not mutually exclusive and that they take turns in my head, and heart, as I continue to move forward in my healing.

Tedeschi and Calhoun's Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: measuring the positive legacy of trauma (1996) was so nurturing and liberating for me.

That literature helped me process and it shaped healing as an outcome for me. It helped me meet myself.

When I was admitted into my doctoral program at the University of Pennsylvania in 2009, I felt alone arguing that my PTSD diagnosis 10 years earlier in 1999 was deficit oriented, so I wanted to create a new narrative in the literature. I persisted in my conviction to create a sense of belonging: humanize trauma, post-conflict entrepreneurs and the emerging markets marketplace.

Like so many, I grew up in silence and with stigma around seeking therapy as a Latina. So, formal education became my therapy. It gave me access to books, frameworks in and within the trauma and management literature, and it nurtured my thirst for knowledge. I learned to learn where I came from, and what had happened to me.

The search for words to make sense of my own story in light of Argentina's history during the '80s, and where we are in the arc of our own nation's democratic history continue to support my passion for educational answers that help provide historical perspectives on psychological political trauma recovery, and trauma healing.



@BlessTheMessy

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I would describe my journey to map onward like a centrifugal motion of constant spinning, balancing, navigating, pausing, holding, releasing, repairing, learning, unlearning, renaming, recasting, and reframing. It has been exhausting in many ways. Yes: grief, mourning, longing, trauma, and soul wounds broke off a few branches from the tree of my life. But it has also been the most amazing of gifts.

Over time, I have learned to nourish my tree trunk to grow.

I have learned how to move with the wind.

I have learned how to feel the winds of change.

I have learned how to withstand its forceful blows, too.

I have learned that I have a strong tree trunk and that my conviction toward healing and peace—both feeling inner-peace and seeking to live in peace—have never wavered.

This online journal has been so nurturing and healing for me. As I thought about how I could be of service during the global lockdown, I recalled someone saying that we might be in the storm but not on the same boat. My intention behind Mapping Onward has been to serve as a lighthouse in the storm as we navigate these new uncharted waters; individually and collectively.

When I have not known which way to go, I have closed my eyes, paused, and began to imagine what joy would feel like to me. I began to follow emotions of hope that felt like sunshine to me. As I began to listen to my emotions, I began to trust myself, my decisions, my steps. I began to map out a way from here, from there, from where I was at the time. I held space. For me, I began to go back to when I was a child and used maps as imaginary friends. Free to roam about the globe in my mind and in my heart. This is all from where the name for this journal stems.

I hope these words and my journey help you in your own journey. It is a journey.

My hope is that you also get to imagine a way forward from where you are today.

Be kind to yourself. Scroll less. Give yourself permission to grieve, to feel.

There will be really good days or, sometimes, really good minutes within a day.

Go to books that will help you learn to learn about you.

When there is no book, you are the book, the chapters, and the pages.

The pen is in your hand. What could onward from there look like?

Take good care today.

All my love, C



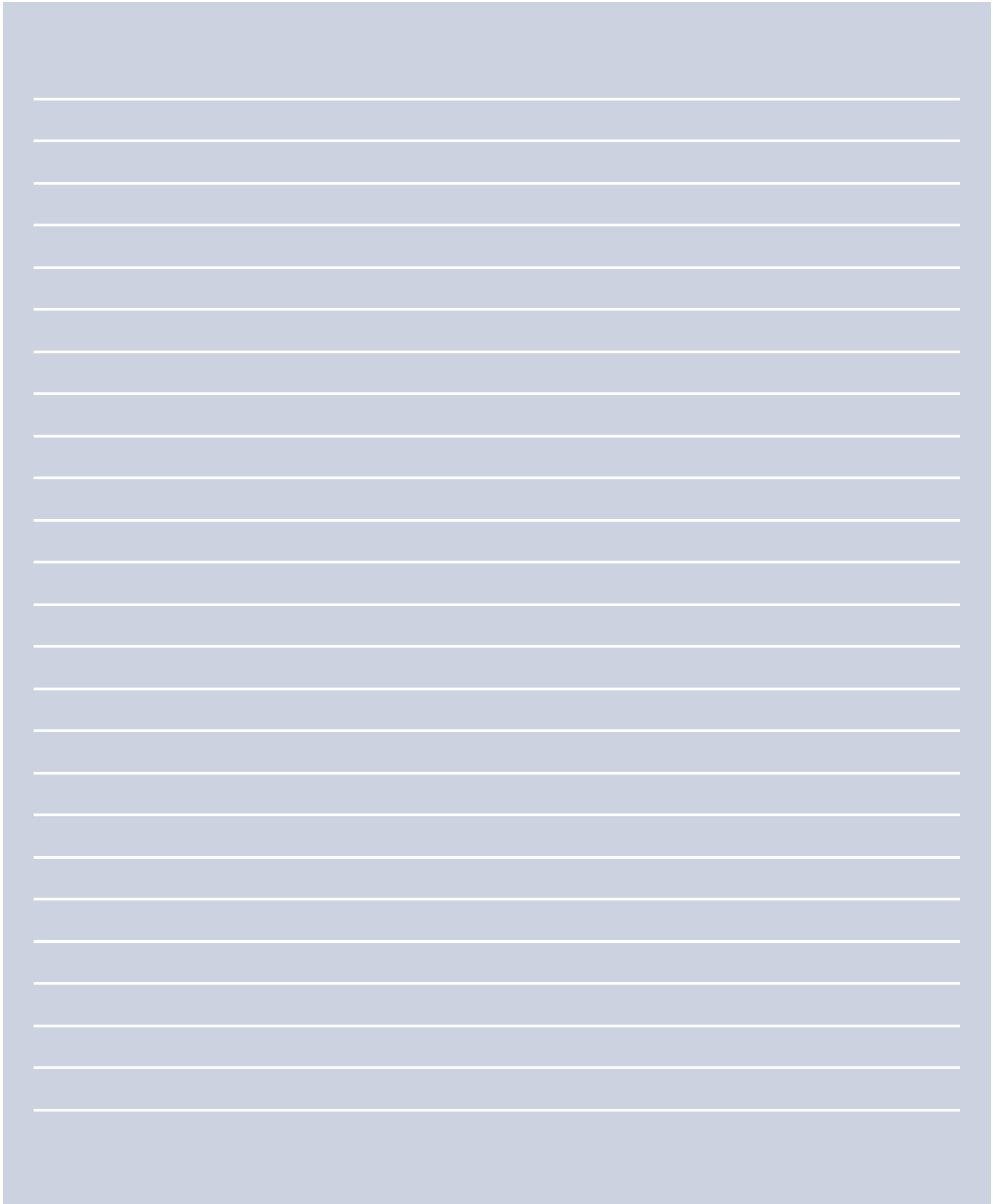


MAPPING ONWARD MOMENT

What good could come of this moment?
What good has come out of this moment?
What good can come out of this moment?

Gratitude, mindfulness, and journaling: Mapping Onward

Use this space to write down at least one thing you can recognize as a personal strength, to explore new possibilities, to consider your perspective on life, or whichever way this moment is inspiring you to map onward.

A large rectangular area with a light blue background and horizontal white lines, intended for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the area, providing a guide for text entry.



The Matrixed Self

By Cecilia M. Cardesa
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The Matrixed Self

"If I add myself unto myself multiplied times
You and yours and you again
There's just me
And if I divide 8 billion, 48 trillion, 98 zillion
There is, there is just me
If I subtract one plus me to the 5th degree,
Use any theorem
There's just me"
One is the Magic Number by Jill Scott

I remember listening to this song about 15 years ago or so and thinking how my life had been an algebraic equation of variables with some of them known and others unknown. That reflection has stuck with me ever since.

Unlike plus, minus, multiplying, which are associated with actions and gradings, the equal sign only communicates a relationship between entities and one of equal value.

Take for example, $(3 + 2) = (7 - 2)$ where the answer is 5.

We could also reverse the equations: $y = x$ or $(7 - 2) = (3 + 2)$; but the equality of the entities would remain.

The equal sign is, therefore, a relational symbol. In other words, it does not communicate that an entity is greater, lesser, weaker, stronger, or anything of that nature. Equality does not necessarily mean sameness; it means the same value. Of course, equality is not only mathematical; it is also cultural and psychological.

"Social value is about context. As a concept, social value is at its most potent when it is thought of as akin to storytelling – providing a narrative for impact which allows us to see beyond distinct events to give us a richer, deeper understanding of not just what happened to whom, but also why it happened and the implications of this." Beyond Social Impact to Social Value - Community Action Suffolk

In times, I wondered:

What value did healing play in the mathematical equation of my life after trauma?

How much would it take for me to heal?

And what will I gain in return for that investment in my life?

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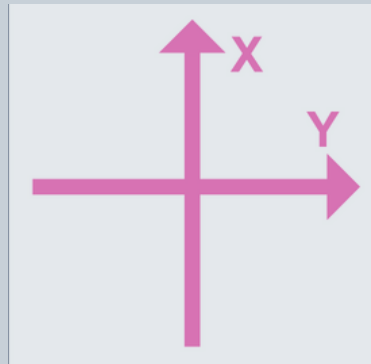
Understanding my own life in the context of the external world around me proved meaningful in how I considered the 100 years that came before me. I considered the lives of my ancestors, the implications of decisions that dictators made for me, and how, through psychological political trauma recovery, I was determined not to let them affect the next 100 years of my life. I do not want to pass on my trauma to my children and grandchildren. It also proved meaningful for me in understanding other people's histories and lived experiences.

As I looked inward at the intersection and multiplicity of my trauma and healing self, I began to consider how my own ecosystem had an X and Y axis as well. My identity was formed, and my behaviors carried out based on myriad of push and pull factors and variables. It is this Matrixed Self framework that, for me, helped orient my being grief-aware, trauma-conscious, and healing-centered. For me:

- Healing is about peacebuilding.
- Healing is community development.
- Healing is spiritual.
- Healing is expensive.
- Healing is layered.
- Healing is internal and external.
- Healing is non-linear.
- Healing takes humility.
- Healing takes compassion toward self and toward others.
- Healing takes courage.
- Healing is liberating.
- Healing lives within an ecosystem.

Healing can also be a matter of public policy, and our advocacy can serve as instruments of mainstreaming our individual and collective healing. For me, humanizing my trauma and mainstreaming my healing have been one form of building a more just, equitable, and peaceful world in classrooms, board rooms, dirt roads, street corners, and more. Just like women's rights advocacy has led the way in mainstreaming gender into the law, we have the opportunity today of mainstreaming healing in the law to help us close the mental health gap.

The Matrixed Self (Cardesa; 2021)



The X axis denotes our identity: First-Person Narratives, our lived experiences, passed on events, resilience, ancestors; multi-generational trauma and healing.

The Y axis denotes our external world: inter-personal relationships, the workplace, society, community -- our village, our world; collective trauma and healing.



MINDING ONWARD MOMENT

breathe in peace.
breathe in hope.
repeat.



What I have been reading (& re-reading)

What is PTG: the Science of Post-Traumatic Growth - [Positive Psychology](#)

The Hidden Benefits of Post Traumatic Growth - [Lead Change](#)

Life after COVID-19: Making space for growth - [American Psychological Association](#)

Grief Belongs in Social Movements. Can We Embrace It? - [In These Times](#)

Growth After Trauma - [Harvard Business Review](#)

Spirituality Meaning - PTSD: National Center for PTSD - [va.gov](#)

Investing with Purpose in Societal Wellbeing - [Able Partners](#)

What Are Food Deserts? - [verywellhealth.com](#)

Exploring America's Food Deserts - [The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#)

Closing the wellness gap - [Deloitte University Press](#)

What we can learn from refugees in the fight against COVID-19 - [World Economic Forum](#)

Mental Health is Political - [Curly Therapist](#)

The Jha Lab - [amishi.com](#)

When Trauma is Passed Down - [The Society Pages](#)

Ecosystems: Cornerstone of Future Growth - [Accenture](#)

What Is a Learning Ecosystem? - [EdTech Center @ World Education](#)

Reconciliation after Genocide, Mass Killing, or Intractable Conflict: Understanding the Roots of Violence, Psychological Recovery, and Steps toward a General Theory - [Wiley Online Library](#)

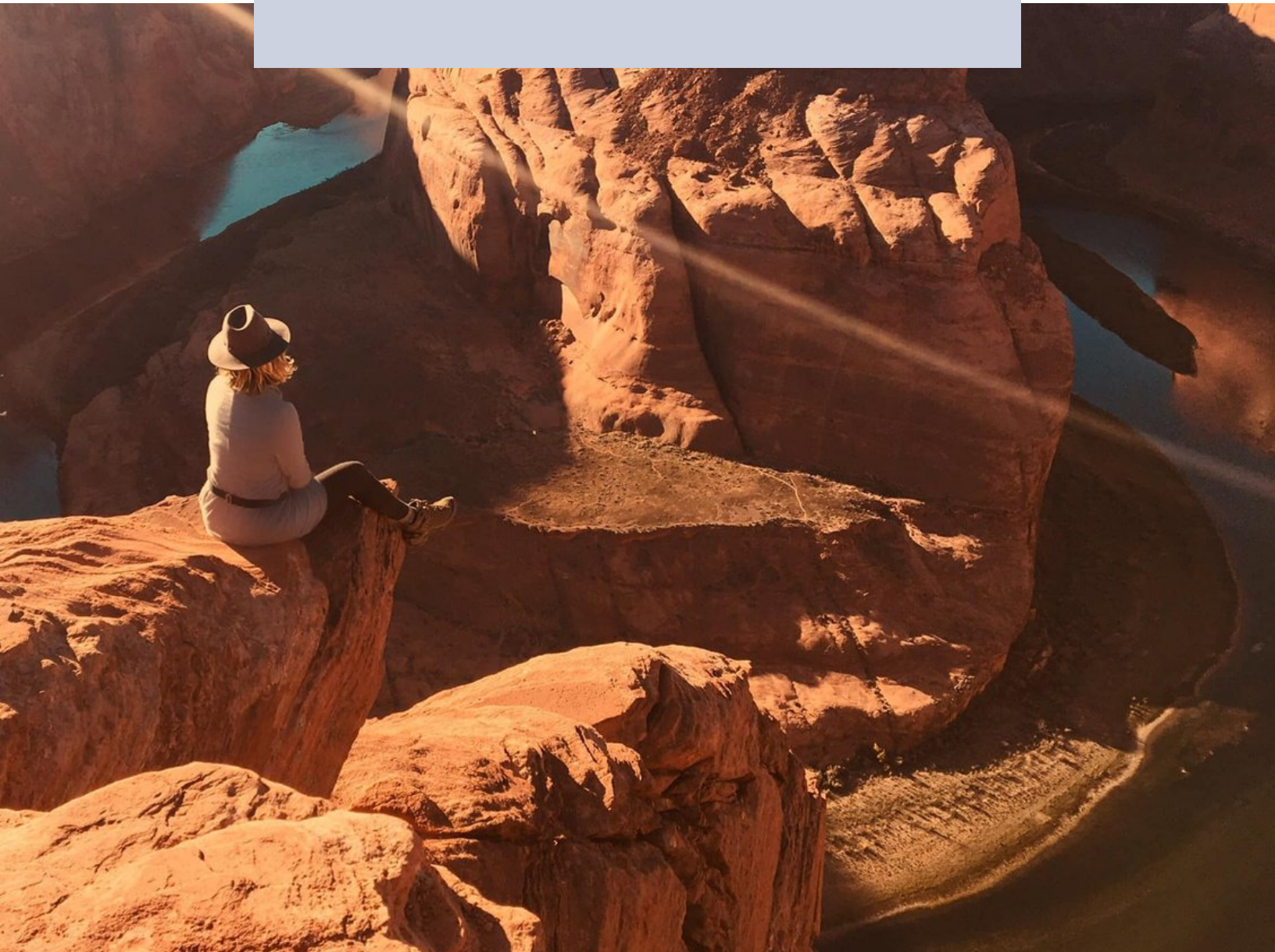
Personal and Political: Post-Traumatic Stress Through the Lens of Social Identity, Power, and Politics - [nih.gov](#)

The Psychology of Genocide: Beware of the Beginnings - [Psychology Today](#)

Activism as healing - [SHARE: Education Team; Stanford University](#)

Activism for Healing and Thriving: Supporting Students of Color in Building Agency - [Center for Academic Innovation](#)

food for thought



Dr. Cardesa; Horseshoe Bend, Arizona (2018)

**mainstreaming healing:
the wellness gap**
by Cecilia M. Cardesa

mainstreaming healing



In Autumn 2018, I was witness to a U.S. Veteran's attempt to end his life. I am grateful to say he chose otherwise. Holding space with him for over 12 hours left me enveloped in a fog of sadness and a wide array of emotions. At that time, I had health insurance, but it did not cover my mental health needs. For instance, it would have been too expensive for me to seek the therapy I knew I needed because of the mountain of student loans and bills in my debt-to-income equation. Therefore, I had to seek solace in what I knew had worked for me before. In my search for healing, well-being, and self-care, I went to nature, which has proven time and again to be a meaningful source of nurturing.

After visiting the Grand Canyon for the first time, I went to Horseshoe Bend in northern Arizona. While there, after a little walk/hike, I sat down to admire the wonder that is Horseshoe Bend. There I felt the sunshine, grieved and released a lot of things I was carrying like an emotional backpack that was weighing on me. There is a gap in access to quality mental health care and when we layer the limited options of therapy that is culturally competent the math does not add up. It is very expensive to heal and there are tangible barriers to mental health.

In 2012, former Chair of the Federal Reserve stated: "The ultimate purpose of economics, of course, is to understand and promote the enhancement of well-being". What would it look like if economic structures mainstreamed healing and promoted well-being?

Broadly speaking, the Social Determinants of Health have opened our eyes to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, and work. Much research and practice exist on relationships shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources related to income inequality, social connectedness, and a sense of individual and collective agency. The Social Determinants of Health framework offers us the opportunity to learn about individuals' lived experiences, invite us to be empathetic and bridge us to connect compassionately with others.

While social determinants of health proved to be a meaningful framework in shaping my understanding of our multigenerational trauma, we also know that social justice, advocacy, and the rule of law can serve as meaningful portals for healing and repairing.

A few weeks ago, I was invited to serve as a panelist along with Cheryl Espinosa-Jones during a 2-day training in Texas on Re-Centering Mental Health. I spoke on the intersection of advocacy through the lens of being grief-aware, trauma-informed and healing-conscious. Please stay tuned for more articles stemming from this conversation

mainstreaming healing



In the discussion, I shared my perspectives related to the impact of grief and trauma exposure in the context of social justice and anti-violence work throughout my career. I also shared that healing is a matter of public policy because we are globally suffering from wellness deserts and there is opportunity to influence good practices that work: good personal mental health is good societal wealth.

Over the summer, I had lunch in Manayunk with two individuals whose minds and hearts are as beautiful as can be. As we broke bread together, we wondered, could there be another framework to help us understand the legal barriers and structures to well-being and healing?

What if we approached racial inequity in healing through a legal framework in light of our multigenerational traumatic BIPOC experience with the law, justice and the legal system, and began to repair our lived experiences through a restorative justice, healing-centered approach?

Just like there are food deserts in our communities, there are wellness deserts, too.

There is a lack of structural systems to help us heal in ways that are meaningful—financially, culturally, spiritually.

What would it be like to create urban spaces in repurposed shopping centers where we could dance as a way to connect with ourselves?

Where we could share poetry as a means to heal community wounds.

Where we could play music that feeds our soul.

Wellness exists in ecosystems.

It is time to plant new seeds.

We all individually and collectively need them.





Mapping Onward

a healing-centered publication
of TraumaVenture

