

LIGHTLY EDITED FILE

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

Loss, Self-care & Healing:

There is Hope & Joy Ahead, Part III

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>> Ivonne: Welcome, everyone.

Thank you for joining us this afternoon.

We are getting ready to start.

It's a very exciting session today.

And my name is Ivonne, as some of you know.

And I wanted to tell you that, keep it going, I see that the chat is really really busy.

So feel free to introduce yourself and, remember, this is a public chat.

Everything that you write is public.

So keep that in mind.

And we'll be starting pretty soon, in one minute.

[ silence ]

>> Ivonne: Hi, everybody.

My name is Ivonne Ortiz, I'm the manager for the Training Institute of the NRC DV.

Thank you for joining us today.

And I'm really excited to introduce our speakers for today.

This is Part III of our series Loss, Self-Care & Healing.

If by any chance you missed Part I and II, you will be able to access the recording on VAWnet.

And Breckan will be posting that link. There it is.

So feel free to access that recording as you please.

Thank you, thank you for joining us.

And today we will focus on building effective and sustainable self-care practices and we'll share tools for short-term and long-term healing.

Each one of our presenters will offer a unique perspective of the insights of trauma and strategies for restoring peace, joy, hope and healing in our lives and communities.

And let's welcome back our presenters.

We have Latoya Mcleod, she is a licensed clinical social worker based in Queens, New York.

Latoya is the owner of her private therapy practice Lmcleod Counseling, where she specializes in the treatment of anxiety, mood disorders and major life stressors.

Latoya received her bachelor of arts in psychology at Hunter College, City University of New York, her master's of social work at Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College and her post-grad certificate in advanced assessment and diagnosis at NYU.

We have also Ghia Kelly, she is a faith leader, visionary and social justice advocate.

She's a native of Miami, Florida. She has a passion for empowering individuals and helping them reach their maximum potential, both

naturally and spiritually.

Ghia is a certified life coach and the founder and CEO of The Gift of Truth, Inc., a faith-based organization and ministry that seeks to create opportunities and safe spaces for individuals to learn, heal and grow.

Ghia holds a bachelor of science in public management and a master's degree in clinical social work, and she is currently pursuing her doctorate in transformational leadership.

And let's welcome also Carolina Bautista Velez, she is a certified professional coach, consultant and mindfulness teacher with over 17 years of professional experience.

She is the owner of CVelez Consulting and Metamorphosis-Coaching.

Carolina's work is rooted on social justice, cultural humility and antioppression framework.

She holds a degree in clinical psychology with a specialization in social psychology.

She is an immigrant, Latinx, social changer, who believes in the power of individual and collective liberation.

Welcome, ladies how are you guys doing today?  
>> Very good.

Thank you for having us.

>> Wonderful.

>> Ivonne: This has been a magical, magical experience for us at the NRCDV.

We were -- and this is the vision of one of our vice president's and it has turned into something amazing and this morning, remember I said with some of you that one of our participants sent us an email saying that she felt like she had a support group now.

So let's keep it going.

This is our third session of our series.

But let's continue the conversation.

At the end of the presentation you will see that each one of our presenters has added their contact information, keep in contact, keep in contact with me NRCDV.

We're here, you know, to provide support to one another and as a national technical assistance provider, we have access to resources that we can share with you.

Please visit our online library.

You can get information and a lot of resources on gender-based violence.

Again, you know, we're getting ready for so many things.

We're going through a lot, but we still need to do the work.

So don't forget to visit our page on the Domestic

Violence Awareness Project where you can find tons of resources to get ready for the events.

Let me just, you know, be quiet and let's start our conversation today.

We'll start with Ghia and what we're planning on doing for this session, we're going to do a recap of session I and II of highlights, and after the presenters are done with their highlights, we're going to jump in with conversation, we have great questions that some of you posted in previous sessions, and we're going to have a chance to hear from our presenters.

So, Ghia, take it away.

>> Ghia: Hello, everyone.

It's so good to be back again.

It is a privilege again to be able to come back and just recap and to answer questions and such.

And, so, I hope that you all have been taking care of yourselves in the meantime.

But just a recap of the first session.

We talked in the first webinar a lot about us going through a very difficult time during this pandemic and the importance of allowing ourselves to grieve.  
Right?

That we have experienced a lot of loss because these are unprecedented times.

It's something that we have never as a collective group of people, as a nation, as a world, we have never gone through anything like this.

And, so, it is imperative that we allow ourselves the ability to grieve the losses, and loss is self-defined, much like the grieving process.

And, so, some of us have lost jobs, some of us have lost some loved ones, some of us have lost our sense of safety.

And, so, whatever the loss is, it's imperative that we grieve that loss but that we grieve in a healthy way. During these times we have experienced loss in addition to uncertainty, not knowing exactly how things will end.

We have been posed with a time of reflection as we have been safe at home, we've been quarantined, and it has pushed each of us to really reflect on our lives, on our values, on what's important, on our work, right, on the time that we spend with our loved ones.

I know me, myself, I have three young ones and, so, it has caused me to reflect on just so many things as a parent.

And, so, I know you all as well, who may have children at home, it has been a huge adjustment for us.

And that reflection has caused us to also have to reprioritize our lives.

And I think that that's a good thing.

For me, the reprioritization has been amazing in that I'm able to put things that are put to the side because of being too busy.

Right?

I've been able to put those things back in their proper place in my life according to my own values and what's important to me.

And, so, I know that many of you all from our conversation in the chat in our first webinar, you know, many of you all felt the exact same way.

And, so, again, we wanted to just acknowledge the loss but also understand that grieving is healthy and that grieving is necessary.

So just to continue that conversation, grieving is healthy.

You're going to be sad, you're going to go through, you know, times of not knowing what to do.

That is a natural response to have during these times.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve, but what we are saying and what I'm admonishing you all to do is grieve in a healthy way.

And we know the healthy versus unhealthy.

Healthy is things that make you feel good but that don't cause damage, right, to you or others.

So there is a healthy way to grieve during this time, depending on your individual need and what, again, is important to you and what makes you feel good and feel alive.

The biggest thing also that we talked about during my presentation was what story are you telling yourself? Like, you know, how we maneuver through this difficult time is based on our personal narrative.

We know what MSNBC is telling us and all these news outlets, we know what social media is trying to tell us, but what story are you telling yourself?

Are you telling yourself a story of overcoming and this is difficult but I will get through this?

All of my parents with young children who may be home while you're trying to work, we have to continuously tell ourselves, we will get through this, I will make it through this, right?

And, so, you have to understand the story that you are telling yourself, and because you are the narrator of your story, you can change that story at any time.

So if you found yourself being very negative or just not -- or lacking hope, it's okay to identify that and to change that narrative.

That is the power that you hold in your own story.

But we need to understand that the story that we tell ourselves is directly connected to how we feel and how

we behave.

And, so, it all goes back to our thought process and how we think on things.

We're human, so every day is not going to be, you know, rainbows and joy.

But we have to be able to identify when our narrative is not helping us and when our narrative is actually harming us.

Right?

And then, lastly, we just concluded with some strategies for personal peace.

And these are just some things that you all can do at operationalizing your own lives just to help you to get through this time.

You want to shift your focus, you want to shift your focus away from things that make you feel not so good.

So that means cutting off the news and not watching it all day if it causes there to be a damper in how you feel, right?

Getting off social media, not going back and forth with people that don't understand that Black Lives Matter, right?

We don't want to invest our energy, right, into that kind of stuff over and over and over again.

And, so, we want to shift our focus, begin to focus on

the things that make you feel alive, the things that make you feel happy.

This is where, you know, taking a walk and enjoying your loved ones is so important, watching your favorite movie, eating your favorite ice cream, whatever it is, just to get your focus off of the things that are kind of draining you.

The self-care kind of ties into that as well.

Do what makes you feel good, do what makes you feel alive.

And, again, that is self-defined.

Get a manicure, pedicure, no judgment from me, I've been there.

I wore my mask but I got my toes painted because it made me feel good, right?

So whatever it is that you need to do for you, by all means, do you it, right?

The next thing is have a heart of gratitude.

Sometimes we can get so caught up in what's not going right that we don't focus on that we do have things in our life that is going well.

So gratitude is an amazing strategy for just centering yourself and understanding that I have so much to be grateful for, right?

And, so, just identifying five things that make you -- that you're grateful for, even when it's a struggle,

begin to identify those things and it helps to just help you to realize that things could be worse and you have some things to be grateful for.

Mindfulness, Carolina did an amazing job of going into detail about mindfulness, but mindfulness in a very simplistic manner for me is living in the moment and focusing on where you are right now, listening to your breathing, looking out the window, taking a moment to really embrace the nature around you, whatever that is. But it's being mindful versus my mind being F-U-L-L, right?

Mindful versus mind full.

So it's a process of kind of just emptying the mind a bit and paying attention to how you feel, your emotions, what your body is saying, right?

And then, lastly, lend a helping hand, help somebody.

We are all going through this together, we are all in this together, we are one people, right?

We all are human race.

So it is important that we get out there and lend a helping hand to those who may need it even when we are ourselves need help, it's important to help because that, too, helps us to keep our focus on things that are not so harmful.

And, so, again, that's just a quick recap from my

presentation and if you have any questions, I'm sure we'll have time to catch those.

So thank you again for joining us today.

>> Ivonne: Thank you so much, Ghia.

What a great recap.

And now let's hear from Carolina.

Maybe you're muted, Carolina.

>> Carolina: You would think that by now after all the conferences that I have to do online, I have this covered, right?

That I would know that I was muted.

I was saying that I'm very very happy and honored to be here today on session 3 with the other presenters and all the staff at the NRCDV.

So just a little recap about the presentation that I did in the first session, we talked about awareness and self-compassion and how those are practices for individual and collective liberation.

A lot of the times when we think about self-compassion or mindfulness, we have these wrong ideas that these are only self-care practices, but we do know now that when we take care of ourselves, we are much better people for our families, for our communities and for the world.

So let's go a little bit into what we talked about before.

So what is self-compassion?

And this compassion is one of the tools that can help us go through the challenging times in life.

And a very easy way to remember what self-compassion is is this that you see in the presentation, treating ourselves with the same kindness as we will treat a friend when things go wrong.

So usually when a friend or a relative comes to us with a challenge or is going through some type of thing, you know, what are our attitudes toward this person?

I asked people in our first session, and everybody responded, oh, the tone of voice is very gentle.

I even use the touch to be able to comfort the person.

The words that come out of my mind are of support.

And something important that was mentioned was, yeah, I tell my friend or a relative or someone that is suffering that this is going to pass.

But when it is asked the person that is suffering and going through a challenging time the way that we talk to ourselves is totally different than the way that we communicate with someone that we love or that is suffering.

So that is something to reflect, how do I want to treat myself during those challenging times?

So the question when you're going through this -- and

Ghia talked beautiful in the first session about the self-narrative -- what is the way that I treat myself?

What do I tell myself?

Self-judging?

You're very stupid to be thinking like this.

Why are you so worried in this moment?

Why are you so anxious in this moment?

Knowing that the reality is that we are going through unprecedented times, right?

More violence is seen, right, on the TV.

More access to all of the oppression that has been going on forever but that now we are bombarded with it, right?

We need to do something with all the things that we are holding, that our communities are holding during a pandemic, all the uncertainty, the losses, as Ghia was mentioning.

So talking about self-compassion, it's important to think about that narrative or how do I treat myself

during a challenging time.

So Kristin Neff, the person that created a program called mindful self-compassion, I love her definition of self-compassion because it gives you tangible things to do, a concrete thing to do, to be able to turn inward and not going outward all the time but take the time to reflect on yourself.

So the first part of being self-compassionate is being mindful.

And what mindfulness is or means in this moment is recognizing that this moment is difficult, that we are going through a hard time with our children, that maybe our marriage or our partnership is suffering or that my relationships at work are not okay or that I feel severe pain when I watch the news and I see all the oppression and the racism and antiblackness.

If we don't recognize that we are suffering, we cannot offer ourselves self-compassion.

So that first step is really taking the time, ah, this is a difficult time.

I am really struggling in this moment.

And just by doing that, we start creating more presence, to be able to go to the second step, and that is common humanity.

When we are going through challenging times, we usually tend to say, this only happens to me, I am very stupid because, you know, I'm sure that anyone else is experiencing this but with the pandemic we are seeing more and more, right, clear on how interconnected we are with each other, how one person's actions affects another person every day.

So in this common humanity, it allows us to realize, I

am not alone in suffering.

For example, I am the mother of a teenager and it is very challenging sometimes to raise a teenager, and during those moments of challenging, I put a hand over my heart and say, I'm sure I'm not alone in this. Many more parents are going through this difficult time.

And it makes me feel that I am not isolated, I am not the only one going through this.

And the third thing is the self-kindness.

A very important component that we were talking about before in the first session is that when we talk about compassion, the component is -- and is a component to take action.

So if we know that we are suffering, if we know that we are not alone in this suffering, what do I need in this moment that I'm suffering?  
What do I need in this moment when I'm feeling sad, anxious, sad or overwhelmed?

So that question is the primary question.

And if I need -- for example, we were talking about the brain in the first session and how we work from the limbic brain when we are not engaged in compassion. Right?

We are more reactive.

And that's what happens when we are going through

challenging times, and maybe we start screaming or we start isolating ourselves, we have the three responses of fight, flight or freeze.

Touch, soothing touch is something that is very important.

We talk about the model of the brain, right, to engage the prefrontal cortex to respond instead of reacting.

So it can be a soothing touch, what I need in this moment.

It can be a kind word that I tell myself, it's okay, sweetheart, I know it is hard for you, I am so sorry.

So that is changing the narrative of how do I treat myself when I am going through a difficult time.

So we talk about these three components of self-compassion.

And we also talk about how our brains are wired Rick Hanson said to be velcro for bad and Teflon for good.

Our brains are wired and it is a biomechanism, right, to be able to anticipate threat, to anticipate danger, but we don't really need that survival mechanism to be activated all the time.

So the brain is wired to remember everything bad that happened and we're giving the example, at your job if someone gives you a compliment, wow, you really did a great job today talking to that client, that client

felt very good in that moment, that if another person the same day comes and says, wow, you didn't really attend to this other client that you were supposed to attend, the brain immediately becomes velcro for the bad comment and forgets that we are a complex -- or a complexity of different things that are okay, that are not okay, that are good, that are not so good, so it is -- I am forgetting in this moment how I usually call it -- but we are very complex.

To be able to bring the goodness and to bring the compassion, we need to retrain the brain because naturally it is not wired for that and that's where Ghia beautifully was talking about the self-narrative and intentionally thinking about the goodness, intentionally bringing compassion, intentionally being aware of where we are in each moment. So that's what we talk about.

And a phrase that I was sharing with people is Viktor Frankl, between the stimulus and the response, there is a space.

In that space is our power to choose our response.

And in our response lies our freedom.

That is very deep.

Right?

Between the stimulus and the response, we have a choice, mostly for many of our communities that

sometimes we feel so powerless with what is happening, we can rewire our brain to be able to respond for more intentionally and from that freedom that we all deserve.

>> Ivonne: Thank you so much, Carolina.

>> Carolina: That is a recap from what we talked about.

>> Ivonne: Wonderful, Carolina.

Oh, my God, it is wonderful.

And to hear your voice, it's just so soothing.

Thank you so much.

So let's move on to Latoya.

Latoya.

Let us see you.

>> Latoya: Yes.

I am getting my technology going here.  
Can you hear me clearly?

>> Ivonne: Yes.

>> Latoya: Wonderful, great.

This is so amazing.

I'm just so -- I'm so honored and I'm so pleased to be back for the second time in this space, having these conversations.

Thank you so much, Ghia and Carolina, amazing presenters, participants, this is soul food what I want to call this today.

There's just so much for us to learn and encourage each other.

I'm seeing Latoya is very quiet.

Can you hear me clearly?

>> Ivonne: Yes.

>> Latoya: So, in part 2 of the presentation, we focus on trauma and, you know, the agreement that we're all going through a collective somatic experience in this pandemic.

COVID-19 has upturned everything.

Our lives, as we knew it, or health or professionals or families, the way we live, the way we did things, and it makes us question, well, now, you know, what's next?

And my recap focuses on, you know, some of the questions that came from the feedback from the chat. You know, we came to a collective agreement that we're all -- there's some change that we're feeling, there's some suffering, there's loss, there's grief, there's questioning of the self-compassion.

So, you know, what's next and how do we move on from here?

What is our healing response going to look like?

And my recap focuses on what are the positive things that we can take away from what's going on, right, from all the trauma, from what we're facing, what we're feeling, from what we're hearing on the news and our

news feeds and the emotions that we're feeling inside, the uncertainty, how do we move on from the uncertainty.

And I want to bring focus to embracing hope.

You know, this was a big topic as well in part I and II of the series that there is hope ahead even though we are in some uncertain times, having to question everything that we knew was normal, we're tuning into our emotions and experiences and acknowledging that what we're feeling is okay.

So as Carolina beautifully, you know, explained in her presentation, it's really asking yourself, well, what am I feeling right now?

And identifying that emotion, right?  
Feeling scared right now but that is okay.

All right.

If there's a loss that you're going through, if there's a difficult, complicated situation or experience that you're feeling, that you're going through in your life right now and it's bringing up emotion for you, knowing that I'm feeling scared, I'm feeling frightened, I'm feeling unsure of myself, I'm feeling overwhelmed, right, I'm tuning in to those emotions, that's a healthy place to start.

Knowing and identifying.

Recognizing that you do not have to have everything figured out to move forward.

If you're like me, we're probably just winging it for the past few months.

We're winging it and we're being faithful in what we're doing, we're being hopeful in what we're doing, but we are also, you know, not very sure of what the future holds.

We're going to talk about our new normals, right, in a few minutes.

Feel, heal, and return to your focus.

This goes back to tuning in for emotion, right?

So we're going through loss, we're going through uncertainty, we're going through, you know, a racial and social unrest, this is bringing up a lot of feelings, it's bringing up a lot of tough conversations, it's separating families, it's bringing families closer together.

So people are dealing with these things in different ways.

So it's good to feel, heal, return to that focus, return to whatever your focus was.

If you're an activist, if you're an advocate, right, and this is in your heart, who you know you are.

And there's work to be done with the people that you serve with yourself.

Feel, heal, return to your focus.

Understand that it's during the most challenging times that your grit comes through the most.

I think that's one of the things that we don't focus so much on grit.

That little instinct inside of us that you need when you're going through challenging times and when you're going through something hard and when it's hard to pull on that confidence or it's hard to pull on the self-compassion that we need to show ourselves.

So the hope, the grit, the grit is what brings us through those times when we get up in the morning and we say, we have to get through this again. Allowing yourself flexibility, be willing to bend but not break.

This is also being creative, right, being creative with what life is right now, if it's going to a therapist of your own to deal with all the things that's happening, we spoke about vicarious trauma, right, we spoke about compassion fatigue in the workplace, when we're managing what our clients are going through, what our colleagues are going through, and how we're responding to that and how we're creating emotional boundaries, right, with what's happening in our environment, your traumatic experiences is unique to you, right?

So what you go through is unique to you, how you cope with it is unique to you.

We're going through a global pandemic, we're going through a nationwide unrest as we speak, and everyone's dealing with that and processing it differently.

Right?

So embracing that how you manage to cope with something in a healthy way, as Ghia spoke about how we're dealing with things and our self-care, what does that look like, right?

Your traumatic experience, how you deal with it might be different than someone else who is going through the very same thing as you and that's okay, that's completely okay.

Our healing journey.

Healing happens on a continuum.

Right?

Healing happens on a continuum.

This is not -- I don't ever believe that this is a point that we just go to and we feel like everything's okay.

It's not a magical place that we get to.

It's constantly being aware of your space, your energy, and here is something in part 2 I explained about, as we deal with the pandemic, I'm meeting with clients, I'm doing my own self-reflection, these are something I

came up with myself because these are topics that were so common as we navigated our own healing journey, as we tried to make sense of what's going on.

Right?

Hope or H for hope in the present and the future.

Continue to look towards the positive outcome no matter what's going on in your life.

Protecting your energy, what you focus on, what you feel, invite positive, hopeful, favorable energy into your emotional and physical space.

Acceptance.

You know, a lot of the resistance and a lot of the negative emotions that we feel comes from a little bit of pushback from, you know, not willing to expect this is how life is and we might need to be flexible, remember, be willing to bend but not break.

We might have to change how we do things.

We might have to change or get creative in living life as we know it.

Love.

Right?

True healing requires love.

Love for self, right, love for others, love for the things around you.

Intentional, becoming intentional with your purpose.

Say no to things that aren't important so that you can intentionally focus on what matters most.

New normal, what this means moving forward in this pandemic is unique to you.

Many lives and circumstances have been changed.

Be willing to embrace what comes next when you talk about our new normal.

A lot of us are working from home, Ghia mentioned the parents who are hanging in there, maybe by this point, by a thread because we now realize that -- and that's a new normal for us, right?

As parents, as caregivers, a lot of us are caregivers. Be gentle with your growth during this process.

Be gentle with, you know, be gentle with what you're creating, be gentle with how you're now doing things around you, what works today might not work tomorrow, right?

And it's okay to try different things in ways that are unique to you.

Don't be afraid to start over again.

This is a very strange time for all of us.

There's no one general answer.

You have to get into your emotions with your feelings, know what works for you.

Yesterday you might need a different technique than today.

Right?

Self-care.

I am such a big advocate for self-care.

And this is something that I didn't learn until stress hits us hard, right?

And, unfortunately, it's not until we realize that we need to pause, reset, take a break, and maybe do something for ourselves that we realize why self-care is necessary.

What is it and why is it important, right?

I'm sure you can type in S for self-care on Google and you'll come up with a whole list of things that you need to do.

Get yourself a mani/pedi, read a book, right?

Get yourself back into an environment where you're protecting your own well being.

So self-care is the practice of taking an active role in protecting your being and happiness during periods of stress.

It's a continuum, right?

It's deliberate.

It's something that you have to be intentionally focused on.

Recognizing when you are out of sorts, recognizing when you are snapping at everyone or everything that comes

in your way.

You had a bad day at work today, that might transfer into how you speak to your children and your spouse, right, when you get home.

Recognizing those moments and knowing that maybe it's time to hit pause, right, and just be intentional with it.

This is a continuum.

It continues.

Self-care should not stop when you're feeling at your best, right?

It's especially at our best when we can keep that momentum going in terms of being connected with ourselves and showing ourselves the self-compassion that we need to.

It presents in different forms, physical, mental, social, spiritual.

So for some people exercising is a way of caring for themselves.

Mental, I always advocate whether you are a survivor, a professional in the field, advocate, get a therapist if you need to, right?

Have your own person that you can brainstorm these things with, these uncertainties that we're going through.

Social self-care, connect with one another,

connections, right?

We're human beings, we're naturally inclined to form relationships with other people.

So connection.

Spiritual, many people gravitating towards their faith in times of uncertainty, right?

When you take care of yourself, you're better able to meet the needs of others and this is why self-care is important.

I'm sure you've heard the term, you need to fill your cup so that you can help others.

Self-care begins with me.

It begins with you.

So the tools that you're going to put in your toolbox begins with you internally, identify your emotions.

You've heard this from Ghia and Carolina before as well, what is it that I'm feeling in this moment, why do I need to hit pause, right, if it's anger, if it's frustration, if it's feeling overwhelmed.

Stick with the feeling that you're feeling in that moment and acknowledge it.

I think that's a great way to start with taking care of yourself and even figuring out what self-care means and what's the next step in really helping you get back to a place of happiness.

Accept and let go of what you're not in control of,  
right?

Some of that might be turning off the media and the  
news and giving yourself a social media break, right?

Things seem very much out of control when you listen to  
the news, you feel like there's nothing you can do, you  
feel like things are slipping your life, as you know  
it, slipping from your grasp.

And many times these things are out of our control.

So focus on the things that you have immediate control  
of.

Accept and let go of what you do not have control of.

Make sure your self-care is not self-sabotage.

And I say this all the time, you know, when I'm  
speaking with people, but if your self-care is causing  
you more stress when you're finished with that process,  
is that truly self-care?

So if your \$2,000 vacation, right, to get away from the  
stress of life and everything is going to cause you  
more of a financial burden when you get back from the  
vacation, is that truly self-care?

So assessing what you're doing, how you're taking care  
of yourself, what does self-care mean for you?

It should not be causing you more stress.

Remember, the idea of self-care is to hit pause and get  
back to your natural state of calmness.

Mindfulness, groundedness, right, and that happens on a continuum.

Show self-compassion by celebrating small accomplishments.

So on days where it's the if the best thing you did was get out of bed that morning, celebrate that.

Right?

Celebrate that.

Give yourself a pat on the back.  
Everyone's coping is different.

How you cope with things are unique to you.

So show yourself some self-compassion.

Carolina spoke about how we can do this.

Celebrating small accomplishments.

Listen to your body.

Most of our stress physiologically manifests itself in our bodies.

In part II we went through a series of experiential exercises where you can listen and tune into your body, right, your emotions, right.

And where are you feeling this stress?

I shared that my stress happens in my jaw.

So when I'm extremely stressed, when I'm tense, that's the first place that you see that.

Okay.

Something's going on with Latoya.

And I might not be mindful of that in that moment,  
right?

So listening to your body, right?

Are you tired?

If you're tired, rest.

Rest is self-care.

We live in a culture where we're always on the go,  
right?

We're a part of a society where busyness is glorified,  
right?

You know, getting some rest sometimes you feel guilty.

You're entitled to doing that, right?

Resting.

Laying down if you need to is self-care.

Give your mind and body time to relax, to take a break.

Practice gratitude.

Right?

Be thankful, be thankful for the sun when it comes up,  
being thankful for the birds, if you can listen to  
them, be thankful for a phone call that you got, be  
thankful for the roof that you have over your head.

Many people are going through so many losses and it's  
so hard to just pull on some things right now.

There's always always something to be grateful for.

Be grateful that you have another day, right, and how

you can put this into practice is start a gratitude journal, right?

Get a little notebook, get an app on your phone, one thing each day that you're grateful for, right?

Gradually trains the mind and refocuses the mind, retrains the mind, as Carolina said, to focus on the happy, the good things, by actively practicing gratitude and doing something kind for someone else, right?

Holding the door for someone.

Paying it forward.

If you're in the line at the coffee shop, you know, pay for a dollar cup of coffee for someone else.

Right?

This gives you good feelings, all those feel-good hormones in your body makes you feel good for your day.

Doing something kind for someone else.

I want to leave you with those tips today and I'm going to open it back up to a conversation, then questions.

Be patient with yourself throughout this process.

What works for you.

You have to figure out what works for you.

And how you're going to put that into perspective.

>> Ivonne: Thank you so much, Latoya.

I'm going to invite Ghia and Carolina to turn on your

video so we can have a little chat.

And make sure you unmute yourself.

We're missing Carolina.

There we go.

During our previous series, we were collecting feedback from our participants and there were a lot of questions in the comments.

And some of them we were able to answer. But there's some other questions that we were not able to answer.

So I wanted to take this time for us to ask the participants to share any -- you know, ask questions.

We have enough time today for questions.

And I have a list of questions that I collected that we received.

And while everybody starts thinking of a question, I'm going to ask our presenters this question, it's really interesting.

We talk a lot about self-care and self-care practices.

We say we're going to do this, but then at the end we are either too busy, you know, there's a survivor that came in and it took my time, take ten minutes, drink a cup of water.

So how do we build effective and sustainable self-care practices?

How do we do it?

You know, not just saying it.

How do we do it?

And any of you...

>> Latoya: I can take that one, Ivonne.

I think it starts with understanding, it starts with the understanding of what we're identifying as our self-care.  
Right?

Because sometimes when we think of self-care, the idea that comes to mind is, you know, a day at the spa or, you know, an exotic vacation or, you know, something that is probably expensive, something that you can't afford.

So I always think of, when you're thinking of self-care, how are you identifying this?

Having a cup of coffee in the morning can be self-care, if you take the time to slow down and be mindful and enjoy that cup of coffee, enjoy every sip.

Maybe you want to look out your window, right, to enjoy the sunlight that's coming through when you're having that cup of coffee.

And, yes, as I said, we're in a culture where we're always on the go, there's always a schedule to meet, there's always an appointment to go to.

But it's incorporating something for yourself in those

moments, right, maybe you're driving from meeting to meeting, or we're Zooming now from meeting to meeting. So stopping in between those meetings, give yourself a massage, give yourself a hug, give yourself a hug. Look in the mirror and just give yourself five minutes to sit calmly.

Right?  
That can be self-care.

So I think it starts with looking at how are we really looking at what self-care can be.

Because, yes, we can be too busy for the exotic things, right?

We can be too busy for the mani or the pedi.

But I don't think we're so busy that we can't give ourselves five minutes of mindful time.

>> Ivonne: Go ahead, Carolina.

Thank you, Latoya.

>> Latoya: Yeah.

>> Ivonne: You're muted.

>> Carolina: Okay.

Can you hear me now?

>> Ivonne: Yes.

>> Carolina: To just build up on what Latoya was saying, also remembering that self-care has the component of protection as well.

So self-care is setting up boundaries.

Self-care is saying no.

Self-care is not only something, as Latoya was saying, that we do outside, right, like outside from when we are in front of suffering.

When we are in front of someone that is suffering that is making us upset or whatever, that is the moment that we need to have some excuse to be able to deal with our suffering because that is where we need it the most, right?

So what I was mentioning, the soothing touch, right? The dialogue that we're having inside, the kind words towards ourselves, when the other person in front of us might be suffering and we are suffering.

So I like to remind everybody that self-care also has action and it is the action to protect as well and to motivate, self-care means that we can say, I'm going to do that today.

I'm waking up from my bed today, that is self-care as well.

>> Ghia: Can you all hear me okay?

Okay, awesome.

I was just going to add, I agree completely with what Latoya and Carolina said.

And I think, you know, because we have seen self-care in such a lofty way, like it's this thing that we

aspire to, you know, I have to build up a reservoir of money to be able to take this cruise, to practice self-care, whatever, that we've not prioritized it. And I just wanted to encourage folks that you can be stingy with your self-care.

You know, you have to put it as a priority, like, okay, this is not me being selfish, I need this in order to function.

[ no audio ]

>> Ivonne: Latoya -- I mean, sorry, Ghia, we lost you.

[ no audio from Ghia ]

>> Ivonne: We're going to be sending her a message.

That's the regular phone.

Sorry.

Speaker phone.

While Ghia comes back, I'm looking at the chat, and I saw that some of you are sharing some ideas and examples of what you do.

And I love Gabrielle's example.

She says that in between Zoom meetings today, I set an alarm for ten minutes, closed her eyes and sat back and practiced deep breathing.

And I think that's really wonderful.

And Rea, but I don't see the message anymore, let me see if I can go up, she also wrote, something that my kids and I do, practice saying, thank you Jesus for

giving me today.

And it makes us feel better and refreshed.

So that's another practice.

Ghia, do you want to send us your thoughts?

>> Ghia: I don't even know where my call dropped.  
I'm sorry.

>> Ivonne: Okay, wonderful, wonderful.

>> Ghia: I agree.

>> Ivonne: Okay.

Wonderful.

Somebody else asked a question about how to unify  
yourself.

They were asking, what are some techniques to unify  
yourself in order to give harmony to your mind, body  
and soul.

>> Carolina: Ivonne, can I go back a little bit to the  
previous question?

In the first session I was talking about the importance  
of reclaiming self-care practices, you know,  
colonization has made us believe that the self-care  
practices that matter are the ones that don't belong to  
our communities.

And I asked that question in the first session, right?

And someone said, boy, I never thought that cooking,  
right with our families and in community is self-care,

so I also would like to invite everybody to think about what are the self-care practices that have been passed from generation to generation that we need to reclaim. Those are the practices that move our heart and our soul, right?

Another person was talking about prayer.

That is self-care practice too for a lot of people.

For example, for me, I know that is dancing, right?

So dancing is another self-care practice, just asking more of those questions is very important.

>> Ivonne: Thank you very much, Carolina.

And following up on that, definitely, my community, the Puerto Rican and Latino community, we're told that we don't have time for self-care, so we've been providing -- and we've been thriving while we go through so many things in my community, hurricanes and, I mean, everything, earthquakes, and people have that joy.

So you just made me think about that.

Yeah.

I love to dance.

And that's a self-care practice, of course.

My family loves to cook, my family loves to just to get together and just be silly.

So thank you.

Self-care is not just a bath for some people, a glass

of wine.

It can be anything that brings you joy.

Thank you so much.

Anybody else want to share before we move on?

>> Ghia: We're back talking about the centering, right?

How do we --

>> Ivonne: Yeah.

>> Ghia: What was the question?

What word did they use specifically?

>> Ivonne: To unify yourself in order to achieve harmony.

>> Ghia: I think, again, because I'm a person of faith, prayer for me is a huge strategy.

So that may be a combination of me talking to a higher power, but also just having quiet time.

And, so, even if that -- you know, you may not subscribe to the same religion, whatever, that time of quietness is so important and stillness.

And so I believe that we have to find time, like we talked about earlier, where we can be one with ourselves and one with, again, if you have a belief in a higher power.

For me, that is an amazing moment of centering and I feel like I gain a lot of clarity from those.

So I just encourage you all to find moments of

stillness where you can -- you know, where there's not television and not a whole lot of noise, that you can really hear your own heart beat, right?

It's a powerful thing.  
So that's one of the strategies that I use.

I encourage others to find something similar or the same.

>> Ivonne: Thank you, Ghia.

Latoya, Carolina, any thoughts?

How do we center ourselves?

>> Latoya: I agree with Ghia wholeheartedly.

I think becoming centered goes back to silencing the noises in our minds and in our heads, and the best way to do that is find yourself in a place of peace, right, a place of stillness when you talk about becoming grounded and focusing and, you know, getting our mind, our body, our soul connected.

We must be in a quiet space so we can listen to our bodies physically, listen to our minds, what are we telling ourselves in that moment, and this all goes back to changing that narrative, right, having that moment of stillness so that you can fill your mind with positive thoughts, feel your body and listen to the tension in your body so that you can sit still in a comfortable position.

I agree with Ghia, with connectedness begins with

pausing, right?

Pausing, resetting.

Getting into a peaceful frame of mind so you can collect your thoughts, listen to your body, listen to your mind.

>> Ivonne: Thank you, Latoya.

>> Carolina: Yeah, for me, I love to think in terms of the brain.

In the first session I was sharing with everybody the model that Ben Siegal, a psychiatrist, uses to express how mindfulness practices and self-care practices make us feel more whole and grounded.

And I used the hand, right, is the model that he uses. And whenever we are under stress, this reptilian brain that is very survival with evolution and the mammalian brain are two primitive brains that we have, right, that we have.

And the prefrontal cortex, when it comes down, and we feel whole, we feel grounded, we feel that we are connected, right.

But when we work with these two brains, when we feel everything is unresolved, we feel distress, anxiety. So prayers, mindfulness practices, yoga, dancing, cooking, the goal is to bring this prefrontal cortex down and engage with compassion and empathy for others

and collective and thinking is which is in this prefrontal cortex.

So whatever we do, the breath, when we take deep breaths, we are trying to bring down that prefrontal cortex and engaging it.

Whenever we express a kind word to ourselves and others, whenever we help other people or ourselves, that's exactly what we're doing in the brain.

So I was sharing with people that sometimes, you know, my teenager, when I am going around super stressed, one day she was like, mom, bring it down, bring it down.

Oh, yes, what a great reminder, right?

So that is just like a visual thing, you know, for me that is important to remember.

>> Ivonne: Wonderful, ladies.

At the NRCDV, we have mentioned that we have a group that we call ourselves warriors and we promote self-care and just making sure that the staff in the organization put self-care in the forefront of our work, one of the things, not all.

But I've been grateful to have the opportunity to read a lot and to learn about self-care.

And one of the things that touched my heart the most was I was reading about -- you know, sometimes we forget about our Native brothers and sisters and the wisdom they have on self-care and joy and grateful.

And I remember reading that we need to remember to go into what's called a sacred space within ourselves. If I remember, but it was something along the lines that is a space and the time between breaths when you breathe in and breathe out, that space in the middle, that is a sacred space.

I found that that was really profound and guided me, thinking, like, let's not forget those things come together and that's what starts to make you feel whole, make you feel centered.

I thought that was really powerful.

So let's go to our next question.

Are there any techniques available to help us deal with empathy fatigue?

>> Carolina: Sorry, Latoya, go ahead.

>> Latoya: Okay.

Empathy fatigue, if there's any a time that we're feeling or we're experiencing empathy fatigue, it's now, right?

We are drained up of carrying all the things that are going around us and sometimes we're at a loss for words.

And when I opened my presentation last week, I asked, how are you really doing?

How are you really doing?

Because I think, as I said before, we've lost some of the intentionality of asking people, how are you doing, I feel like we're somewhat on autopilot in the last few months.

We're really not sure how we're feeling and we're really not sure how to ask, how are you doing?

So we find ourselves slowly losing the ability to feel for someone else.

I think when this is happening, it's important to start creating emotional boundaries, right?

Being aware of how much of other people's stress you're taking on and really framing your mind to not take on so much of that.

So if it means, you know, leaving work on time when you're supposed to, right.

I know we're online more than we ever were, we're logged on more than we ever were.

We actually aren't getting more work done, we're unplugged, so to speak.

That causes emotional distress, it causes empathy fatigue.

Creating some emotional boundaries, right?

Protecting the energy and the space around you.

Be mindful of how many stories you're hearing throughout this time.

We're naturally inclined to help and we want to help,

we want to find process through this process and this experience that we're going through, but also

protecting your energy, protecting your space, right?

You don't have to say yes to every phone call that comes through, you know, your phone from a family member.

And I think those who care about you will understand that you're protecting your energy, right?

And getting yourself back to a space, again, the wholeness, the connectedness, the pausing, being still in your moment, right, by creating those emotional boundaries around you.

So one of the things that I implemented in my own life is saying no, you know, being comfortable with saying no, I don't jump to every invite, I don't stay for the entirety of every meeting because sometimes this can drain, you know, just the emotional energy from me.

And you have to be proactive and intentional in protecting your space.

>> Ghia: And I wanted to just add to what Latoya said, I heard someone say something this week that was very profound to me, so I wanted to share it with you all. But that question, how are you doing, and Latoya said, how are you really doing, there was a person that I was listening to a podcast and she posed it in this way,

how is your heart?  
How is your heart?

And that -- I mean, it blew me away because I'm very  
big on words.

So it's kind of -- it's not easy to just skate through  
that.

How is your heart, you know?

And, so, imagine someone asking, how are you doing,  
which you're, like, I'm fine, versus, how is your heart  
doing?

So sometimes we have to have that same -- that's with  
other people that we have a good rapport with and a  
trusting relationship with, but also with ourselves.

How is my heart?

And having an internal dialogue at the same time with  
ourselves about how is my heart doing and I am a person  
who can easily become fatigued taking on -- you know,  
it doesn't necessarily even have to be other's stress,  
but I can just hear too much or read too much about the  
pain of other people and it literally, I can sob and  
cry as if I knew them.

So I realize, as Latoya was saying, I must set  
boundaries.

So I have to stay away from certain stories.

I have to stay away from certain videos.

I can't watch what everybody else can watch and just

turn off.

And, so, I'll say know thyself, you have to know your own limit and be okay as Latoya was saying, in setting those boundaries and sticking to them.

As I say all the time, no is a complete sentence.

It really is, no, period.

Right?

And we have to learn how to prioritize our own peace.

And that's some of the ways that I do that.

But I pose that, how is your heart?

How is your heart?

>> Carolina: I love that.

It's very indigenous.

In fact, in a lot of indigenous languages, the question is not, how are you, it is literally, everything is related to your heart.

How is your heart talking today?

What is your heart saying today?

So thank you for reminding me of that, Ghia.

You know, we have this beautiful capacity, amazing capacity in the brain to have these neurons that are called mirror neurons so when somebody is suffering, when we feel pain, when we see pain outside, those mirror neurons reflect in our brain the same that the other person is feeling.  
It's called empathic resonance.

What a beautiful thing.

We will be walking around without caring for anyone.

The problem is that our brain is wired for that and unconsciously and consciously we are feeding our brain the pain from others, right?

Like has mentioned, through the media, through our families, if we are taking care of children or relatives that are ill, in our profession.

Unconsciously we are receiving all of this, and no one has told us that in order for us to really care in the most whole, in the most beautiful way and compassionate way for others we must use the oxygen mask for us because the brain is bombarded with the pain that is outside of us.

We are resonating with everybody else all the time.

So one of the things that I love about these practices, including self-compassion, I see it as an antidote for empathy fatigue.

It is putting the oxygen mask and saying, the moment that I offer myself a soothing touch, the moment that I change the narrative inside of me, the moment that I give myself a kind word, the moment that I step outside and set the boundary of the "no" or I'm not going to do this anymore with you, that is putting the oxygen. And it allows us to come back and be connected and

compassionate to others.

It is not selfish.

Right?

In fact, I'm sure, you know, as an advocate, as a therapist, as a coach, I have felt that before, even in my family, that I'm giving and giving and giving and at some point I am reacting.

You know, I'm showing the face, but inside I'm like, why do I give so much?

I am so tired of giving.

And I can become mean.

So that oxygen mask helps us to not retaliate and be someone that we don't want to be to our clients, to our relatives, to us.

>> Ivonne: Thank you, Carolina.

>> Ghia: And I was going to also add, I think, you know, since we've been talking a lot about self-care and strategies, another thing that I would love to suggest is the power of affirmation, particularly when trying to shift your narrative, right.

We are, as people, we have to rehearse things for them to become a part of us.

And, so, this is a journey that I've been on

particularly during the pandemic is, I actually downloaded an affirmations app and I didn't want all

the fluff that they had in there, so they have an

option for me to create my own affirmations based on what I needed to rehearse.

So I put about ten affirmations, and it can be, you know, whatever it is that's important to you or what you want to remind yourself, and at different times throughout the day I get these amazing little messages that says, black girl, you rock, you know, that says, you got this, you know, like, that says, you know, you're brilliant, you're beautifully and wonderfully made, whatever that makes you feel good.

So I think that that can be a very powerful reinforcement and strategy for self-care as well.

So I highly encourage you to find, since we're phone people in a digital age, finding the affirmations app, put you in some affirmations and let it speak to you, let it build you up and encourage you.

I'm telling you, this is about two weeks and I'm, like, even at moments where my narrative is shifting and I found myself in a not good place, that affirmation pops up and it's, like, get it together, you rock, you know. And, so, I just wanted to put that out there.

>> Ivonne: I love it, Ghia.

I love it.  
Thank you so much for that.

Any other thoughts?

And I'm reading also.

Everyone is loving the conversation.

Thank you so much.

So let's move to the next question if you don't have anything else to add.

What are some tools for short-term and long-term healing?

Let's talk about healing.

>> Latoya: What are some what, Ivonne?

>> Ivonne: Tools for long-term and short-term techniques to deal with healing.

>> Ghia: I guess my first thought is, and healing is such a huge word, right?

And, so, I'm going to assume that we're talking about personal healing.

Because we have racial healing, we have so many -- we need a lot of healing y'all, we need a lot of healing. So to address all of that is difficult.

But short-term healing I think, again, a lot of what we've already expressed, self-care, the self-compassion is huge, the narrative change, the mindfulness, all of those will aid you in your healing, particularly the self-compassion because we typically -- we have a bad habit of not giving ourselves enough grace, and I'll use that word in the same way, we don't give ourself enough grace in our processes.

So healing is not always pretty, right?

And, so, we have to be able to be compassionate as we process through whatever that healing is.

Healing from whatever.

But I do think that all of the strategies that we've already established will be beneficial to that in addition to not being afraid to get dirty, not being afraid to reflect, not being afraid to put the work in because, again, we have different levels of healing that we need.

But it's a great investment into ourselves.

The healing is a great investment into our own lives.

And, so, that's all I would really say in addition to what we've already said.

>> Ivonne: Before we move to Carolina or Latoya, somebody is asking Ghia, what's the app that you use? And I know we're not promoting a specific app, but I'm sure there's a number of apps that are customizable.

People are asking.

>> Ghia: Yeah.

I was looking for it.

Oh, it's called affirmations, there you go. It's called affirmations.

And it's like a blue screen, you know, you'll see it, it's like a light, but, yeah, it's called affirmations.

>> Ivonne: Okay, awesome.

Go ahead, Latoya, I'm sorry.

>> Latoya: Yes, I want to continue on what Ghia was saying on healing, how we're approaching healing short term, long term, with the asterisk of, what are you healing from?

There's so many things that's happening in our lives at the same time.

And I like to use the aspect of compartmentalizing things, put everything in their own box so that we don't get overwhelmed with the stresses that we're feeling, if it's stress from work, if it's healing from loss, if it's healing from a job loss, if it's healing from, you know, whatever circumstances come up.

The racial tension that we're feeling in this country, you know, right now.

So compartmentalizing things and asking yourself, what takes priority in my life right now, what is it that I need to work on for myself.

What is it that's taking most of my energy right now, because we might have stressors going on at the same time but affecting us differently.

And being patient with yourselves, because whether

you're working on something on the short term and the long term, healing is a continuum.

I feel like there's always healing to be done.

There's always a best self or a better or a best self that we're working towards attaining.

There's a calmness, there's a peacefulness in life that we're always trying to accomplish, right?

So it's being patient with yourself through that process.

And using these tools that we're sharing today and understanding that as I shared earlier what works today might not work tomorrow, right?

So being flexible with your faith, whether it's a spiritual healing journey that you're on, if it's an identity healing journey that you're on, you know, you find get comfortable with the tools that are available to you, get comfortable with trying new things, right, and being patient with the process.

This happens on a continuum.

>> Ivonne: Thank you, Latoya.

>> Ghia: I'm sorry.

Carolina, were you going to say something?

I didn't want to --

>> Carolina: Yeah, yeah, but please go ahead.

>> Ghia: No, I was going to add, don't feel like you have to do it all yourself.

Because I know we've been talking a lot about self-compassion, self this, right?

But some stuff you need a person that is skilled to help you through that.

And, again, we don't all need a therapist, but we all need a therapist.

[ Laughter ]

So be okay with needing help and getting help.

That, too, again is self-care.

And because there are some things that we compartmentalize, some trauma, some things that need to be healed from, that it can be overwhelming if we try to do it ourselves.

So I highly encourage you to partner with -- get someone to partner in that journey that you can trust.

Yeah.

Just because we don't want to cause more damage by going somewhere where it's a lot and you may need some assistance.

So I just wanted to highlight that as well.

>> Ivonne: Thank you, Ghia.

Go ahead, Carolina.

>> Carolina: Yeah.  
Yeah, that's very important.

Yeah.

When I think about healing, you know, when I have asked groups, the first thought that comes is brokenness, right?

And I like to think about healing more from a healing perspective, how is it from our communities that we've gone through everything we've gone through, we're still here, we're still showing up, we're still going through the beautiful collectiveness in healing.

So approaching it from that is very important to me, it's not a deficiency, in fact, it's something that is so rich and that we must have something good present in our genetics to be able to have survived so much.

So we have already the capacity inside to survive and to thrive.

Another thing that comes to my mind when we think about self-compassion, it's very important to know that we don't use these practices to feel good.

We use self-compassion because we feel bad.

So that's something very important to remember because we live in a society that is asking us for results all the time.

So if I meditate 45 minutes, that means I'm not a good meditator.

If I don't sit quietly, then I cannot be X, Y or Z.

If I practice self-compassion, does that mean that I'm going to be 10% more self-compassionate tomorrow?

And that is not.

And the example that I like to give is, for example, if

our child gets the flu.

We don't bring the soup and we don't bring the hug and we don't bring the warm tea with the belief that we're going to get rid of the flu, right?

We give this because they're feeling bad, not with the outcome that the flu is going to go away in five minutes after I give this.

So that is self-compassion and it's for the long term. It is not an indulgent practice.

It is that we do and we ask ourselves what do we need right now?

The mindfulness compassionate every day, paying attention even when we're brushing our teeth, when we are brushing our hair, just to be present is retraining and rewiring the brain.

So all of these practices are for the long haul.

This is not going to fix anything tomorrow or in ten hours.

It is for the long haul.

>> Ivonne: Thank you so much.  
Any other thoughts?

Okay.

Can we move to the next one?

Okay.

How do we restore peace, joy, hope and healing in our lives and in our community?

That's a big one.

How do we restore peace, joy, hope and healing in our lives and community?

>> Ghia: I think it starts with -- again, this is a very simplified, it's a huge question -- but I think we have to get those things within us first.

And, so, working on ourselves is the biggest contribution that we can give to our community and to the world around us.

And, so, I would say, you know, really getting ourselves in a healthy place, in a joyful place, in a grateful place.

And then from that place we can begin to look -- you know, look out and say, how can I help someone else? And a lot of the times we are overwhelmed at the need we see around us and we know that as advocates, right, it's like, man, is domestic violence going to ever end?

Is sexual violence?

And it can become very overwhelming, that secondary trauma.

So it's the same with the status of the world.

Another black life taken.

What do I do?

So we can either be overwhelmed or become very unbothered by it.

And that, too, is a bad place to be where we lose our hope.

So I know that I'm a hope pusher, right?

So I'm always encouraging people to keep the hope alive even in times where it seems overwhelming and it seems like we'll never get to the end, and, so, start with one thing, you know, one person, one connection.

Whatever that is.

And so start with self and then look at your immediate sphere of influence, your children, your family, your loved ones, your neighbor as opposed to looking at the entire world, right?

If we can just reach one person, then we've done an amazing job.

And, so, I would say keep it small and keep it realistic or else you'll burn out very quickly.

>> Ivonne: Thank you, Ghia.

>> Latoya: Yes, I agree with that.

Oh, Ghia, yes.

It starts with yourself, it starts with yourself and recognizing where do you need to help yourself so that you can help someone else.

Whether this is individually from a community perspective.

You know, as Carolina mentioned, there's beauty in everything.

There's beauty in where we're coming from, whether it's as a person with the experiences and the things that you've been through, as a community, as a country, as a race, whatever, you know, perspective you want to look at it from, there is some strength, right, in what we've accomplished so far.

And I think going back and coming back from that, like really asking yourself the question, well, what's the work that has happened to me so far or how can I add to the strength or how can I be productive, be fruitful, help someone else?

As Ghia said, I think it starts from an individual perspective.

All these metaphors that we've been using this afternoon, that oxygen mask first, right, filling your cup with kindness so that you can take care of someone else or be an advocate for someone else.

>> Ivonne: Thank you, Latoya.

>> Carolina: Yeah.

For me, the two words that come to mind are dismantling and radical.

So in order to move towards hope and all of this compassion towards others, we need to start dismantling the beliefs that societies, different systems, family systems, different identities have imposed on us to

take us to feel so separated and divided from one another.

So dismantling all of these beliefs are very important.

And I agree with Latoya and Ghia, it starts with us.

In Spanish there is a expression [ speaking Spanish ]

it starts in the nest, with us and with our families.

And the other word, "radical," to me, in order to do this work, we must be radical, radical meaning going to the root of the causes.

When you go to the root of the causes, we feel more connected to one another.

We feel more compassion to one another.

We feel that we can move towards collective goal.

Individualism, if it is not clear for some people, is not, it has not, and it will never take us anywhere.

It is only with collective working in communities and together that we're going to move towards empathy and kindness and liberation.

>> Ivonne: Beautiful.

Thank you.

Thank you.

As you all know, you are incredible friends, the three of you, you are amazing women.

And there's one last question that I'm sure our participants want to know.

Do you have any recommendations for this summer?

We are at home.

Some of us have been able to go out again.

Some of us, like in Florida, we are staying home.

Any great book recommendations?

We want to know what you're reading?

>> Latoya: Oh, I love this question.

I'm a reader at heart.

This is my escape.

My books will be my vacation for this year.

I'm trying to take some serious vacations through some amazing authors this year or just get some very good soul-searching done through the books that I read.

I read anywhere from about five to ten books a month.

I'm really -- this is how I practice my self-care.

I have shelved right now *So You Want to Talk About Race* because I feel like there's so much that I need to

learn myself and to equip myself with to have some of these conversations and to preserve my own, you know,

my own emotions and have my conversations from a place of, you know, understanding and facts and all that.

So I shelved *So You Want to Talk About Race*.

I'm not sure why the author's name is not coming back to me.

And because it's summer, you know, I treat myself with some light romance reads, you know.

Because we all need a break sometimes.

>> Ivonne: Of course.

We do.

>> Latoya: Because we all need a break sometimes to have something light and fun to just carry us along the way.

And that's what I'm reading this summer.

>> Ivonne: Awesome.

Ghia, Carolina?

>> Carolina: Yeah.

What I'm reading right now is a book called the Body Is Not an Apology, and I don't have it here at my desk and I am so bad with authors.

But it talks about how we should recognize not only our minds and our bodies and embrace it and he talks about imperfectionality on how all the different identities come together.

The other one that I'm going to start reading that I got today is called Love and Rage and I am so excited to read it because we talks from the perspective of how is such an important emotion and how to utilize it for the individual and collective well being.

As Latoya was saying, I tend to be very big with everything, so I like this complex books and I already work with organizational dismantling and everything and it's so much so many times.

So what I try and focus, and I tried it for the last two weeks, is doing my morning rituals, to find some peace.

Instead of going toward the books that I love so much but that are so charged also with heaviness, right, so my morning ritual is at 6:00 a.m. I am outside in my backyard with my bare feet and I just stand there and feel the ground and breathe in the trees and then I take the time just to meditate outside with this weather so I'm trying to focus more on that light than the books that I want to read all the time.

>> Ivonne: Wonderful.

Wonderful.

>> Ghia: And I'll just add a couple.

I'm actually getting my doctorate so reading is like breathing these days and I don't always get to read what I want.

But I do have through book recommendations.

One is the Dare Greatly by Brene Brown, and it's so imperative to the -- what needs to happen, right?

That we have to be willing to be courageous and to have courageous conversations, to dismantle some things, all of that good stuff.

And, so, that -- I also recommend from a spiritual perspective a book by Brennan Manning that's called

Abbas Child, and it's just really a book that focuses on our identity as children of God, if that's what you believe, but it's a beautiful book that really is very comforting.

And then one book that I just downloaded that I haven't read but is on my to do list and I've heard really good things is by Austin Channing Brown and it's called I'm Still Hear: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness.

So those are three books that I recommend.

And, again, if you want to talk about race, you got that.

If you want to just feel loved and understand identity from a spiritual perspective, we have that.

And then just what can I do to be more courageous in my life.

So hopefully those are helpful.

>> Ivonne: Wonderful recommendations.

And at the NRCDV we have a book club.

This is our first time that we're meeting.

And we are reading I believe, Everybody Knows You Go Home by Natalia Sylvester and it talks about -- or shares the journey that a Mexican family has in immigration and it's really nice.

And the first chapter focuses on how our ancestors come back.

It's heavy.

But it's really beautiful.

>> Latoya: I read that book.

It's amazing.

>> Ivonne: Oh, you did?

>> Latoya: Yes, it's amazing.

I'll be joining the book club.

I've been meaning to speak to someone about that book.

It's very good.

>> Ivonne: Awesome.

And I'm also working on, not the book, but the  
inspirational journal, and I have that.

So those are the two that I'm really excited about now.

And our time is up.

So I want to thank all of you ladies, like I said, we  
are incredible fans, we're your biggest fans.

We want to thank you for sharing your knowledge, for  
sharing yourselves, somebody in the chat was thanking  
our presenters for sharing your love and your personal  
lives.

Thank you so much.

You have been a valuable resource for our advocates.

Every single day we're working in crisis, and it's  
great to have, you know, role models like you to remind  
us that we need to take care of ourselves before we

take care of others.

So thank you, thank you so much.

Any last thoughts, anything you want to say to our participants?

>> Ghia: I would just say thank you for joining.

And be good to yourself.

That's all.

>> Latoya: Likewise.

Thank you.

This was an extreme honor to have the space to have these conversations.

It's so needed in this time.

And take care of you.

However that might look like.

Do something positive, do something healthy for yourself.

Take care of you.

>> Carolina: Yeah.

The same.

Very honored to share the space with Latoya and Ghia.

It was an honor to be here with you.

Thank you, Ivonne, for inviting us.

And thank you all who participated.

May we all continue on this journey towards our individual and collective liberation.

So thank you for showing up.

>> Ivonne: Thank you so much.

And I want to thank our National Resource Center staff. We have Breckan, she's taking care of the chat, we have Justine, she's providing technical support, we have Morgan that has been tweeting and working social media, you know, throughout all the series.

And, of course, we have additional support from other staff at the NRCDV.

We want to thank our captioner, Angie, thank you so much for allowing us to be accessible.

Thank you.

Thank you.

And we'll see you later.

This conversation is going to continue.  
Take care of yourselves.

>> Bye, everybody.

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