

Mental Health Strategies for Young Women in the Digital Age

~Gathered, written, edited and presented by Utar Chadhav
~Art from Supriya
~Supported by Action Aid Global Platforms



Before we deep dive into the workbook, let's take a moment to **Slow Our Breathing Down**. We will guide you through the process. Breathing can help us ground when things are not as we expect them to be.

Let's start by focusing on our nose. We will be taking a moment to slow our breath. Slowly, we will try breathing deeply into the abdomen (belly), not just the chest. Inhale slowly for a count of 4 seconds, then exhale for 8 seconds, making the exhale longer than the inhale. Please continue this breathing pattern for 1-2 minutes. The longer exhale helps activate your body's natural relaxation response, promoting a sense of calm and soothing your nervous system.

The workbook that you are unfolding is a process of self discovery so please go slow, do it with people, debrief, if something feels difficult, please pause. Please refer back to this page when it feels overwhelming going through the pages.

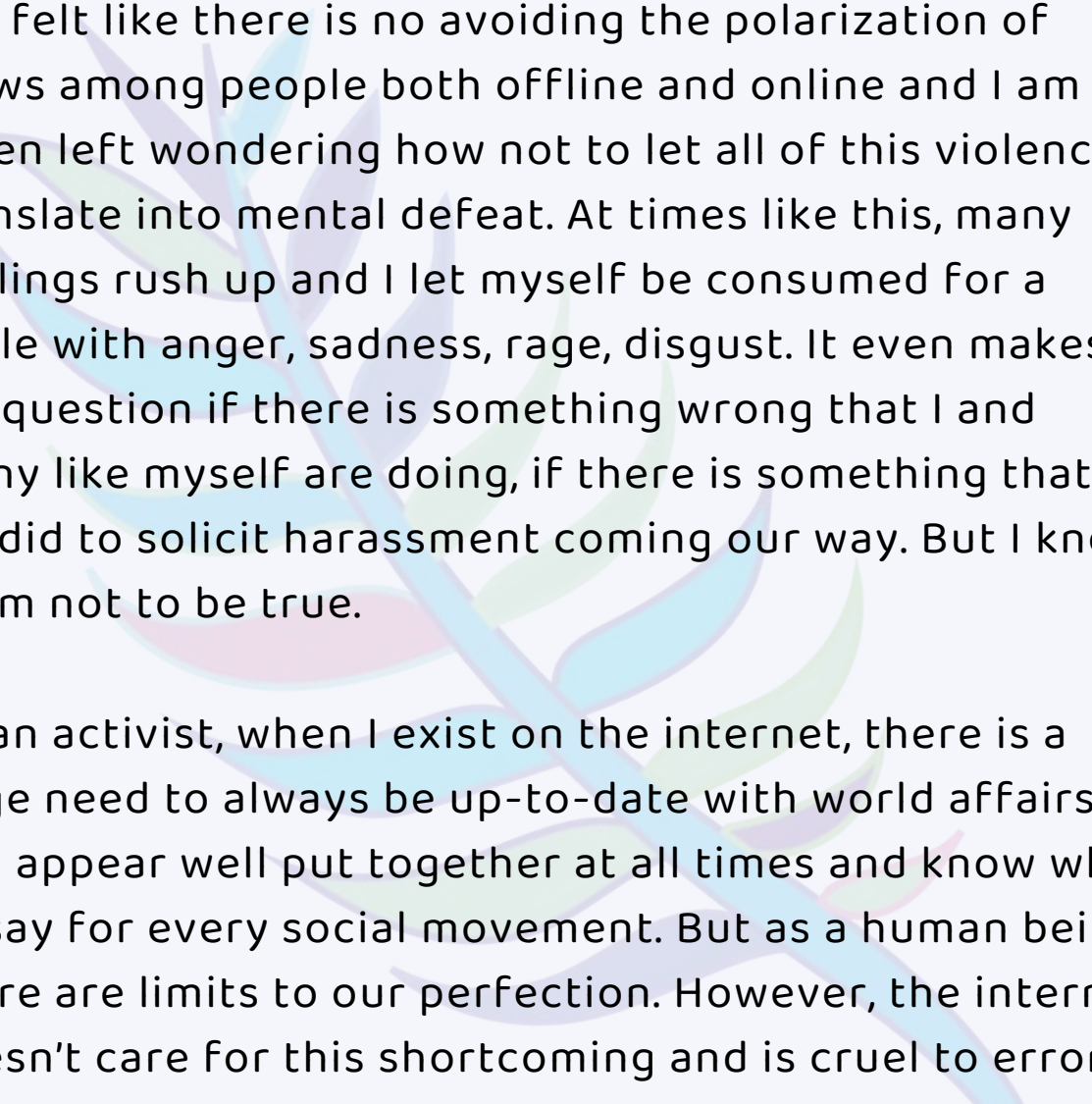
Please remember to breathe.



Foreword

You cannot exist outside the vicinity of the internet anymore. If you have ever been online or accessed internet services for any purpose, a digital version of you exists. Being on the internet has now translated into a risky game. There is a huge industry of experts tracking who I am, what I do, what I search on the web; it tracks every page I have ever visited and not only keeps a record of it but also sells the same data to third party companies and corporations. It also learns about my personhood, to predict what I am likely to do next based on the patterns it catches onto. It does its best to keep me on the internet, spend more of my time and money, eventually creating a digital clone of myself. A version of me that is beyond my access but accessible to all those who know the right way to find me or have enough money to have purchased data about me. It is also not in my control, what is done with this data, although it is not hard to speculate the ways in which it is being exploited. This personhood then cannot be ever erased, I'm sure a lot of us are already familiar with the phrase, 'nothing is ever deleted from the internet'. When thoughts like these cloud my mind, I feel forced to hide inside a cocoon, but again, truly hiding on the internet does not seem so possible anymore.

Just like my physical self, being an activist is a part of my identity and that identity then becomes a part of my digital identity too. I can't separate either component



from the other. And just like real life, the internet seems to bring along all of reality's vices alongside it. Despite many efforts at curating my own little space on the internet, things like sexism, misogyny, racism, queerphobia, ableism, cis-hetero-amatonormativity tend to somehow seep into my atmosphere. Recently, it has felt like there is no avoiding the polarization of views among people both offline and online and I am often left wondering how not to let all of this violence translate into mental defeat. At times like this, many feelings rush up and I let myself be consumed for a while with anger, sadness, rage, disgust. It even makes me question if there is something wrong that I and many like myself are doing, if there is something that we did to solicit harassment coming our way. But I know them not to be true.

As an activist, when I exist on the internet, there is a huge need to always be up-to-date with world affairs and appear well put together at all times and know what to say for every social movement. But as a human being, there are limits to our perfection. However, the internet doesn't care for this shortcoming and is cruel to errors. It is easy to feel like there is no room for improvement and everything that you do is being looked at through magnifying glasses. Have you ever had an unpopular opinion? How dare you have thoughts for yourself! Being online has brought with itself a lot of dissonance with my values and how I was pushing myself beyond my limits to always be speaking on things that matter to

me. Putting so much pressure on myself, made me crumble under the weight of the world and did more harm than good.

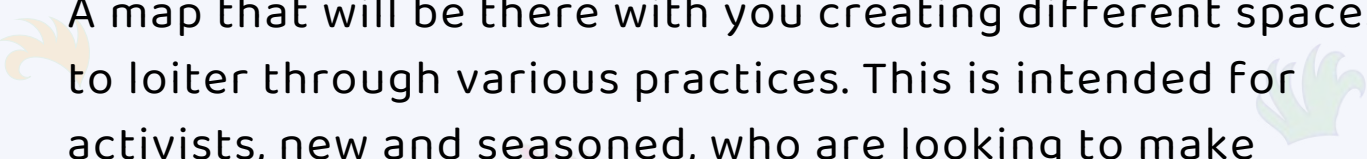
My experience online, however, is not just filled with terrible times. I am more often than not uplifted by the good work done by many who are relentless in fighting these challenges at each other's side. When I witness people stand up for something that I too believe in, it brings in a sense of solidarity and catharsis that motivates me to keep going. It brings me clarity that I too have agency, albeit little but agency nonetheless, to shape how I appear as well as how things appear to me on the internet.

The above piece is shared by Astray(name changed), a young activist. As you read through their narrative you most likely resonated with the relationship the writer has with the internet. This workbook has been created with the intention of navigating the internet while centering our collective mental health. It has been sketched with the understanding of intersectionality and that each person's experience on the internet is shaped by their multifaceted identities. This workbook honors these intersections and encourages a nuanced understanding of our individual and collective experiences.

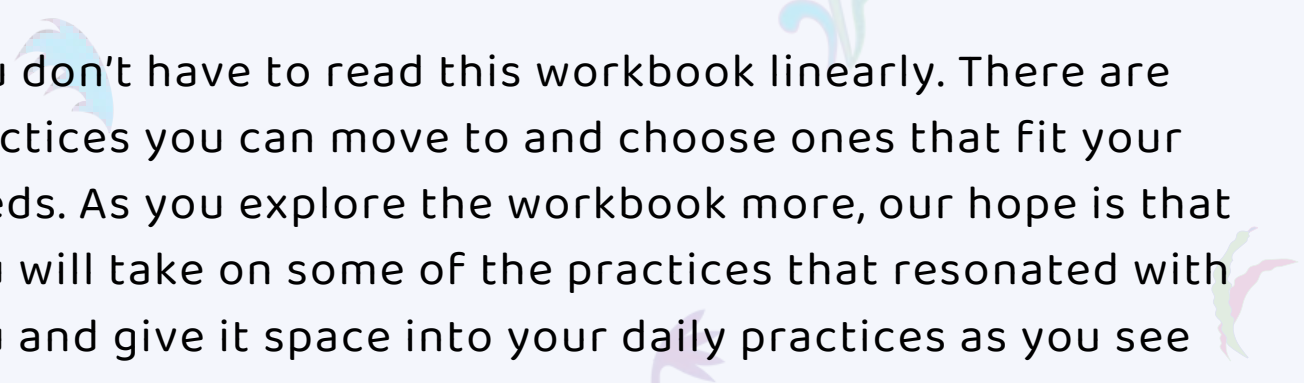


How to use this workbook?

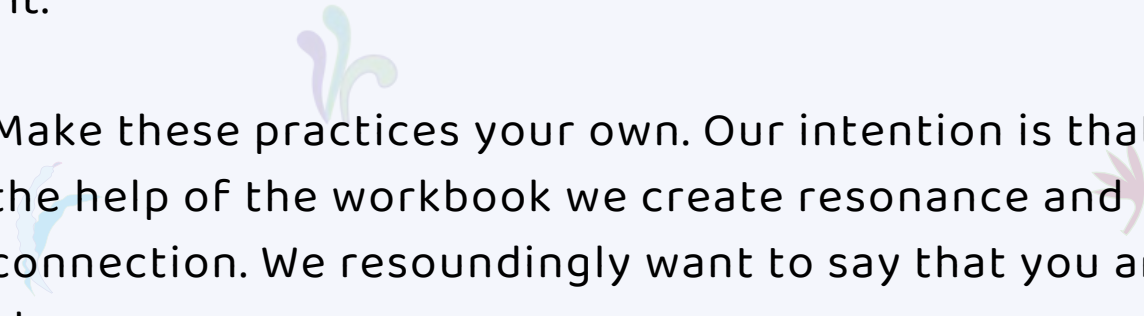
We consider self-care as a journey, therefore this workbook is intended as a “tour guide” and “map” in your and your community's journey.



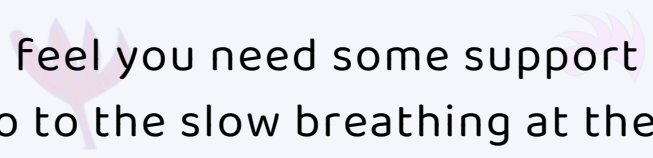
A map that will be there with you creating different spaces to loiter through various practices. This is intended for activists, new and seasoned, who are looking to make collective spaces to come together and take that collective sigh together.



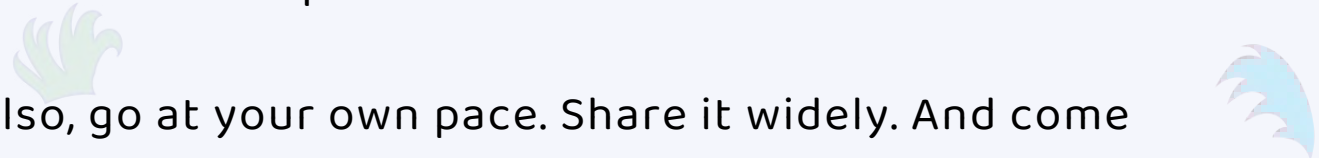
You don't have to read this workbook linearly. There are practices you can move to and choose ones that fit your needs. As you explore the workbook more, our hope is that you will take on some of the practices that resonated with you and give it space into your daily practices as you see fit.



Make these practices your own. Our intention is that with the help of the workbook we create resonance and connection. We resoundingly want to say that you are not alone.



At any time you feel you need some support or pocket/s of pause, please go to the slow breathing at the beginning to learn the practice of grounding. We advise that you read through what we mean by grounding before the practice to make the experience richer.



Also, go at your own pace. Share it widely. And come together to practice.

What is this workbook about?

This workbook is for everyone to read because it is all of our responsibility to be invested in the safety of young individuals, who are at the greatest risk of violence, originating both offline and online and affecting their lives both online and offline. Within the youth population, boys, girls, young women, transgender, non-binary and queer individuals are more likely to face violence. And when we examine through an intersectional lens aspects of class, caste, race, religion and disability we will discover that the occurrence of violence will be even more.



Individuals from these communities who are activists speaking on various forms of violence may be singled out and further risk may fall upon them affecting their overall wellbeing.

If it feels like we are in a constant struggle for our rights and feel constantly overwhelmed as we scroll through news and socials, it's because we are up against a very organized anti-rights movement. From the year 2008 to 2017, research shows that over 6.2 billion dollars was spent on anti-rights organizing to negatively affect social justice and movement work (Global Philanthropy Project, n.d.). There is a concerted effort to undermine and make activists feel unsafe online. Therefore if you feel unsafe online, it is because it is designed to create disorientation. To take care of



our bodies and our communities in this scenario then is itself an act of resistance.

You are not alone. The fact that our bodies are feeling a deep sense of grief is because we care about justice. A big part of online activism is then also weaving intentioned practices of well being.



This workbook is meant to be a beginning of this journey or a continuation depending on where you are, where your community and loved ones are.

We recommend you engage with this workbook as a collective. If you are reading this alone, think of individuals who you would like to be a part of this journey to online activism centering mental health.



The rise in online violence has put the spotlight on mental wellbeing and in this workbook we center mental health in our understanding of activism online, and we begin with asking what is the definition of activism and who is an activist. This workbook will help you to slow down and navigate your online experiences however at the time of discomfort please reach out to your trusted companion and professionals.



[illegible]



Sara's Story

During the second COVID lockdown, I was spending a lot of time on Twitter, like many others. There was one person, going by he/him pronouns, who began liking all my posts and retweets. At first, it didn't seem like much—it was just one more interaction in the sea of activity on social media. But after a while, I started to notice a pattern. It felt like every single tweet I posted, he would engage with. The constant attention started to feel uncomfortable.

Eventually, I decided to block him. That's when things took a turn. A friend reached out to me, saying that this person had set my photo as his profile picture. My heart sank as I realized he might have created a fake account using my image. After some digging, I confirmed that it was indeed the same person.

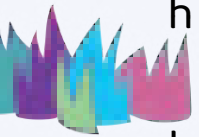
In a mix of fear and frustration, I unblocked him and confronted him directly, asking him to remove my photo and explaining that what he was doing was wrong. His response was chilling: "Only if you follow me back will I take down the picture."

I was shaken, but I stood firm and said no. I wasn't about to give in to his demands. At that point, I shared the situation with my Twitter network, and the community rallied behind me, warning others and asking them to block his account.

This prompted him to escalate his behavior. He sent more threatening messages, claiming, "You made a big deal out of something small. I have a lot of pictures of you, and I'll make them public."



Thankfully, I didn't have any sensitive or compromising images, so I wasn't as worried about that. However, the real fear came from the fact that I didn't know who this person was. They were completely anonymous, a stranger hidden behind a screen. In some ways, if it had been someone I knew—like a classmate or a neighbor—I would have had a better idea of what they were capable of and how to respond. But with this anonymous figure, I had no way of knowing what he might do next or what his intentions were.



In the end, he seemed to back off. I guess he wasn't as fearless as he appeared. His behavior became less frequent, and eventually, he dropped out of sight.

I decided to take a break from Twitter after that incident, feeling shaken by the experience. Recently, I returned to check if he was still active, but thankfully, I found no signs of him. Still, the sense of unease lingered. I realized that I didn't need to be on Twitter anymore, so I deleted my account altogether. It wasn't worth the risk or the mental strain.



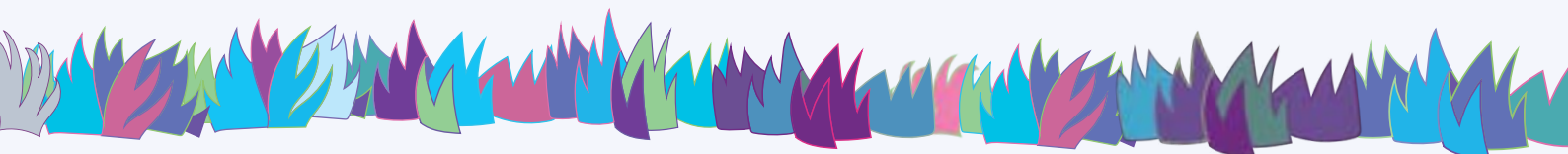
Looking back, the scariest part of the whole ordeal was the anonymity. Not knowing who this person was, what

they wanted, or why I became their target was unsettling in a way that felt almost impossible to prepare for. The experience made me realize how vulnerable we can feel when we're exposed to the unpredictable and often untraceable actions of others online. I have no desire to engage with that person again, nor do I want to relive the stress of dealing with online harassment.

Listen or read more about this story in an episode on Ups and Downs in Online Spaces.

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/show/utar-chadhav/episodes/Episode-2-Online-Spaces-e22l883>

Translation: Ups and Downs in digital spaces



Who is an Activist in Sara's story?

Who is an activist?


It is difficult to describe who an activist is and sometimes it's easy to understand when we expand on what an activist does, in order to arrive at the definition.

Activism is generally measured by the impact that is felt from the action/s. Depending on access to power related to our intersectional positioning we as individuals and as collectives have varying degrees of power. In this workbook, we want to cultivate a non-hierarchical way of thinking about activism. We want to acknowledge that many acts of online activism may be invisible or may not be thought of as activism, however

we want to emphasize that many different kinds of acts are activism because the intention is to liberate our identities to live a fulfilling life. Both online and offline activism usually tend to be influenced by our identities. Correspondingly, it is important to understand and acknowledge that oftentimes persons facing multiple levels of marginalizations may have no other options than to become activists to navigate their realities.

Some of the examples:

- A person volunteering to put in information on wikipedia;
- Young people blocking their family members from their socials to avoid surveillance;
- A group of individuals hacking classified documents belonging to a corporate entity;
- Someone who delegates harmful content to collectives for the action;
- A group of individuals who report harmful accounts;
- A friend who alerts about suspected **phishing**;
- A person who is source and shares authentic news;
- A person who is passionate about issues and writes to hold authorities accountable;
- A person who keeps continuing the conversations in different spaces;
- A person who makes educational tutorial videos;
- A person who maintains Anna's Archive;




What are some of the descriptions of activism/activists that resonated with you from the discussion above?

Jot down different actions you are doing that make you an activist. The fact that you are reading and engaging with this workbook is proof enough that you imagine a just world.

When we resonate with each other, with our surroundings and nature, many of us feel an expansion in our chest, maybe a long sigh, maybe some emotions come and you may feel grief--grief for a world that feels polar opposite to what we are about. This collective grief and resonance itself is our body's way of letting us know that we belong-- something that violence often snatches from us

Keep adding to the list above and keep it somewhere you can see as a reminder that this is what you are about when oppressive voices try to silence and make us feel helpless.

Now let's dive a little deeper...



We will go into an activity of mapping control in our lives as it pertains to our online and offline identities, which are definitely merged and coexist sometimes in ways we might not be able to explain. By loitering in the landscape of my preferred stories of things I can control and where that control ebbs and flows; and recognising spaces where we may not have any control at all but not letting that stand in the way of us navigating our sources of power and things we do have under control.

Again, if possible, bring a friend with you along this journey. These conversations will in the long term help us help each other feel grounded and connect with the collective resonance.



Circle of Control

- **Circle of Control**

- Privacy Settings [Making your profile private, Being selective about your follow list, Blocking people, Filtering Comments section, Making your profile non-taggable or can be tagged and mentioned after permission, Having filters on such as Sensitive Images need permission to be displayed]
- Using safe applications of communication that have their encryptions on
- Including experts in your community who can share their knowledge and expertise
- Being careful before opening random links

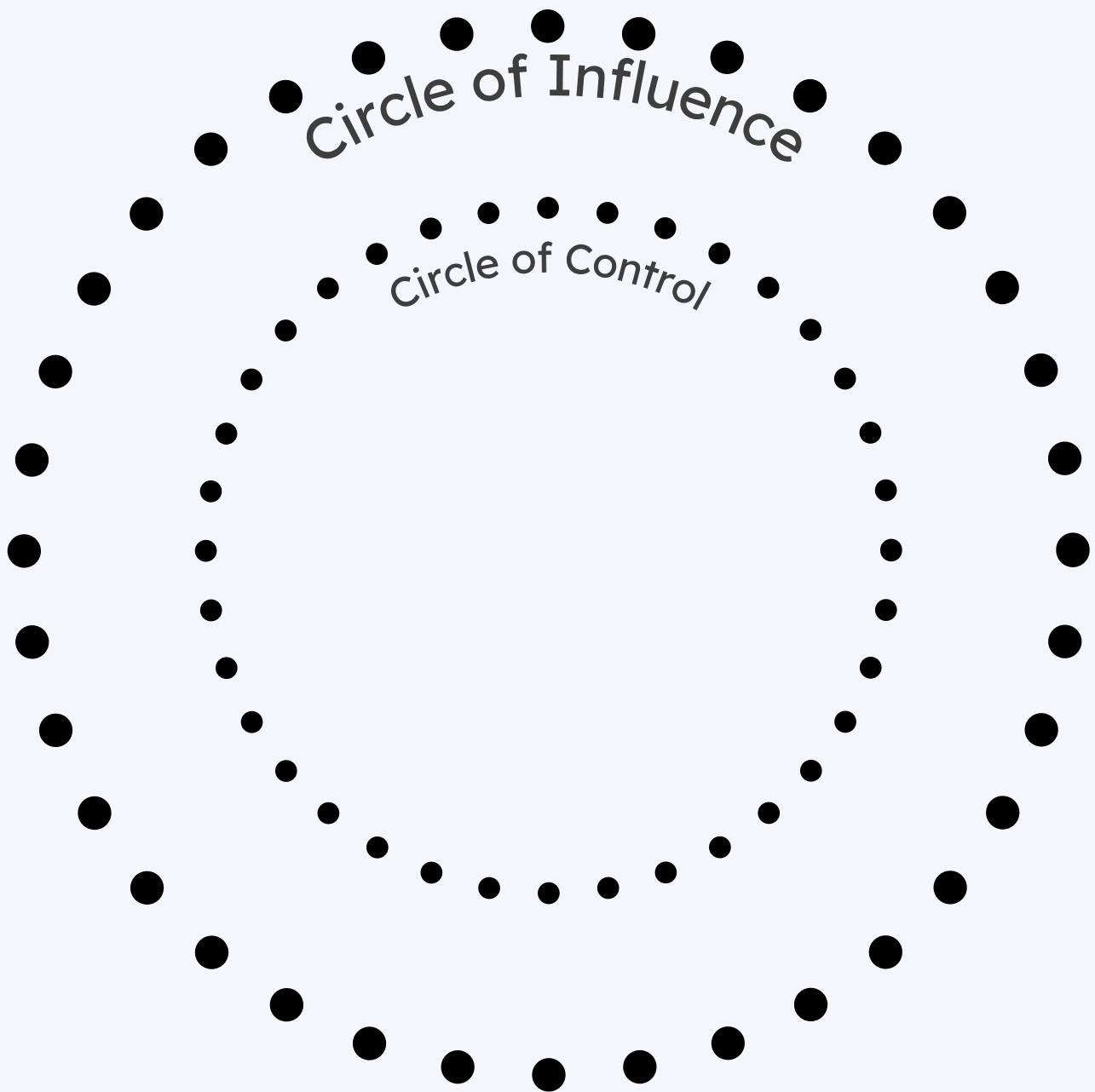
- **Circle of Influence**

- Creating collective accounts in addition to private ones
- Creating group chats where reliable news are shared
- Sharing each others' know-hows of how we are navigating the internet
- Alerting our loved ones when we come across unusual activity with particular accounts or websites

- **Circle of Concern**

- Do other people support the issues that I am talking about or not?
- How do people talk about me and/or about the actions I take?
- Will I be harassed over something I say or post?
- Will my words be made out to be something it's not?

Your Circle of Control



Circle of Concern

Make your own Toolkit (Pockets for pause in digital spaces)

1. As you sit down to make your own regimen for battling internet experiences, lift the shoulder to your ears and tense the muscles and finally let go.
2. Read through the workbook as many times as you would like to be familiar with the many things that you and people have been doing over the years. Go through the resources provided that may give you more ideas on where you might want to start.
3. Jot down things that you already have been doing. Acknowledge that you have been taking care of yourself in the ways that you know and pat yourself on the back for your efforts. It is not easy to battle against an industry that is designed to keep you stressed.
4. Explore strategies that you found interesting, want to learn more about or want to include in your routine.



Remember to move, take a drink of water and find a comfortable space as you move on to the next practice.



Grounding 101; let's say hello to our bodies

Online spaces move at a disorienting speed. We get inundated with information which over time may feel difficult to take in because of the sheer speed at which they come at us and our mind can feel jumbled with a lot of thoughts. We might forget to move, drink water, eat etc. as we engross ourselves in the information we are receiving.

When we ground, we are practicing a little pause for our senses which may be working overtime in assisting you with the much needed work you are doing. And therefore it's even more necessary to find pockets of pauses to incorporate grounding.

There is never enough time because we live in structures that bind us into a 24/7 cycle making activities like grounding feel unproductive because there is no material benefit that can be instantly visible. This practice might feel weird or awkward, even artificial because we may not have had the chance to be with our bodies.

When we ground we listen to our body via all our



senses. We are also sensing the external environment and discerning what is feeling very much at ease, okay, or too much.

As you engage with the language of grounding and sensing, remember that seeing doesn't only mean through the eyes, nor does listening mean the act of listening through our ears. We visualize, imagine, sense vibrations, experience touch in many ways and for each of us it is a unique experience depending on our bodies. Touch and soothing can happen through the air we breathe in, by our limbs, fingers, texture of our clothing or a blanket. Or simply imagination! With grounding we advise you to lean into sensory experience that feels the most you! And beginning with simple grounding practices can even be a way to that self discovery.

If this practice is new for you, think of it as an invitation for your body, and take it slow. And you will learn that our bodies know how to ground, when we make space for them.

You can ground with your friend, with your pet, with your colleagues at work and with nature.

Ending the grounding with some words of gratitude, shared emotions like pain, rage are welcomed and can



assist in strengthening connections amongst ourselves. If you are on your own, you can write, draw after each practice which can be something you can go back to and reflect and feel resonance for yourself.



Some questions could be:

How does it feel to observe my environment after?
How do textures feel, what colors or vibrations surface more and which feel muted? etc.



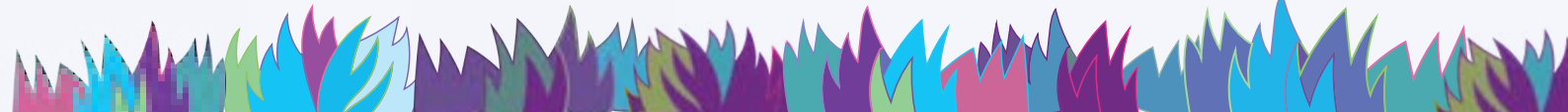
The workbook has many different ways of grounding, proceed with what feels comfortable, pause when needed and return. There is no one way to ground.

Dance and movement can also be forms of grounding once we are in touch with our body. Simply put, movement that happens with intention is embodiment. It's our body waking up and being in touch with the muscles. This may be accompanied by some feelings and emotions. These are all very common. And sometimes breathing exercises can be simple ways to ground.



Always start with a Simple Pause to Check In With Yourself:

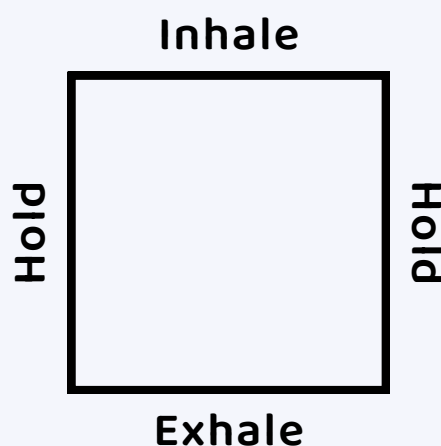
Whenever online space feels overwhelming, start with a simple pause to check in with yourself. We will guide you stepwise

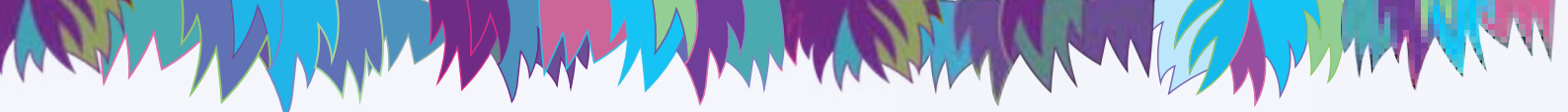
- 1.If it is possible, find a quiet space where you can sit comfortably, undisturbed for a few minutes.
 - 2.As we talked above, take three slow, deep breaths — inhale deeply through your nose for count of 4, hold for a moment, and exhale fully through your mouth for a count of 8. Let your body relax with each breath.
 - 3.Now, bring awareness to your body. Notice if you are feeling any sensations, tension, or areas of comfort. Observe parts that feel discomforting.
 - 4.After observing it for a while, ask yourself internally:
 - How am I feeling right now?
 - What do I need at this moment?
 - 5.Continue breathing deeply, giving yourself space to listen to your body. You will find yourself more relaxed than earlier.
- 

Square Breathing

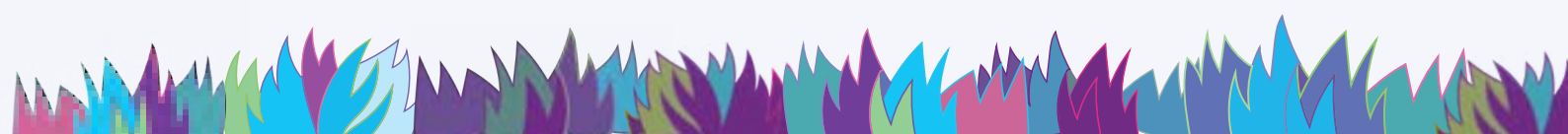
Once you're comfortable with relaxed breathing, you can apply this skill to a more structured practice. This could be your regular activity, not limiting to practicing it when you feel threatened or restless. This helps you regulate your nervous system.

1. Find a comfortable position — either lying down or sitting in a supportive chair, leaning against a wall, resting your back. The more you practice you will begin to know what comfortable feels for you. Choose a time when distraction is at a minimum for you such as before bed.
2. Begin with a few rounds of relaxed breathing that we practiced as slow breathing to establish a calm, deep breath pattern. Relaxed breathing can be enhanced by softening our bellies using a pillow as an inspiration or our fingers kneading tummy gently.
3. Now, follow the square breathing pattern:
 - Visualize a square



- 
- Inhale slowly for 4 counts as you trace the top side of the square with your mind.
 - Hold your breath for 4 counts as you trace the right side.
 - Exhale slowly for 4 counts as you trace the bottom side.
 - Hold your breath for another 4 counts as you trace the left side back up.
 - Practice this pattern for several rounds. As you become more comfortable, close your eyes and visualize the square in your mind's eye.

If at any point you feel lightheaded or dizzy, stop and return to regular deep breathing. Square breathing is meant to be calming, so listen to your body and adjust as needed. Take a couple of minutes before you get out of the position and move into your day.





Let's experience grounding together

Now let's begin, this is an invitation and there is no right or wrong way of sensing your body.

Imagine times even when we are sad being surrounded by folks who make space for our vulnerability. It could be your four legged friend, a place that is in nature, your own room, any space where you are with friends. Go back to the moment when you were in such a space most recently. Breathe in the love slowly. You can use your breath, hand or imagination to feel the air traveling to your chest and tummy requesting them to soften.

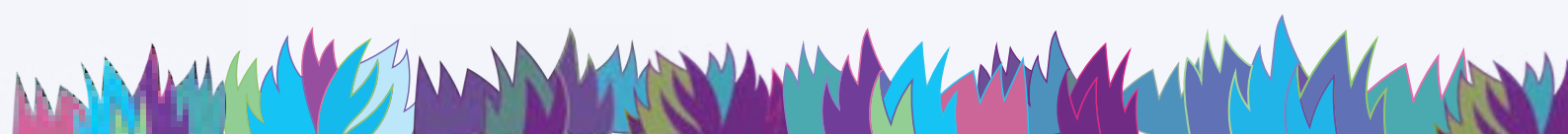
Invite your body to sink more in the comfort of the seat you chose.

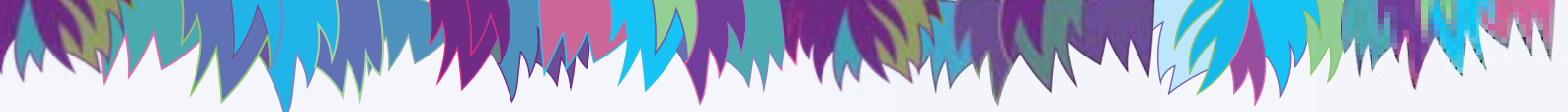
Feel the ground again, with hands, feet or simply imagination.

Feel the grass, the carpet, feel the air and sun on your body through your skin.

Notice what feels soothing to your senses, a scent that helps you breathe better, a texture that feels soothing to touch, sounds around you, far and near. A color or an object that feels good to look at or memories in your imagination as you take your eyes on a walk.

You can do this standing or sitting, strolling or with stimming toys if that feels comfortable for your body. Remember, your body makes so much possible for you, hence take your time to figure out what grounding practice feels the most comfortable.





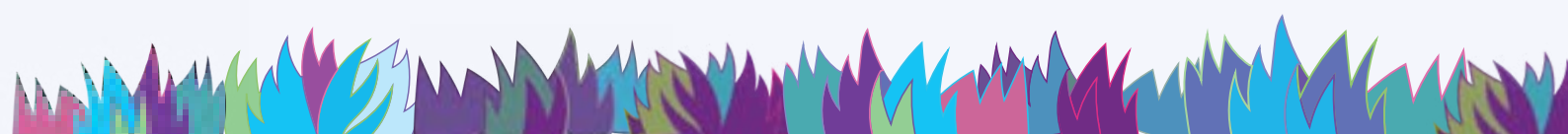
Some emotions might arise. Remember, we are all together in this.

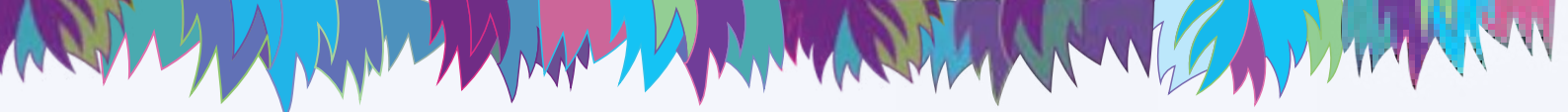
Soften your belly. Feel your back through the fabric of your clothing. What are the sensations there?

There could be some lightness, some numbness, some tightness....

You can pick a comforting sensation to go back to if anything difficult is coming up. All parts of our bodies can come to assist us. So if a part feels heavy, like the back of your neck and shoulder feel stiff, just say let the whole body take on that burden, you don't have to do this alone.

Now I invite you to start sensing your body more, how does clothing or blanket or simply the air around, feel on your skin, is the sensation less somewhere and more at other parts, you can look at yourself, feel sensations at the edges of your body, evoke the parts you may usually forget, or use your hands to touch them like your back, if that's possible for you or simply imagine touch you have experienced that feels safe. Is there a part of the body that can come to your rescue--I invite you to put your hand, take your attention and imagine touch where your body is asking for support, massaging our necks, shoulder. Imagine, air flowing into your body and making space for softness, nurturing it as it passes...Gently helping softening our bellies, our calves.

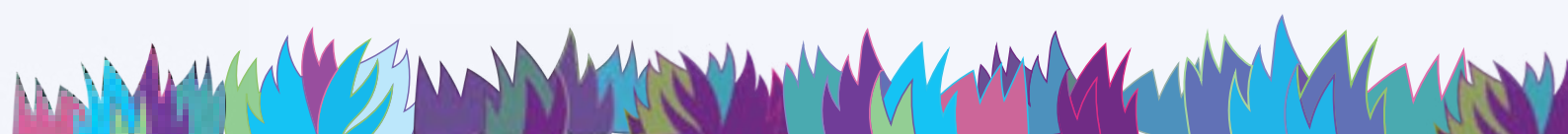




If possible extend your exhale to a soft long one. You can hum a tune and notice the vibration in your neck and chest. How far does the vibration travel?

You can ground with many different intentions and make it your own. Practicing yourself or with people around you helps build connections. Online spaces belong to all of us, regardless of who we are and what we look like.

Grounding together helps us to embrace the sense of community. When you or your friends are feeling anxious, sometimes guiding them through simple stepwise exercise can be very effective to help them and ourselves feel at ease.



Grounding through senses:

In this technique we will be using our five senses as a quick way to shift our focus from overwhelming thoughts or emotions back into the present moment. We will ask friends to take a moment to engage each senses. Ask them or yourself the following questions with the request to answer them vocally..

1.Look around and name 5 things you can see/visualise:

2. Listen closely and name 4 things you can hear/vibrations you sense:

3. Touch something nearby and name 3 things you can feel:

4. Breathe deeply and name 2 things you can smell:

5. Take a moment to taste and name 1 thing you can taste:

Bringing back attention to our senses calms us at the time of crisis. Make this a regular practice to assist our bodies at the time of crisis. Then feel free to ask yourselves and others what form of support may be helpful at this time



Creating Your Imaginary Safe Space

When your mind is racing, sometimes taking yourself out of the current moment can be incredibly calming. One effective way to do this is by creating an imaginary safe space somewhere you can return to whenever you need peace and relaxation.

1. Start with deep breathing:

Take a few moments to breathe deeply and slowly, letting go of any tension. Close your eyes and bring your focus inward.

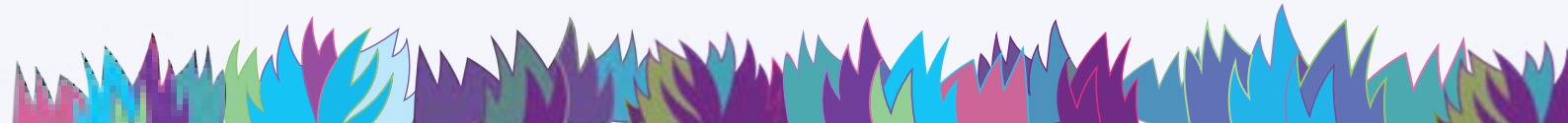
2. Imagine a calming place:

Picture a place where you feel completely at ease. This could be a peaceful beach, a quiet forest, a serene field, a snowy mountain or any fantasy based place of your imagination—anywhere you feel safe and calm.

3. Bring your safe space to life:

- What do you notice around you?
- Are there any buildings or structures?
- Are there animals, plants, or natural elements?
- What is the lighting like?
- Can you hear any sounds, like waves, rustling leaves, or a gentle breeze?

Take your time to fully imagine all the details of this safe space. The more vivid and real it feels, the more effective it will be.





5. Settle into your safe space:

- What would you be doing here?
- Would you be lying down, sitting, or perhaps strolling along?
- Choose the most relaxing position you can think of, allowing your body and mind to fully soak up the calmness of this place.

6. Handle intrusive thoughts:

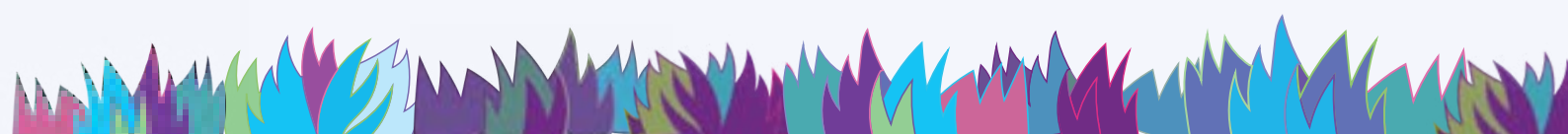
- As you relax, you may notice thoughts beginning to intrude. Remember, this is a safe space away from the racing mind, and these thoughts do not belong here.
- When a thought enters, don't react to it. Simply notice it.
- Transform this thought into something that fits your environment—perhaps a feather, a dandelion seed, a cloud, or a snowflake. Choose whatever feels right to you and suits the peaceful surroundings.

7. Let the thought drift away:

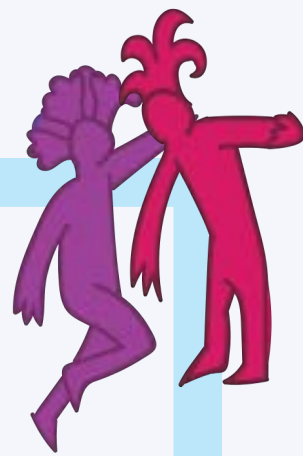
- Once you've transformed the thought, picture it being carried away by a gentle breeze.
- Watch it slowly float away into the distance, becoming smaller and more distant until it is gone.
- With each passing moment, the space around you becomes quieter and more still.

8. Stay as long as you need:

Allow yourself to remain in this peaceful space for as long as you need to calm your mind. You can return to this place anytime you feel overwhelmed by thoughts or emotions.



Friends are the best medicine: Impromptu dance party!



We are always prescribed movements and exercises to have a better mental health. But we all know it's not that easy. So here's an invitation. Play music you love, loud or using a headset and slowly start to move to the beat. Some parts of your body may feel shy, after all, being open and playful with our bodies doesn't happen with a click of a button. Maybe your shoulders take the lead or the hands or your waist, slowly moving. Bring in some playful gestures, allow yourself to be goofy. Now listen to the beats in the music and invite your body to sync into the rhythm. Start with one song at first and build on that. This distraction is pleasurable to the body because our bodies love to express via movement as it helps it let go of tenseness.

Some movements you can incorporate into your goofy dance to release and let go are gently shaking shoulder joints, neck, hips and legs while the knee stays a little bent and soft at the joint.

If you are seated or lying down, imagine parts of the body that you have access to contracting and loosening. You can also have a prop like a cushion you can squeeze and let go syncing to the rhythm and vibration of the music or beat that you can sense or hear.



The Social Lifeboat Setup

This is an activity designed to have a lifeboat as a safety net for yourself. Try to do this activity along with your friends, colleagues, family or social network.

Step 1: Create the Lifeboat:

On a large sheet of paper or a board, draw a simple lifeboat. The lifeboat represents the player's social support system. You can add sections like "Friends," "Family," "Community," or "Support Professionals" as labels to represent different areas of social support.

Step 2: The Social Lifeboat Cards:

On each piece of paper, write a potential "supportive relationship" type that players can add to their lifeboat. Name them. The social lifeboat can be different from one individual to another but doing it together with a group will help you brainstorm about your circle deeper. Some examples are:

- Emotional Support Friend: A friend who listens to your worries.
- Fun Buddy: Someone who brings joy and adventure to your life.
- Mentor: A person who offers guidance and advice.
- Problem-Solving Partner: Someone who helps you brainstorm solutions.
- ----- (add your label)

When you complete this activity you will have your social lifeboat setup for the crisis.





Rage: If our rage could speak

When our boundaries are violated, even if our mind does not register the experience as one of boundary violations, we will experience feeling the sensations in our bodies over time. We want to spend some time understanding what anger and rage mean in this context.

Sara's story has many instances of her boundaries being violated (page ...).

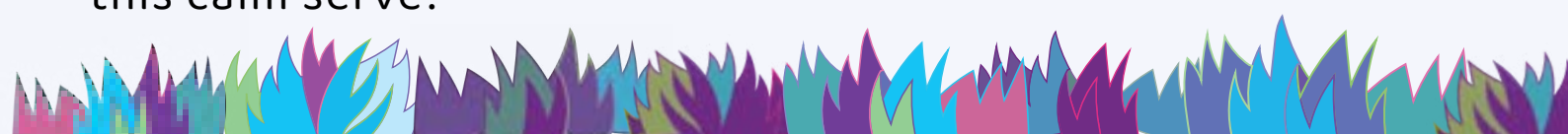
Being "rage baited" which means having to interact with entities who are online working specially playing the "devil's advocate," with the goal of creating fear and overwhelm for activists.

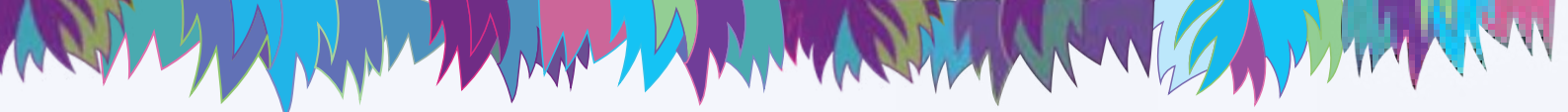
Sometimes these online violations feel even more threatening because a remark online on our devices can make us feel uncomfortable while surrounded by loved ones even in the comfort spaces that usually feel safe.

When we center our mental well being, we engage with rage as a site of information about what justice means to us.

And just like in Sara's case, we can also look at rage in a collective way.

Rage can feel like heat in our stomach, tightened jaw, tightened fist, tense muscles, rashes on our bodies but at times we may not even know we are experiencing rage because we are asked to suppress anger from the time we are children as there is emphasis to be a calm and controlled child so one will grow into a calm adult as well. However, who does this calm serve?





Young people, girls, and women often are reprimanded for showing anger. Why is that, whose anger and rage is tolerated and who is shamed or punished for it.

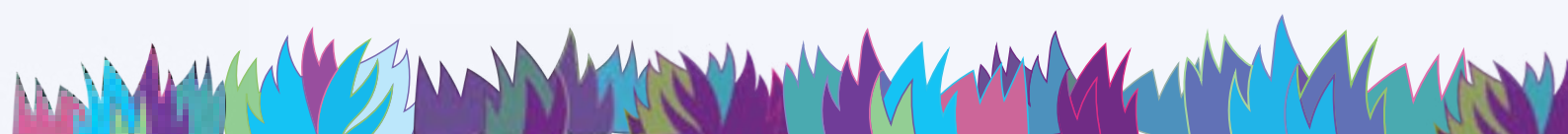
We know the answer to this question all too well.

When activists online express rage over injustices they get attacked and invalidated not only by individuals who are acting on their own but also by anti-rights groups who recruit people as well as employ bots that are created to encroach on our boundaries and make us feel unsafe.

As you read the above, notice your ownbody. Many of us might recall an incident where we felt anger and rage but also felt helpless not knowing what to do. Take a pen, pencil or simply type if that is more accessible for you. Take some time to read the questions below. Notice what is happening in the body as you make space for what the question is asking. There is no right or wrong answer here. This is your experience. We recommend you do this activity in a group. Currently many of us are struggling to make sense and are enraged by the helplessness we feel of what is happening in Palestine, the rise of AI and uncertainty around it and the general rise of the anti-rights movement all over the globe.

Come together to write about your collective rage.

Before embarking into this practice, we encourage you to do simple grounding. If it gets uncomfortable, lean back to the simple grounding process.





Answer the question as a group or individually:

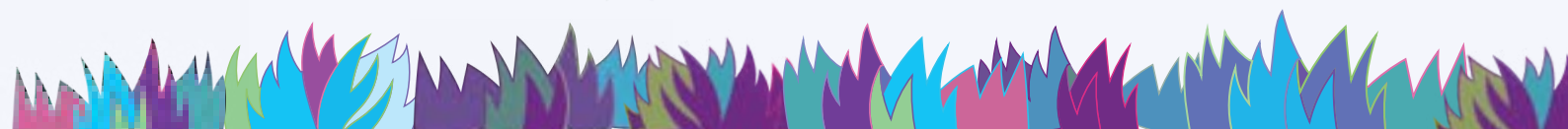
1. What does your rage say about how you want the world to be?
2. What does your rage look like?
3. Imagine with eyes closed or open, what color, texture, shape is it?
4. If you were to talk to your rage, what would it say about what is important for the rage?
5. Why does the rage show up?

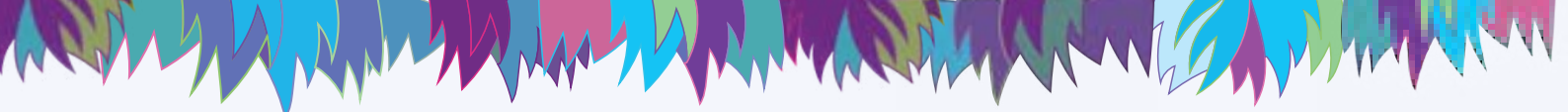
Centered in the belief that our bodies can sense injustice, the physical sensation we feel in the face of injustice, we want to honor these sensations. Contrary to what we are told, getting to know our anger and rage and making space for them in the long run will help us take care of ourselves and those around us.

Check back to the body from time to time as you re-read or express out loud among yourselves collectively what rage means to everyone.



If you are by yourself, evoke memories of people, places and beings that believe in what you believe. Keep pictures of them around you, or objects that remind you of them. Again, you are not alone in this.



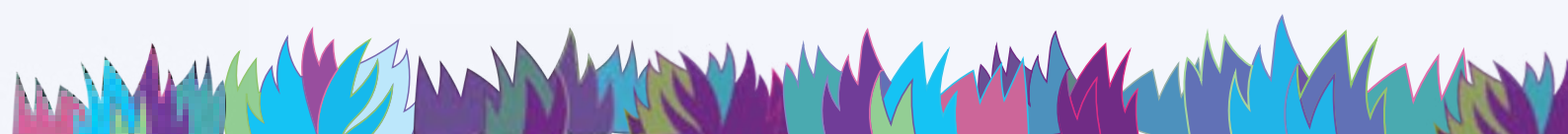


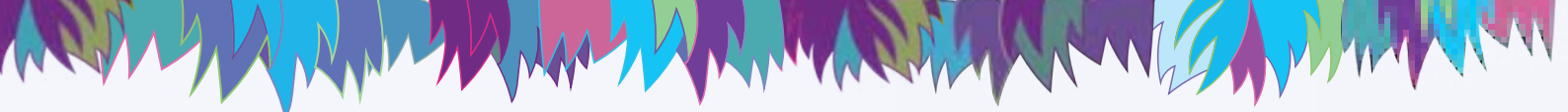
You will hear collective sighs of agreement and resonance. Look around as you share and see your rage be affirmed by nodding of heads, expression of care on your friend's face or in the cadence of their voice. Hold hands and squeezing it as a sign of resonance if voicing feels difficult at the moment. This can be done online or offline depending on where your support communities are.

You could be that person for your collective who brings this topic up and has this conversation. These conversations can be scaffolding to when rage shows up unexpectedly. Sometimes these feelings might come out more and the affirmations from the exercise can be helpful to remind us why our rage is showing up.

When we have space to investigate rage as something that is a very common experience, and distance it from shame, we can also hold ourselves more accountable when it spills over. Instead of using the word "controlling your rage" we would invite you to explore and understand it as it can tell us what we are about, what makes us sad, what gives us joy.

Next page we list some movements and sensory engagement to engage with our rage. One of the reasons theatre and improvisation are used while engaging with rage is because they provide us imaginary safe spaces to show our rage without the rage spilling over and hurting ourselves or those around us.

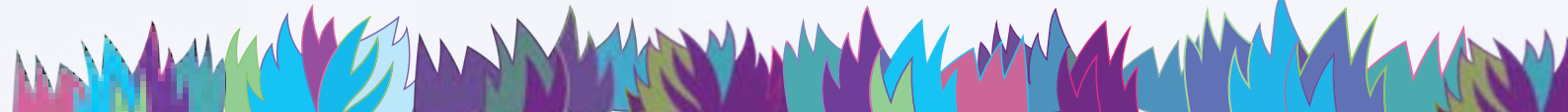




So if the following practices feel theatric, it's because they are meant to be! :

- Take a pillow between your arms and squeeze it to release the energy you feel in your arms.
- Shaking our limbs gently and letting emotions flow at a slow pace is helpful. Remember to rest and hydrate after these exercises as our bodies are still processing. Knowing how long our bodies need rest is a wonderful know-how to assist us in this journey.
- Putting our arms up and bringing them down as if chopping wood and doing it in the rhythm you are comfortable in.
- Bite into a crisp fruit like a tiger would and feel the sensations akin to biting into that thing that is causing that rage with the intention to defend yourself.

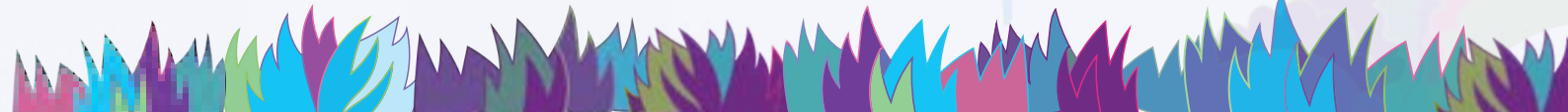
We highly recommend pairing the impromptu dance party and talking to our rage as something we practice together. Create playlists for different moods, dance into softness and joy!

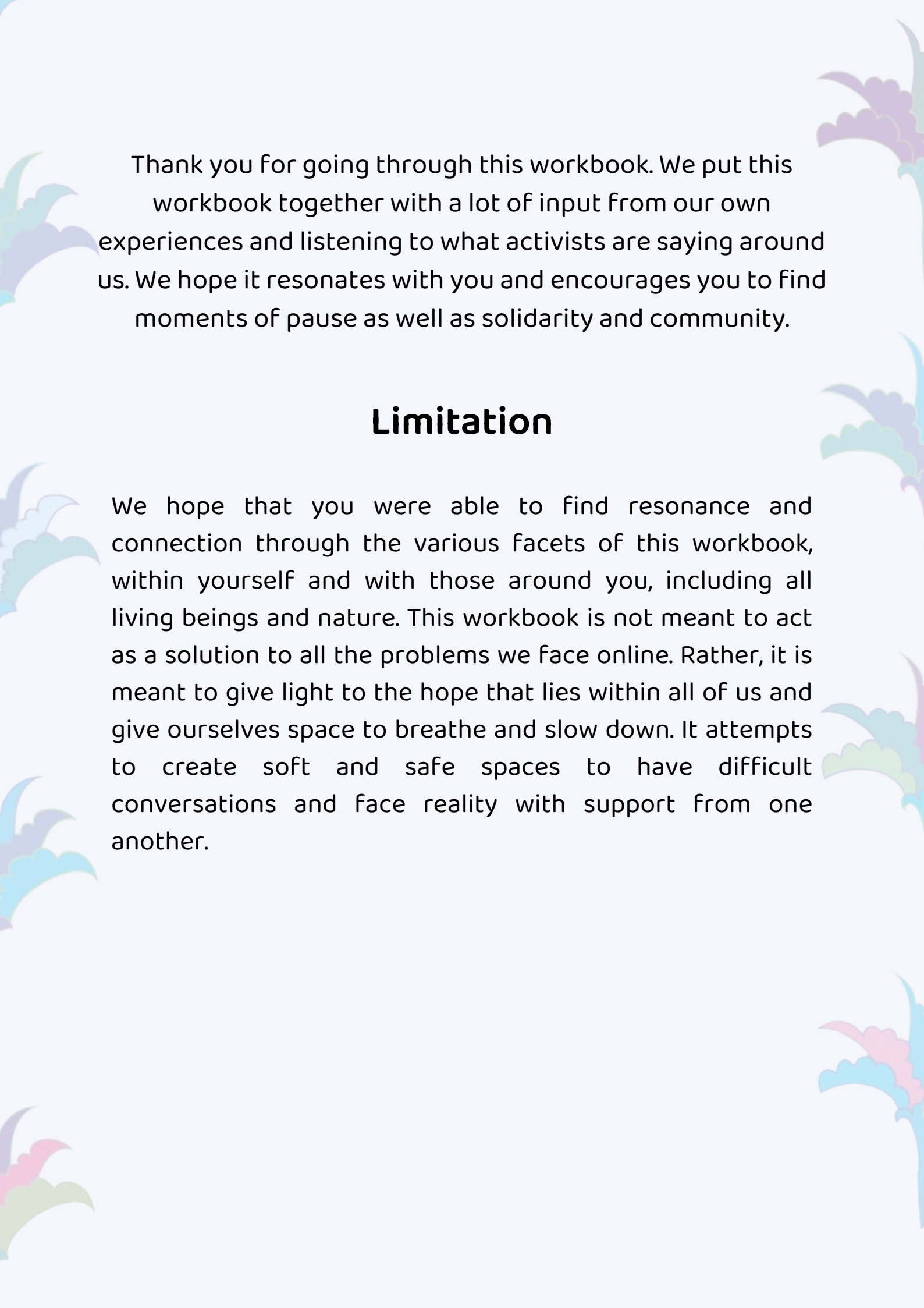




Ways to take a break

The internet can sometimes be an overwhelming place to be. When the grasp of the internet's claws dig in deep, know that it's okay to distance yourself from it and take a break. Here are a few ways we found to take a break. Do them on your own or with a company, start with 1 activity or pair as many as you like. It's okay, you've got time, the internet will be right here when you are ready to come back to it. Keep adding to your list

1. Pamper yourself with some chocolate or a snack
 2. Cuddle with a pet or watch animal videos
 3. Practice breathing exercises
 4. Eat a favourite meal
 5. Declutter your wardrobe and find clothes/accessories to donate
 6. Listen to your favourite music
 7. Read a book you haven't read in a long time
 8. Spend time in nature
 9. Watch a favourite movie
 10. Watch a sunrise or sunset
 11. Listen to a podcast from a creator you haven't listened to before
 12. Create a list of short term goals
 13. Dress up in your favourite outfit
 14. Chat with an old friend
 15.
 16.
 17.
 18.
 19.
 20.
- 



Thank you for going through this workbook. We put this workbook together with a lot of input from our own experiences and listening to what activists are saying around us. We hope it resonates with you and encourages you to find moments of pause as well as solidarity and community.

Limitation

We hope that you were able to find resonance and connection through the various facets of this workbook, within yourself and with those around you, including all living beings and nature. This workbook is not meant to act as a solution to all the problems we face online. Rather, it is meant to give light to the hope that lies within all of us and give ourselves space to breathe and slow down. It attempts to create soft and safe spaces to have difficult conversations and face reality with support from one another.

Glossary and Resources

Concern Trolling

Abusers pose as fans or supporters of a target's work and make harmful and demeaning messages and comments masked as constructive feedback.

Cyberbullying

An umbrella term, cyberbullying encompasses many harassing behaviors, but boils down to "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. The term is primarily used in relation to children and young adults.

Cyber-Mob Attacks (aka Dogpiling)

When a large group of abusers collectively attack a target through a barrage of threats, slurs, insults, and other abusive tactics.

Deepfake

The use of "a form of artificial intelligence called deep learning" to make manufactured images, audio, and/or video that appear real.

Doxing (aka Doxxing)

The publishing of sensitive personal information online—including home address, email, phone number, social security number, photos, etc.—to harass, intimidate, extort, stalk, or steal the identity of a target.

End-to-end encryption (E2EE)

End-to-end encryption is a secure way of communicating over a network whereby it scrambles data in a way that can only be read by the intended recipient's device.

Hacking

The unauthorized intrusion into a device or network, hacking is often carried out with the intention to attack, harm, or incriminate another individual by stealing their data, violating their privacy, or infecting their devices with viruses.

Hashtag Poisoning

The creation of an abusive hashtag—or the hijacking of an existing hashtag—which is then leveraged as a rallying cry for cyber mob attacks.

Hateful Speech

Expression that attacks a specific aspect of a person's identity, such as their race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Hateful speech online often takes the form of ad hominem attacks, which invoke prejudicial feelings over intellectual arguments in order to avoid discussion of the topic at hand by attacking a person's character or attributes.

Misinformation

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information—getting the facts wrong.

Online Impersonation

Creation of a hoax social media account, often using the target's name and/or photo, to post offensive or inflammatory statements to defame, discredit, or instigate further abuse. A harasser can also impersonate someone the target knows in order to cause harm.

Phishing

An online scam that starts with some form of communication—an email, a text, a Whatsapp message—designed to look like it comes from a trusted source. The aim is to trick you into doing something—usually clicking on a link or opening an attachment, which may automatically download a virus onto your device or lead you to enter private information, like login details, which could then be used to gain control over your online accounts, impersonate you, or sell your info to others.

Rage Baiting

Rage baiting is a deliberate tactic used by content creators, media outlets, and even brands to provoke outrage and emotional reactions.

Revenge Porn

Nonconsensual pornography is “the distribution of private, sexually-explicit images [or videos] of individuals without their consent.

Feminist Internet:

<https://feministinternet.org/>

Disability justice principle:

<https://sinsinvalid.org/10-principles-of-disability-justice/>

Good journalism examples around the world:

<https://netzpolitik.org/2024/data-broker-files-how-data-brokers-sell-our-location-data-and-jeopardise-national-security/#netzpolitik-pw>

Anti-rights AWID research:

https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/RightsAtRisk_TimeForAction OURsTrendsReport2021.pdf

Digital Security Helpline by Access Now:

<https://www.accessnow.org/help/>

How to Improve Your Digital Resilience by Mighty Bytes:

<https://www.mightybytes.com/blog/digital-resilience/>

Online Harassment Field Manual:

<https://onlineharassmentfieldmanual.pen.org/>



About Utar Chadhav

Utar Chadhav started out as a space focused on capturing the voices that felt were not being centered when it came to mental health. The idea that we at Utar Chadhav really put into continued practice is that people are experts of their own lives, that we know what we are about and try to do our best given the context of our lives.

Instead of moving to a prescriptive model of telling folks how to live their lives, which we ourselves had been told, we realized that learning from each other about how we are making sense of this often disorienting and scary world and finding our spaces of solace be it in a living being, in a book, in a moment in time and so on has been more helpful.



About Global Platforms

Global Platforms are safe spaces empowering young people to learn, organize, and connect for societal change. Global Platform methodology built on feminist principles, action-learning methodology, offers coaching and training to analyse power structures, build leadership skills to connect and take action. Across 30+ countries local partner organisations run each Global Platform connected through the Global Platforms Network with digital communities, online trainings, campaigns, physical gatherings, and capacity development.

The ActionAid-hosted secretariat supports members with methodology, advocacy, safety, and security, fundraising, and international opportunities to support youth leadership and activism globally.

