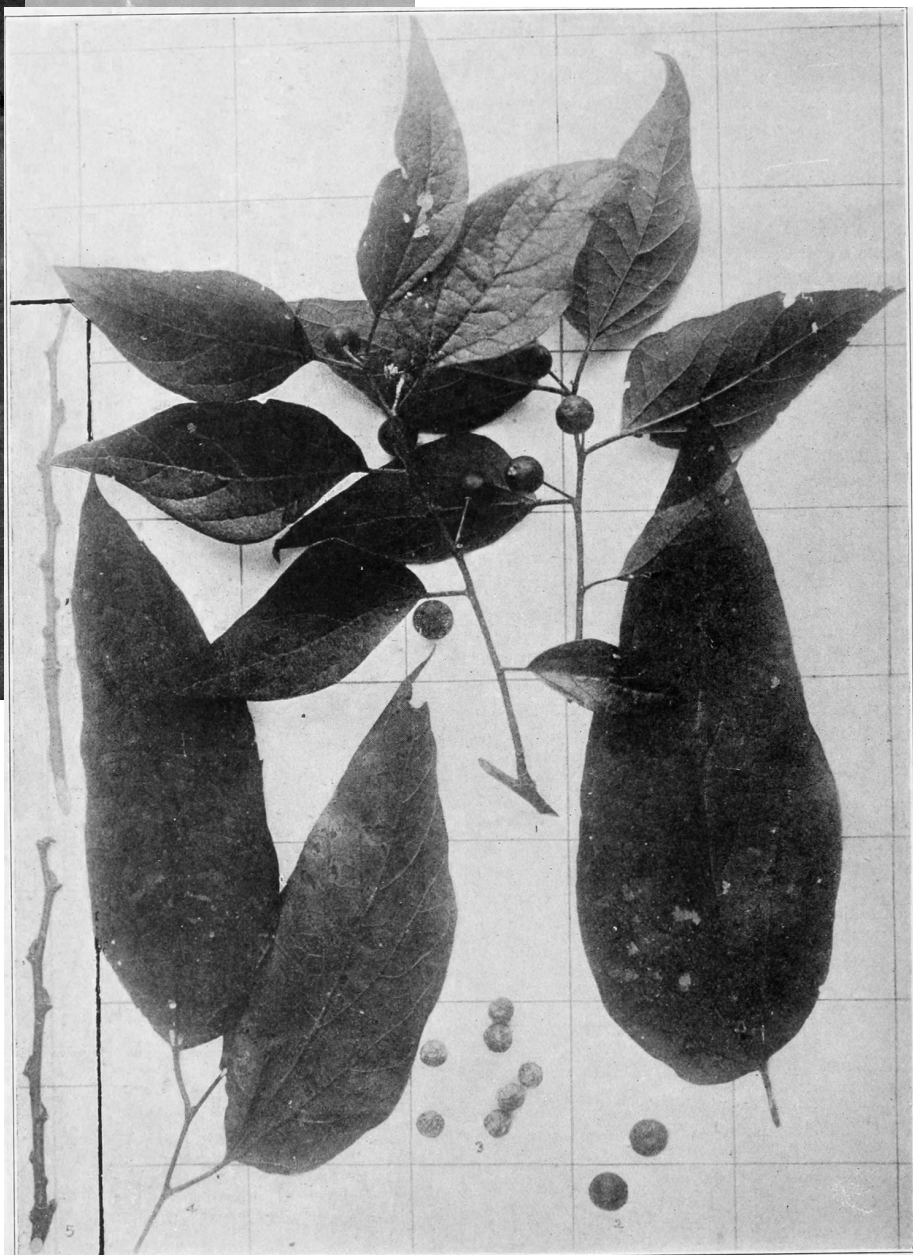




HEALING THROUGH COLLECTIVE CHANGE

**A HERBAL SELF CARE ZINE
FOR THE 2020 SHIFT**



We are in a time of mass civil unrest. As the sons and daughters of Africa the injustices that have been a part of our lineage for hundreds of years are finally rising up through our bones to be heard and held. This process is deep. It ends now, with us, in this lifetime. We are being called to transmute the pain and suffering of racism , to learn and to grow, and to make a change on this planet for the generations to come.

We are the living ancestors.



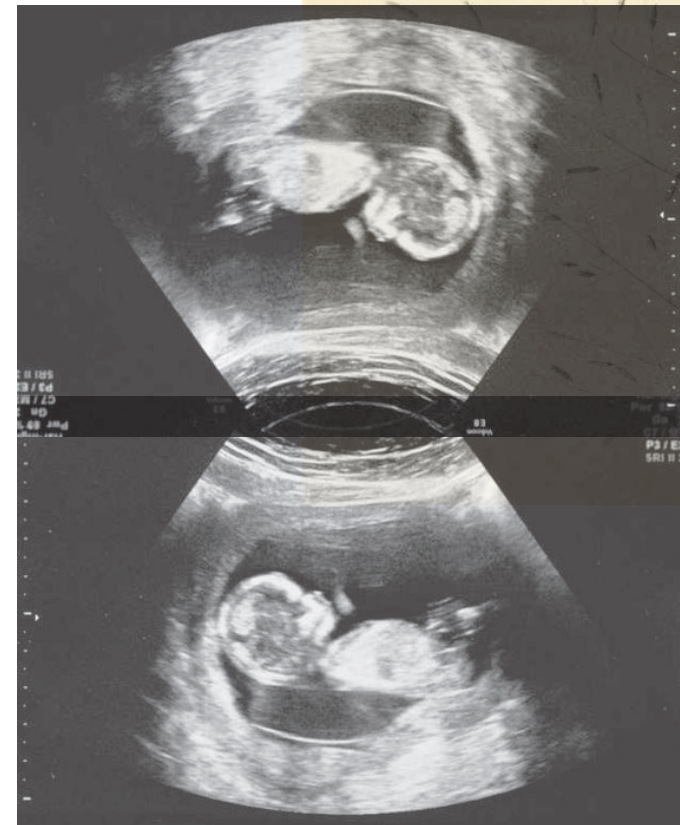
THE
EFFECTS OF
RACISM
LIVE WITHIN US.

INTER GENERATIONAL TRAUMA IS REAL.

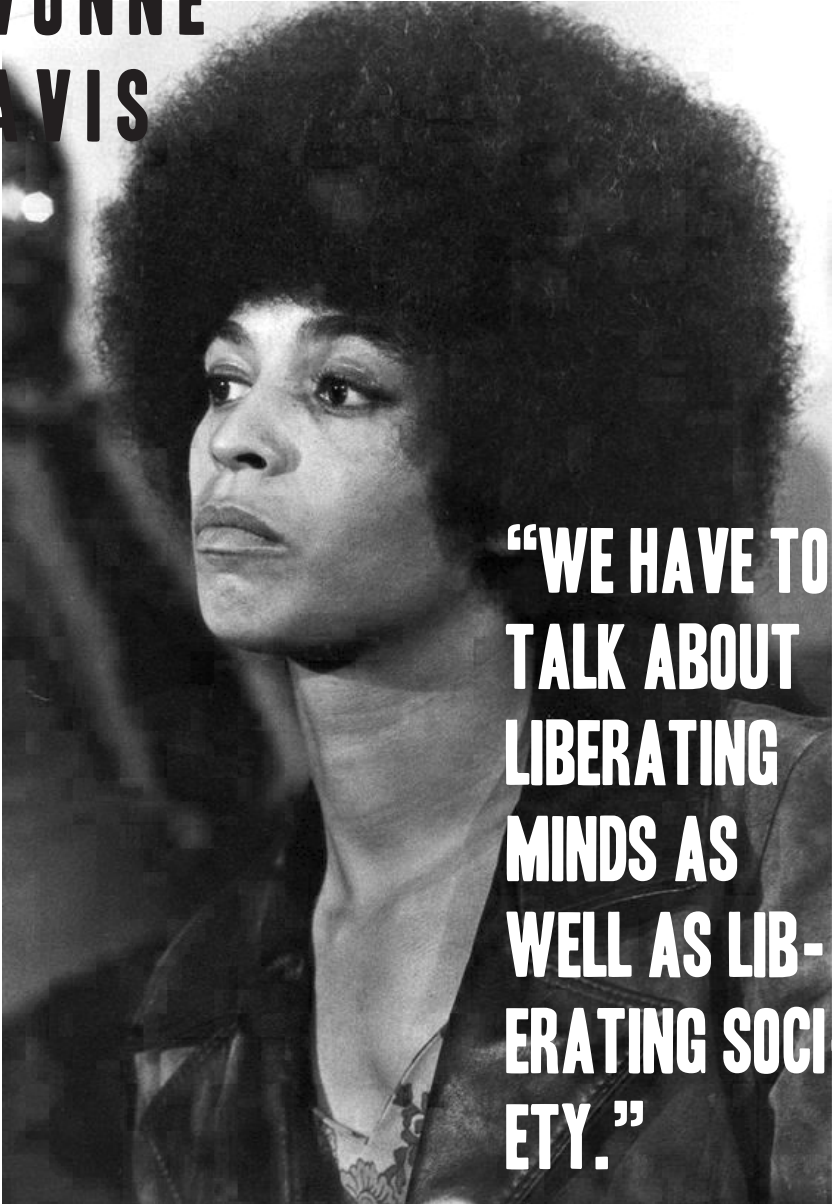
No 17.

With emerging developments in epigenetics we are recognising that the stories of our parents and our grandparents live through us. Dr Rachel Yehuda from the Sinai Hospital in New York has demonstrated that children who are born to parents who have experienced PTSD are likely to be born with low cortisol levels, predisposing them to relive PTSD symptoms, and that these children are 3 times more likely to develop anxiety and depression as a result of this. As a BIPOC, the trauma of our colonial history is never too far from our lives.

What is interesting about trauma is that it seeks healing, the same triggers that lived inside your grandfather also live in you. Your grandfathers experience of racism that put him on edge, his body reacting whenever he heard sirens, how his eyes scanned the environment for safety, are traits that he may have passed down to you in order to keep you safe. This is epigenetics. These are gifts of resilience, passed down through the ages, but it is also our duty to remind the body (and the story that comes with it) that we are safe and that all is well.




ANGELA YVONNE DAVIS



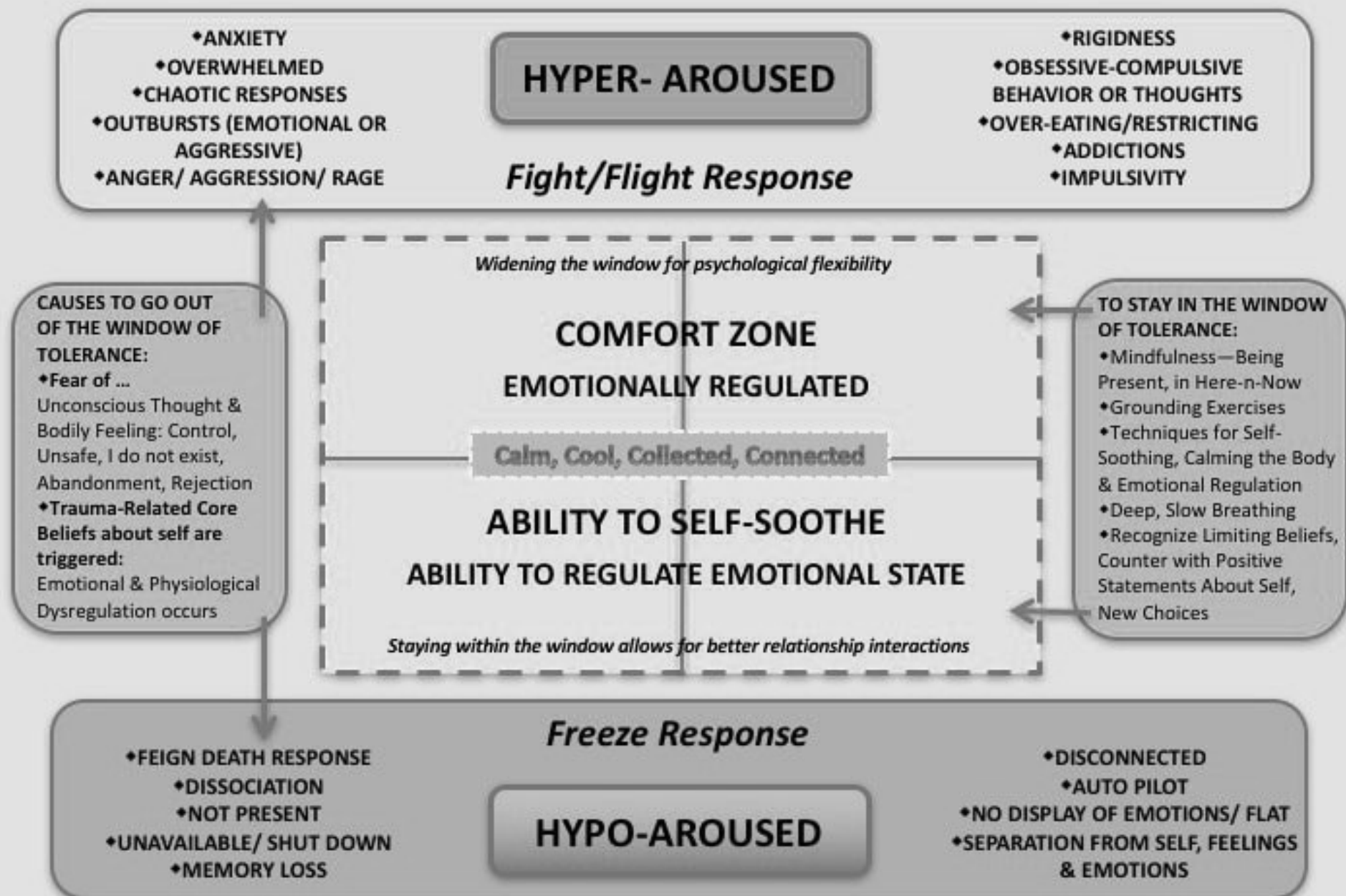
“WE HAVE TO
TALK ABOUT
LIBERATING
MINDS AS
WELL AS LIB-
ERATING SOCI-
ETY.”

We must lead the body and the mind to a **place of calm**. It is from this space that we are able to make decisions that serve our best interests, that we are able to face this big, wide, overwhelming world with **authenticity, strength and tenacity**. In order to be good ancestors we must teach our bodies (and therefore the beings that are birthed through those bodies) safety and security. This may be for the first time in a long time for our lineage.



This is about self-sovereignty and self-mastery. We want to be able to respond to life's challenges with an inner well of resources. We want to be able to respond to racism with a sense of absolute ease. **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.**

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE- TRAUMA/ANXIETY RELATED RESPONSES:
Widening the Comfort Zone for Increased Flexibility



WINDOW OF TOLERANCE MODEL



When we have had repeated instances of stress on our lives our window of tolerance shrinks. Our window of tolerance is the space of psychological flexibility to be able to respond to challenges in a calm and rational way. If something triggers us we are able to self soothe and bring ourselves back into a calm space. We are able to recognise when we are inside our “window of tolerance” through our physiological responses. Our breathing pattern is calm, we are feeling grounded and connected to the world, we are able to make clear decisions.

When we are triggered, our body perceives danger and threat. We can become “hyper-aroused” or “hypo-aroused” . We can recognise hyper-arousal by excessive activation/energy often in the form of anxiety, panic, fear, hypervigilance, emotional flooding etc. This keeps our system stuck “on” and impacts our ability to relax, often making it difficult to sleep, eat and digest food, and optimally manage our emotions. At the most intensified level this may result in dissociative rage/hostility.

Hypoarousal may occur when we have too much hyperarousal. The body can only tolerate being in the hyperarousal state for so long. When this happens the body plunges into hypoarousal, which can look like shutting down and dissociating. The body can get stuck in this “off” mode, typified by disconnection, despondency, depression, lack of energy, and numbness. We may find it difficult to motivate ourselves, and want to sleep all the time. It impacts our appetite and digestion and may make it difficult to feel any emotion at all.

THE WINDOW OF TOL- ERANCE AND RACISM

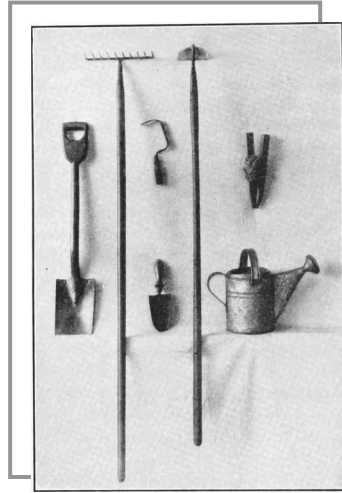


Viewing this through a race lens, if we have experienced repeated instances of racism, whether **direct or indirect**, our window of tolerance is going to be smaller. This means that when we are triggered, we are more likely to go into **hyper or hypo arousal**.

Neither of these states serve us in our ability to stand up for ourselves and make **change in our environment**. The media have done an incredible job of manipulating righteous Black rage into something dangerous, and in a numbed out state you are unable to hold any boundaries and assert yourself in the world.

I share this tool to encourage you to begin to notice the times when you become dysregulated. What was it that triggered you? How did it feel? What did you notice was happening to you at the time? How did you bring yourself back into your window of tolerance?

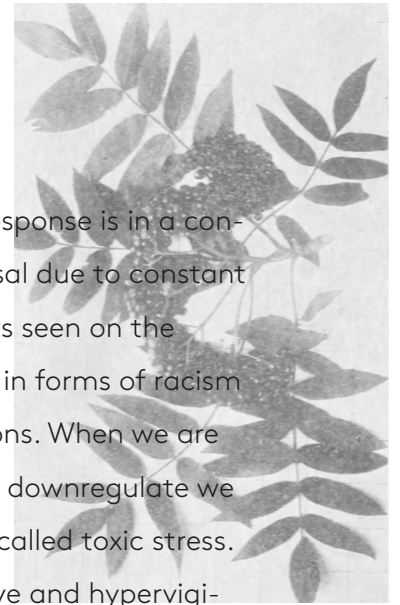
TOOLS FOR EMOTIONAL REGULATION



The fight or flight stress response (sympathetic nervous system response) is responsible for gearing us up to defend ourselves or run away from danger. Once this danger passes, the body is able to downregulate, returning to a place of calmness and balance. You notice this reflex in animals, if they hurt themselves they usually shake. This is their process of dispelling the excess energy of the sympathetic nervous system.

Often, this stress response is in a constant state of arousal due to constant threats and dangers seen on the media or that exist in forms of racism and microaggressions. When we are unable to relax and downregulate we experience what is called toxic stress. We may feel reactive and hypervigilant, on edge, anxious, “switched on”. This can manifest as difficulties sleeping and chilling out.

These techniques can help to calm this response, shift the body into parasympathetic rest and repair mode, and return us to balance.



HEALING HEAD HOLDING

(AKA FRONTAL/OCCIPITAL HOLDING)

*Adapted from Terrence Bennett's Touch
for Health Neuro/Vascular Points

Purpose: This is a powerful technique for defusing 'negative' emotions, processing emotional experience and balancing the hemispheres.

One hand contacts the forehead (frontal lobes of the brain) while the other hand contacts the occiput (area closest to the brain stem and the limbic system).

You can either focus on a memory or upset; OR gently focus on your internal experience, on somatic sensations in your body. You can do this for yourself, or even better with a partner.



STEP 1

Select something to focus on: either your internal experience (somatic sensations) OR on some emotional distress.

STEP 4

Lightly hold the back of the head with the other hand, with the little finger at the base of the skull, holding the rounded portion of skull under the occipital ridge.



STEP 2

Rate the issue or memory on a scale from 0 – 10, where 0 = 'no intensity;' and 10 = 'overwhelming.'

STEP 5

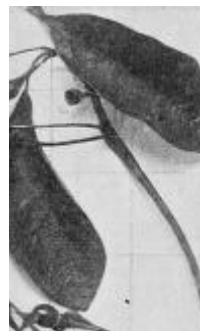
Gently focus on your internal experience OR on the issue or distress, while breathing gently but deeply.

STEP 3

Place one hand across the forehead with the little finger across the eyebrows and the thumb up by the hairline, or friend can do this for you.

STEP 6

Gently hold this position for several minutes until you feel a pulse or heartbeat in both hands; or until the issue or distress shifts and releases.



THYMUS THUMP

(from John Diamond, Behavioral Kinesiology)



Purpose: To get the system going, help relieve shock anxiety and panic attacks, and increase your Life Energy.

Use when:

- **After a shock or trauma**
- **Feeling anxious or panicky**
- **Feeling tired or fatigued**

Common experiences:

- **Feeling anxious or panicky**
- **Feeling stronger, more awake**
- **Feeling calmer, more present**
- **Increased energy and stamina**

Follow along with the video: <https://youtu.be/ZIkRe4ZSWHs>

Taken from Resources for Resilience – Self Help Techniques For Emotional First Aid

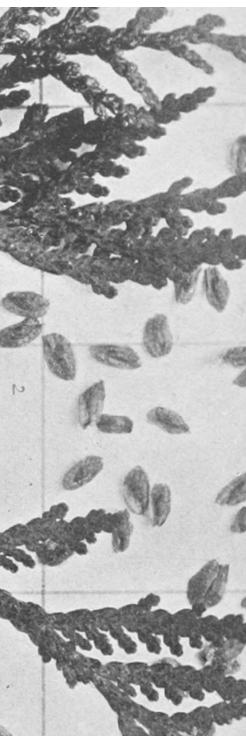
STEP 1

Select something to focus on: either your internal experience (somatic sensations) OR on some emotional distress.



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NERVOUS SYSTEM NOURISHMENT



In our journey through this time it is important to check in with our nervous system. Our nervous system needs nourishment. It is our nervous system that is constantly reading the wild world and searching for our safety. As, BIPOC our nervous systems are likely to be working overtime .

Luckily on this great green planet medicine is all around us. I would like to introduce 3 nervines, plants that work with the nervous system, which can be drank as a tea.

I recommend working with a herbal blend for a period of 90 days , in this way you will get to know the plant, and get to witness how it works with you.

When sourcing herbs buy organic if possible. Use what is available to you. Medicine should be, and is free. It is all around us.



IMPORTANT TEA BREWING TIP!

Boil the herb in a saucepan with a lid on.

The volatile oils in the tea evaporate so you want to capture that goodness and bring it back into your tea.

Every tea should be boiled for at least 5 mins so that the water has time to extract the botanical constituents.

Oat Straw (*Avena Sativa*)

This is the ultimate soothing and nourishing nervine tea. It is excellent to use as a base to blend with other teas.

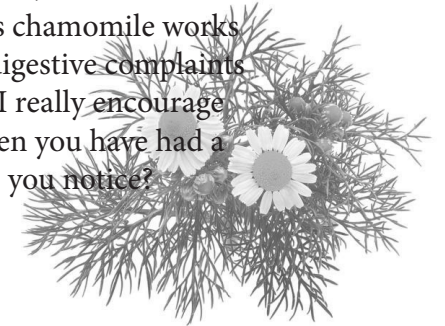
Oat straw when picked fresh emits a milky white substance. Its this substance that coats nerve endings. It is good for people who feel that they are “on edge” or “burnt out”. Its restorative action works on the nerve cells as well as the brain, so has a particular affinity for those whose stress comes from overthinking. It contains high levels of zinc, iron and manganese.

This is a vitality tea, Make this tea your best friend..



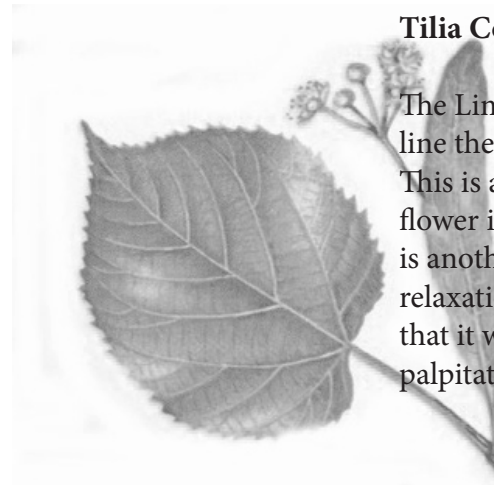
Chamomile (*Matricaria Recutita*)

This is a widely used herb for a reason. This is a sedative nervine used for its relaxing properties. It is a brilliant herb for the nervous system, encouraging deep relaxation and tension relief. It is used for headaches, inflammation, muscle aches and spasms. Due to its anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory and carminative properties chamomile works well for those who suffer with digestive complaints that are exacerbated by stress. I really encourage you to tune in to your body when you have had a cup of chamomile tea. What do you notice?



Tilia Cordata

The Lime Tree or Linden Tree (*Tilia Cordata*) line the streets of Bristol. They are everywhere. This is a tree native to the UK that produces a flower in early June. This exquisite little flower is another sedative nervine, bringing us deep relaxation. It is an anxiolytic herb, which means that it works well with anxious states, heart palpitations, racing thoughts, and headaches.





HERBS FOR ANGER

Borage (*Borago Officinalis*)



Borage has a blue flower, and has an affinity with the throat chakra. This is a helpful herb for those who feel that their anger needs a voice. It will help to take what needs to be said from a place of anger to a place of righteous peace. It's a cooling herb, bringing the heat of anger back down into the body.

Borage works with the adrenal glands, so supports us when we are under a lot of stress and mental exhaustion.

PARTS OF THE PLANT TO USE:

Flowering tops

Dandelion root (*Taxicum Officinale*)



According to Traditional Chinese Medicine the energy of anger is stored in the liver. Dandelion is a strong liver herb, it is diuretic which means that it supports the liver and kidneys in their functions of removing toxins in the body and flushing them out via urine. Energetically, Dandelion is a cooling herb, helpful for those who feel anger with heat. Dandelion root is bitter, which stimulates the digestive system. This is a helpful, grounding action.

PARTS OF THE PLANT TO USE:

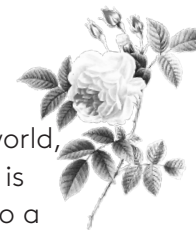
Flower, root and leaf.

HERBS FOR GRIEF

HERBS FOR GRIEF

HERBS FOR GRIEF

Rose (*Rosa Gallica L./Rosa Damascena*)



Rose is an incredible flower. Used across the world, the rose's gentle energy works on the heart. It is a nurturing, supportive flower that brings us to a place of acceptance and love. It is a mild sedative and anti-inflammatory.

PARTS OF THE PLANT TO USE:

Flowering tops

Hawthorn (*Crataegus Oxyacanthoides*)

This is a cardiac herb, which restores the functioning of the heart by increasing blood flow to the heart and strengthening the heart muscle. The tree is native to the UK and you can use flower and berry.

Energetically, the heart is the place we feel grief. Through hawthorns encourages the deep refuge in the heart, bringing us back to our life force.

PARTS OF THE PLANT TO USE:

Flower, berry, leaf.

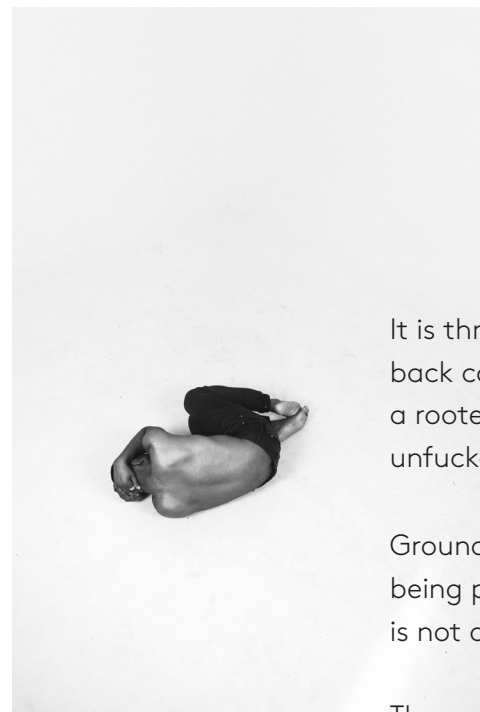


GROUNDING AS AN ACT OF RESIS- TANC

Grounding is about reclaiming your personal space, time and energy in a world that threatens your sense of self.

As a black race we are constantly bombarded with expectations placed on us through white supremacy. We are often required to provide emotional and physical labour on a daily basis and to make space for white fragility.

A lot of racism is insidious. Oftentimes we are manipulated into thinking that racism doesn't exist. That wasn't a racist remark, their actions weren't racially motivated, that microaggression didn't occur, and through this the connection we have to ourselves is severed. Through white supremacy we are fed the idea that those who are white are more deserving, and that we must sacrifice our own health and wellbeing so that they may benefit.



It is through grounding that we take back control. It is through having a rooted sense of self we become unfuckablewith.

Grounding is being in the body whilst being present in the world. Grounding is not a doing, it is a being.

There should be no effort made to feel your feet on the floor, or your back on the chair. Grounding is about noticing, tuning in to your body and your environment.

THE ACT OF GROUND- ING IS REVOLUTIONARY.

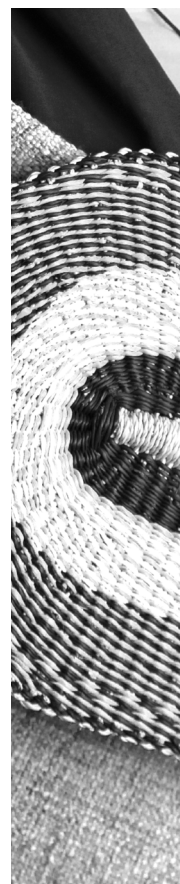


**“I THINK OF MYSELF
AS A TREE THAT IS SO
STRONGLY ROOTED AND
GROUNDED THAT I
CANNOT BE UPROOTED.
I’M FLEXIBLE ENOUGH
TO SWAY BUT NEV-
ER BREAK WHATEVER
LIFE’S STORMS BRING
MY WAY”.**

- Emma Ako of Mama Luna



At first it may feel a little unsafe. Distraction is a major technique our brains have developed to keep us from feeling difficult emotions. I encourage you to be gentle with yourself in this process.



This is where Mother Nature steps in. The use of our senses in the environment can be an incredible way to develop a nurturing relationship to our surroundings. We can almost always see the sky. Do you know where the sun sets and the sun rises above your house? Have you taken a moment to figure out what constellations are in the night sky above you? These rhythmic celestial movements are just one way we can anchor ourselves to our surroundings.

5 SENSES TECHNIQUE.

Take 5 minutes, wherever you are, to check in with your body. Check in with your breathing. Rapidity of breath is usually the first sign that you are feeling unsafe, or anxious. Just bringing your attention to your breath is enough sometimes to level it out.

Use your senses to bring your attention to what is happening in your here and now.

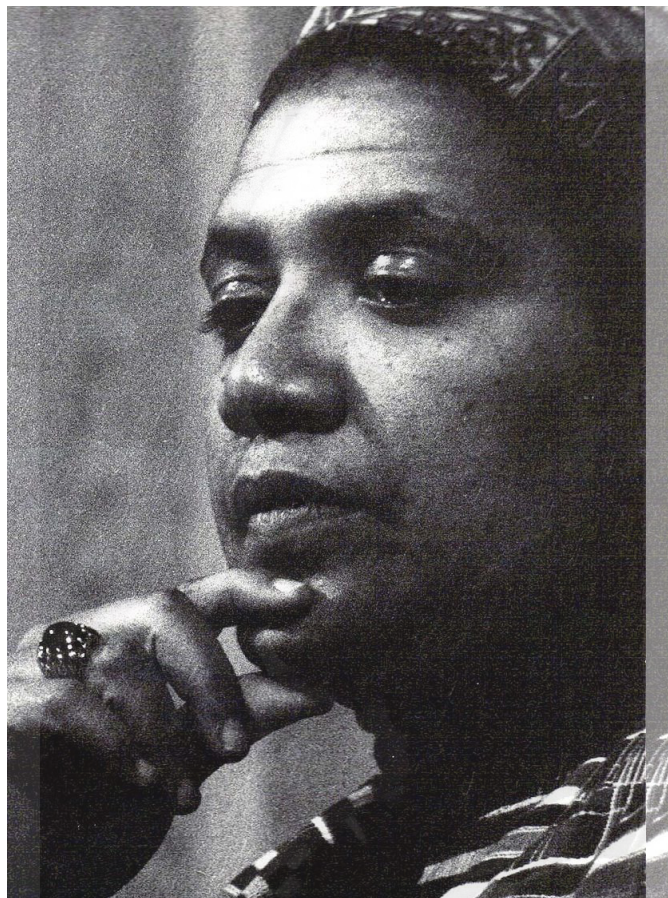
Name to yourself 5 things you can see,

4 things you can hear,

3 things you can touch,

2 things can smell,

1 thing you can taste.



Come back to your environment. Come back to nature, it will hold you. Get your shoes off and get your feet on the ground. This is especially helpful for people who are flighty/stuck in the head, or disassociate.

If you are noticing a sensation of overwhelm during your grounding practice, using icy cold water on the wrists can help to bring you back into your body as this activates the vagus nerve, and using strong smells like essential oils (particularly ones that relax the nervous system, lavender, clary sage, bergamot).

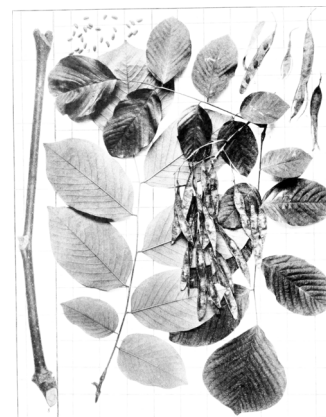
**“CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT
SELF-INDULGENCE, IT IS SELF-PRES-
ERVATION, AND THAT IS AN ACT OF
POLITICAL WARFARE.”**

- Audre Lorde





As Black people we are disproportionately more at risk of developing heart disease and diabetes, and more at risk of being treated for serious mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder. We are over-represented in mental health institutions and very few medical studies include Black and Brown bodies in their research. Foraging sits at the intersection between social justice, environmental justice, mindfulness and health.



Foraging give us the opportunity to take our health into our own hands, as well as giving us the opportunity to connect with our environment. It's empowering to know the environment in which you live, and to know that nature is always supporting you. An interesting thing happens when you start to tune in to your surroundings. You start to notice certain plants, its almost like they are calling you. More often than not those are the plants that you need at that time in your life, either for a physical ailment or a spiritual one.




FORAGING TIPS

Making medicine is about getting to know yourself deeply and tuning in to your needs, learning about what ails you on a physical/emotional/spiritual plane, and then looking for support in nature.

Just like grounding, foraging is about noticing. What shape is the plant? Where does it grow? Does it have a scent? Does it like disturbed ground? Damp places? What time of year does it flower? What grows around it? Does it live in woodlands or fields? Hedgerows or riverbanks? What does it taste like?

I recommend getting a good foraging book like Food for Free by Richard Mabey or Wild Remedies by Rosalee De La Foret. I don't know of any UK based BIPOC written books, but if you do, please let me know.

- Be mindful when foraging any wild plant and be sure to leave more for the earth than you take for yourself.
 - Don't pick from anywhere where an animal may have urinated.
 - Make sure you don't pick from any fields which have been sprayed with pesticides.
 - Don't pick from the sides of busy roads because the car fumes will have affected the plants.
 - In Bristol we have loads of good foraging spots. Try Snuff Mills, Conham River Park, White's Paddock , Blaise Castle, Stockwood Open Space, Leigh Woods.
- 

BOOKS AND RE-SOURCES

Resma Manakem

My Grandmothers Hands - Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies

Mark Wolynn

It Didn't Start With You. How Inherited Family Trauma Shapes Who We Are and How to Break the Cycle

Bessl Van Der Kolk

The Body Keeps The Score – Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma

Bartrams Encyclopedia of Herbal Medicine

Queen Afua

Sacred Woman – A Guide to Healing the Feminine Body, Mind and Spirit
www.joiunlimited.com
Radical Self Care for Social Justice by Dr Joi Lewis

Instagram Accounts

@Activeculturemedicine

@maryamhasnaa

@muneerapilgrim

@divinabotanica

@mamalunayonisteam

@sacredvibesapothecary

@holidayphillips

@lewiswedlock

@brissblm

LOCAL BRISTOL RESOURCES

Project Zazi

Off The Record

Supporting BAME 11-25 year olds through social action and mental health support.
otrbristol.org.uk/what-we-do/zazi

Rachel Rose

Third Generation Healer and Womens Wisdom Keeper
thirdgenerationhealer.com

Black and Asian Therapists Network

baatn.org.uk

NAOS

Children, Young People and Family Therapists
naos.org.uk

Lou Lachman

A trusted Therapist and ally.
energycounselling.co.uk/about/about-louanne-energy-counseling-bristol

Elsie Harp

Zine author. Mental health and flower medicine practitioner www.divinabotanica.com

Rhizome Clinic/Herbalists without Borders

Becs and Annwen of Rhizome Clinic have been actively involved in the Radical Herb Gathering – a network of herbalist practitioners who believe in radical self care, mutual aid, and community responsibility.
www.rhizomeclinic.org.uk

A QUICK & EFFICIENT RITUAL

BY SOIZIC ELBAZ

In these demanding, uncertain times with triggers and microaggressions (or outright aggressions) everywhere it is entirely natural to feel any of these emotions: overwhelmed, angry, tired, sad, ungrounded, stressed, anxious, or simply to want to take some intentional time for yourself.

This ritual is in no way a replacement for mental health help nor does it change the fact that our societies and its individuals need to reckon with white supremacy, racism, and anti-Blackness.

It is simply my hope that this ritual will help you enhance your wellbeing, feel grounded, and feel a sense of connection. Take what resonates with you and discard the rest. Who am I? My name is Soizic. I am originally from France, although I have grandparents of Tunisian, Caribbean, Middle Eastern and Polish origin.

I recognize it is my duty to ensure my offerings and practices are actively in line with anti-racism work, and with an awareness of the many ways anti-Blackness shows up in the wellness world.

If you have any feedback, comments or concerns, email: contactsoizic@gmail.com



RITUAL PART 1



1) Find a comfortable space to sit. You do not have to sit cross-legged. Sitting on a bolster, pillow, or chair is perfectly fine. You can also doing this laying down.

2) Imagine a red lazer beam coming out of your pelvic floor and connecting all the way to the centre of the Earth. You can also imagine roots growing through the foundations of your house, through the layers of sediments, all the way down to the centre of the Earth.

Focus on your breath, making sure to expand the belly while you inhale. With each inhale, you can draw energy and light from the centre of the Earth. You are connected.

3) Imagine a ray of golden light coming out of the top of your head and towards the sky. You can decide to connect it to whichever resonate with you most: your Soul Star, the central sun of Sirius, or of our galaxy. You might have some tradition or religion with a specific domain you can connect to in the Sky - feel free to adapt to this. You can also simply request you connect with your Soul, your Higher Self.

4) Focus on your heart. Now you are both connecting to Earth and Sky, and both energies meet at your heart. Take some deep breath in and exhale through the mouths, sighing.

RITUAL PART 2

5) Imagine a bubble of protection around you. In that space, you are safe and protected in all circumstances. Personally, I like to imagine a bubble of pink light that extends about three meters away from my body. With each inhale, the bubble expands. With each exhale, it comes closer to you. Take at least ten breaths, repeating that process.

6) You can now call in your Healed Ancestors, and your Guides. You can include plant and animal guides, or any entities from specific traditions you resonate with and/or are part of your lineages. You can request specific assistance and protecting depending on your circumstances and desires. This is the part where you can really adapt this to your own practices and preferences. This is also a space to stay in relationship with your ancestors, their strength and wisdom. That's it! You can go on about your day after this. When going to bed that day, make sure to thank all the energies and entities which you have invoked, and inform them you are now finished with your task/day.

For more upcoming wellbeing content, check out www.soizicelbaz.com. I hope this serves you, and allows you to enjoy grounded, and regenerative, moments.



HEALING THROUGH COLLECTIVE CHANGE

Elsie Harp is a mental health and folk medicine practitioner based in Bristol.

Elsie is a daughter of Apartheid, born to a Black South African mother and White West Country father. She recognised early on that the story living through her was not hers, and sought to liberate herself from the traumas of her lineage. Through work on the physical, emotional and spiritual planes Elsie continues to explore how the past affects her present, working with a deep reverence and respect for gifts that her ancestors and spirit guides offer to her in this lifetime. She can be found at www.divinabotanica.com or @divinabotanica on Instagram.

This is a free resource for BIPOC, if you are white and would like to download this, I would ask you for a donation through PayPal.

