

## *Transformative Movement Organizing and Healing Justice Collaboration*

Centering *wellness in justice* work and *justice in wellness* work is both a timeless and timely issue. The impacts of COVID-19 and police brutality only magnify pre-existing conditions of inequity as they relate to wellbeing and to the fragility of wellness of those



working at the frontlines. This project aims to highlight and examine this, find and put to use tools and trainings to address it, and provide models for others to use to effectively change our justice organizations and movements to be more trauma- and healing-informed in analysis and practice. This is the moment to build the support, resilience and tools for wellness that will help us not only *survive* the injustices of today, but actually *thrive* as we dismantle injustice and build the world we want.

### *Project Process:*

Based on informal discussions throughout 2019 between CASA faculty director and members of each of CASA's community partners and students, interests in the topics of healing justice emerged, with requests for more information and support in this vein. This led to focus in the CASA academic program on transformative movement organizing and healing justice in CASA 101 Critical Community Studies in 2019 and 2020 as well as CASA hosting a 2-hour workshop, "Navigating the Traumas of Injustice," exclusively for CASA community partners and interns (in which 30 individuals, representing all 8 core community partners, participated). The evaluations from this session further indicated

an interest and need in this topic and a formal community-based action research project was launched June, 2020 with CASA faculty director, Tessa Hicks Peterson, trauma-therapist and community leader, Hala Khouri, and Justice Hub office manager, Scarlett Duarte, as the primary leads, alongside 2 Pitzer students, Keely Nguyen and Dalia Paris-Saper and 3 Claremont Graduate University students, Vanessa Reyes, Cindy Gaytan and Therese Julia Uy.

The launch of the community-based action research project first focused on exploring self/organizational reflections on if/how/where/why and where/why not wellness, healing, trauma- informed practices and transformative organizing exist in daily operations and strategic vision of organizations (on personal, interpersonal, institutional, structural/systemic levels). This reflection allowed people to name what is and isn't and inform next steps/ what's needed/ what to build on. This took place through digital surveys, focus groups and interviews with staff of CASA organizations. 26 surveys and 7 focus groups were recorded, transcribed, coded and thematically analyzed, producing a full and executive report of these findings (July, 2020).

The next step of this project (Fall/Spring, 2020-21) involves assessing the main issues that emerged in this study and seeking trainings, tools, workshops, curriculum and programs that address them. It will also involve raising funds so that staff from each organization can attend trainings and then train the rest of their staff. The research team aims to create a training and resource manual that can be used in the creation of strategic plans that integrate wellbeing practices and justice values into organizational structure and daily practice, climate and culture, programs and organizing. Future plans (2021-22) include another assessment to see impact after 6-12 months of implementation, then make alterations to training and practitioner's manual accordingly. The main goal is making this scalable, helpful to those on the ground, impacting community-based organizations and movements so that other organizations can use to follow this same process into the future, thus contributing to gap in existing justice work that does not center or sustainably practice wellness, healing and transformative movement organizing in the work.