

# Building to Heal

## TOOLS CATALOGUE

June 2024



## Acknowledgments

This catalogue draws from and incorporates the principles and strategies of Enterprise's [Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development](#), a framework that provides community development practitioners with the principles, strategies and tools to ground their work in the fundamental aspects of culture, connection, power-shifting and healing.

Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development is co-authored by Chandra Christmas-Rouse, Brandon Jones and Meghan Venable-Thomas.

*"... from North America in Native space and on the traditional lands of over 560 Indigenous tribes. In authorship, we/they speak to you as Black people, descendants of the enslaved. Our ancestors were stolen from their homelands to economize the soil of this land that for centuries before was stewarded, cultivated, and loved by Native People. In honoring the land, we honor our ancestors. In honoring our ancestors, we must not neglect to honor the land. Through honoring our ancestors and the land, we acknowledge our inseparable connectedness with everything in the world. We ask you to remember that wherever you are in the Americas, you are on Native space sacredly linked to Indigenous people. May all that we do and strive to be in these Native spaces honor the land and prepare the way for those to come."*

*– Excerpt from Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development*

This work was supported by The Kresge Foundation and developed as part of the Build to Heal Peer Network:

- Build to Heal Peer Network: Shelby Chapoose, Rasheedah Jones, Stephanie Simeon, Raven Willoughby and Bea Zuluaga
- Enterprise Project Team: Anna Ravindranath and Mary Ayala

Join us at [Healing-Centered Practice](#) on the Enterprise Community Partners website.

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*“We will need to work  
In more than theory  
In more than action plans  
But the equity of shoulder to shoulder  
Sweat  
Of heart-to-heart vulnerability  
Of soul-to-soul transparency  
supporting each other as we grow  
New cells of hope  
New skins of kinship  
We can do the labor  
To be reborn  
A new people  
with new hearts and minds  
We are brave enough  
To do this work  
To heal  
Together”*

– An excerpt from [The Healers](#), Leslé Honoré

## Build to Heal Peer Network Overview

In 2020, Enterprise released Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development. The Framework provides community development practitioners with the principles, strategies and tools to ground their work in the fundamental aspects of culture, connection, power-shifting and healing.

The Framework resonated with many who are united in their desire to address the racism and racial trauma that exists within the community development field by adopting anti-racist strategies into their approach to community development. Healing is a central feature within the Framework, serving as a focal point to the creation of a new set of norms and practices to increase healing and liberation.

To support uptake of the Framework, Enterprise launched the Build to Heal Peer Network with funding from The Kresge Foundation in May 2023. The Network consists of five community development practitioners who, in their diverse roles within community development, use healing-centered practices to:

- Build relationships and a support network among practitioners.
- Develop new tools and resources to support the community development field in implementing the Framework.

### Meet the Network

- **Shelby Chapoose**, Executive Director, Indigenous Health and Wellness Connections
- **Rasheedah Jones**, Founder, Dream Team Realty Co.
- **Stephanie Simeon**, Executive Director, Heart of the City Neighborhoods
- **Raven Willoughby**, Senior Director, Enterprise Community Development
- **Bea Zuluaga**, Long Branch Gardener, Founder of Food with bea

Learn more about the Network in this [overview video](#).

# Burnout Prevention Toolkit

*“When you feel you are not enough, you often will inflict undo harm onto yourself and family that gets neglected, so, you will appear to be enough and are getting your needs met. For years, I was applauded for this harm to myself and family because I met metrics, brought in the dollars, increased the staff – at a cost. In 2020, I realized the cost was too much to bear.”*

*– Stephanie Simeon, Executive Director  
Heart of the City Neighborhoods*

In today’s fast-paced work environment, burnout has emerged as a pressing concern. The resulting toll on individuals and organizations is undeniable, yet its roots often extend beyond mere workplace stressors. As we strive to address this issue within the Network, we recognize that burnout is not solely an individual challenge; it is also a reflection of historical and current inequities within our workplaces.

Workplaces in the United States have been shaped by systemic inequities that disproportionately advantage one group over the others. These injustices perpetuate unequal access to resources, opportunities and representation, thereby contributing significantly to heightened stress levels for those who have historically been harmed. The legacy of these injustices manifest as persistent barriers, ongoing biases and environments that sustain hierarchies and power structures rooted in white supremacy, impeding well-being and fueling practitioner burnout.

As we work to address burnout, we must prioritize healing and incorporate the principles of racial justice into our workplace strategies. The Framework can provide us with direction, emphasizing the interconnectedness of both individual healing and healing in and through relationships to address the broader societal challenges regularly faced by practitioners.

The strategies and exercises in this resource on burnout prevention aim to not only mitigate burnout, but to move us towards a more equitable and inclusive workplace. Together, we embark on a journey to promote healing, foster racial justice and cultivate environments where well-being is a right, not a privilege.

## Reflect: Practice Mindfulness

As you begin diving into this resource, first take a moment to reflect on the opening quote. Take a deep breath. Try to clear your mind and focus on your intention in navigating this resource. Honor your well-being as you engage in the material – take breaks, go for a walk, write down your thoughts. It is important to take the time and space to absorb, process and integrate these strategies at your own pace.

## Understanding Burnout

Due to its prevalence in the American workplace culture, most of us probably do not need a definition for burnout. Its impact is particularly notable in nonprofit spaces, like community development.

Community development is a field of passionate professionals deeply invested in their work, driven by a strong commitment to social change and community. “It is imperative that community development professionals understand the impact place, geography and community development strategies have on racism and racial injustices.” (Stephanie Simeon, Executive Director, Heart of the City Neighborhoods).

*“The legacy of institutional and systemic racism in economic, governmental, and social systems has resulted — and continues to result — in the disproportionate distribution of the costs and benefits of society. The results of this legacy not only stifle Black Americans’ ability to socially, economically, and politically thrive, but ultimately the potential to live and survive. Explicitly racist policies such as Jim Crow and Redlining have evolved into covertly structural racist legal frameworks such as ‘stop and frisk,’ eminent domain, the ‘war on drugs’ era, and the mass incarceration evident today.*

– Excerpt from *Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development, The Living Legacy of Harm*

Within nonprofit community development workplaces, burnout can be caused by and result from a variety of factors including:

- Compassion fatigue
- Resource constraints to meet desired outcomes
- Prioritizing output for funding over long-term outcomes
- Chronic understaffing
- High expectations for outcome and impact

These factors are often rewarded in the workplace, and may even result in bonuses, accolades or awards. However, looking beneath the surface may show evidence of staff being underpaid and overworked, an understaffed team, employees experiencing imposter syndrome, a lack of belonging or support, or unrealistic goals. This culture of praising factors that promote burnout is ultimately harmful.

Symptoms of burnout can manifest physically, mentally and emotionally. Many nonprofit professionals, including those who supported the development of these materials through the Network, have experienced burnout in various forms such as easily getting sick, exhaustion, anger, anxiety or heightened stress, necessitating mindfulness of their own needs and emotional capacity.

The Framework and Network are “reimagining what is possible within the field and practice of community development, with culture, creativity, and healing at the center. Historically, the housing sector has evaluated community development impact through the lens of the number of units produced or preserved. However, research demonstrates that brick and mortar alone does not cultivate thriving, sustainable communities. Housing and community development without a comprehensive understanding of residents’ collective living experience and inherent strengths has significant potential for harmful community disruption, cultural erasure, and perpetual trauma.” (Stephanie Simeon, Executive Director, Heart of the City Neighborhoods).

When we talk about healing for Black communities [communities that receive much of the focus from the community development industry], we are talking about healing from the impact of racial oppression. Racial oppression deteriorates our sense of shared humanity and demoralizes our spirit – that which shapes our internalized feelings of ourselves and supports our social relationships.

Healing is required to restore the disturbance of racial oppression to our humanity. The Framework is a tool grounded in principles of culture, connection, power shifting and healing. It asks us to reflect on where we are in our journey, to reach out for collective learning and cultural sharing, while constantly finding what replenishes us – as restoration is the act that allows us to not only survive but to thrive.

## Creating your approach

### How can we combat this chronic stress in our workplaces?

1. Recognize the importance of holistic well-being not only for individuals, but also for the communities they serve and the organizations they work for.
2. Explore the power you hold in your role to make change and protect yourself and those around you from burnout.
3. Collectively work with team members to develop strategies and workplace norms that can contribute to healing and reduce the stressors that lead to burnout.
4. Designate restoration time in the workday and allow each person to determine the best use of that time for their individual needs.

In creating a healing-centered approach to combat burnout, consider strategies within the following categories. The organization’s norms and practices within these categories play a pivotal role in setting an organizational approach to burnout prevention.

- HR practices
- Mentorship and peer support
- Boundary setting
- Supportive team environments
- Time management
- Skill building



## Exploring Roles

It is important to adopt a variety of practices to support healing and well-being in order to meet the needs of the diverse set of experiences and roles people have or take on in the workplace. To start this exploration of roles, take a moment to participate in the following reflection and review the resource linked.

### Reflect:

Consider the role you play in your work towards social change. Use the linked resource, “[Mapping Our Social Change Roles in Times of Crisis](#),” to consider different roles often taken on in the pursuit of equity, liberation and justice.

Consider how many roles you are holding in your work. How have your experiences in serving in these roles impacted your well-being (positively, neutrally or negatively)?

The “Mapping Our Social Change Roles in Times of Crisis” resource provides explanation of skills to apply and consider how strategies may differ based on varying roles in the workplace. For example:

- **Frontline responders:** Resources to cope with high-pressure situations and healing spaces away from the immediate needs of their work. A supportive team environment and opportunities to build relationships to ensure those with shared experiences and understanding can rely on and learn from one another.
  - **Guides and weavers:** Opportunities to engage with a peer support group or mentorship.
- It is also important to consider the different roles commonly found within an organization and the contributions each make. Consider the power each of the following roles has, and the opportunities that exist for each to be a part of the burnout prevention approach:
- Board
  - CEO/Executive Director
  - People managers
  - Direct reports
  - Interns
- Additionally, this tool makes a call to the board, CEO/ executive director and people managers to examine what they are applauding and rewarding within their organizations and teams. Consider where there is opportunity for harm within the structure, and what alternative opportunities of award may look like. This may also occur cross-organizationally. Funders, intermediaries, and community-based organizations all have different influences and can contribute to an environment or culture that leads to burnout.
- **Healers and caregivers:** Regularly practice self-care such as mindfulness exercises and meditation.
  - **Storytellers and visionaries:** Create space for self-expression and brainstorming, and for rest and downtime to allow ideas to incubate and flourish.

## Collaborative strategy development exercise

Burnout triggers can vary widely among individuals and workplaces. Stressors such as a formidable workload, lack of control, unclear expectations and insufficient support may be contributing factors. For this reason, we recommend a collective exercise to develop a strategy for burnout prevention.

If your team is not yet ready to have a conversation around this topic, consider building a synergy session as a starting point. A synergy session can allow for curated opportunities to pause, breathe and observe.

The Framework offers an exploration into the field of community development where healing for both the Black practitioner and intended community are centered and protected. We hope that the Framework serves as a tool in navigating this chapter of radical imagination and historical, transformational change.

“Healing refers to the process of restoring holistic health and well-being. The healing centered framework focuses on emotional, spiritual, mental, and psychological health and the processes that relieve stress, achieve acceptance, promote hope, and restore relationships. Relationship building can take the form of interventions for community-based practitioners and how we engage with one another. Relationship building can be understood as both the action and an accountability structure. The healing-centered framework provides guidance on how to practice being in accepting relationship with ourselves, each other, and the land for which we are stewards—especially regarding the development of brick and mortar.”

– Excerpt from *Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development, The Living Legacy of Harm*

### Consider the following exercise:

1. **Setting the tone, experience, climate, atmosphere, spirit and stage for the conversation:** Gather team members in a collective space (virtual or in person) and emphasize the importance of this as a collaborative exercise to promote well-being. Take a healing-centered approach and ensure that you are including time for participants to care for their breath and body, to reflect, and reflect and connect.
2. **Brainstorm activities:** Consider a brainstorming activity that draws on the six categories shared above (HR practices, mentorship and peer support, boundary setting, supportive team environments, time management and skill building). Allocate time for each category. The prep steps for a synergy session can provide some ideas and guidance.
3. **Group discussion and idea sharing:** After brainstorming, have the team discuss and build out what the ideas would look like if implemented. Encourage an open dialogue.
4. **Prioritize areas or strategies:** Facilitate a discussion to identify and prioritize the most feasible and impactful ideas within each category. A voting system or consensus-building approach could be used to select the top ideas and flesh them out. The holding session steps for a synergy session can provide some ideas and guidance.
5. **Create a plan:** Decide which strategies can be adopted immediately (e.g., agreement not to email outside of work hours), and which will need to be further worked through or require approval from leadership (e.g., four-day work week). For the prioritized strategies it is important to define next steps, working groups, and a pathway to move it forward. The holding session steps for a synergy session can provide some ideas and guidance.
6. **Continue meeting, sharing feedback, and reminders of the new norms that have been adopted:** The after the session steps for a synergy session can provide some ideas and guidance on ongoing practices with feedback loops.

“While an unprecedented global pandemic and coronavirus has disproportionately impacted Black communities across the country, we have simultaneously witnessed lives of Black folks taken by civil servants and citizens. These crises create collective trauma and so our healing responses must also be collective.”

– Excerpt from *Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development, The Living Legacy of Harm*

## Example strategies

The Network developed a list of strategies to consider when discussing burnout prevention:

### 1. HR practices:

Flexible work hours, mental health days, wellness programs, health benefits on Day 1, mandatory time off, available leave for ceremonies and cultural events

### 2. Mentorship and peer support:

Buddy systems, peer coaching and mentorship programs

### 3. Boundary setting:

No back-to-back virtual or in-person meetings, always schedule a lunch, schedule strategic thinking time, limits on screen time, reduction in team or organizational meetings

### 4. Supportive team environments:

Team-building activities, building in breaks during the day, opportunities to have collective meals, places to rest, no e-mails after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends, extend grace to others when they are delayed, accept help when offered and ask for help when needed

### 5. Time management:

Time-blocking strategies, no meetings before 10:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m., respecting time limits on meetings, share agendas and roles ahead of meetings

### 6. Skill building:

Training sessions, software or IT supports, professional development, sabbaticals, shared leadership roles

### 7. Additional:

Engage multiple senses within meetings and the workplace, access to wellness classes, have clear roles and goals, take more moments to breathe, weekly or daily nap or stretch breaks, reduce stigma in taking sick time or around caring for mental health needs

## Spotlight: Heart of the City Neighborhoods Incorporated

**Heart of the City Neighborhoods** is a nonprofit community development organization dedicated to fostering vibrant and resilient neighborhoods. Their work focuses on empowering residents and creating equitable communities.

### Commitment to healing-centered approaches

Under the leadership of Executive Director Stephanie Simeon, Heart of the City Neighborhoods has prioritized a healing-centered approach as a fundamental aspect of their organizational mission, employees and overall approach. Recognizing the prevalence of burnout and its impact, they have taken proactive steps to address it within their organization.

### Approach

- 1. Advocating for work-life balance:** A four-day workweek has been implemented for all staff, emphasizing the importance of work-life balance. The results on productivity and reduction in burnout have been illustrated over time at the organization. This approach seemed like a big step at first; however, in working with the board, Simeon was able to advocate and obtain buy-in for the impact it would have on well-being and ultimately, the positive impact on the community.
- 2. Setting examples in leadership through boundary setting:** Leading by example, Simeon actively displays healthy boundary setting in prioritizing staff lunch breaks and encouraging all meetings to take place between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. This schedule allows an appropriate amount of time for staff to wrap up and kick off their work day. One goal of this schedule is to be able to sign off from work in the evening without a long to-do list hanging over their heads.

- 3. Embracing employees from Day 1:** The organization starts benefits on the first day of employment. Simeon highlighted the importance of not holding back health insurance or other key benefits for employees until they are more tenured.

Heart of the City Neighborhoods serves as an exemplary model by prioritizing the humanity of their staff through healing-centered approaches to burnout prevention. Simeon strongly believes these types of practices are critical in nonprofit organizations and should not be limited to CEOs running Fortune 500 companies. As you implement these strategies within your workplace, remember that progress takes time. Be sure to prioritize self-care along the way over perfection. Healing can take a generation, but each step taken towards a healing-centered environment contributes to a more resilient and thriving community of people and relationships.

## From Neighborhood to Garden to Kitchen: Neighbors Find Community and Connection

On a sunny fall afternoon, nine neighbors gathered in a small kitchen to prepare a meal. The group, primarily made up of immigrants from Latin America and Africa, speak different languages, but communicate through their shared love of growing food and preparing it together.

The [Long Branch Gardeners](#) gather weekly for community gardening in the Long Branch neighborhood near Silver Spring, Maryland. They are led and supported by [CHEER](#), a nonprofit and Enterprise partner dedicated to fostering community development in the region.

In addition to community gardening, the group comes together monthly to prepare meals using recipes from their respective home countries and regions. Most recently, they prepared a Guatemalan dish called [Boxboles](#), subbing collard greens from one of the gardens for the traditional chaya leaves.

“It’s beautiful we can bring together people from different cultures, and we cook the food that we grow together on local land,” said Bea Zuluaga, a community organizer who has spent much of her career working on projects related to food security in the Washington, D.C., metro area and Latin America (see more here: [Food with bea](#)).

Zuluaga is a member of the Long Branch Gardeners and is one of Enterprise’s collaborative partners in the Build to Heal Peer Network. We spoke with her about the group,

the power of cooking to bring people together, and her longtime connection to food as a source of community solidarity and healing.

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### Who are the members of the Long Branch Community Gardeners group? What is the structure?

**Zuluaga:** The Long Branch Gardeners meet twice a week to plan, plant, maintain and harvest together. Members of the group come primarily from the Long Branch neighborhood, and most of the participants are immigrants from Latin American and African countries. While my expertise is with cooking, other members of the group bring their experience with farming or cultivating local groups in their home countries.

Since many in the group live in apartments and small homes, they do not have space to garden on their own property. We use land owned and lended by other people throughout the area to garden. Some of those who share their property to grow the food also volunteer as part of the group.

There are many different languages spoken and some speak a native language. We even have one member from France. Language is just one way to communicate.

### How does it work, and what is the goal?

**Zuluaga:** So far, local homeowners volunteer their backyards and front yards for the group to grow their crops. Volunteers are paid with the shared produce. Some homeowners participate – one man who offered his property paid for an irrigation system to be installed.

For now, we share the produce amongst ourselves, and we have a table at a local farmers market. Cheer provides the grant funding for seeds and soil, but others are volunteers – we are well-compensated with the food.

Long Branch is a big and mixed community, and the program aims to bring people of varied backgrounds together to share and remember their unique cultures. The Metro's Purple Line will have several stops in the area. [Zuluaga is involved separately in efforts to preserve affordable housing and small business in the area after the Purple Line project is complete.]

Our goal is to have enough land to be able to add more residents and increase the number of sites to grow food. We are looking into expanding to local school properties also.

### What are connections to healing?

**Zuluaga:** The main thing is that growing and eating good food is the best way to be healthy. And when you can do this in a local community, it offers a pathway for people to slow down, connect with new friendships, share and remember individual cultures, and process trauma and grief.

We can talk about ingredients and how we use them and the health benefits. Herbs are so different for all of us, but they bring us all together because we recognize how they benefit us.

### The group recently gathered to cook. How was the experience?

**Zuluaga:** Once a month, the group gathers in my home to cook together. Most recently, we prepared the Guatemalan specialty Boxboles, as well as the French vegetable dish ratatouille.

We used all of the ingredients from our summer garden. Despite the language barriers, the group has learned to communicate effectively; we compared the individual ingredients and how they use them in our individual cultures. With gardening and cooking we use fewer words.

Preparing the vegetables, layering them, and then improvising when necessary, the group produced a delicious and nutritious meal. It's a beautiful thing to bring folks from different cultures together, drawing from the food that our local land and climate can produce.

### What are the plans for the future of this group?

**Zuluaga:** The model for this group is, at times, completely informal. I believe it can be replicated in other communities.

Lisa Buttner, the neighborhood gardening director for Cheer, deserves credit for the program's vibrancy. We hope to bring more people into the program, gardeners and those who are willing to share their land for cultivation. Lisa is the backbone; she provides the continuity in communications. She is the soul of the program.

I plan to continue cooking with, and learning from, this group. I grew up in a large family where food was important, and I am such a food lover. It's a joyful experience to learn how this kind of activity can be a food solution for the community.

## RECIPE for Boxboles:

### Ingredients:

- Tender chaya leaves
- White or yellow corn dough (we used masa from a mix)
- 8 ounces toasted pumpkin seeds
- 2 cups of chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup tomatillo
- Salt and hot chilis to taste

### Preparation

- To prepare the dough, cook the corn with a little lime and grind it
- Season the dough with salt to taste and knead it until it is smooth.
- Then wash the tender chaya leaves well and spread them out
- Put a little bit of dough at one end of the leaf – extend it lengthwise, so that it can be rolled well, as if forming a taco
- Carefully place the leaf rolls in a pot and steam for 30 minutes
- Once the boxboles are cooked, serve in a deep dish

### Sauce

- Cook the tomato and tomatillo in two cups of water, with a hot chili then strain them to make a sauce
- Add the toasted and ground pumpkin seeds
- Season with salt to taste
- Finally, bathe the dish with the delicious red sauce

*\*We made masa from a mix and used tender collard greens (blanched), since we do not have the chaya leaves.\**

View the [Long Branch Community Gardners Slide Show.](#)



## Spotlight: Food with bea

Bea Zuluaga is a community organizer and entrepreneur dedicated to sharing high-quality, locally sourced food with children and their families by growing food and cooking together and working on food security and social equity in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area and around the world.

Pulling from childhood experiences growing up with a large, traditional Colombian family, [Food with bea](#) celebrates the opportunity to collaborate with communities in the creation of a shared sense of unity through the act of sharing a meal together.

# Creating a Healing-Centered Synergy Session

## What is a healing-centered synergy session?

A synergy session, within the context of healing-centered community development, aims to bring together diverse stakeholders and practitioners to collaborate in a way that promotes healing, resilience and positive change within a community.

## When might you or your team use a healing-centered synergy session?

In the context of [Enterprise's Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development](#), teams might utilize a synergy session during critical junctures such as the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. A synergy session operates as a navigation tool for community development practitioners to steer and map the complexities of our roles, particularly for community development practitioners who have intimate, day-to-day touchpoints with residents living in the communities we serve.

During the pandemic, the ability to adapt to remote work varied widely among practitioners. While some could transition seamlessly, many, including first responders and those directly engaging with communities, faced the challenge of continued in-person responsibilities. This dynamic, coupled with the disproportionate impact on communities of color, resulted in both first- and second-hand trauma for practitioners.

The Framework emphasizes the importance of creating spaces that support resiliency and sustainability. In this specific instance, a synergy session becomes essential for addressing the unique experiences and challenges faced by practitioners, particularly those in the field who are predominantly people of color and reflective of the communities they serve.

The tensions arising from the different experiences between field practitioners and higher leadership roles, often distant from on-the-ground realities, can lead to misalignment of goals and a lack of understanding of each other's perspectives. The session serves as a deliberate effort to acknowledge the trauma experienced collectively and provides a platform for open dialogue.

By leveraging the tools for healing within the synergy session, we can rebuild team cohesion and realign our collective efforts towards shared goals. The intentional focus on healing not only addresses the immediate challenges but also contributes to the long-term resiliency and sustainability of the team within the Framework.

## What does a synergy session look like?

To model a synergy session using the Framework, follow these steps:

### 1. Reflect: Define the purpose and goals of the synergy session.

- What is the specific issue or challenge that needs to be addressed?
- What are the desired outcomes, both in terms of collective healing and community development?
- Is there agreement on the goals?
- Are these shared outcomes?

### 2. Involve: Identify key stakeholders who should be involved in the session.

This may include members of leadership; team members; staff from different teams, departments, divisions, etc.

- How to identify key stakeholders?
- Who is directly impacted by the issue or challenge being addressed?
- Who are the decision-makers?
- Who might be affected indirectly?

When inviting key stakeholders to attend a synergy session using a healing-centered approach, it's important to convey the purpose, atmosphere and intentionality of the session in a way that prioritizes well-being and collaboration.

**On the following page is a template you can use as a starting point.**

Adjust the template as needed based on the specifics of your session and the context of your relationship with the stakeholders. The emphasis should be on creating an inclusive, respectful and healing-centered space for collaboration.

Subject: Invitation to Healing-Centered Synergy Session

Dear [Stakeholder's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. We are reaching out to invite you to a special Healing-centered Synergy Session on [Date] at [Time]. Your presence is crucial as we embark on a collaborative journey to address [briefly mention the purpose or challenge the session aims to tackle].

Why a healing-centered approach? In recognition of the unique challenges and experiences we collectively faced, especially during times like [reference to specific events or challenges], we believe in the importance of fostering a healing-centered environment. Our intention is to create a space where we can collectively acknowledge and address the impact of these challenges on both personal and professional levels.

What to expect: This session is not just about problem solving, it's about coming together as a community, acknowledging shared experiences, and working collaboratively towards sustainable solutions. We aim to prioritize your well-being, ensuring that your voice is heard, and your participation is valued.

Agenda: [Include a brief overview of all important topics to be discussed]

Logistics: Date: [Insert Date] Time: [Insert Time] Location: [Insert Location or Virtual Meeting Details]

RSVP: To confirm your attendance, please RSVP by [RSVP Deadline] by clicking [RSVP Link] or replying to this email.

Additional information: Feel free to share any specific concerns or topics you'd like us to address during the session. Your input is invaluable in shaping the agenda to meet the needs of our community.

Your commitment to our collective well-being and success is greatly appreciated. We look forward to your presence and contributions to this important session.

Warm regards,

[Your Name] [Your Title] [Your Contact Information]

### 3. Identify and create a safe and inclusive space.


Ensure that the synergy session is held in a space where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives. Use trauma-informed approaches to create a supportive environment.

#### Adaptable supplies to offer safe and inclusive spaces include:

- **Location:** accessibility for entry, restrooms, transportation, interior (temperature, availability of natural light) and exterior environment (entryways, lighting, signage, etc.)
- **Nourishment:** food and water, feature locally owned Black, ethnic and Indigenous businesses
- **Goodie bags:** fidget toys, foundational art supplies (various mediums such as clay, coloring, drawing/doodling, painting)
- “Wayfinding” props appropriate for the space and environment

### 4. Agenda development.

Crafting a purposeful synergy session begins with designing a thoughtful agenda—a roadmap guiding participants through a journey of collaboration and reflection. Creating an agenda for a synergy session using a healing-centered approach involves integrating activities (e.g., breath and body work, art making, story circles) and discussions that prioritize well-being, acknowledgment of experiences and collective healing.



On the following page is a sample agenda that you can adapt based on the specific goals and context of your session.

## Healing-centered Synergy Session Agenda

1. Welcome and opening (15 minutes)
2. Introductions
3. Setting the tone: Creating a safe and inclusive space
4. Overview of the purpose and goals
5. Land acknowledgement

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### Interactive activity: Strengths and resilience (20 minutes)

- Guided activity: Identifying personal and collective strengths
- **Example:** Community altar building project: create a communal space or structure where community members contribute items, symbols or representations that hold personal or cultural significance
- Reflection: How our strengths contribute to the team

### BREAK – 10 minutes

### Facilitated discussions on key topics (60 minutes)

- Session focus: [Specify the main topics or challenges]
- Roundtable discussions: Sharing perspectives and insights
- Open dialogue: Addressing concerns and identifying solutions

*If possible, offer multiple ways to participate, especially for those who feel less comfortable speaking (e.g., collecting notecards ahead of the dialogue).*

### Break and refreshments (30 minutes)

### Collective healing practices (15 minutes)

- Breathing or mindfulness exercise
- Sharing and reflection: Insights from the healing practices

### Collaborative planning for the future (25 minutes)

- Visioning exercise: Envisioning a healthy and productive future
- Goal setting: Identifying short-term and long-term objectives
- Action planning: Who, what, when, and how

### Closing and commitments (15 minutes)

- Recap of key takeaways
- Individual and collective commitments
- Gratitude and acknowledgment

### Next steps and follow-up (10 minutes)

- Overview of next steps
- Follow-up actions and responsibilities
- Closing remarks and appreciation

### Additional notes:

- Provide breaks between activities to allow for reflection and self-care.
- Encourage participants to share their preferences or needs for comfort and engagement.
- Foster an open and non-judgmental atmosphere throughout the session.
- Remember to tailor the agenda to fit the specific goals, challenges and dynamics of your team or community. Flexibility is key, allowing for spontaneous discussions and adjustments based on the needs of the participants during the session.

## 5. Follow-up Steps

Following up with teams after a synergy session is crucial to reinforce key insights, track progress and ensure that the collaborative efforts initiated during the session are sustained.

*Survey Evaluation Tool:* When designing a survey for the evaluation of a synergy session, it's important to craft questions that capture the participants' experiences, gather feedback on key aspects, and provide insights into the effectiveness of the session.

Sample survey questions

### 1. General Feedback:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the synergy session?
- What aspects of the session did you find most valuable?

### 2. Session Content:

- To what extent did the content of the synergy session meet your expectations?
- Which topics or discussions were most relevant or impactful for you?

### 3. Facilitation:

- How would you rate the facilitator's ability to guide and engage the participants?
- Were the facilitation techniques used during the session effective in promoting collaboration and open communication?
- Reflecting on the facilitation style used, did you feel actively engaged and heard throughout the session? Please share any specific instances that contributed to your experience.

### 4. Healing-Centered Approach:

- How well do you think the healing-centered approach was integrated into the session?
- Did you feel that the session provided a supportive and empathetic environment?
- Did the healing-centered practices, such as breathing exercise or guided meditation positively impact your emotional well-being during the session? Please elaborate.

### 5. Action Items and Goals:

- How clear were the action items and goals set during the synergy session?
- Do you feel motivated and equipped to implement the agreed-upon action items?

**6. Community Building:**

- Did the synergy session contribute to building a sense of community among participants?
- Were there opportunities for networking and collaboration that you found valuable?
- In your opinion, to what extent did the community building aspects of the session contribute to a supportive and collaborative environment? Share specific examples if applicable.

**7. Logistics and Organization:**

- How satisfied were you with the logistics and organization of the synergy session?
- Were the materials and resources provided sufficient and helpful?

**8. Follow-Up and Support:**

- How satisfied are you with the follow-up communication and support received after the synergy session?
- Do you feel adequately supported in implementing the outcomes of the session?

**9. Additional Comments:**

- Please share any additional comments or feedback you have about the synergy session.

*Session Notes and Resource:* Ensure that session materials, resources, and insights are documented and made easily accessible to team members. This could include creating a shared repository or updating existing project management tools.

*Schedule a check-in post session:* Schedule regular follow-up meetings or check-ins to discuss progress, address challenges, and maintain momentum. These meetings can be an opportunity to reevaluate strategies, share successes, and address any emerging issues.

*Communication Channels:* Utilize communication channels such as email, messaging platforms, or internal newsletters to share updates and relevant information with the team. Consistent communication helps maintain a sense of connectedness and shared purpose.

*Celebrating Successes:* Acknowledge and celebrate achievements resulting from the synergy session. Recognize individual and collective efforts, fostering a positive and motivating atmosphere within the team.



## Spotlight: Enterprise Community Development

Enterprise Community Development, an affiliate of Enterprise Community Partners, is a nonprofit owner and developer of affordable homes in the Mid-Atlantic. Resident services and property management professionals serve as frontline practitioners, directly interfacing with residents and addressing their needs within housing communities.

Adopting healing-centered practices in their work is crucial as it emphasizes a holistic approach to well-being, acknowledging the potential traumas and challenges residents may face. By integrating healing-centered practices, these practitioners can create a supportive environment, prioritize empathy, and foster collaborative relationships, ultimately contributing to the overall resilience and flourishing of the communities they serve.

# Tribal/Native American and Other Indigenous Collaborations

## Overview

The purpose of this tool is to provide guidance on building ongoing, healing-centered working relationships with tribes and tribal/Native American communities. Within this document are fundamental steps that can assist in local efforts to better invest, collaborate, understand and honor the Native American/Indigenous people and land on which your organization operates.

## Language

It starts with an understanding of terminology.

*“Language can communicate respect, acknowledgement, and appreciation for culture. **Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development** reminds us to pay attention and be intentional in our language as we build towards healing.”*

– Shelby Chapoose,  
Executive Director

The term *Indigenous* refers to people who occupied the land prior to the arrival of settlers and/or colonists. This term is used interchangeably with Native American and American Indian, depending on governmental context.

When referring to Indigenous people, it is imperative that efforts are made to consult with local tribal communities regarding the terminology they feel best represents their nation(s).

By listening to and consulting with Indigenous communities, we help to sustain the ongoing efforts of sovereignty and healing. As you listen, keep in mind that as someone with your own diverse background, you will never fully understand the intricacies of Indigenous communities; you are there to help elevate and learn. It is important to be mindful of the phrases and terminology you use when speaking. Use of outdated and stereotyped terms are no longer acceptable. We all must do our due diligence through research and outreach, so that healing can be cultivated through our use of day-to-day language.

## Acknowledgement

Understanding and openly recognizing Indigenous people is one of the ways in which we can engage and elevate healing efforts. Most commonly, this looks like a Land Acknowledgement or Indigenous Land Statement established by an organization's leadership. Often these acknowledgements and statements are used during the opening of meetings, events and other activities. They can also appear on websites, social media, and printed materials and in email signatures.

When an organization begins the process of curating a Land Acknowledgement or Indigenous Land Statement it is best to speak directly with tribal leadership so that they are represented appropriately. All tribes are sovereign nations, meaning they are self-governing, and no two tribes are the same, and will therefore have different preferences for addressing and acknowledging them.

*“We ask you to remember that wherever you are in the Americas, you are on Native space sacredly linked to Indigenous people. May all that we do and strive to be in these Native spaces honor the land and prepare the way for those to come.”*

– Excerpt from **Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development, An Invitation**

## Initiating the conversation

Determine your goals for reaching out. This can best be done by utilizing the principals and strategies in the [\*\*Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development\*\*](#). After you have determined your goals, the next step will be to find the appropriate department or program to collaborate with through research.

During the research phase, you will gather information on the items below:

- General tribal governing operations
  - Remember, this may vary from tribe to tribe.
- Tribal leadership
  - Who is the elected official currently holding the offices of council and/or the business committee? Contact information on these individuals can be found online.
- Tribal department/program leadership
  - These are individuals that are hired by tribal leadership to oversee and fulfill department responsibilities.
  - If you are unable to identify the best department to collaborate with, reach out to tribal leadership and ask for recommendations.

In all collaborations, transparency and authenticity are necessary. Share your purpose for reaching out and be clear with your requests.

## The importance of representation

Historically, tribes have been represented by outside voices. It is important to regard tribes using their own verbiage and address them how they have determined they would like to be addressed. This is the first step toward healing and bridging relations. As we strive to continue healing ourselves and our communities, representation will develop, and collaboration will evolve. We will never fully know everything about Indigenous communities, and the most important takeaway is to listen intently with the purpose of collaboration, trust building and healing.

## Online tools

- [U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs](#) – list of federally recognized tribes
- [Native Land app](#) – maps Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages
- CDC-administered sites
  - [Tribal Health](#)
  - [Healthy Tribes](#)
  - [Office of Tribal Affairs and Strategic Alliances](#)

## Organization Spotlight

Indigenous Health and Wellness Connections (IHAWC) is a Native American-led organization that serves Indigenous individuals and families by inspiring a balanced lifestyle. IHAWC provides community events, educational opportunities, and access to resources that promote and build strong communities by finding balance and harmony in our physical, emotional, spiritual and mental capacities.

# Community Altar Building as a Tool and Practice

When applying the Framework, community altar building offers a creative approach to effectively engage and foster community in an adaptable way. The following tool provides resources and a path towards integrating this practice into your work and other secular settings.

## Brainstorming

### What other words could be added as associations for altar?

Considering the broader language associated with the word altar, what often comes to mind when we hear this word?

Google translation:

1. **Altar** (noun) – a table or flat-topped block used as a focus point for a ritual, practice or an offering to an ancestor, hero, martyr, saint, deity, or something else.
2. **Shrine** (noun) – a sacred space traditionally dedicated to an ancestor, hero, martyr, saint, deity, or something else associated with divinity. A shrine is something that must be constructed or installed, for example a building or structure to revere broadly. Shrines typically include ideals, relics or other objects associated with being revered.

Altar and shrine are frequently used interchangeably. Altars are considered sacred based on a specific purpose or function like a cultural practice. Shrines, however, are traditionally dedicated to a person, deity or saint. Some other common descriptives include memorial, memory box, memory space, honoring space, remembering space, meditation space and reflection space. When developing your altar, consider the purpose, audience, and the language most aligned with your use.

## Community altars as gathering places

Altars can serve as gathering places for people in the aftermath of a tragic event to provide comfort and support to move through difficult emotions like shock, fear, loss and grief, and to raise awareness and offer practical coping tools. Examples of community altars as gathering places include:

1. The Columbine Memorial in Colorado, and the April 16 Memorial at Virginia Tech are examples of spontaneous actions in the aftermath of a tragic event. Each evolved into a permanent memorial for ongoing remembrance of the events that took place in 1999 and 2007.
2. In New York City, memorial plaques are displayed at the sites where pedestrians have been killed.
3. Ghost Bike memorial project in St. Louis—bikes are painted all white and locked to street signs near fatal bike accidents.

## Planning

### What is the purpose of community altar building in community development?

Altars serve as a space for solitude reflection, remembrance, celebration, parades, picnics and family gatherings. These spaces connect each person who visits to something bigger than our individual selves.

Building altars can provide opportunities to heal through the act of creating, crafting and constructing something to return to for reflection, meditation, coping with grief, engagement and interaction, and finding connection with others.

## Building

### What is the process for community altar building?

The ideas, materials and processes for building community altars are endless, but there are some fundamental parts most will require:

#### Brainstorming > Planning > Budgeting & Fundraising > Building > Installing > Use

##### Example of the brainstorming process:

- Make a list of words, associations (colors, smells), images (landscapes), and objects (food, plants) that come to mind
- Research some of the corresponding associations from above
- Identify words, expressions and memories that serve as a reminder to return to
- Consider offerings/additions to the altar to foster feelings of peace, comfort, safety and connection

##### Example of the planning process:

- Determine the “thing” that will house the altar to inform the building process
- Identify need and use (e.g., portable and able to go to multiple places, permanent location, virtual or 3D)
- Easy-to-source materials include, but are not limited to:
  - Small tins like candy or gum is packaged in (e.g., Altoids)
  - Materials from the Earth like flowers, fruits or herbs
  - Jewelry, gift, cigar or shoe boxes
  - Sliding matchboxes
  - Drawers
  - Pictures
  - Books\*

*\*Cut a rectangle shape into the pages, then glue the pages together to create a container for the altar inside a book.*

# Community Engagement Certification Program Pilot

Community development is a practice that requires continuous learning and adaptability. Practitioners must simultaneously foster engagement within communities and among residents, stakeholders, organizations and investors.

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Recognizing the critical role of ongoing development as a dynamic engagement tool, the Community Engagement Certification Program (CECP) pilot is a training program created to facilitate active and sustained engagement, and to foster innovation, inclusivity and resilience across a spectrum of organizations and their interconnected ecosystems.

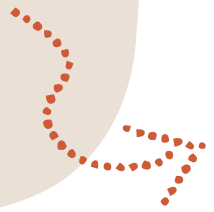
The program is designed to run for a period of 6-8 weeks and will teach participants to:

- Recognize community value systems
- Learn the various definitions for community
- Acquire the skills to effectively navigate conversations with all stakeholders

## Things to consider:

- Who is in the room?
- Are additional accommodations necessary based on participants?
- [Healing Centered Community Development Assessment Tool](#)

Continue to  
Module 1 on the  
following page.



## Module 1: What is Community?

### Open Grounding

Theatrical reading or reading together out loud with participants volunteering to read An Invitation and the Living Legacy of Harm from [Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development](#).

### Launch Theme: Reflect

What are you currently learning in work and/or in life? In a group discussion, distill this experience into one word.

#### Example:

One-word theme: *Grace*

- Theme synonyms: kindness, opportunity, empathy, acceptance, ease
- Thematic verbs: extend, embrace, flow
- Action cues to experience the theme physically
  - Launch formula: verb > body part > direction > breath
  - Embrace yourself as you take a series of deep breaths.
  - Extend your arms and squeeze your shoulder blades together as you take **victorious breaths**.
  - Flow your spine for lateral flexion, starting from the left to the right, and take neutral breaths as you rotate from one side to the other.

Moving on to [self-reflection](#) on defining community for the individual and collective.

Read more on the use of [breath and body work](#) as a tool here.

### Scale for the following exercise:

1	2	3	4	5
Aspirational practice	Emergent practice	Inconsistent practice	Central to my practice	Central to and consistent in my practice

**Reflect:** Reflection is an important and necessary first step to learning and growth, especially before moving into work with the community. The Build to Heal reflection strategy is an invitation to meditate on how you relate to yourself, your community, and how society views you. **On a scale of 1-5 how able are you to do the following?**

		TOTAL
1-5	Able to articulate your relationship to self and community with respect to multiple identities (race, culture, gender, etc.)	
1-5	Develop practices for reflecting on those relationships by slowing down, stillness, and observing one's mind, body and spirit	
1-5	Prioritize spaces for deep, critical and potentially uncomfortable discussions about those relationships	
1-5	Support community-based activities	



### Group Visioning Activity: Community Altar Building

1. Reflections on various definitions and expressions of community
2. Descriptions of an idealistic community
3. Land acknowledgement
4. Materials for community altar building include, but are not limited to, poster board, acrylic paint, markers, crayons, colored Post-its, stickers of shapes, materials from nature
5. Building process suggestions

### Transition: Somatic Writing – Reflect – 10 minutes of breathing, 5 minutes of writing

1. **Breathe**, observe, draw/write
  - a. Neutral breathing for three minutes and draw/write what you observed for two minutes
  - b. Victorious breath for three minutes and draw/write what you observed for two minutes
  - c. Breath retention and release for four minutes, and draw/write what you observed for one minute

### Closing Valuation and Evaluation

	What worked well?	It would be even better if ...
Results		
Process		
Relationship		

### Take-home Practice

**Reading:** From Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development, An Invitation and The Living Legacy of Harm.

**Free write:** Three full pages or for 10 minutes without stopping until complete.

**Take stock:** List a skill that you have and value. Ask someone sitting nearby, friends, colleagues, or family members about a skill that they value in you, or if no one is around, identify a colleague, friend, family member and list a skill you value about them. Make a list of three things you are proud of, three things you are grateful for, and three things you forgive yourself for.

## Module 2: Foundations of Community Engagement

### Open Grounding: Involvement Meditation

#### Launch Theme: **Involvement**

In a group discussion, distill your level of involvement into one word.

#### Example:

One-word theme: *Participatory*

- Theme synonyms: apply, hands-on, experimental
- Thematic verbs: engage, join, enter, partake, perform
- Action cues to experience the theme physically:
  - Launch formula: verb > body part > direction > breath
  - Engage your core, pulling it in as you breathe deeply in and out.
  - Join your hands to a bind above your head as you take victorious breaths.
  - Perform lateral flexion of your spine, starting from the left to the right, while taking neutral breaths rotating from one side to the other.

#### Topical focus areas:

1. Participatory Action Research (PAR)
  - a. Qualitative and quantitative data collection
2. Participatory Evaluation (PE)
3. Add to community altar (see p. 29)

### Scale for the following exercise:

1	2	3	4	5
Aspirational practice	Emergent practice	Inconsistent practice	Central to my practice	Central to and consistent in my practice

<b>Involve:</b> Invites you to unlock the pathways to the most essential gifts of your identity and community. It is through the process of naming, honoring and protecting these inherent gifts that one can glean a sense of alignment with core values and grounded purpose. <b>On a scale of 1-5, how able are you to do the following?</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>
1-5	Develop a comprehensive inventory of personal values, strengths, gifts and assets (attributes)	
1-5	Develop practices for reflecting on those relationships by slowing down, stillness, and observing one's mind, body and spirit	
1-5	Prioritize spaces for deep, critical and potentially uncomfortable discussions about those relationships	

### Transition with story circles

In pairs create a two-minute story that busts a myth captured in the list below.

4. Bust myths with participatory research:
  - a. People don't need advanced degrees or professional credentials to conduct valuable research.
  - b. All groups and cultures have their own biases including professional researchers and evaluators who try to remain neutral or objective in their observations.
  - c. Everyone can contribute valuable expertise, insights and knowledge to a research or evaluation process.
  - d. Those who are closest to an issue, problem or people most impacted generally know the most about it.
  - e. The involvement of diverse participants with different perspectives can help researchers.
  - f. Evaluators, practitioners and community members produce insights that are informed by various perspectives, less biased and closer to reality.

## Closing Valuation and Evaluation

	What worked well?	It would be even better if ...
Results		
Process		
Relationship		

### Take-home Practice

**Reading:** [Measuring Love in the Journey for Justice: A Brown Paper](#), Preface: A Sovereign Perspective, Measuring Love Illustration Key, 12 Dimensions of Love, Learning Love of Self and Others: Grounding in the Most Impacted (Raymond's Story)

**Activity:** Reflect for three minutes on a time that you would have appreciated being involved in a decision in your community. Write or draw your answer to the following questions: How would you like to have been approached, and how would you envision your voice being integrated into the project?

## Module 3: Build the Toolkit for Community Engagement

### Open Grounding: Restore Meditation

#### Launch Theme

1. Building to Heal: A Framework for Holistic Community Development
  - a. Matrix > principles > strategies > tools
  - b. HCCD Assessment
  - c. Cultural Advisory Group

#### Scale for the following exercise:

1	2	3	4	5
Aspirational practice	Emergent practice	Inconsistent practice	Central to my practice	Central to and consistent in my practice

**Restore:** Our strategy for restoration recognizes that we cannot compartmentalize our trauma. It is about creating time and space to allow restoration to become a part of our personal and work lives. We must acknowledge the capacity within our bodies to conduct emotional, physical, mental and spiritual labor, resourcing the tools necessary to increase that capacity and managing the barriers that we can and cannot control. **Using the scale of 1-5 from Module 1 and 2, how able are you to do the following?**

		TOTAL
1-5	Create and prioritize spaces for acknowledging and healing the impacts of racial trauma	
1-5	Develop non-punitive action plans to mitigate current burnout and reduce potential burnout	
1-5	Inventory and utilize healing resources and opportunities for rest	

## Transition

2. [Measuring Love in the Journey for Justice: A Brown Paper](#) resource for restoration (note: resource for reimagining too)
3. Historical context in the United States
4. Grassroots organizing and understanding advocacy
  - a. Reading syllabus
  - b. Exposure to international, national and local literature on grassroots organizing
5. Results-based accountability framework
  - a. Authority to make decisions
  - b. Accountable for the outcome of the tasks
  - c. Responsible for carrying out tasks

## Closing Valuation and Evaluation

	What worked well?	It would be even better if ...
Results		
Process		
Relationship		

## Take-home Practice

**Reading:** [Measuring Love in the Journey for Justice: A Brown Paper](#), From Unconscious Incompetence to Unconscious Competence

**Activity:** Create a list of what you find restorative in your life. Select one item and consider how it could be integrated into your community engagement strategy.

## Organization Spotlight

Based in Memphis, Tennessee, [DreamTeam Realty](#) is a Black, woman-owned regional real estate firm with a specific interest in teaching families how to build generational wealth through real property ownership. Established in 2010, DreamTeam Realty applies a unique community-centered approach to real estate, supports sustainable homeownership models, financial literacy and real estate career development for young professionals.

## 2023 Build to Heal Peer Network Workbook

This workbook encompasses our process for establishing a peer cohort to expand the field of healing-centered practices in community development. We have incorporated examples from our eight 90-minute session agendas, adaptable templates, and the Network's reflections on the Framework. This process fed into the development of each tool captured in the Building to Heal Tools Catalogue.

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To launch the Network, Enterprise put out the call for partners through the Enterprise Programs and Partner Network. Individuals from various Enterprise programs spanning 11 initiatives and six markets, who are engaged in healing-centered practices, were encouraged to submit applications. Enthusiastic practitioners from outside the Enterprise network responded to the call via an online form. Following a review and assessment of their responses, five applicants were invited to participate in the Network.

The participants all brought a unique perspective based on their role in community development, creating a well-rounded network with lots of opportunity for members to learn from each other's experiences. As members of the Network, all participants engaged in monthly calls and one-on-one sessions with the Network's facilitators. To support the commitment and contributions made by each member, a stipend of \$6,250 was provided.

### Peer Network meetings: Exploring healing-centered community development

Over the course of eight sessions held between May and December 2023, the Network applied healing-centered modalities, learned from and about each other, and remained dedicated to integrating the Framework more deeply into community development work. The sessions wove together a diverse set of practices and experiences drawing from the tools in the Framework including breath and body work, storytelling, shared facilitation and collective art making. These practices allowed the Network meetings to be a time for relationship development, self-reflection, learning more about the Framework, and growth.

An overview of each session is shared below. The accompanying agendas are in the Appendix.

Month	Overview	Supplemental Documents
May	We collectively expressed gratitude for ourselves, each other, and the land; connected through shared experiences with healing-centered modalities; and explored connections between the Framework and members' work.	Jamboard, <a href="#">Appendix B</a> (Slides 1–2)
June	We focused on deepening relationships through sharing and learning more about each other's work as framed by the principles of the Framework. Additionally, we began discussing tools that were currently in use and exploring tools we would like to build.	Jamboard, <a href="#">Appendix B</a> (Slides 3–6), <a href="#">Appendix H</a>
July	We built on the previous conversation for tool development, exploring community altar building in a collective exercise and further developing ideas for additional tools. We explored how each of us is practicing and integrating tools that protect holistic well-being as a universal right.	Questionnaire, <a href="#">Appendix C</a>
Aug	We explored the Healing-Centered Community Development Assessment as a tool for exploring our connection to the strategies in the Framework. Raven Willoughby facilitated a deep dive discussion into her use of the Restore strategy with colleagues.	Healing-Centered Community Development Assessment, <a href="#">Appendix D</a>
Sept	Stephanie Simeon shared her story with the Network of using healing-centered practices as a means of burnout prevention, and led the group through a collective exercise to generate strategies tailored to different roles.	Jamboard, <a href="#">Appendix B</a> (Slides 10–13)
Oct	We focused on practicing breath and body work. Anna Ravindranath facilitated the use of a tool to integrate healing-centered practices through a theming exercise.	Theming with Breath and Body Work, <a href="#">Appendix E</a>
Nov	We explored community building through integrating practices related to food – gardening and cooking. Bea Zuluaga shared how she uses these practices as a strategy for community power building through pictures and story.	Long Branch Community Gardeners Deck, <a href="#">Appendix F</a>
Dec	Shelby Chapoose started the session with stories from the 2023 Native American Heritage month events, followed by a collective reading and reflection on the Framework, An Invitation.	Whiteboard, <a href="#">Appendix G</a>

The Build to Heal Peer Network was a nurturing space with healing-centered practices intertwined. The Network became a shared space for learning, expression of gratitude and connection. Themes include valuing the articulation of practices already being implemented, growing comfort with vulnerability, and embracing the integration of healing-centered practices into oneself, as we deserve. This extends to workplace settings, emphasizing patience and asserting our power through culture, expression and healing.



## Building the tools

Beyond the collective sessions, members of the Network co-created with Enterprise project team, Anna Ravindranath and Mary Ayala. These meetings provided an opportunity to brainstorm and develop tools based on each member's unique experiences and allowed for reflection on the various roles Network members held across community development. In some cases, these tools were built upon, informed by or presented in the Network meetings.

**Build to Heal Peer Network Video:** Introduces the Network, while sharing an overview of the Framework and its impact.

**Burnout Prevention Tool:** Explores the underlying reasons for burnout in the nonprofit community development sector and how to create an approach to combat it. The tool also explores how different roles can approach burnout prevention.

**Community Engagement Certification Program Pilot:** Details a curriculum and facilitation for a community engagement certification training. The activities in the curriculum incorporate and explore healing centered practices, focusing on the strategies in the Framework.

**Long Branch Community Gardeners Overview:** Shares the inspiring story of the Long Branch Community Gardeners as a model that can be replicated in communities across the country. The model and story of impact are shared through an interview.

**Healing-Centered Synergy Session:** Provides a step-by-step guide to plan and host a healing-centered synergy session for community development practitioners working in residential communities to support cross-sector collaboration that promotes healing, resilience and positive change.

**Tribal/Native American and Indigenous Collaborations:** Details an approach to collaborate with tribal communities. The tool shares considerations, steps, and resources.

This set of tools are a testament to the self-exploration done between May and December 2023 and the collaborative work of the Build to Heal Peer Network. Unique tools were crafted from each member's experiences, challenges, and hopes for a more healing-centered workplace. The set of tools provides other practitioners with ready-made curriculum, inspiring stories and activities to put the Framework into practice.

## Dissemination

Throughout the grant period, the Framework and tools were disseminated across Enterprise's platforms by engaging with program teams and their network of partners. We leveraged existing opportunities and meetings to apply and workshop the tools being explored and developed in the Peer Network.

Four key dissemination efforts included:

1. **Breath and body work with the Upward Mobility Team:** In this session, the program team went through a session centered on breath and body work to learn more about how it can be incorporated into their work and explore its impact on themselves (e.g., stress reduction).
2. **Healing-centered assessment with the Impact and Evaluation Team:** The team collectively explored the Framework through the healing-centered assessment tool. This tool allowed participants to reflect on their existing healing-centered practices and where they could continue to develop practices. They explored this both personally and as a group, culminating in a collective exercise to pave the way for future integration of healing-centered practices in their team approach.
3. **Sharing breath and body work in the Thome Aging Well learning collaboratives:** In the December learning collaborative for Michigan and Maryland grantees of the Thome Aging Well program, grantees were introduced to the Framework through the Build to Heal Peer Network video and with breath and body work that was incorporated throughout the collaboratives' agendas. This integration aimed to support the grantees with easy to utilize restorative practices and illustrate how these practices can become a seamless part of collective engagement.
4. **Collective reading and whiteboard reflection in the Upward Mobility Team's peer facilitated meeting (organization-wide):** During a monthly company-wide session with the Upward Mobility Team, facilitators shared core principles, strategies and tools from the Framework. As a group, we participated in a reading of *A Living Legacy of Harm* from the [Building to Heal: A Framework for Community Development](#), self-reflection and sharing with a whiteboard activity on the reading.

Through these engagements, we strived to share the Framework and illustrate how, by applying healing-centered practices in various settings, we can more closely align practitioners to the mission of their work in community development.

## Gratitude

In closing, we share our deep appreciation of and gratitude for The Kresge Foundation. Their support and belief in our vision has helped to create meaningful change in community through healing-centered practices. Our gratitude extends to the amazing group of Build to Heal Peer Network members who provided their insight, commitment, and belief in the transformative efforts of the Framework. Finally, appreciation to the authors of the Framework, Meghan Venable-Thomas, Brandon C. Jones, and Chandra Christmas-Rouse whose vision laid the groundwork for the Build to Heal Peer Network.

# Appendices

## [Appendix A: Peer Network Meeting Session Agendas](#)

Appendix B: Jamboard

- [English version](#)
- [Spanish version](#)

[Appendix C: Questionnaire](#) using principles of the Healing-Centered Community Development Framework

[Appendix D: Healing-Centered Community Development Assessment](#)

[Appendix E: Theming with Breath and Body Work](#)

[Appendix F: Long Branch Community Gardeners Slideshow](#)

[Appendix G: Network Reflections on Collective Reading](#)

[Appendix H: Build to Heal Retrospective Whiteboard](#)

[Appendix I: December Closing Poem](#)

[Appendix J: Healing-Centered Community Development Assessment](#)

[Appendix K: Healing Centered Project Screen](#)

[Appendix L: Cultural Asset Inventory/Cultural Resilience Assessment](#)

[Appendix M: Green Communities Criteria & Certification](#)



## About Enterprise Community Partners

Enterprise is a national nonprofit that exists to make a good home possible for the millions of families without one. We support community development organizations on the ground, aggregate and invest capital for impact, advance housing policy at every level of government, and build and manage communities ourselves. Since 1982, we have invested \$64 billion and created 951,000 homes across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands – all to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging. Join us at [enterprisecommunity.org](https://www.enterprisecommunity.org).