



This list of self-care activities is designed for individuals who are seeking to create connection and mend from the compounded effects of intersectional trauma. Healing from trauma rooted in the overlapping nature of one's identities (e.g., race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability) requires a holistic approach that addresses the mind, body, community, and ancestral lineage.

The activities below are not a "to-do" list but a menu of options. The most impactful self-care is always trauma-informed, meaning it prioritizes personal safety, choice, and compassion. Listen to your body and engage only in what feels right for you at this moment.

1. Forging Connection with Self (Embodied & Internal)

Healing from intersectional trauma begins by creating a safe connection to your own body, which may have been a site of harm or chronic stress. These activities focus on self-regulation and feeling grounded in the present moment.

- **Somatic Body Scans:** Take a few moments to sit or lie down and gently bring your awareness to different parts of your body. Notice sensations without judgment—tension in your jaw, a softness in your belly, tingling in your hands. This practice helps you rebuild a sense of inner safety and presence. (Inspired by Resmaa Menakem's work).
- **Gentle Self-Touch:** When feeling overwhelmed or disconnected, place a gentle hand on your chest or stomach. Feel the warmth and pressure of your own touch. This simple act can provide a sense of containment and is a powerful tool for self-soothing and co-regulating your own nervous system.
- **Grounding and Orienting:** Feel your feet on the floor. Press them down, feeling the support of the earth. Slowly look around your physical space, noticing objects that are neutral or pleasant. This practice, called orienting, helps your nervous system register that you are in the present and relatively safe, counteracting hypervigilance and dissociation.
- **Mindful Movement:** Engage in gentle movement that feels good to your body. This is not about exercise goals, but about releasing trapped energy. This could be slow stretching, restorative yoga, or simply swaying to music. Prioritize listening to your body's needs over achieving a specific form.



2. Creating Connection with Community (Relational & Collective)

Intersectional trauma is often isolating. Reconnecting with community—especially with others who share your identities—can be a profound source of healing, validation, and joy.

- **Find a Shared Identity Group:** Seek out a space or community where you feel fully seen and affirmed in all your intersecting identities. This could be a queer BIPOC hiking group, a disability justice collective, or a support group for survivors. Finding a space where you don't have to explain yourself is a form of deep rest.
- **Practice Collective Joy:** Actively seek out and participate in activities with your community that are purely for joy and celebration. Share a meal, dance to music, attend a cultural festival, or laugh together. Collective joy is a powerful antidote to trauma and a way to build resilience.
- **Healing Circles & Witnessing:** Participate in structured healing circles or restorative justice dialogues where you can share your experience and be witnessed without judgment or the need for others to "fix" you. The act of being seen and heard in your full humanity is deeply regulating.
- **Co-regulate with Loved Ones:** Intentionally spend time with people whose presence feels calming and safe. Simply sitting with a trusted friend, holding hands, or engaging in gentle conversation can help regulate your nervous system through co-regulation.

3. Deepening Connection with Ancestors & Culture (Spiritual & Lineage)

Healing intersectional trauma often means looking back to the resilience and wisdom of your ancestors. This is an act of reclamation and a way to feel connected to a lineage that survived.

- **Learn Your Family's History:** Research your genealogy, listen to the stories of elders, or look at old family photos. Understanding your lineage can help you feel rooted in a larger story of strength and survival.
- **Engage in Cultural Practices:** Reconnect with your cultural heritage through food, music, art, or language. Cook a family recipe, listen to traditional music, or learn phrases from your ancestral language. These practices are an embodied way of honoring your lineage.
- **Create an Altar or Sacred Space:** Set up a small altar or designated space in your home with objects that represent your ancestors, culture, or personal journey. This can be a place for quiet reflection, meditation, or gratitude, helping you feel connected to something larger than yourself.



- **Rituals of Release and Reclamation:** Create personal rituals to release the pain of intergenerational trauma and reclaim aspects of your identity that may have been suppressed. This could involve writing down what you want to let go of and safely burning it, or a ceremony to honor a name, a tradition, or a part of your identity.

4. Expressing Connection through Creativity (Expressive & Reclaiming)

Trauma can make us feel numb or disconnected from our full selves. Creative expression provides a safe outlet to process emotions, tell your own story, and feel a sense of agency and aliveness.

- **Free-Form Journaling:** Write without an agenda. Don't worry about grammar or a clear narrative. Journal about the sensations you feel in your body, the emotions that are present, or a stream of consciousness. This helps you process and release what's stored within.
- **Embodied Art:** Use various art forms (drawing, painting, sculpting) to express what words cannot. Focus on the process of creation itself, not on the final product. Let your hands and body tell the story.
- **Music and Sound:** Listen to music that allows you to feel your emotions deeply, whether it's grief, joy, or rage. Try humming or toning a simple, resonant "om" or "ah" sound. This vagal toning can help regulate your nervous system and release trapped energy.
- **Storytelling:** Write your own story, your own narrative. Whether it's through poetry, short stories, or a personal essay, telling your story from your perspective is an act of reclaiming your power.

Note:

While these self-care activities are powerful, they are not a substitute for professional, trauma-informed support. Working with a therapist or healer who understands the intersectional nature of your trauma can provide the container and guidance necessary for deeper healing.