



H.O.L.L.A!'s Youth Organizing, Transformation and Healing Training as a model of Radical Healing



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qGuyI-Gu2s>

The Historical/Structural Context of Urban Youth Development

The Seven Neighborhood Study (1979) led by activist and formerly incarcerated organizers known as the Green Haven Think Tank showed, 85% of the people who were in prison were African descendants (Black or Latino); and showed, 75% of those imprisoned in New York State correction faculties hail from the seven neighborhoods in New York City, all of which are marked by a host of targeted and enforced inequalities spanning generations. And no amount of hard skill training or job readiness programs, alone, can demonstrably ameliorate the entrenched historical and structural forces driving this Seven Neighborhood phenomenon that, for

generations, have created conditions resulting in a defacto pipeline from these communities to jails and prisons.

Grassroot Approach to Human and Healing Pedagogy for Youth/Community



How Our Lives Link Altogether! (H.O.L.L.A!) has conceptualized our Youth Organizing, Transformation and Healing Process emanating from a radical healing model that acknowledges young people as precariously situated within the larger historical and social context of structural and interpersonal violence. We prepare/train and heal up youth of color to engage in long-term grassroots organizing and relationship building.

H.O.L.L.A's 18-Month Radical Healing Training

The curricula for the *Youth Organizing, Transformation, and Healing Process/Training* is designed to take youth from the most marginalized communities color through a relationship and skill building process deeply connected to culture, spirituality and resisting structural violence as individual and collective agents of change (as healers)

There are three trainings/processes within curriculum, they are all interconnected and build off each other:

1. **Ritual Program.** A platform to build relationships with youth (ages 13-25) and their families through youth-led community events and community canvassing.
2. **Nat Turner Revolutionary Leadership Training (NTRLT)**, which is now being called the Harriet Tubman Revolutionary Leadership Training . Part one of the 18-month leadership, transformation and healing training/process, this is a 6-month relationship-building, political education, skill-building, resource-connecting and organizing training.
3. **Youth Organizing Collective Training (YOC).** Part two of the 18-month leadership, transformation and healing training/process, this is a 12-month engagement with human and healing centered community organizing, political and cultural education.

Re-inserting Emotional Development and Pedagogies of Spirituality and Hope in Youth/Community Development



Youth development as process to cultivate social-emotional well-being, and emotional knowledge development: We understand pedagogy of vulnerability as emotional knowledge. Vulnerability is an ingredient that brings together the intersections of – the shame, love, guilt, pride, pain, dreams, sharing of stories, not sharing of stories, healing and relationships. Dialoging and strategizing about oppression and

healing is an emotional process. To hold space for others peoples' stories of oppression is hard work, yet, feeling strong enough, and/or safe/brave enough to share one's own emotions related to oppression is equally hard.

Youth development that engages spirituality and hope as critical elements: Black families living through historical trauma (structural and interpersonal harm) have long engaged spirituality for survival and resisting. Teaching connection to spirit is a political practice. Cultivating hope and the capacity to dream has always been at the heart of all/every grassroots movement. As an ontological foundation - The cultivation of spirit and hope is a response to the ways structural violence and interpersonal harm produces hopelessness and dehumanization within poor communities of color. Critical hope is a praxis that allows space for spirit to grow, and a connection to other's inner intention(s) (i.e., the heart of the people involved) needed to collectively commit to reflecting on each other's lives. We believe the cultivation and development of hope and spirit is one of the most important factors to facilitate individual, community and societal healing, transformation and justice.

Reinserting cultural and ancestors rituals into youth development: Cultural rituals to sustain healing and to respond to emotional hurt from structural and interpersonal oppression requires intention and stated purpose(s). Pedagogy on spiritual development is an important process for relationship building and engaging in rituals. Rituals are ceremonies in which spirit is called in to be the driver, the overseer of activities. To engage in ritual allows room for youth souls to stay whole. Ritual activity, on the one hand serves as a tool to assist urban youth of color in processing complex feelings and emotions, and on the other hand, as an engagement strategy for relationship building by creating a space where youth participants can share vulnerable stories with other youths and people of color

The re-inserting of hope building, spirituality and the development of emotional knowledge is a pedagogical and philosophical shift to move youths and families forward to true freedom.