Community Care Post-Election Toolkit

Curated & Developed by J Vu Mai, October 2020



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The political, social & emotional realities of an election season

As we move closer to election day, communities all across the country and world are pro-actively preparing resources, support systems, and care structures in response to this election season.

To deny the significant impact and influence that election seasons have on the emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of those witnessing them is to deny the collective experiences of real people with real feelings, anxieties, and fears. Elections hold weight- they determine policies, language, and decisions that have real and tangible impacts on people's lives.

This upcoming election season has the potential to impact folks on both an interpersonal level and a structure level.

Interpersonal impacts can include:

- Hearing that friends/ roommates/colleagues voted for someone who has advocated for policies that would harm you)
- Racist/homophobic/transphobic/ etc. political talk from family/community members
- Witnessing/experiencing acts of bias and/or violence

Structural impacts can include:

- Anxiety and fear around the state of trans rights, DACA, marriage equality, on-going police brutality, etc.
- Experiencing resource and support gaps in times of political crisis



What is the purpose of this toolkit?

The following toolkit is first and foremost, an acknowledgement that this year's election will inevitably impact people's lives. Regardless of the outcome, white supremacy exists; homophobia and transphobia exists; ableism exists; xenophobia exists; colonialism exists; poverty exists; systems named and unnamed that shape the fabric of our lives constantly, with and without our permission, exist.

In knowing the political, social, and emotional realities of this election season, this toolkit exists to help you and your communities navigate what may come up as a result of this election season. Ultimately, it is designed to equip you and your communities (in whatever ways you define "community") with the framework, tools, and resources necessary to care for yourself and your communities in light of this election season.

Toolkit Purpose & Framework

In this toolkit, you will be able to find the following:

- An extensive guide on what, exactly, is a community care plan, and how to design one for you and your communities
- Interactive worksheets and guides on how to assess your communities' needs, strategize safetey and care plans, organize your community(ies), and do community care.
- Tips and tricks on how to communicate your own care needs and boundaries with your communities
- A list of Wake Forest University affiliated care resources
- A list of non-Wake Forest University affiliated care resources



What is Community Care?

Community care is just that- the practice of caring in community. Community care includes (but is not limited to):

- Practicing mutual aid by taking care of each other outside the state systems that punish and ultimately fail to meet our needs
- Practicing collective care by holding spaces of healing in our communities and building our skills and practices to support mental health and emotional health
- Studying and practicing **conflict mediation** to address issues within a community
- Building **survivor -led** support networks, crisis centers, and self-defense groups
- Building **community-led alternatives** to the police state
- Creating rapid response networks that can share information and mobilize the community





Why Care in Community?

Healing in isolation makes us more vulnerable to harm and emotional, mental, and physical distress because it glosses over the fact that we experience trauma together, as a community. Thus, as community members experiencing collective trauma together, it would make sense to heal as a collective.

Caring in community is understanding that your survival, wellbeing, and ultimate flourishing is intimately connected and intertwined with the survival, wellbeing, and flourishing of your community.

If this election season impacts one person in our community, it impacts all of us. If I am not free, then you are not free. If my community is not free, I cannot be free.

"Without community, there is no liberation." ~ Audre Lorde



Steps on how to create a community care plan:

I. ASSESS

Assessing/ taking inventory of your community's needs

II. STRATEGIZE

Strategizing a community game plan to meet, navigate, and address your community's care & saftey needs.

III. ORGANIZE

Organizing and preparing your community to execute the care strategies that ya'll have collaboratively built together.

IV. DO

The actual practice and execution of community care.

I.ASSESS

Assessing/ taking inventory of your community's needs is a crucial first step in creating a community care plan. In preemptively figuring out what needs might come up for our communities post-election season, we can effectively and pre-emptively create strategies on how to meet those needs.

You can use the acronym **E.M.P.S.** to help you and your community(ies) assess both individual and communal needs that may come up post-election.

Assessing Needs Tips

- Assess/take inventory of your individuals needs before assessing your community's needs.
- When assessing communal needs, be specific about what communities you want to focus on (i.e. Black communities, queer communities, classroom communities, etc.)

E.M.P.S.



Emotional



Mental



Physical



Spiritual

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self preservation and that is an act of political warfar. ~ Audre Lorde

Reflection Questions to help you assess **individual** needs



Emotional

What sort of relationship do you have with your emotions? How can others help you process and facilitate your own emotional needs and landscape?



Mental

Which resources and strategies have been the most effective in helping you cope with different mental health issues? How can others help you gain access to these resources?



Physical

What helps you eat? Drink water? Rest? Nourish yourself? How can others encourage you to take care of your physical needs?



Spiritual

What grounding rituals, spiritual practices, sources of power help ground you during times of distress/crises?

Reflection Questions to help you assess **community** needs



Emotional

What communal spaces exist/does your community need to create to facilitate group processing?



Mental

What mental resources specifically tailor to and take into account our community's unique needs? How can we ensure/facilitate access to these culturally competent resources?



Physical

How can we ensure that everyone in our community eats? Drinks water? Rest? Nourish themselves? How can we collectively facilitate communal nourishment?



Spiritual

What grounding rituals, spiritual practices, sources of power can help ground us deeper into community?

ASSESSING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Use the following worksheet to brainstorm, document, and collect your individual needs based upon the reflection questions offered on page 7.

Emotional	Mental
Physical	Spiritual

ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Use the following worksheet to brainstorm, document, and collect your community's unique needs based upon the reflection questions offered on page 7.

Emotional	Mental
Physical	Spiritual
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II. STRATEGIZE

Once you've taken inventory of your community's post-election needs, you can now strategize a community game plan for how you will plan to meet, navigate, and address your community's care needs.

For this toolkit, the stategizing step includes:

- Saftey strategy planning
- Reviewing Crisis Management Steps and Essential Questions

Strategizing Tips

- Put all of your community's emergency resources and plans in one place that is accessible to everyone (i.e. google drive, a community crisis manuel, group message thread, etc.)
- Be as specific as possible when it comes to the logistical details of your community's care plan. For example, instead of "Contact my family," put down "Contact my mother via text, phone call, email, etc."
- Establish common communication lines with members of your community(ies) for example, create a text message thread, groupme, Signal Group Chat, etc.



Post- Election Saftey Strategy Planning

Answer the following questions to help you and your community(ies) strategize different saftey planning measures for potential crises that may arise post-election.

What Post-Election safety concerns do you have that you may need support with?	What strategies can you suggest to help your community(ies) feel more safe or get support in implementing saftey measures?
How will you integrate these new strategies into your routine?	What support do you need to implement these strategies?

Guiding Crisis Management Questions

The following questions were designed to help you and your communities navigate crisis.



What is the crisis? What exactly is going on/happening? If we don't know, how can we find out what is going on?



Who is actually being impacted by this crisis? Who are we contacting, communicating with, reaching out to during a crisis?



What is our time frame for addressing this crisis? Does this crisis require immediate care? Or is this a crisis that we can address at a later time?



Where are our community check-in points? Where exactly can our communities come together in the event of crisis?



How exactly are we going to address this crisis? What resources and support do we need to address it?

III. ORGANIZE

Once you have assessed your community's needs and strategized a community safety plan(s), you are now ready to organize your community to address those needs and to execute those safety plans.

What does it mean to organize?

"Organizing is both science and art. It is thinking through a vision, a strategy, and then figuring out who your targets are, always being concerned about power, always being concerned about how you're going to actually build power in order to be able to push your issues, in order to be able to get the target to actually move in the way that you want to."

~ Mariame Kaba, Prison Abolitionest & Organizer

If you've made it to this point of the toolkit- if you've assessed the needs with your community(ies), strategized care and saftey plans with your community(ies)- then congratulations, you have already done some organizing work.



ORGANIZING COMMUNITY CARE ROLES

Everyone in your community occupies a critical role in your community care plan- identifying the different roles and figuring out who plays which role is important to creating sustainable and effective community care intiatives.

Frontline Responders

"I address community crisis by marshalling and organizing resources, networks, & messages."

Guides

"I teach, counsel, and advise using my gifts of well-earned discernments and wisdom."

Community Care Roles

Caregivers

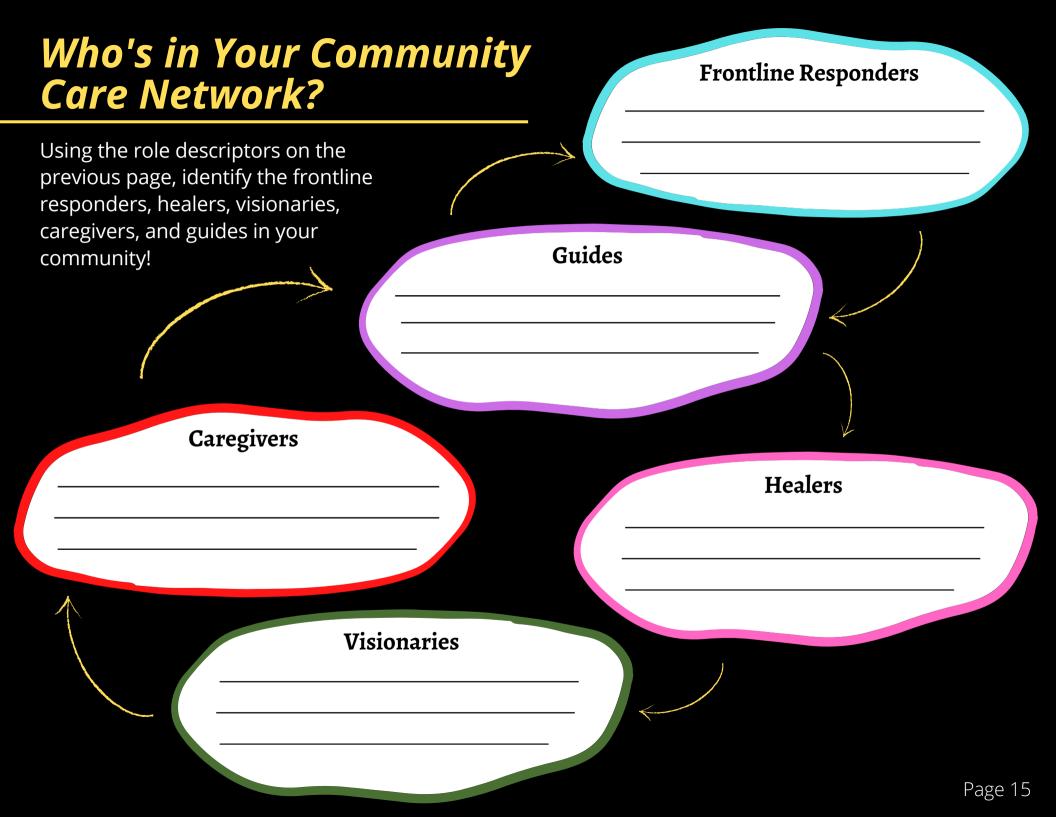
"I nuture and nourish the people around me by creating and sustaining a community of care, joy, & connection."

Healers

"I recognize and tend to the generational and current traumas caused by oppressive systems, institutions, policies, and practices."

Visionaries

"I imagine and generate our boldest possibilities, hopes, and dreams, and remind us of our direction."



IV. DO

Last but not least, is the "Do" step in the community care planning process. This final step contains the actual practice and execution of community care.

To care in community is to actively work against systems of oppression that seek to isolate us from our power- our power to heal, connect, resist, and dream.



Key things to consider when engaging in community care:

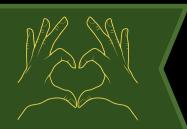
- Be aware of and regularly gauge your capacity to provide care- to provide care from an empty cup inevitably sets you and you community(ies) up for failure.
- Ask for help! The whole point of community care is to do it in community, aka, with other people.
- Community Care is a process, not a destination. It is something we continously do and navigate with other people.
- Give yourself grace. It's okay to make mistakes, as long as we're willing to hold ourselves accountable, transform, and work to do better.

"Remember, oppression thrives off of isolation. Connection is the only thing that can save us."

~**Yolo Akili**, Executive Director of the Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective

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Self-Regulation Crisis Tools: Introduction to Grounding Exercises



Grounding Exercises

Breathwork – Breathing is obviously fundamental to life, but our breath can also be used consciously to control our nervous system. If we are short of breath, as an example, whether from asthmatic crisis or chronic anxiety, the resulting feeling we have is often panic. Deepening our breathing, even for a moment, can help us soothe our anxiety, calm our panic, and restore a grounded nervous system.

Box breath – Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, release for 4 counts, and hold at the bottom for 4 counts. Repeat several times. Notice if your shoulders are able to drop, notice how thoughts and moods shift.

Body scan – Together, notice your bodies and what is happening for you internally. We spend a lot of time, especially if we are feeling unsafe, tracking what is happening outside of ourselves and in the minds of others. Take time (and breath!) to get curious about what is happening within your own bodies. Share out a mood and a sensation you noticed for the first time.

Chanting – Chanting and group singing are great ways to ground on a shared purpose or feeling. They are proven to regulate and sync up nervous systems within a group.

Check-ins – Most folks make time for check-ins at the start of meetings. The magic of check-ins can only work in relation to our vulnerability. Can we make room to ask each other how we are showing up and what we need to feel more present or grounded? What will you need during an action to stay grounded?

Sometimes, we're not always able to recieve our needs right when we need them. A helpful practice to have on hand until you are able to recieve support is **self-regulation**.

"Self-regulation is the ability to monitor and manage your energy states, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in ways that are acceptable and produce positive results such as wellbeing, loving relationships, and learning (Blog, "Your Therapy Source")."

Grounding Practice:

Choose one of the exercises on the left to practice by yourself or with an accountability partner.

Content Source: Black Lives Matter Healing Justice Toolkit

Self-Regulation Crisis Tools:Self-Care Grounding Practices by B.E.A.M







Communicating & Responding to Community Needs using the <u>Speaker Listener Formula</u>

Speaker Formula

"I feel [name an emotion], about [a specific event/thing], and I need [state a positive need]."

Community Care Tip 💁

Try to frame your needs positively- for example, instead of "I don't want to be around others right now," say "I need some space for a couple of hours."

Also- it's okay to not know what you need.

You are allowed to tell folks "I don't know."

Listener Formula

"It makes sense that you feel $[\underline{x}]$ about $[\underline{y}]$ and that you need $[\underline{z}]$. How can I support you in getting your needs met?

Community Care Tip 💁

If you actually don't have the capacity to support someone, say that and/or refer them to someone who does. Empty cups can't fill other cups!

Source: Instagram account @gottmaninstitute





How to Shift from Emotionally Abandoning ~~~ Yourself to Asking for Support in Healthy Ways



Emotionally Abandoning Ourselves looks like:



- Losing control when feeling big emotions.
- Demanding that our support partners hold space for us, even if they are flooded or need space.
- Expecting our partners to always put their needs aside and be there for us.
- Desperately seeking validation from our support partners.
- Becoming frantic when big feelings arise- seeking external soothing methods like using substances, shopping, food, chasing someone for energy.
- Acting out- temper tantrums, becoming physical, violent, or verbal attacks.





- "I'm feeling a lot, do you have the bandwith to hold space for me right now."
- "Is there a time that we can process this conflict together and have space to share what's coming up for each of us?"
- When you said/did XYZ I felt _____ and felt like _____.
 (Example "I felt dismissed, and I felt like you don't think I'm important)
- Call a coach or therapist and schedule time to have unconditional support and space held for you to move the energy.

How to Improve Your Listening Skills While Holding Space for Others



HOW TO BE A BETTER LISTENER

Don't:

- Spend your time planning what you are going to say next/waiting for your turn to speak.
- Try to "fix" things or offer unsolicited advice.
- Split your focus between the speaker and your phone or something else. Multitasking is a fallacy.
- Try to finish or anticipate what the speaker is saying.
- Take what the other person is saying so personally that you become defensive and unable to hear their side.
- Completely shut down your own reaction to what the other person is saying. Your feelings and reactions are valid and it's good to pay attention to what comes up for you.

The Gottman Institute

HOW TO BE A BETTER LISTENER

Do:

- Tune in to what the other person is saying. Stay curious.
- Make understanding a goal. Confirm what you heard with the speaker to see if you have it right.
- Repair if you interrupt, get distracted, become defensive, or misunderstand.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Inhabit the role of a passenger on the speaker's train of thought. Follow their journey, at their pace.
- Be aware of how much time you spend talking in the conversation.

The Gottman Institute

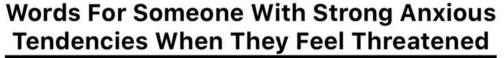
QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK INSTEAD OF "HOW ARE YOU DOING? ~



"If you could do any part of today over again, what would it be?" "what would you like to be different tomorrow?" "when did you feel appreciated/understood /loved today?" "what are you most excited for this week?" "what do you wish you did more of today?"

Source: Instagram account @sitwithit

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK INSTEAD OF "HOW ARE YOU DOING? ~~~



Created by @silvykhoucasian

"I know you're having a hard time. I'm right here."

"I'm not going to abandon you."

"Your feelings are okay with me."

"You are not a burden to me."

"You are safe to share your needs to me."

Source: Instagram account @silvykhoucasian



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HOW TO SET BOUNDARIES WHILE DOING COMMUNITY CARE

When engaging in community care, it is important to set boundaries for **yourself** and **others**.

Setting boundaries ensure that our community care initiatives are **sustainable** across time. They also help us prevent caretaker burn-out and feelings of resentment towards those we are caring for.

BOUNDARIES THAT I SET FOR MYSELF

- "I will support others when I have the space and capacity to take care of them and myself.
- "I will be honest and transparent when it comes to communicating my limits and non-negotiables."
- "I will reach out to others for help when I feel like I am running out of space and capacity to support others.
- "I will reach out to my support systems, resources, and/or communities when I need support."
- "I will only respond to my phone/email/texts between the hours of and ."
- "I will honor my body's needs."

BOUNDARIES THAT I SET WITH OTHERS

- "I would really like to support you, and I don't have the capacity right now. I will do my best to get back to you when I do have the capacity."
- "I am unavailable at the moment, can I refer you to someone else who might be able to support you?"
- "I don't feel equipped to support you in the ways in which you need to be supported.
 - Can I refer you to someone who might be better equipped to support you?
- "I'll reconnect with you when I have more space/energy/capacity."

Boundaries are essential to community care because they ensure and maintain the community <u>trust</u> and <u>transparency</u> required to creating long lasting, healing justice movements.

WFU Affiliated Mental Health Resources

The following resources contributed and shaped the content of this toolkit. To gain access to all links by just a click, download this toolkit in PDF format.

University Counseling Center

Students may call 336-758-5273 to access mental health support. During business hours they will be routed to one of two available crisis counselors. Afterhours they will be connected to a crisis intervention specialist.

UCC Approach to Equitable Access:

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been vast and far reaching. We at the University Counseling Center are committed to providing support to our students during this time. We recognize that everyone has not been impacted by the pandemic equally, and that those individuals and communities who have been marginalized by those with privileged identities within our society have experienced greater hardship. We also acknowledge ways that mental health services have historically upheld these systems of white supremacy and oppression, creating unequal access to competent and safe therapeutic spaces. Our commitment to social justice, anti-racism, and dismantling oppressive systems compels us to center the needs of students with marginalized identities, as they are likely to be suffering the most significant impact of the pandemic with the least access to resources.

Chaplain's Office

Students may call 336-758-5273 to access mental health support. During business hours they will be routed to one of two available crisis counselors. After-hours they will be connected to a crisis intervention specialist.

The Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life seeks to support a diversity of beliefs through the multi-faith character of the chaplaincy and its relationship to numerous religious life affiliates. We acknowledge the importance of faith, both in our individual and collective lives, and strive to provide opportunities for members of the Wake Forest community to express and explore their faith in a supportive community. The core work of chaplaincy is rooted in the care of the whole person – body, soul, and spirit. As such, a key aspect of our office is to make available pastoral care and advisement for any member of the Wake Forest community – students, staff, faculty, and alumni. This can happen through individual counsel, programming on critical spiritual themes, intervention in medical emergencies, mortality concerns, and presiding at key life rituals. https://chaplain.wfu.edu/

Election day MindfulWake meditation drop ins -

https://chaplain.wfu.edu/mindfulwake/mindful-ofelection-stress/

CARE Team

The CARE Team is available virtually for any faculty, staff, student, or community needs. If you are concerned about a member of the Wake Forest community, and are in need of consultation or referral, please send an email to care@wfu.edu or complete the CARE referral form.

Safe Office

24/7 helpline 336.758.5285 https://safeoffice.wfu.edu/

The Safe Office provides confidential crisis response and on-going support services to Reynolda Campus students for concerns related to interpersonal violence, including sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking. The Safe Office also serves as a liaison to campus and community resources, offers educational programming, and provides confidential consultations for concerned students, parents, faculty, and staff.

Safe Office also has a list of mental health resources specifically for Black people on their website.

Wellbeing Office

To support the students, faculty, and staff of Wake Forest University, the Office of Wellbeing, Campus Recreation, and other colleagues at WFU have curated this hub of resources which encompass a variety of wellbeing topics to help our community as we transition to remote school and work: https://thrive.wfu.edu/thrive-remotely-2/

Office of Academic Advising

If your mental health is impacting your course attendance or performance, you can reach out to your Academic Advisor, or to the Office of Academic Advising at undergraduateadvising@wfu.edu and ask for assistance in communicating with your professors about your needs.

Other WFU Affiliated Resources

IDENTITY CENTERS

ADVOCACY

LGBTQ+ Center

https://lgbtq.wfu.edu/

The LGBTQ+ Center is committed to fostering a safe, equitable and inclusive experience for all. The LGBTQ+ Center is the campus location where students, faculty, staff and alumni connect for resources, services, education and leadership programs related to gender identity and sexual orientation.

Intercultural Center

https://interculturalcenter.wfu.edu/

The Intercultural Center strives to influence campus culture by cultivating intercultural knowledge, competency and leadership. We are committed to enhancing the experience of domestic and international underrepresented groups by offering co-curricular programming, student support and engagement, identity development initiatives and opportunities for comprehensive learning and development.

Women's Center

https://womenscenter.wfu.edu/

The Women's Center strives to create an educational and professional environment that supports women and promotes gender equity.

International Students and Scholars Office

https://global.wfu.edu/iss/

The International Student and Scholars division (ISS) serves all international students and scholars participating in programs with Wake Forest University.

Office of Community and Civic Engagement

https://communityengagement.wfu.edu/students/#civiclearning

Office of Civic and Community Engagement: Are you looking to make a difference? Join other Wake Forest students who are discovering the value of service and developing leadership skills both on-campus and in the community. The Office of Civic & Community Engagement provides different avenues for engagement including: direct service and philanthropic events, social justice programming, project-based learning, and civic learning and democratic engagement.

https://communityengagement.wfu.edu/students/#civic-learning

Bias Reporting Team

https://reportbias.wfu.edu/

Bias Incident Reporting team - A bias incident is an act or behavior motivated by the offender's bias against facets of another's identity. Bias occurs whether the act is intentional or unintentional. Bias may be directed toward an individual or group. Bias may contribute to creating an unsafe / unwelcoming environment.

Non-WFU Affiliated Resources

The following resources contributed and shaped the content of this toolkit. To gain access to all links by just a click, download this toolkit in PDF format.

Community Care Resources & Organizations

- B.E.A.M (Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective)
- Healers in the Movement, Jamila Reddy
- Rest for Resistance
- Decolonizing Therapy
- NATIONAL QUEER AND TRANS THERAPISTS OF COLOR NETWORK
- The Nap Ministry
- The Gottman Institute
- <u>Dignity and Power Now Healing Justice</u>
 Toolkit
- Black Lives Matter Healing Action Toolkit
- <u>Transgender Law Center</u>
- Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project
- Indigenous Action
- Southerners on New Ground
- The Freedom Center for Social Justice

Preparing For Post Election Scenarios Resources & Training Guide

<u>https://docs.google.com/document/d/17ITo-u9TS5yJPKE7XOQMIHvlwJF-pKnTZ8uXIETgEOg/edit?usp=sharing</u>

This guide provides a selection of resources, coalitions, readings, and trainings to help you connect with others and develop a plan for how to organize in the event of a contested election or undemocratic action after the U.S. Presidential election on November 3. This guide mostly does not cover the diverse organizing taking place to ensure a fair election and an electoral victory against fascism. This guide does attempt to compile the various formations that are preparing for the potential of undemocratic actions from the Trump administration after November 3, so that you can find ways to connect with others and organize your friends, family, and community to be prepared for multiple and potentially unclear outcomes after election day. This guide is compiled by Adrien Salazar, a NYC-based organizer. For questions or to request additions to this guide please complete this inquiry form.

Toolkit Bibliography

The following resources contributed and shaped the content of this toolkit. To gain access to all links by just a click, download this toolkit in PDF format.

- https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/11/how-to-cope-with-post-election-stress/507296/
- https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/supporting-someone-through-trauma-four-important-tools-0620144
- https://www.beam.community/tool-kits-education
- https://medium.com/@SolidarityWOC/filling-our-cups-4-ways-people-of-color-can-foster-mental-health-and-practice-restorative-healing-64e5e7584127
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- https://www.beam.community/theconversation