



# ICSW | PEOPLE POWER 2020/2021

## SELF AND COLLECTIVE CARE FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE



Being an activist can be overwhelming. We have to deal with adverse contexts, shrinking civic spaces, power conflicts and systematic oppression. We

often move in environments characterised by overwork and exhaustion. Additionally, we tend to put an unreasonable and unhealthy amount of pressure on ourselves. Sometimes, we are so committed to the cause that it simply takes over our lives and our efforts to change the world end up taking a toll on our body, mind and soul.



Working under such circumstances can lead to high levels of stress, frustration, depression, anxiety, guilt, exhaustion, burnout and even make us more prone to diseases. Does this sound familiar to you?

There has been progress in recognising the importance of mental and physical health care to help activists stay in top shape. However, funds for emotional support and spaces where changemakers can really talk about feelings are insufficient and sometimes non-existent.



The good news is that we can implement practices to look after ourselves and others close to us. Practicing self and collective care is vital to keep us going as individuals and also to make our activism sustainable in the long term.

**SELF & COLLECTIVE CARE > TOP MENTAL HEALTH > FOCUSED,  
READY, EFFECTIVE, EMPOWERED CHANGEMAKERS**

## SOME SELF CARE TIPS

There are many evidence-based tools and strategies to promote self care. Some are based on social research, science or traditional practices from around the world. Give them a try, find the ones that work for you and practice them consistently.



Give feelings and emotions some time and space. They have something to say! Observe, acknowledge and accept them without judging.

Investigate what's causing your feelings. Go beyond symptoms.

Let it all out! Try talking to your close people or to a therapist, stress journaling, drawing and practicing other artistic ways of expression.

Practice gratitude, mindfulness, breathing exercises, meditation, yoga, qigong, tai chi or whatever activity that stimulates your cells, re-energises your body, makes you happy and nourishes your soul!

Take care of the whole package: body + mind + soul

Focus on the positive: although there is still a long way to go to change the world, you've already achieved so much!

Make time for you and what's important to you beyond your work. **#yourlifematters**

Don't wait until you feel bad. Prevention is better than cure!



## IF YOU CAN, PROMOTE COLLECTIVE CARE PRACTICES!



If you are dealing with groups, movements, organisations and communities, take the lead and open-up spaces and provide tools that allow for collective care. Have group check-ins where team members can talk about feelings, build a supportive environment, provide self and collective care toolkits, develop resilience plans and healing strategies and if you can, organise well-being and resilience workshops. Make care practices part of your group's daily life!

...you might feel invincible, but if we are to sustain **#peoplepower**, don't forget to slow down, stop and recharge!

