

**VOICES THAT  
SHAKE!**



**SHAKE! THE SYSTEM**

# **GUIDEBOOK**

**RITUALS, TOOLS & PRACTICES**

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- i) *Voices that Shake! An Anthology of Creative Movements*
- ii) A youth-led *Shake! the System Research Report: A Decade of Shaping Change 2010–2020*
- iii) A youth-led *Shake! the System Guidebook: Rituals, Tools & Practices*

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**GUIDEBOOK**

RITUALS, TOOLS & PRACTICES

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**VOICES THAT  
SHAKE!**

*The meanings behind the name 'Voices that Shake!' are multifaceted.*

*Our voices shake as colonised people pursuing decolonisation  
and liberation over centuries.*

*Our voices shake to cry, to protest, to demand.*

*Our voices shake to breathe, to respond to the call,  
and to culminate in harmony and joy.*

*We must hear our voices outside of the white noise,  
in our own right,  
to just be.*

*This is what we want to thrive.*

## **The Politics of Language and Imagery: A Guide to Shake!'s Terms and Images**

### **Language and Terms**

Shake! reaches towards building a full recognition of the cultural heritages of Shake!rs and those in our communities that captures our specific richnesses. The struggle to be named and reflected on our own terms, rather than to be described and racialised by white supremacy culture, is ongoing.

In our trilogy of publications – *Anthology*, *Research Report* and *Guidebook* – we use the phrase ‘Black people and people of the global majority’.

In using this phrase we want to acknowledge both the specific harms of anti-Black racism – which is not only a phenomenon of whiteness – and to embrace the breadth of international cultural heritages which are racialised by white supremacy. The phrase ‘Black people and people of the global majority’ is not perfect. Language is political, but in and of itself not our liberation. Terms and language are ongoing, constantly moving as power and resistance to oppression evolves.

By the time these bodies of work reach you, the terms we use may have become outdated or even redundant. We encourage you to engage with these texts in a dynamic way that follows less the form and more the substance.

### **Photographs and Contributions**

The people who are visible throughout Shake!'s publications and online consented to their visibility.

However for many Shake!rs, allies, mentors, artists (Black people and people of the global majority, of diverse sexualities and sexual identities, from precarious economic circumstances, with varying cognitive, physical and mental health capacities) being visible puts us at daily risk of harm and abuse in oppressive cultures.

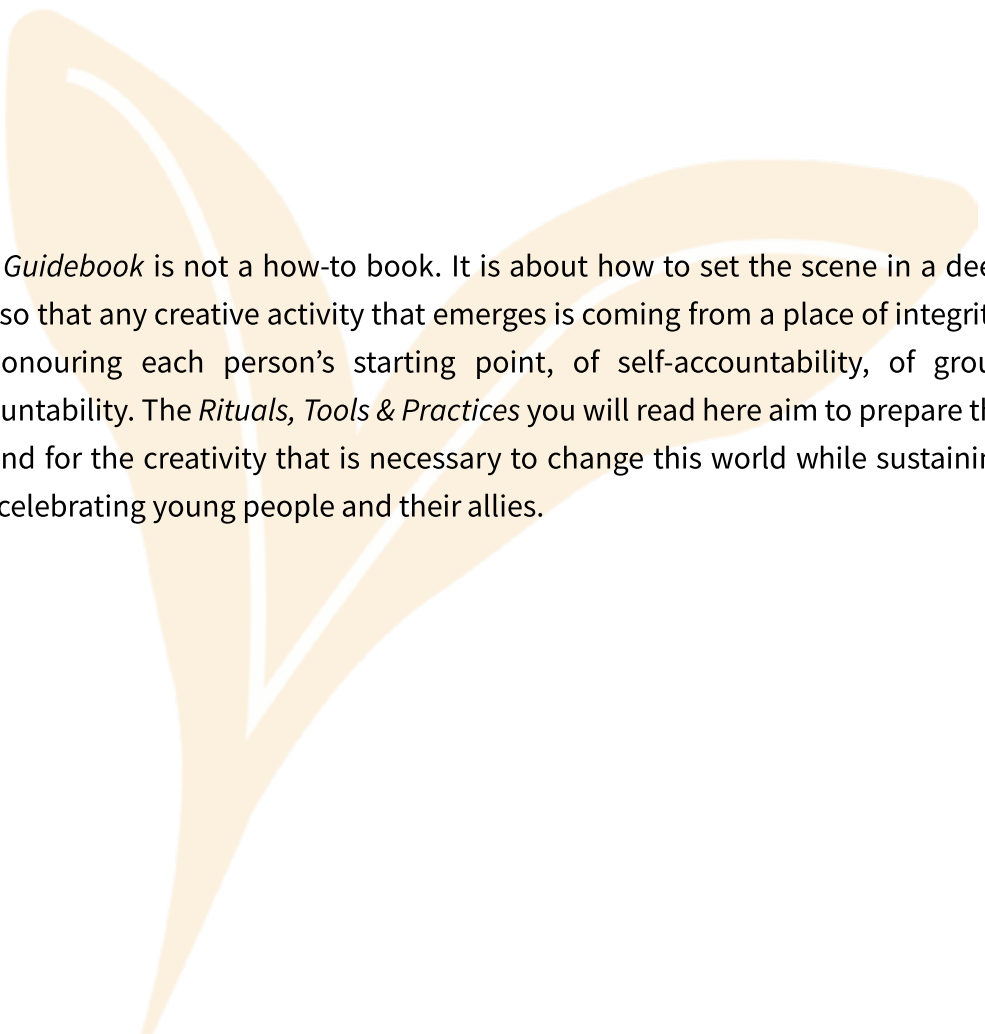
We recognise not everyone we want to honour and acknowledge from the Shake! community can be visibilised or made known, so we make an effort to uphold and remind ourselves that we travel with and protect those seen, unseen, known and unknown. As you make your way through these pieces of work we encourage you to hold the entire constellations behind Voices that Shake!

To read more on language and framing visit: [www.voicesthatshake.org](http://www.voicesthatshake.org)

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This *Guidebook* is not a how-to book. It is about how to set the scene in a deep way so that any creative activity that emerges is coming from a place of integrity, of honouring each person's starting point, of self-accountability, of group accountability. The *Rituals, Tools & Practices* you will read here aim to prepare the ground for the creativity that is necessary to change this world while sustaining and celebrating young people and their allies.





# Introduction

For the last 13 years, Voices that Shake!, a youth-led initiative based in London, has organised arts-based political education and courses, youth-led skillshares, mentoring, youth-led campaigns, showcases, reading groups and care spaces with a clear mission: to make a place for Black people and people of the global majority, and young people who have been marginalised to explore, express and embolden their voices in speaking truth.

This pioneering organising space was born in the context of the politically hostile environment of the UK, and the strategic divestment with youth and community services. We see structural violence against Black people and people of the global majority normalised, including other intersections of oppression such as against the working class, LGBTQ+, disabled, chronically sick. To mark our decade, we created the youth-led *Shake! the System* collaborative research project to reflect on Shake!'s practice and impact. You can read the full *Shake! the System Research Report: A Decade of Shaping Change* online. We have also published *Voices that Shake! An Anthology of Creative Movements* featuring 10 years of Shake!'s political cultural practice showcasing a range of art, poetry, film, soundscapes, song, creative writing, essays and activism.

In this *Guidebook*, we share some of the practices and tools that have been useful to Shake!'s work. The *Rituals, Tools & Practices* are designed to enrich and sustain you doing this work, and enrich the spaces you are curating or supporting. This *Guidebook* is designed primarily for Black people and people of the global majority who are organising and engaging in arts and activism spaces for and in solidarity with our communities.

The community of Shake! – the Shake!rs – have created this for you with love. It has been initiated by two Shake!rs, **Annick Météfia** and **Haneen Hammou**, and co-developed with the rest of the Shake! team: **Farzana Khan, Sai Murray, Rose Ziaei, Tiff Webster, Paula Serafini** and **Jane Trowell**. The *Guidebook* emerged from our collaboration with 35 people across the Shake! ecology who contributed to the research over summer 2020 through: interviews, two Researchers' Community Gatherings and a WhatsApp Group; alongside drawing from over 13 years of collective organising and building, experience, practice and resources.

Shaker!s who participated in the research were all asked:

If you had to pick one thing from your Shake! experience to go in a collection of *Rituals, Tools & Practices* to share with others wanting to create their own Shake!-inspired space, what would it be?

The Shaker!s' responses reflect impactful and memorable *Rituals, Tools & Practices* which this *Guidebook* builds from and fleshes out. It is not exhaustive or fully representative of Shake!'s practice and sits alongside many other tools and processes which are nurtured in a more relational and communal way. It shares and passes on methods and approaches that can be carried forward and evolved as appropriate.



# Guiding Concepts for Using the Rituals, Tools & Practices



## 1. Intergenerationality – On Whose Shoulders and On Whose Ground We Stand

*‘There is a deep sadness and power in realising that many of our ancestors are young people.’<sup>1</sup>*

*‘When an elder passes, a library burns to the ground.’*

– African proverb

Youth initiatives and youth work are often approached as something just for young people. However, we have always acknowledged in Shake! that compartmentalisation across generations creates and reproduces oppression. When you hold the young, youth and children as only ‘the future’ you deny us opportunity to build and move with you in the present, with you now. In order to build holistic and wholesome futures that hold all of us, we have to create opportunity to expose ourselves and engage in the wisdom and experience of our elders and the insight and zeal of our youth at the same time.

Oppression is successful in rupturing connection: as we see in the dismemberment of our people's bodies, communities, environments, narratives, herstories and much more. Intergenerational building provides both a pathway and portal to Survive (the System), Re-Member<sup>2</sup> (Re-Imagine, Repair), Reclaim (Head) Space, Repair (the Road) and Heal (the Cuts). The preceding are all titles of Shake! courses, where intergenerationality serves as a central methodology to move together to places where the logic and apparatus of disconnection are diminished.

We share across and within generations as a way to collapse imbalanced hierarchies, to honour knowledge and to connect with ways of being that existed before us, while making sure they continue to do so fluidly beyond us. We create opportunities for this to be built upon and recontextualised based on need and appropriateness. We reach backwards to send forwards.

### POINTS OF SELF AND COMMUNAL ENQUIRY:

**How does our politics evolve when those outside of notions of productivity (e.g. children and elders) are valued and cherished?**

**What becomes possible for our movements when our ancestors, our elders and our youth are centred and forefronted in how we build and who we build with?**

**What needs to be practiced and prepared now so that we can become the best possible elders and ancestors?**

<sup>1</sup> Education for Liberation Network and Critical Resistance's working group on K-12 Education and Abolition (2020). Young People Are Healers TOO. How can youth-led abolitionist organizing change to heal our communities? [online event]

<sup>2</sup> We use 're-member' because we know remembering is not just a cognitive process, but it is also a part of the decolonial process of seeking wholeness as part of our life's work as those who have been dismembered; drawing from ancient indigenous thought such as the myth of Isis.



## 2. Co-facilitating as Building Towards Accountability

*‘It’s important to think about how we level power.’*

– Dhelia Snoussi

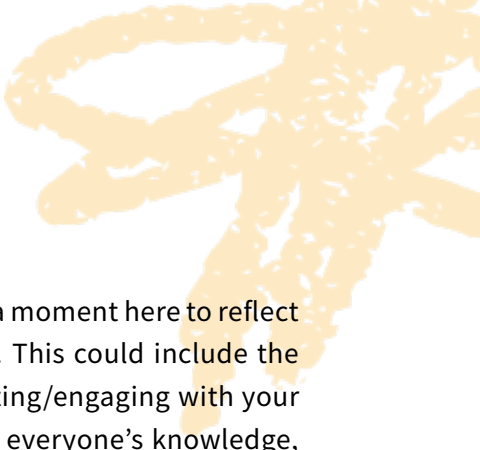
Building youth, community and movement spaces can inadvertently reproduce dynamics of power presenting some of us as ‘experts’, facilitators, leads, ‘celebrity activist influencers’ and ‘educators’. While we hold the importance and necessary responsibility of having people who guide and scaffold spaces where we are building together, especially with communities that are trauma-informed, we also seek to practice ways to disrupt hierarchies of knowledge production. This means finding supportive ways to uplift and embolden each other’s agency and the genius, wisdom, expertise of our youth.

While we know this cannot all happen at once, radical connection, as one of Shake!’s values, is a non-extractive and non-transactional entry point that acknowledges and honours our interdependence and all our capacities to illuminate and build. At Shake!, connections expand beyond the time and space of our activities through mentoring, organising and community care. We prioritise the need for authentic radical relationship-building which then fosters the necessary conditions of trust and of feeling supported to co-create and co-facilitate. This is especially important for groups and people who have been historically denied this opportunity. It prepares the ground for us to be led by one another, especially by those who are relegated to the margins.

Our radical pedagogical framing values non-hierarchical teaching and sharing, which takes into account issues of power and privilege, including the way power has to be redistributed and levelled in sustained and consistent ways over time, particularly so as not to overwhelm the young, absolve elders of their own responsibilities and/or ignore or be afraid of being led by different types of expertise. In Shake!, we consistently look towards the ways in which there may be a dynamic relationship between leaders and participants, as we see group members become facilitators and facilitators become group members.

As part of sustainable co-facilitation practice, we recognise the importance of working with and being fluid around people’s needs, and we believe this will only be possible if there are habits and cultures of self- and collective accountability. This includes honouring boundaries, timelines, plans, labour. We seek to build cultures that reduce and don’t reproduce harm, and work to minimise when harm happens, especially around divisions of labour and burnout, both often sources of collective breakdown.

We know that building these types of radical connections takes time and can never be perfected. Radical connection requires an ongoing curiosity and commitment that isn’t always easy, especially when our very human fears, anxieties and distress show up. However, when it works and we are able to move through things, it is always worth it. The learning is an invaluable part of liberation work that has to be practiced.



If you are already working with, or are part of a group, or a collective, take a moment here to reflect on your practice and space. You can explore this as a collective activity. This could include the facilitating/curating of your own space and/or alongside those participating/engaging with your space. Before you begin, please consider the ways you can support how everyone's knowledge, experience and labour is valued.

**Some questions to ask yourselves during your reflection could include:**

**For new spaces/projects/collectives:**

- **What space are we creating?**
- **Why are we creating it?**
- **Who are we creating it for?**
- **Are the right people in the room?**
- **What capacity and conditions need to be built in order to ensure the right people are moving and building with us?**
- **How do we care for and tend to the needs and accessibility of the group, prioritising those most vulnerable?**

**For existing spaces/projects/collectives:**

- **Does 'why' we created the space match 'who' we are building it with and 'how'?**
- **What is working and what isn't?**
- **What changes do we want to make to a space/organisation/project and why?**
- **Are we attending to the needs of who this work was created for?**
- **Are the right people in the room?**
- **What capacity and conditions need to be built in order to ensure the right people are moving and building with us?**
- **How do we care for and tend to the needs and accessibility of the group, prioritising those most vulnerable?**

**Ongoing reflexive explorations:**

- **Where does knowledge sit, and how is it valued?**
- **What are the ways we can democratise knowledge hierarchies (who leads, who feels able to not lead, who is listened to, who feels able to participate, who feels able to rest, etc.)?**
- **How do we create the infrastructure to co-create in a non-extractive and meaningful way?**
- **How do we see issues of power and privilege manifest in our space, and how do we attend to these to create knowledge equity and to level power as collective practice?**
- **How do we create habits and cultures of self- and collective accountability?**





### 3. Move with Intention

Within the context of white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal culture, many of the ways in which we have to resist and build, react and respond are in reaction to the onslaught of oppression. If in tandem we seek to realise liberatory futures outside of this, we need to know what that can look like and feel like for us. Being deliberative and intentional supports us to find stillness and rootedness in chaos and violence.

There are many challenges that come with building community and youth work rooted in racial and social justice and creative practice. They range from: hostile government policies that demonise Black people and young people of the global majority; to competitive environments where communities are pitted against one another; to a lack of understanding of what holistic needs are for young people, to name a few. These barriers, alongside the demands of bureaucracy and data capture in youth work can create environments in conflict with our communities' needs and visions.



To anchor the work and to honour that we are consistently navigating hard environments, through the very humble yet powerful gesture of deliberative and intentional crafting and building, we allow ourselves and each other to shape, sculpt and reconfigure our realities. We can set intentions for every aspect of our work that help us reclaim, recalibrate and realign with our values and visions as we negotiate environments and structures not designed for us. Our intentions can become daily personal affirmations, collective mantras, communal chants: the habitual calling in and effort to speak into existence new realities; the reminder of our own agency even within the confines of harsh structures.

We encourage you to be intentional and continually reflect on the relevance of your intentions, through renewing and rejuvenating them. Think about how you can be cyclical and seasonal with these.

**Personally or collectively set or identify the intention/s of your work or practice.**

- **What is this trying to nurture, achieve, realise?**
- **How does this intention feel at different phases of your work? Have you outgrown it? Do you need to adapt it? Do you need to realign with it?**
- **How can we, through each intention, strategically position and reposition ourselves to build more capacity towards the next phase or call, in the direction of collective liberation?**
- **With each new context, dynamic or phase, what are the new intentions or anchors that are emerging?**



# Establishing Community Principles

At the beginning of Shake! courses and programmes, we make space to create our group and community principles. This establishes how we want to engage, experience and encounter each other. The principles help define the space and support a culture of kindness, openness and encourage everyone to show up as themselves while also trying to disarm some of the internalised and existing dynamics of power that each of us carries. These principles like intentions should be revised, be dynamic and speak to the context of the space. The multiple needs and realities that are ongoing and changing, require an adaptability and a responsiveness that needs to be practiced and reset in every new coming together.<sup>3</sup>

While the culture around building community principles/terms of engagement for a space is not new, and in certain movement spaces is widely practiced, what has often been noted about Shake!'s principles is the holistic and multi-faceted ways we aim to attune and attend to ourselves and each other on a personal, material, emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual level. The principles then invite in, and give permission to, the different ways in which we show up, participate and hold the vision of seeking and supporting our wholeness as marginalised and erased peoples.

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3 For a description of Shake!'s Values, visit the methodology section of the *Shake! The System Research Report: A Decade of Shaping Change* available online at [www.voicesthatshake.org](http://www.voicesthatshake.org)





Here are some openers and principles from Shake! spaces for you to build upon, amend and draw inspiration from.

**Opener:**

*This is our radical practice space.*

*In this space our values are not the values of ableist white supremacist hetero-patriarchal capitalism.*

*We recognise and welcome all body types and the neurodiverse without pathologising or assuming what our capacity and limits are.*

*We recognise and welcome: all genders, sexualities and none; all religions, spiritualities and none; all the varied lives and life paths that share this space with us. Here we prioritise and centre the most marginalised as full beings and as experts of their own experiences.*

*We also acknowledge cycles of reproducing harm that can happen inside our own communities (class violence, colourism, ableism) and how privilege also exists within our communities.*

*We are curious and committed to the ways in which we can unlearn oppression and practice new ways of being together.*



## Principles:

- **‘Take space, make space’.**<sup>4</sup> Be conscious of your privileges and your positionality: if someone is better positioned to speak on an issue, or is situated in an identity that is often under-represented or goes unheard, make space for them to participate. Similarly, if you are someone who doesn’t normally get to participate or speak, how can this be an opportunity for you to practice taking up space?
- **Practice over performance.** You do not have to perform in this space. You are honouring the people around you by showing up as who you authentically are, especially if there are parts of you that chronically or historically have been marginalised or unseen. In the ongoing work of liberation practice, all of us have so much to learn and unlearn. Rushing to solutions and over-identifying with theory, terminology and analysis and fixating on how ‘woke’ we can be/sound does not allow us the space to nurture meaningful collective liberation.
- **Hard on ideas, soft on people.** Disagreement and conflict can be useful and clarifying. If you disagree with something, how can you vocalise this by speaking to the issue and source of tension without personalising or punishing one another? Try to keep a hold of the perspective that we grow and learn best together when there is space to do so and that all of us have learning and growing to move into.
- **Don’t be an ASS, don’t assume: ASK.** If you’re not sure or if you don’t know, ask with curiosity and compassion, being mindful of people’s capacity and what labour it creates to educate or inform. Are there ways that you can seek clarity or diffuse confusion that put the onus on your own self-learning and reflection?



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4 adrienne maree brown (2017) *Emergent Strategy*, AK Press, p229

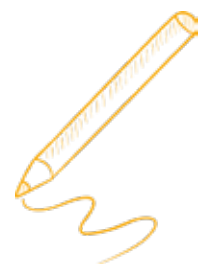
- **Respect, trust and affirm people's words on their experiences.** We live in a world where we as marginalised and minoritised peoples are often not free or safe to speak about our own experiences, and when we do, we are still often policed on how. Actively listen and accept people's words and experiences. If you disagree with some of the things that have surfaced, how can this be an opportunity to go hard on ideas, soft on people? We can create the bandwidth to hold and affirm each other's experiences without it becoming our own truth.
- **Embodying liberation.** We are not just minds in one room, we also bring our bodies. We might be tired, ill, in pain, anxious or just uncomfortable – our bodies come with us. We all carry heavy invisible bags and often forget about the effort our bodies put in daily to carry them. This is the space for you to put down these bags. You might have to pick them back up at the end, but we hope you will then feel not only stronger but also more aware of the ones you don't need to pick up again. And the ones you should never have had to carry at all. In this space, prioritise your body. Drink water, stretch, honour yourself and others by being honest about your needs. Your body is unpacking, unlearning and relearning. Just as your mind is in this space, you need to make space for this effort. Support your body to not override its messages, wisdoms and needs, including, if it needs: to cry, rest, feel, opt out, etc.

The above are our community principles most referenced by Shake!rs. For a fuller expansion see Annex B for an extract from the Healing Justice London Facilitation Guide.



**Now it's your turn.**

**What principles would you build with your group?**





# The Pillars of Shake!'s Practice: Scaffolding to Support Us

The 'Pillars of Shake!' are a set of practices identified by Shake!rs through our research. The lead researcher for *Shake! the System*, **Annick Météfi**a conceived the analogy of the 'Pillars of Shake!' as the skeletal and supporting structures that hold us and our work up:

*I had the image of Shake! as a house on stilts, offering us a space away from the outside world. . . A safe space, but grounded in reality at the same time. You can look down on things with a good view from up above, with a distance, but with a connection to it. And I thought of the many cultures where there is a main big communal house on stilts where people meet up, debate and make decisions as a village. That was me thinking of Shake! as a physical space, like during intensive courses. And then because Shake! is also a 'culture' and practice, the pillars are 'pillars of practice'. I think I was definitely influenced by the idea of the Pillars of Islam.*

The Pillars are practices that Shaker!rs commonly found are central to their experience of the culture and atmosphere of Shake! and which underpin the unlearning and learning process. We encourage you to read more about the theory behind Shake!'s Pillars of Practice in the ***Shake! The System Research Report: A Decade of Shaping Change*** (available online). You can also read ***Voices that Shake! An Anthology of Creative Movements***, to explore some creative and cultural outputs and practices that illustrate these Pillars in action.

Revolutions are created with what is at hand: DIY, second-hand and discarded materials, in corners and small spaces. It is the resourcefulness and agileness of our communities that surfaces our genius and survival.

Based on the Pillars highlighted in the ***Research Report***, here we offer a range of practical tools and activities. If something is not transferable to you, the work you are trying to do, or your community, consider how you might hack it, DIY, adapt it or opt out.

Over the next few pages we will be exploring the following Pillars:

- ||||| Nurturing Trust – Radical Cultures of Kindness
- ||||| Radical Pedagogy – Centring Arts, Culture and Play
- ||||| Moving from Participation to Presence – Encountering our Wholeness
- ||||| Movement Work – Embodying Liberatory Practice
- ||||| Nourishment – Nurturing through Nature and Food
- ||||| Sustaining Ourselves – Restorative Space and Living Library
- ||||| Community Care work – Wellness and Care Pool

**Note:** Some of the recommendations only make sense in a world where you can physically be together with people safely, and will need to be adapted to be appropriate for remote sharing or social distancing in the context of Covid-19 and other pandemics.

# Nurturing Trust – Radical Cultures Of Kindness



In movement and community building, it is important that we never assume that trust is necessarily in the room as a given. We hold that trust-building is a deeply relational and dynamic process that, as facilitators, needs to be nurtured, modelled, practiced and re-established in an ongoing way.

At Shake! we often voice the invitation to join us in **‘trusting the process’**, especially as radical work is emergent and often unidentifiable against the backdrop of everything we have known and internalised. There are multiple ways Shake!rs identified trust-building, (as dubbed by one Shake!r as ‘a culture of radical kindness’): from the pastoral care to the vulnerability and lived experience in the room; to the ways in which there is an ongoing effort to skill-share, to redistribute power and expertise. This is most observed through active listening and allowing ourselves to be led by the wisdom of the youth.





Setting the space to feel trusting and trustworthy relies on building opportunities for active listening practice to be nurtured and to value how important and impactful that is, even if this is quite challenging. Many young people in Shake! spaces attest to being heard and seen for the first time, whether that was through their art, doodling, voice, silence, movement, protest. It was also this range in legitimising the different ways we express and communicate that supports the audibility of people who so often go unheard.

Consider the different ways voice shows up in your space – you can look to our cultural anthology (*Voices that Shake! An Anthology of Creative Movements*) for our interpretation of the stages of politising and emboldening our voices. We can hold how being vocal includes a range of expression that is important for us as a culture to attune to: from artistic expression to silence to listening and introspection.





What are the ways people are communicating in your space?

Identify five different types of expression and voice:

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....
- 5 .....

Which are prominent and which ones would you like to nurture more?

## Encouraging Listening

**Listening** is a relationship. Communication can be reframed as gifting time, space and energy to one another. Listening is so often an invisibilised act that many expect happens naturally. However, it requires presence to increase our capacity to truly hear ourselves and each other.

We suggest having an exploratory conversation as a collective about the process of listening.

- Describe what it means to create spaces to hear and hold emotions.
- Integrate into your group's practice phrases like **'thank you for sharing'** or another phrase that legitimises and affirms someone's experience especially when speaking on something that is personal and may be difficult to open up about.
- Encourage people also to be able to sit quietly with what they hear without jumping into fixing, offering uninvited solutions or pathologising.
- Practice holding different realities and opinions, even, and especially when, they appear to be conflicting by replacing **'but'** with **'and'**.
- Refuse solutionism and create bandwidth for curiosity and uncertainty by saying things like **'I don't know'**, **'I'm not sure'**, **'Can we come back to this?'**, **'I need to sit with this'**.
- When approaching difficult and uneasy subject matter explore whether there is capacity for this, and if not, offer a spacious alternative by saying **'Can we park/pause here and return to it at. . .?'**





## Active Listening

In our *Surviving the State* course, Shake!r Rosie invited us all to engage in active listening processes that encouraged us to listen more deeply. Here's a take on this activity:

**Step 1** Find a partner (you can do this over the phone, or in person) and decide who will be partner A or B.

**Step 2** Allocate 3 minutes each to respond to the following question: 'When did I feel heard?'

**Step 3** Partner A speaks uninterrupted for the full allocated time. Partner B will, without intervening, listen attentively as is possible, only offering physical gestures or non-verbal cues of affirmation. If you would like to go deeper you can increase the time to five or seven minutes and explore the following questions:

- Give an example of when you felt heard and, as a result, seen? How will you know that this is happening?
- What were the conditions that enabled you to feel heard?
- What is an example of when you really heard someone and how did you know that person felt heard?
- Who in your life could you be listening to better?
- What are the ways that you can demonstrate making a person or a people feel heard?

**Step 4** Switch partners and repeat Steps 1–3.

**Step 5** Discuss and explore how this felt both as the listener and the speaker.

If you don't have a partner to practice with, set your phone for three minutes and take this time to listen to your environment.

- What are the sounds occurring in this space? Jot down these sounds and repeat another two times. Observe if there are any differences.
- Explore what sounds are prominent to you and why?
- What sounds feel less prominent? Is there an association or familiarity around this?
- Is there anything you are hearing or paying attention to for the first time and why do you think that is?



# Radical Pedagogy – Centring Arts, Culture and Play



Our Anthology (*Voices that Shake! An Anthology of Creative Movements*) of over 300 pages explores and showcases how art and culture is an integral part of Shake! and central to our political building. We recognise ‘art for art’s sake’ is something that marginalised communities are worthy and deserving of, yet ‘art for art’s sake’ in mainstream culture is still mostly afforded to those with privileges and exists as a luxury.

Art and cultural practice in Shake! and as part of our political work has so often revealed itself to be more than catharsis or a way of coming together. Art also operates as a site of inquiry; as a place to grow and strengthen the muscle of imagination needed to vision the sites of possibility outside of oppression.

There are many artistic and cultural practices we draw upon within Shake! spaces. These include: poetry, prose writing, spoken word, film, music and DJ-ing, dance, song, movement, collage, zine-making, games, outdoor activities, capoeira, yoga, breath-work and meditation. However, some forms have been foundational for Shake!: the word and the power of coming to voice; film and moving image that harnesses young people’s analysis and visual/technical genius; new image-making through collaging and zines; making beautiful and other noise through song, breathwork and hollering; bodywork that supports us to inhabit our bodies as people who are brutalised out of them.



Games and short play exercises are an integral part of Shake!'s approach and are intentionally punctuated throughout our courses, workshops, rehearsals and care spaces. More than simply ice-breakers or warm-ups, they provide opportunities to practice and become skilled in community movement-making and resistance work. They provide safe spaces for us to rehearse and enhance our activism, deepen our organising and make our resistance robust. These small and humble activities play a big part in strengthening our sustainability in ways that centre joy, pleasure and creativity.

There are countless games and exercises we employ and continue to evolve in Shake!. We include only a small selection in this *Guidebook*. The list below offers some of our most common forms. We expand on a few of these over the next pages:

### **NAME GAMES**

These are conducted at the beginning of meeting people to get to know each other, to honour our names and full beings. Take time to hear and accurately pronounce each others' names as a gesture to welcome our fullness and to make this collective practice. Practice consent by reminding each other that we get to choose how we wish to be identified.

### **PHYSICAL WARM UPS**

Use gentle embodied warm-ups as a way to discharge any tension; to disarm any inhibitions and nervousness; and to remind us that we want to take our bodies with us into the liberated futures that we are calling in. Short, accessible and consensual physical activities allow us opportunities to decompress from over-intellectualising and access our other knowing faculties.

### **RHYTHM GAMES**

These create opportunities for us to come together and consider how we move together. Rhythm games connect and sync us with each other on many levels – physically, emotionally, energetically. Use them to explore dynamics, defaults and where we could be practising deeper cohesion, building towards group performance and expression.

### **VOCAL EXERCISES**

Practicing our voice is a release: it helps explore our range and emotionality. It diffuses any anxiety or blocks. It helps us express through sound, word, rhythm, and to connect with our mouth, breath and vocal muscles. Create tools to take this practice beyond the space so that we can amplify our expression, be rooted in our authentic self and speak truth – even if our voice shakes.

### **TRUST GAMES**

Trust games punctuate processes to reset and realign in playful, proactive and safe ways. They allow us to access what it feels like to be supported, to feel safe, to be entrusted – necessary senses for feeling resourced in resistance and movement-making.

### **RELAXATION TECHNIQUES**

Intentional relaxation as collective practice – from rest breaks to naps to caretaking – is woven in to help nurture what it means to sustain ourselves and each other. Building in rest and relaxation periods supports our resistance in becoming long-term and sustainable. They help counter feelings of guilt, shame and anxiety that can surface in a fast-paced and urgent mobilising/movement context.

## The Freewrite

Freewriting is an exercise encouraging free expression through ‘automatic’ writing. It encourages a way to care for, and to build, an acceptance of the authentic self and awareness of our inner narratives, dialogues and voice. We have found with routine and regular use that freewriting can nurture self and communal care and awareness. It is a way to be clearer and kinder to the self and thereby creates more opportunities for deeper listening and greater accountability.

The freewrite can be considered as a tool to unpack at strategic moments, to make space. A space ‘to release thoughts’ rather than ‘to get thoughts out of heads’. The exercise can help us to become aware of the presence of unexpected feelings which, even if they are not directly related to what is happening, by their presence can often be telling. Freewrites can also activate inspiration or solution-design as they allow us to access unearthed parts of ourselves. Throughout Shake! we have utilised freewrites for everything from team planning to creative evaluation and within audience participation settings at our Shakarings and Showcases.

### Freewrite Method<sup>5</sup>

*Be clear before you begin that this is private writing. We suggest setting a short time limit, between 3–5 minutes. If working on a specific theme, some suggested prompts or starter phrases may be useful, otherwise starting freely can provide more expansion. Place your pen on the paper and start writing. Let anything present on your mind come through. There is nothing ‘bad’, ‘irrelevant’ or ‘invalid’. This is not about ‘correct’ spelling or grammar. Keep writing – if you don’t know what to write, write about how stuck you are, or return to a previous phrase/ theme, and repeat, and keep flowing past this. If you are doing this with a group or partner, observe when to bring the freewrite to a close by feeling out the energy in the room. Invite people to bring their writing to a natural pause and emphasise that this is not a stop, and that the energy of the writing can be returned to at any time. You can try and do this a few more times: keep writing, keep writing, keep writing . . .*

The paragraph above could be seen as an example of how a freewrite might flow.

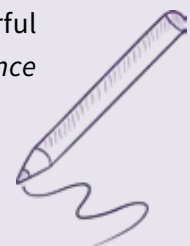
For a prompt or guidance to steer your freewrite, we love to draw upon the powerful and profound questions that Audre Lorde asks of us in *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*<sup>6</sup>. She asks us:

*‘What are the words you do not yet have?*

*What do you need to say?*

*What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own until you will sicken and die from them, still in silence?*

*Perhaps for some of you here today, I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am a woman, because I am Black, because I am myself, a Black woman warrior poet doing my work – come to ask you, are you doing yours?’*



**Place your pen on a sheet of paper, set a timer for three minutes per prompt, let the words flow . . .**

<sup>5</sup> For more on the pedagogy of freewriting see 'Teach Like A Poet' by Sai Murray published in *Teach Like A Writer* by Jennifer Webb (2020). Edited extracts available here: <https://saimurai.wordpress.com/2020/04/20/teach-like-a-poet/>

<sup>6</sup> Audre Lorde (2017) *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. London: Silver Press. Originally published in 1977.

## Group Poetry/Communal Poeting

A way to go deeper than we often use in Shake!, evolving from the freewrite, is to create communal poetry: collectively writing pieces out of individual and personal writing journeys.

- As a group or collective do a freewrite as instructed in the previous pages.
- When everyone has a freewrite to hand, create a reflective circle where you can invite people to share a sentence, a few words or expressions on what the freewrite brought up for them. This can be done in pairs or threes to help build relationships and then brought to the wider group. This collective sharing helps obtain a flow of consciousness unique to the group.
- Alternatively, you can ask people to select two or three phrases/lines from their individual freewrite and write them out again, clearly (so others will be able to read it), on separate slips of paper.
- In pairs or groups, place the new written out slips of paper in front of you and explore together how you might arrange them into a poem (like a jigsaw).
- Listen to the rhythm of the piece and re-arrange, re-write and edit for moments of emphasis (adding a strong beginning/ending, a chorus, choral elements, developing consistent imagery, tone, intention, voice . . .).

Arranging, editing and re-arranging our collective words into some new and meaningful order encourages a synchronicity of thought, as well as a shared responsibility for the poem, a levelling of artistic and literary abilities, a culture of acceptance and an understanding across disparate experiences.

A video we often use that shows how individual freewrites can be evolved into a group poem is *Shake Perceptions* by Ralph Thoresby High School, 2012 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DGGJv0Mn4T8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DGGJv0Mn4T8).

See *Voices that Shake! An Anthology of Creative Movements* (pages 226-229) for examples of group poems created out of a freewrite process.





## Alphabet Attack

Alphabet Attack is a physical language and reasoning game that sits alongside the freewrite in helping to approach a challenging subject and to open up different entry points into discussing complex issues. The game provides a disruption of space and in its team encouragement and co-operation breaks down reservations and encourages team bonding. Competitiveness de-emphasised, fun maximised!

The resulting word bank created from the game is useful to document and refer back to throughout upcoming sessions and can be used as prompts for further writing and creative exercises as well as the reasonings being key reference points for developing discussions.

### Method

- Write the letters of the alphabet on two sheets of flipchart paper (or on a white board) and attach to a wall.
- Divide participants into two teams with one or two people as judge/scorekeeper.
- Each team makes a queue in front of the alphabets.
- Decide on a word or phrase that reflects a theme that may be relevant for your programme or space to explore (e.g. 'Freedom', 'Community', 'Survival', 'Power', 'Reparations', 'Violence', 'Resistance', 'Colonialism', 'Food Justice', 'Climate Justice', 'Healing', 'Movement'. . .).
- Announce the theme for the game and signal 'Go!'
- The first person in each of the lines races to the flipchart and writes a word relating to the chosen theme beginning with the letter 'A'.
- The pen is then passed to the second in the line who races to the flipchart and writes a word beginning with the letter 'B'.
- The pen is passed to the next person who writes a 'C' word (fourth 'D', fifth 'E', etc.) with each person joining the back of their line after completing a word and continuing in a relay formation until the alphabet is filled.
- Award five points to the team who finishes first and four points to the second group for also finishing.
- Each team then has one minute to collectively choose three words on the opposing team's list to challenge.
- Taking it in turns, the person who wrote the queried word on each team then has 30 seconds to justify why the word relates to the theme (helped by team-mates if needed) and to earn extra points for creative reasoning.

### Pointers

Encourage use of mother tongues, non-English languages.

Encourage use of creative language and language formations and do not penalise spelling.

Discourage use of names (to avoid singling out individuals).

Encourage, help and cheerlead where necessary!

## Where Does This Live in My Body?

This communal game is one that Shake!rs and facilitators have noted as being memorable in helping them experience in a tactile way how important our bodies are in building liberation. Often featuring midweek on a Shake! five day programme, it helps us bridge from the cerebral thinking and dismantling that we do on the first few days towards creative building, re-imagining, resourcing and repairing. As an intentional midweek punctuation – the Breath of our journey – the activity helps us to connect with our own sustainability and wellness, as well as to our community more broadly. A playful and embodied way to re-member our bodies as we find ways to proactively take all of our selves with us and leaving no body behind. We recontextualise the impacts on our bodies: both in everyday oppression and everyday resilience that lives with us.

**Step 1** Arrange the room in a circle with everyone facing outwards, away from each other.

**Step 2** Invite the circle to close their eyes or to lower their gaze, resting their eyes somewhere comfortable in the room.

**Step 3** Share a word for the circle to feel into and to observe how their body responds e.g. ‘grief’, ‘loss’, ‘racism’, ‘anger’, ‘rage’. Ask each person to hold the feeling for five to ten seconds if they choose to participate. Shake out the emotion after holding it.

**Step 4** Ask the circle to turn back to facing each other and to hear from different people how their body responded from:

- the shape their body took
- how their breath felt
- any sounds their body made
- any motions or movements their body made
- any emotions that arose or images that they felt came up

**Step 5** Repeat the same activity with a new word that is a more supportive and spacious emotion – you can use words like ‘love’, ‘community’, ‘support’, ‘solidarity’. Ask the circle to hold this word this time for a little longer – 10-15 seconds.

**Step 6** As a group reflect on how people’s bodies responded using the prompts from Step 4 above. You can also draw comparisons between the first word and the second word as well as reflecting on the importance and impact of words and thoughts on our body and how this is experienced in a variety of ways for each of us.

Note: for some people this may be a difficult activity to embark upon because they do not feel bodily safe. Please remind them that they can opt out or engage in a way that feels apt for them.

It is also good to remember in the reflection space that we don’t want to make value judgements or pathologise what people’s experiences are and instead hold the range and multiplicity of experiences.



## The Artist's Way

In our programme we often follow the individual exploration of 'Where Does This Live in My Body?' with a more communal exploration of our political and movement work. 'The Artist's Way' is another embodied activity designed to drop us out of our heads and bring us a little more into our hearts and bodies.

**Step 1** A facilitator picks a key word that they would like to explore in the game. Words that we have frequently used are: 'community', 'love', 'support', 'justice', 'reparations', 'capitalism', 'oppression'.

**Step 2** Split the room depending on size into groups of at least three to four people.

**Step 3** Ask each group to arrange their posture or limbs to represent the chosen word using only their team members. Each group has between 40 seconds to a minute to make their image and then hold it in a freeze frame.

**Step 4** Each group is then invited to defend and demonstrate their freeze frame and awarded points based on use of imagination, humour, creativity, teamwork and proximity to the given word.

**Step 5** Repeat the activity with two or three different words you want to explore. Winning teams at Shake! are usually awarded first dibs at the chocolate biccies!

Variations in the game include allowing the freeze frame to evolve to include movement, music, sound, props, chanting, one selected item from the room etc.



# Moving from Participation to Presence

## – Encountering our Wholeness



### Building Presence

During our research interviews, Shake!rs highlighted how supportive grounding and breathing exercises are in settling, soothing and encouraging connectedness.

At the heart of these exercises is consent and comfort:

- Be led by what your body is consenting to, and by what brings your body ease and comfort.
- Honour your capacity and range.
- If you don't feel comfortable, don't force yourself.
- If this is your first time encountering such exercises, acknowledge how you feel about them: self-conscious, anxious, curious, sceptical, inspired, nurtured – the awareness to and honouring of our feelings is important.

There is also a political dimension that is important to consider: 'mindfulness' practices and the language of wellness are often appropriated by the white neoliberal capitalist system and its culture of commercialising 'well-being'. This can strip healing practices of their ancient, non-European spiritual, cultural and communal foundations. As a result, many of us might have had painful or simply cringe-worthy run-ins with the world of meditation and breathing exercises, often because we have been exposed to, shamed or policed into practices that are devoid of their origin and context.

Shake!'s collective grounding practices and rituals invite us to re-member ways that our spiritual, cultural and ancestral traditions support in building our resilience and joy, especially as peoples who have generationally and in the present-day, survive profound adversity and harm.

We've found running these check-in exercises at regular and different points during a session works well:

- At the beginning to create calm and arrive.
- In the middle, to check in, pause and focus.
- At the end, to contain, reflect and to integrate feelings of connection to community as we leave the space and return to the rest of the world.

On the adjacent page are some examples of grounding and breathing exercises we used during the research process.

**Try a grounding exercise on yourself, and then with someone you trust.**

### Tracking Questions:

- How did it feel?
- Did this work for you?
- If so – how do you know? If not – how do you know?
- Is there an adaptation or amendment that you could introduce that feels more supportive?

**#1 Close your eyes,  
or lower or rest your gaze somewhere that feels soothing.**

**Whether you are standing, sitting or lying down, connect with your root and/or your seat.  
Feel or connect with what is holding and supporting your body and visualise this as earth energy,  
unconditionally loving and holding you so you can sink, relax or rest a little deeper.**

**Breathe in and out three times.**

**The first breath is for yourself, thanking yourself for being here.  
The second breath is for each other, thanking each other for holding this space together.  
The third breath is for the rest of the world, acknowledging it is here.  
Acknowledge that some people who would have wanted to be here could not join us.**

**Roll your shoulders back, or visualise your shoulders dropping back a few times, making space in your ribcage, around your heart.  
Keep breathing in awareness of your own rhythm.**

**Stay here as long as you need . . .**

**When you are ready, gently come back to the space  
Flicker your eyes open and slowly look around the room taking in the sounds, tastes, smells, feelings.**

**#2 Close your eyes,  
or lower or rest your gaze  
somewhere that feels soothing.**

**Whether you are standing, sitting or lying down,  
connect with your root and/or your seat. Feel or  
connect with what is holding and supporting your body  
and visualise this as earth energy unconditionally loving  
and holding you so you can sink, relax or rest a little deeper.**

**Take a filling breath in and out.**

**Imagine a colour that is soothing, all around you, like a cocoon.  
Try and visualise it, to see it in front of your eyes.**

**Now imagine a sound that you find relaxing. Hear it.  
Imagine it is right up to your ears and surrounding you.**

**Now imagine a taste that you like. Feel it on your tongue, taste it.  
Think of a smell you enjoy. Imagine you are breathing it in,  
it is right under your nose.**

**Think of a texture you like. Imagine touching it, running it between your fingertips,  
move your fingers around if it helps.**

**Now, take a filling breath and bring it all together.**

**This colour is all around you, this beautiful sound is in your ears, you can smell your favourite smell,  
this taste is in your mouth, and this lovely texture is caressing and comforting you.**

**When you are ready, gently come back to the space.  
Flicker your eyes open and slowly look around the room taking in the sounds, tastes, smells, feelings.**

**What can you hear? What can you touch? What can you see?  
What can you feel? What can you smell?**

## Listening & Self-Care for Facilitators

Self-care for ourselves as facilitators, as people holding space for other people's experiences and trauma, is important to nurture long-term sustainability and safety.

- **Observe and take note of the sensations and feelings in and around your body:**
  - Are you feeling tired?
  - Dehydrated?
  - Hungry?
  - Restless?
- **Can you design your session/day/programme to attune or respond to your body's needs and be resourceful around this?**
- **Where do you feel spacious? Relaxed? At ease? What supports this? How can you create more exposure to this? (E.g. plants, sunlight, freewrites, joy, etc.)**
- **Where can you and your team create windows/portals to check in with how you are feeling, what you need and how you can all be supported?**
- **What are the boundaries that you can establish individually and collectively around your time, energy, capacity and expertise?**
- **What are the boundaries and limits that the work needs to hold to contain and make the space safe?**
- **Where can you create spacious collective debriefs? Where can you create wellness and healing sessions to hold anything that might be surfacing for yourself and the rest of the team?**
- **As a team, where can you identify and implement self and community care rituals appropriate to your particular contexts (cultural, spiritual or ancestral traditions) that support you to process heavy or difficult moments or subject matters?**
- **Is there trauma-informed practice or particular expertise around wellness that you can seek? Is there a healing skill-share you can do where you collectively pool together tools and skills to nourish one another?**



- Can you think of any practices, habits or patterns when it comes to your own well-being and care, that you want to be mindful of NOT modelling to young people? e.g. burnout culture, exceptional infallible leaders, collapsed boundaries etc.
- Are there habits or patterns you DO want to share with young people? Which of these habits, practices or patterns require a structural or organisational change and what are the steps needed to start applying this?
- As well as the practices you are building together around cultures of care and support, what, if any, is the personal responsibility and self-accountability that you could undertake outside of this space as part of all our work in liberation practice and becoming meaningful allies and humans to one another? <sup>7</sup>

Over the years we have learnt an important question to ask ourselves and each other routinely is:

## ***What will resource and enable our rest?***

A question to ask not just on a monetary level but also on an emotional, spiritual and physical level.

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7

For the Aftercare Menu resource by Healing Justice London please see Annex A on page 59.

# Movement Work

## – Embodying Liberatory Practice



Movement work can support us to connect to ourselves and our bodies. Oppression often forces us to leave our bodies behind and creates environments that neglect and/or brutalises us. When this happens, as a survival, stress or coping strategy, we can sometimes feel disconnected from our bodies and unable to tune into its signals. This also happens when we experience cumulative traumas and stress that are normalised by systems of oppression (slow violence).<sup>8</sup> Movement allows us to sometimes create space in our bodies through shifting energies, discharging intense emotions and letting our body process things our mind cannot.

Shake!rs mentioned self-soothing exercises as an example of feeling connected to the wisdom of our bodies. Our bodies are multisensory. We often experience synaesthesia – where one sense might emerge/surface another sense; for example, the felt sense of touch on the body might also awaken the memory of a particular colour or smell. This is why when we do body or movement work we have to be super-consensual with ourselves and honour our body's capacities and range. We can start really gently. Connecting to your body as an individual or collective might look like: walking, jogging, dancing around, wiping your body with a warm towel or cloth, doing arm sweeps, creating a rhythm with fingers or hugging ourselves after a stressful incident.

As you deepen your awareness and relationship with your body, the more you are able to tune into your own needs. This creates a baseline resource for us as we navigate oppressive structures and times. Resting when you are tired, drinking water to stay hydrated, and eating nourishing food when we are hungry, all allow us to support our bodies with consistency and indicate to our body that it is being cared for.

Use the questions on page 34 to track and build a deeper literacy between your body and you.

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8 Rob Nixon (2011) *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Harvard University Press

## Self-Soothing

We invite you to try a self-soothing exercise. It's important to note that what surfaces for you will be different to what surfaces for others.

*Practice consent with yourself. If it doesn't feel supportive: adapt, opt out or move on to another practice. You can find other practices throughout this Guidebook.*

***Gently  
place one hand  
on the opposite shoulder or  
visualise your hand being placed there.***

***Very lovingly squeeze the top of your shoulder or  
visualise this.***

***Very slowly move the hand along the arm  
squeezing and releasing gently and intentionally.  
When you reach your hand, hold it for a little while, offering yourself a loving hold.  
Feel the warmth and comfort you can offer yourself.***

***If touch is not available to you this is just as powerful as a visual exercise.***

***When it feels good, move back up along the arm with gentle and slow squeezes.  
In your own time, move on to the alternate hand and arm to do the same.***

***You can repeat this a few times  
and/or do sweeps along each arm as a variation.***

We do this technique to create and strengthen our own felt sense of boundary connecting with where we begin and where we end.

**Which sensations surfaced?**

**What did you feel?**

**Where did you feel it?**

**Which thoughts came to mind during and after?**

**Did you enjoy this? Or not? How could you tell? What were the signals?**







Inhabiting our bodies as marginalised people can sometimes feel scary and alarming because often our own bodies have not been safe spaces. Instead of forcing ourselves to sit in dis-ease or discomfort we can find comforting and joyful ways to re-member our bodies. Be mindful that not everyone likes games, singing or dancing. Reassure each other that you can sit out, enjoy witnessing or offer scaffolded entry points for different ways of engaging and participating.

Below are a few playful ways to introduce body and movement practices. Think of these as items of clothing that you get to try on and take off if they don't feel comfortable.

## Joy Activities: Games, Singing and Dancing

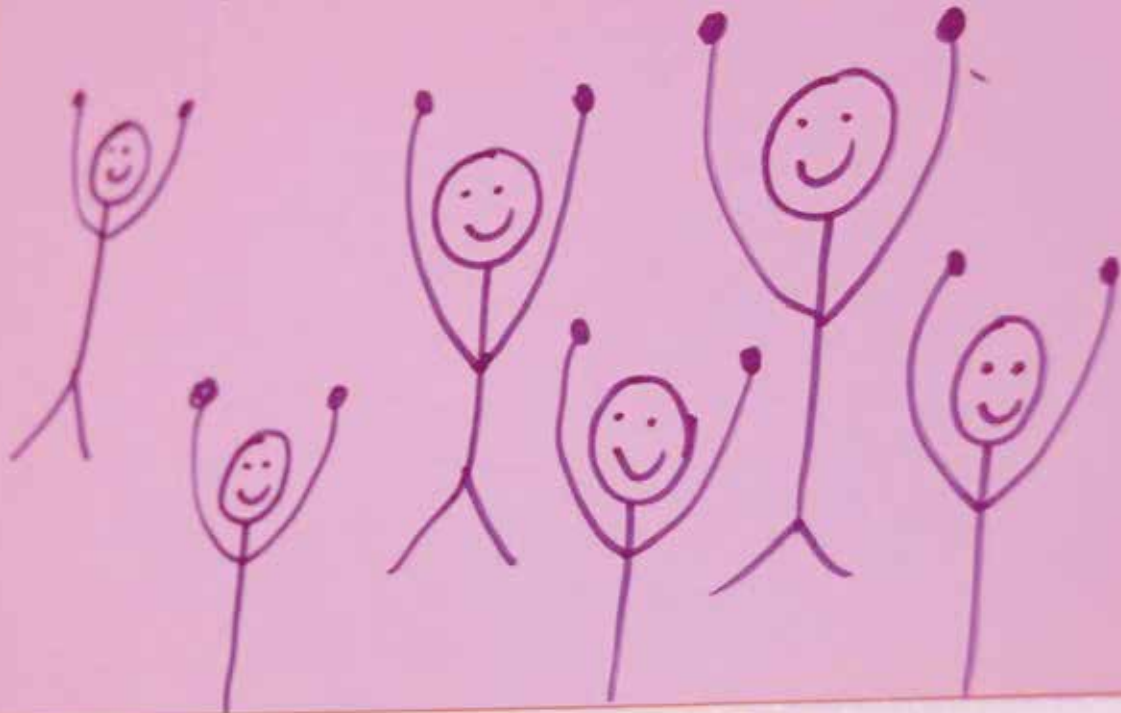
Movement, dancing and singing can be great activities for creating a collective experience and transforming the energy of a space. Make this explicit to the group before you start to be mindful of mobility and access needs.

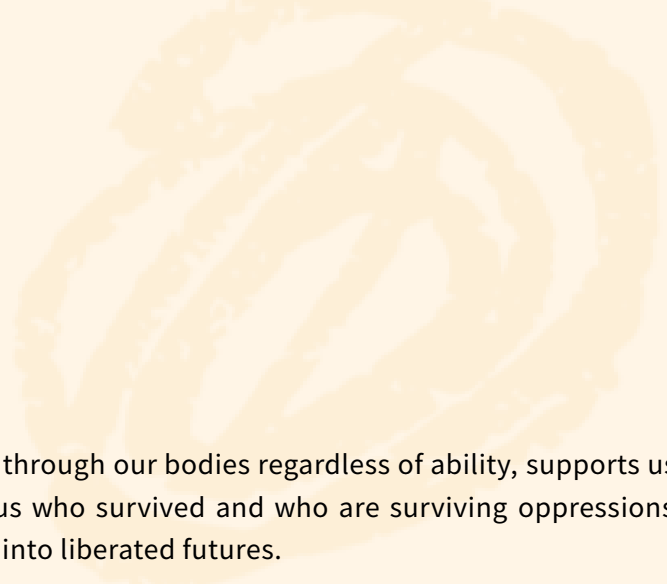
Movement, singing and dancing includes our internal experiences and does not always require music or external gestures. Encourage people to create their own pace or use heartbeat or breath as a rhythm. In this way dancing doesn't presume physical ability. If physical range is limited you can visualise different parts moving internally or externally.

Try this:

- Pick a song that you can learn to sing together. At Shake! we have loved to learn Ella's Song 'We who believe in freedom' (by Bernice Johnson Reagon, originally recorded by Sweet Honey In The Rock).
- Pick a song that you could all have some free expression, movement and dance to. You could use headphones to make it a silent disco, or turn the lights off to really let go of inhibitions. A favourite dance moment at Shake! is Lionel Ritchie's 'All Night Long'...
- Do a series of group hums. Singing is about vibrations and humming can feel like a 'sonic massage'<sup>9</sup> for our bodies.
- Think of the games that make you feel good, that promote collaboration and teamwork. At the same time, do not discard gently competitive games that allow us to compassionately challenge one another like in Alphabet Attack and The Artist's Way.
- Tense and release muscles and body parts. This can be done as a visualisation as well as a physical activity. We go around in a circle or a group, each of us nominating a part of the body - a muscle, organ, or limb - and we collectively tense and release. We repeat this a few times before moving on to the next. You can ask the group to focus on a thought or a feeling while they tense and then release that feeling, which can also be combined with breath work.

HARD TIMES REQUIRE  
FURIOUS DANCING





Making space for joy and play, with and through our bodies regardless of ability, supports us to nurture community. It allows many of us who survived and who are surviving oppressions to reclaim our lives/childhoods and to **feel** into liberated futures.

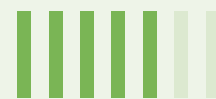
It helps us connect with who we can be outside of oppression. Therefore it is crucial for Voices that Shake! to pace our programmes with games and prioritise fun and joy as part of learning and relaxing in our space. Our political spaces are more powerful when we can let go of our fears, and connect with our inner child through play, fun, movement, dance, music, ritual. Our joy is a radical, political, releasing act which sustains our movements.





# Nourishment

## – Nurturing through Nature and Food



### Access To Green Spaces

Many Shake!rs have described how they perceived connections to nature, to ‘green’, as a core part of Shake!, and they recommended it should be made a central part of the *Rituals, Tools & Practices*. They strongly valued venues with access to green space especially in highly urbanised and increasingly gentrified areas.

Shake!rs appreciated and acknowledged that we are designed for multisensory experiences, yet we often are unable to engage with all of our senses. We recognise that many working-class young people, particularly those who are growing up in cities, without access to green spaces, can spend large amounts of time on different screens with bright unnatural lights through our phones, TVs, tablets and laptops. And, of course, this is heightened in the context of pandemic lockdowns and quarantine. Shake!rs often reflected the impacts on our bodies and how they are deprived of the elements they need in order to keep healthy. Work spaces often have poor natural light and spending hours indoors due to school and work, can keep us out of sync with the natural rhythms, seasons and cycles.

Accessing green spaces allows for a lot of engagement from the senses without it feeling overwhelming. For many of our cultural, spiritual and ancestral traditions, Mother Nature is our source and our site of replenishment and the Earth's pharmacy. Being in green space supports being in natural light, with scents and sounds in the air around us, textures in the plants and trees and long views to rest the eyes. Natural environments can support our bodies to regulate and feel grounded.

It is sometimes hard to realise the harsh effects of being separated from our nature source until we access a green space and feel the benefits. We were often surprised by how meaningful outdoor activities and green space increasingly became to Shake!rs and to us.

Where possible, during your projects, access spaces that have gardens or that have green spaces nearby. This does not need to be right next door. It could be a local park or allotment, a communal garden or field. A green space can be used as a sanctuary. You could encourage your group to leave and access this space individually, if they need a pause. You could, weather permitting, eat outside together, schedule activities outside, take a group walk or a local radical history tour. Incorporate time spent in nature as integral to your programme.

Accessing green spaces isn't always easy or possible, especially for many of us who engage in youth and community work in under-resourced and defunded community centres. A simple and accessible way to resist the brutal lack of green space for our communities is to grow and tend plants indoors and to share cuttings of plants and seeds among one another.<sup>10</sup> Caring for plants is a communal activity that enhances practices of radical kindness and nourishment, and provides some of the health benefits of being outside that can be brought indoors.

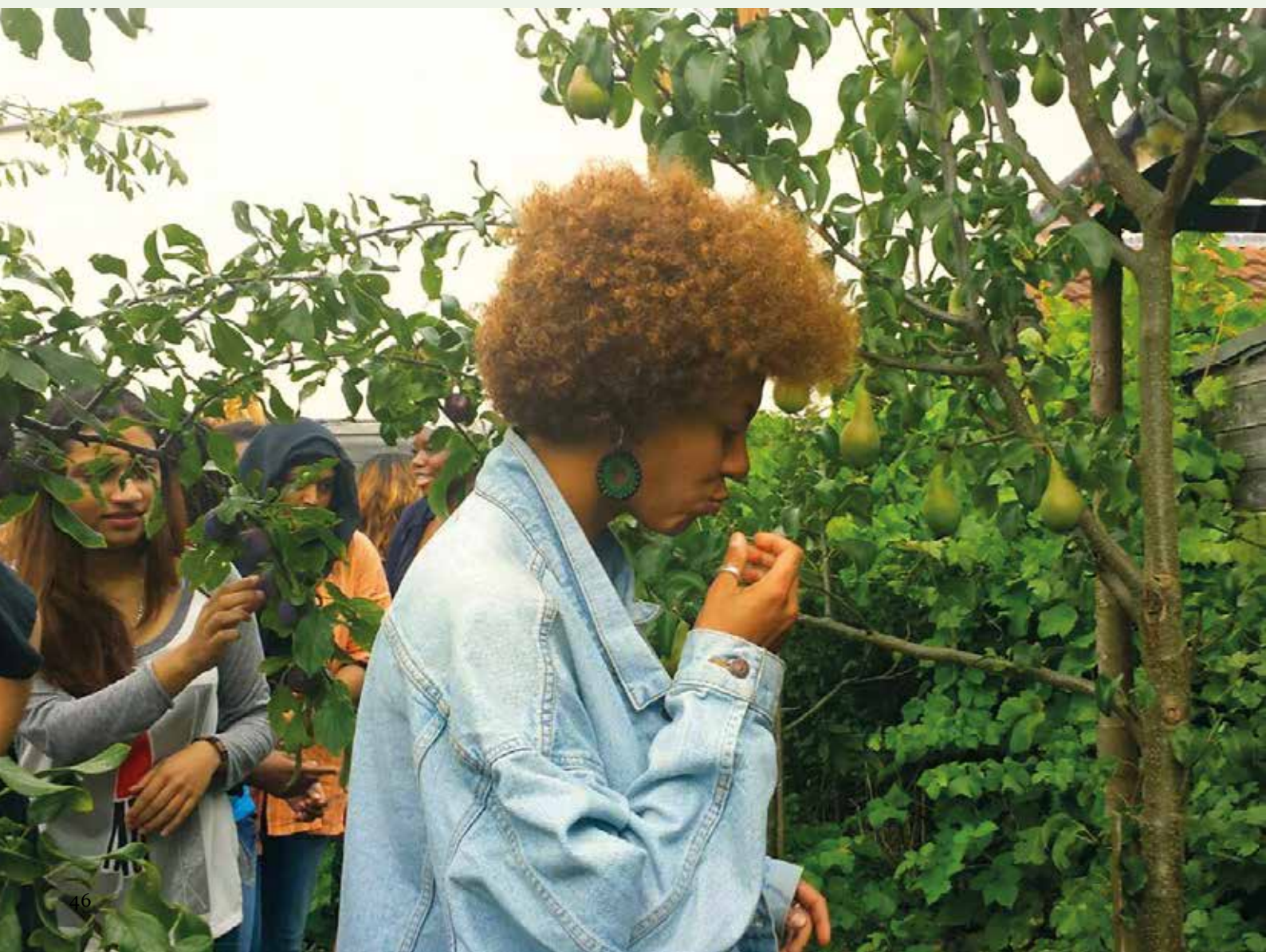
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10 Why not arrange a ‘bring your plant to work/school/training day’ and share about how you care for your plant and exchange cuttings/seeds and ideas for radical plant parenting.

## Nourishing Food

By nourishment, we also are referring to the provision of healthy tasty food and the sense of community, joy and healing that arises from the act of sharing food together. We are aware that feeling nourished goes beyond the physical reality of consumption and eating especially in a climate of food apartheid and limited access to nutritious food for communities that are racialised and working class.

Food is justice, healing, care, love. By providing food to your community in the space, you are acknowledging that access to food is not easy or a given, especially for working class people. You acknowledge the fact that being fed and being fed well allows a person to show up, be themselves and learn, and that good food should be free and accessible across cultural and dietary needs. Most importantly recognising food poverty and hunger are very real social injustices that we must actively resist and factor in when organising.





Try and provide nutritious and culturally appropriate foods (including plant-based food), while being mindful of how vegetarianism and veganism can reinforce classism and forms of racism. Ensure where possible, the food responds to the community and is sourced from local businesses that are Black and people of the global majority-owned. We give these recommendations being aware that it is not always easy to find the ideal type of food and food providers.

In your space you can destigmatise the relationship to eating, often shamed in the harmful systems we are in (diet culture, white beauty standards and privilege), by allowing people to get some food when they want and need to, and by creating a culture where we do not shame people for their choice of food. Remind your community to keep hydrated and drink water often. At Shake! we arrange our environment to have water and snack stations as well as collectivising reminders and labour around this.

The learning process can be hard on the body's energy levels and often emotions like anxiety, sadness or just feeling vulnerable can make us feel cold and fatigued. Try to provide a choice of hot drinks if you can. We often use the wisdom of herbs and herbal teas to support our space and help us tend to ourselves. We make sure there an array of herbal teas, ranging from ones that are good for digestion, warming up the body and those that can soothe or energise us, depending on what we need. For example: camomile to soothe, peppermint to focus, citrus to energise and ginger for warmth. Consider having a tea ceremony together where you can also explore the healing properties of tea and herbs.

Create moments to share food and eat meals together. Try to do this in a different space than the place where the main activities happen, in order to allow people to decompress and to put a boundary around the thinking headspace. Encourage people to come into a more social and communal context. The soft and organic conversations that happen over food and are enabled by sharing a meal are a key part of the experience to help group members unpack and reflect.

Honour the routine, time and space allocated for food. This structuring allows group members to feel reassured, especially when you might have people in your community with complicated relationships to food and who would appreciate the foreknowledge so that they can make arrangements appropriate to them.

Finally, you can also ask your group to bring food, making sure there is no pressure to do so. It can also be quite meaningful, natural and culturally affirming for some people to bring food with them when entering a space as a gesture of welcoming and gratitude. You can support this by allocating particular times for collective and communal foodsharing, and reimbursing the costs so that more people can share without shame or access barriers (you can make this widely known or discretionary) for anyone who wants to purchase the ingredients or types of food to share with the space.

There are many ways that food can be a site of repair, of building community and solidarity. We remind ourselves of the power of food by naming our breakfast, lunchtime and break times as opportunities for ‘the breaking of bread as the removal of separation’.<sup>11</sup>

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11 Author unknown







# Sustaining Ourselves – Restoration Space & Living Library



A **Restoration Space** is a restful, cosy, inspiring space, ideally in the same room where you are gathering. However, sometimes it may be appropriate to have this in a separate space. It can be a place to take time out or rest, reflect or pray. Design it intentionally with cushions, if possible a sofa, blankets, incense, candles, waters and teas nearby. Someone can rest there while being able to listen and watch the session. They can be at ease to step back, to doodle, draw, sleep, without stigma, without having to leave the room. The Restoration Space is an acknowledgement that our bodies are impacted in our organising efforts and we create space to honour, pace and pause without leaving our bodies behind.

Complementing the Restoration Space, offer a **Library** and communal display space. This can be a living archive of the ideas that brought you to this moment, ideas that you are sharing and hoping to develop. It showcases and honours the ancestors, mentors, artists and teachers who have held us at different times, soothed and guided us. Your group or community can add to the Library for the duration of the time you are together. A place to spark curiosity for knowledge! This is intended as a space that is inspirational to you and to group members and allows a re-engagement with knowledge and learning that is an alternative to the violent educational systems many of us go through.





As under-resourced and underfunded collectives, groups and organisations, capacity is something that we need to be very strategic and smart with. Spending real time doing the work of learning and sharing and making that knowledge more and more accessible is a worthwhile investment and act of solidarity building through redistribution of resources. Building the Library can be an act of collaboration. Be strategic and reach out to people, groups and organisations you want to learn from and ask them to provide you with literature about their work. Ask movements, organisations and collectives if they can lend to your Library or advise you on how to build it.

The Library and display area in your Restoration Space reflects different forms of knowledge and is a visual reminder of multiple ways of knowing and different expertise which within hierarchised, white supremacist patriarchal culture is a necessary, disruptive and reparative tool. Especially when many of our knowledge systems are patronised, discredited, invisibilised. The freedom of the space to access and engage with non-eurocentric, non-mainstream narratives, references, literature is important: knowledge in educational institutions is guarded and made exclusive. Normalising the abundance of liberatory and radical knowledge is a way of rebuilding our relationship to learning. It is vital to have this Library in a visible, easily accessed space that doesn't need explicit permission to be engaged with.

Imagination and inspiration are important sources in our learning and knowing, particularly in political education and organising. The Library and Restoration Space displays art to emphasise art as knowledge, art as political action and art as seeking and creating sanctuary. These are all pivotal elements of our work. We want to conduct a space that allows people to explore different forms for expressing ideas and feelings, not only through words. Music is an abundant resource, which can be found for free across different platforms. The range of music available at our fingertips is also representative of a range of cultures, eras and genres. Music, art, books, films, TV, theatre: recommendations can be encouraged through writing on big pieces of paper in a display area. This encourages the idea that we are co-creating knowledge and that inspiration comes in multiple forms.

# Community Care Work – Skills, Wellness Pool



The Communal Skills And Wellness Pool is one of the sessions that is most revered and cherished by Shake!rs. It is where we address how we sustain and resource ourselves in the ongoing and long-term work of liberation and justice.

In this session people pull together their self-care, wellness tools: what supports them to feel well, comforted, safe, nourished. Suggestions are shared, written and collected on a big piece of paper, and kept visible throughout the course. Additions can be added at any time. The wonder of the Communal Skills And Wellness Pool is that it demonstrates that what supports people is varied and often unexpected. It reminds us of all the ways that each of us are vulnerable, human and need support.

Through this self-care pool we collectivise ideas of wellness and care.

- We visiblise the diversity of ways that we are both impacted and resilient.
- We visiblise some of the ways we can be supported.
- We visiblise that due to the breadth and diversity of ways people cope, that we need to be asking permission, practising consent, and not presuming each other's needs.
- We disrupt notions of shame and individual burden around our wellness and connect ourselves to the structural and communal ways that contribute to our health and healing.
- We remind ourselves that we are not trying to become adapted to, nor normalise oppression.

Invite people to share any and all quirky or unusual methods of caring for ourselves. If it supports to have anonymity, people can write their wellness tip or personal resource and put it into a basket so all ideas can be drawn out and shared privately. From this you might find spontaneous contributions through open, responsive group conversations. This is collective, uplifting, moving. It can also be 'life-changing', as some Shake!rs have remarked. By sharing strategies of how we keep ourselves well, the Communal Skills And Wellness Pool allows the genius and resilience as people who have been marginalised to be at the heart of making new, thriving and sustainable futures.

Different generations of Shake!rs from different courses recounted during our research that dancing to Lionel Richie's 'All Night Long' during their course, and shaking their bodies wildly brought so much joy to them. Dancing to 'All Night Long' was a suggestion from a Shak!er during a self-care/wellness pool, as something that supports them to feel good when they are feeling down. We incorporate music, playlists, song and dance and encourage Shake!rs to share their own music choices at key moments throughout Shake! spaces.



Creating, supportive and nourishing environments are so valuable and needed for our communities, however they also spotlight the huge absence and failings in other environments. Pooling together ways in which we can practice community care is a valuable life-long skill that we can take outside of our organising spaces and embed as our culture. By holding the political capacity for community care and community health, we make redundant the many oppressive infrastructures like policing and other carceral and everyday punitive spaces.

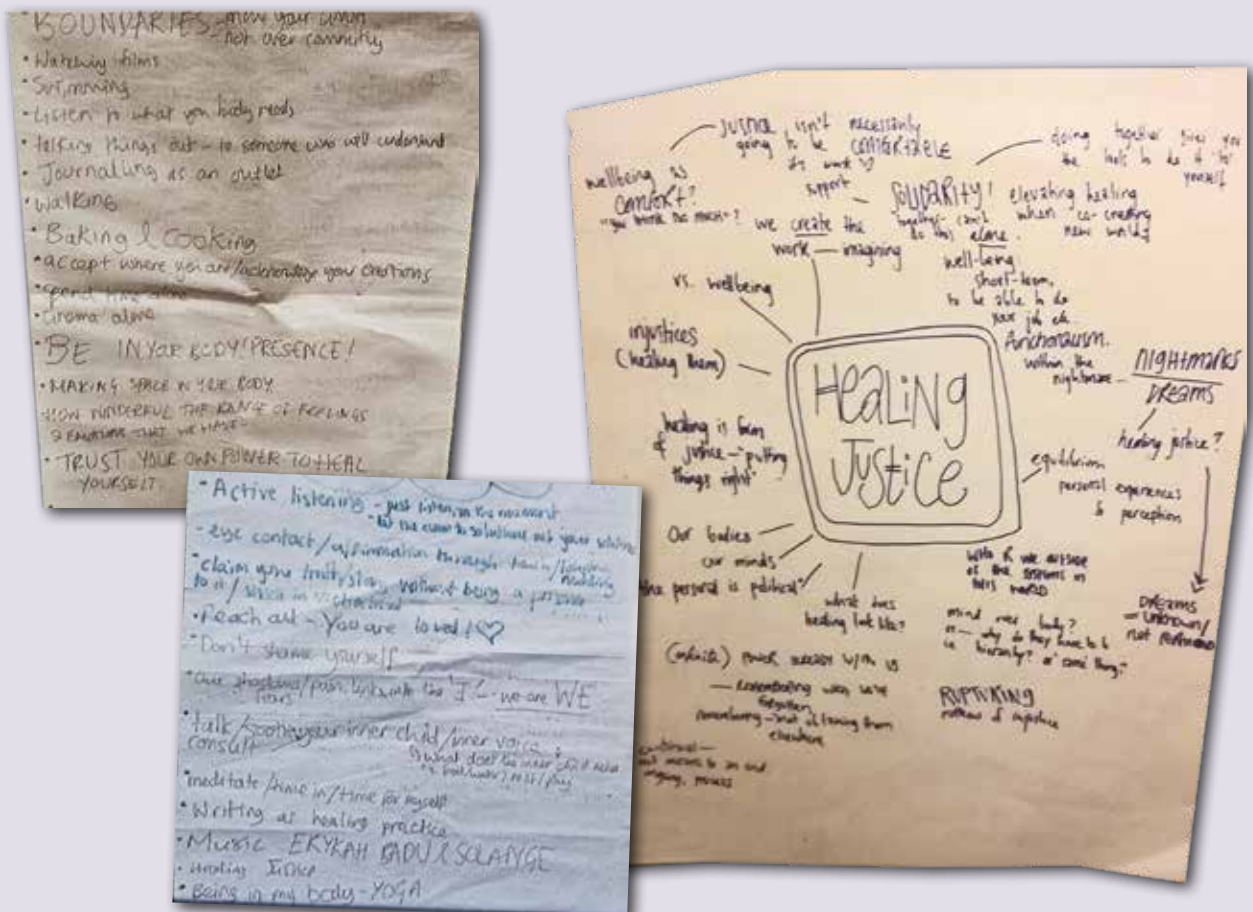
Our capacity to care for one another is the way in which we will realise futures that support and dignify all of us – especially those most vulnerable and marginalised.

**Choose a piece of music that means something to you to play to the group.**

**Listen to other people’s choices.**

**Compile a list of your group’s favourite joyful tracks here and/or co-create a playlist together online.**

**Write down some of your own self and community care tools.**



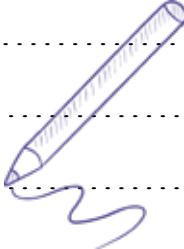
# Reflections and Continuing the Work . . .

## Learning from Each Other

We have shared a selection of tools and practices that support us in organising, building movements and in an effort towards collective liberation. We know this list is not exhaustive and we will need multiple strategies, practices and skills along the way and at different points. There are so many other incredible practices and tools out there, things we did not list, things we could learn from and things you and your community may have developed.

### **What are the other tools and practices you would like to share in this work of transformation?**

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We hope by sharing some of the practices that have supported us over the years – these tools on how to create your own Shake!-inspired spaces – are helpful, relevant and accessible to your community. We know that at the heart of building spaces, we have to centre the values and needs of our communities with whom we are in solidarity and in service to. We encourage you to sit with your community and group to see what their needs and values are, and how you can meet each other to build more sustainable and thriving communities.

In this work, we also encourage you to be gentle with yourself as you intentionally build the space, collective, community, movement that you are nurturing. Let us offer each other the opportunity to grow and learn in spacious and safe ways, that includes allowing ourselves to do that with ourselves too – we need each of us and each other.

We know that this work can feel exhausting. Acknowledging the multiple layers of oppression we face in different aspects of our lives, we have to allow our activism, organising, community building, mobilising, resistance and liberation practice to be pleasurable and joyful where possible. Celebrate the growth and wins – small and big.

Find ways to prioritise our sustainability, health and care and how this can be made possible for our group or communities. We remind ourselves that when we are able to understand or access what we need, this can support and help us to attend to each other more deeply. This strengthens our capacity for community care or organising together long-term as part of abolitionist politics. None of us can fight constantly and in every place. If we want to realise liberation, we need to be able to protect ourselves and one another. We need to be led by one another so that some of us can rest in order to make our movements resilient and powerful.

We hope this small selection of some of Shake!'s rituals, tools and practices support you in the same way that it has done us: to build more freedom, more justice, more community repair, dignity and joy that we are all seeking and longing for.

We look forward to building and travelling with you on this journey to justice and liberation.

In the spirit of the visionary Gloria E. Anzaldúa:



*Contigo*

(With you).

## Annex A

# Healing Justice London – Aftercare Menu

Here are some approaches to care for yourself in the way you might need following the session. If an approach is working for you, take notice of the internal shifts to help increase the positive effects. If you try one approach and you are not feeling a positive shift, give yourself permission to adapt the practice or stop and try something else.

### Need to discharge:

- How to recognize this need: You may feel restless, agitated, hurried, hot, or pressured.
- Approaches
  - Put on some music you love and dance for five minutes non-stop & shake it all out!
  - Deep inhales with loud sigh/ groaning exhale.
  - Emotional Freedom Technique: Try tapping the kidneys and chest area gently with the intention of release. You can also find resources online for more guidance, such as this video by Maryam Hasnaa.<sup>12</sup>
  - Herbs to connect with: sage & peppermint. You can use both or either of these as a herbal tea (try to obtain loose leaf & organic herbs). You can also use these herbs as essential oils, and burn or diffuse them in your space by adding 2-3 drops to water.

### Need to self-soothe:

- How to recognise this need: You may feel lonely, empty, cold, collapsed, or sad.
- Approaches
  - Hug yourself and/or hold your hand.
  - Sit with a heavy blanket covering you.
  - Place one hand over your heart and one on the back of your neck or visualise this.
  - Place one hand over your heart and one on top of your stomach and connect with heartbeat and breath or visualise/ bring awareness to these areas.
  - Herbs to connect with: rose & chamomile. You can use both or either of these as a herbal tea (try to obtain loose leaf & organic herbs). You can also use these herbs as essential oils, and burn or diffuse them in your space by adding 2-3 drops to water.
  - Box Breathing, see this short video<sup>13</sup> for how to do it.

<sup>12</sup> Maryam Hasnaa - *EFT with Maryam Hasnaa for shock, panic, fear of the unknown, worry, anxiety, stress.*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjmHNX4DpBc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjmHNX4DpBc)

<sup>13</sup> Sunnybrook Hospital - *Box breathing relaxation technique: how to calm feelings of stress or anxiety.*  
[www.health.sunnybrook.ca/mental-health/box-breathing-calm-stress-anxiety](http://www.health.sunnybrook.ca/mental-health/box-breathing-calm-stress-anxiety)



**Need to ground:**

- How to recognise this need: You may feel spacey, disconnected, confused, numb, or lost.
- Approaches
  - Walk or stand barefoot on the ground, press your feet into the ground.
  - Roll back shoulders/ drop shoulders/ visualise dropping shoulders.
  - Put hands on the earth/in soil, connect with the feeling of the earth.
  - Affirm; holding your chest and say 'I am here, I am safe, I am loved and protected'.
  - Hold a rock, stone, crystal, leaf in your hand for a period of time. Connect with the texture and feel.

**Need to locate or orient:**

- How to recognise this need: You may feel spacey, disconnected, confused, or lost.
- Approaches
  - Senses: notice your environment by listing all you can smell, touch, hear, taste, and see (you can describe it out loud or to yourself to help you re-orientate)
  - Senses: notice your environment by listing and focus to become specific, start to list:
    - 5 things you see
    - 4 things you feel
    - 3 things you hear
    - 2 things you taste
    - 1 thing you smell(you can describe it out loud or to yourself to help you re-orient)
  - Wash your body with a cool/warm cloth gently to recalibrate in the body

*This is aftercare sample has been compiled by Healing Justice Ldn [www.healingjusticeldn.org](http://www.healingjusticeldn.org) with contributions and support from Nkem, Ndefo of Lumos Transforms [www.lumostransforms.com](http://www.lumostransforms.com)*

## Annex B

# Healing Justice London

## – Facilitation Framework Guide (an extract)

### Group agreement

At the start of the session you can collectively agree on some shared values; ask people to do this together. It might be helpful to draw on our community principles and the collective guidelines below.

## Community principles

We invite you to become familiar with our community principles. These have been developed through the practice of our Co-founder/Director Farzana Khan, Shake!, and HJL.

- 1) **Community care:** we are rebuilding ecologies
- 2) **Confidentiality:** what is said in here stays in here, what is learnt in here grows from here
- 3) **Accessibility:** Explain jargon and ask for clarity.
- 4) **Privilege/power:** making space/taking space
- 5) **\*Personal edge** – you get what you create a capacity to receive
- 6) **Honour labour** – “Citation is feminist memory” – Sara Ahmed<sup>14</sup>
- 7) **Process:** be comfortable questioning, move at the speed of trust, “we deepen practice, not seek perfection. Come as you are”
- 8) **Compassion:** Hard on ideas, soft on people / de-escalation
- 9) **\*Comfort + transformation** do not live in the same house
- 10) **Equity** is the opposite of extractivism
- 11) **Lived experience and trauma** – these not just conversations; its visceral, tangible, material. Take time to hydrate, and rest.
- 12) **Joy, fun and expression** – feel into our liberated selves
- 13) **Embarrassment/shame** is prioritization of how others perceive you over how you see yourself / reinvesting in self-worth
- 14) **Fear** is when individual capacities are outweighed by the capacity of what you are facing / can we collectively assess and hold?
- 15) **Capacity to grow:** These are ongoing conversations, not everything will feel resolved or resonate. We commit to growing and creating spaces to do so with curiosity and creativity.

*\*Resourcing & baseline support are key to this so that discomfort can be supportive to you to live wholly. Remember to be discerning as discomfort may not always be appropriate for the context & could retraumatise.*

## Collective Guidelines

We encourage you to get familiar with these guidelines developed by Bad Ass Visionary Healers<sup>15</sup> in the United States. We often read them at the start of each HJL session, inviting everyone to be involved by reading a line each.

- We begin by listening.
- We are people of color, indigenous people, disabled people, and survivors of trauma, many genders, ages and classes of people, and we are committed to leading the work of building healing justice at the AMC.
- We do this work to lift up and politicize the role of health and healing in our movements as a critical part of the new world we are building.
- We honor individual and community agency, intuition, and innate wisdom, and therefore honor people's rights to make decisions about their own bodies.
- We understand that health and wellness should be determined by the individual or community receiving care, and for many of us this includes the reality of disability, illness, and harm reduction. We accept and encourage individuals and communities defining health, healing, and wellness for themselves, and not based on normative models of healing.
- We center the genius and leadership of disabled and chronically ill communities, for what we know about surviving and resisting the medical industrial complex and living with fierce beauty in our sick and disabled bodies. We say no to the medical industrial complex's model of "cure or be useless," instead working from a place of belief in the wholeness of disability, interdependence and disabled people as inherently good as we are.
- We live in countries that deny health care access to people based on economic and identity status, and we must build alternative structures for giving and receiving care that are grounded in community and ancestral traditions and in the values of consent and equality. The Healing Justice Practice Space is a part of that work.
- We believe that medicine is media, and we work with the understanding that how we heal ourselves is directly related to how we see and interpret ourselves and the possibility for transformation.
- We are aware that the body does not live forever, and that we honor death as a part of the cycle of life.

14 Sara Ahmed (2017) *Living a Feminist Life*, Duke University Press, p25

15 <https://badassvisionaryhealers.wordpress.com/healing-justice-principles/>

## Annex C

# The Shake! Anthology in Action

Here we describe how Shake!'s *Anthology of Creative Movements* can be useful in structuring processes with groups and community. The Anthology's five chapters - *The Cry, Protest, Breath, The Call, Harmony* - suggest a particular journey for the individual and collective exploration of political and creative voice.

Below is one example that the Men of Colour Healing Circle, convened by Healing Justice London, has used from the Shake! Anthology. It is based on *The Cry*. Below we suggest prompts for the facilitator, and a reading.

**Based on everything you have read so far in this Guidebook, we invite you to imagine the nurturing facilitation techniques that could precede, ground and hold the process and the people within your group. Consider what kind of questions would arise from these prompts.**

### **Discussion/freewriting prompts:**

**Audio** – Listen to *The Cry* soundscape by Teju Adeleye, commissioned for the Shake! Anthology:  
<https://soundcloud.com/voicesthatshake/the-cry>

**Photograph** – Show a photo of England footballer Bukayo Saka being consoled by England manager Gareth Southgate after missing the final penalty in the Semi-final of the 2021 European Championships.

**Video** – Watch UK Conservative politician Jacob Rees-Mogg's reply in an interview to the question on what makes him cry 'Owen Jones meets Jacob Rees-Mogg', The Guardian 2015 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-dVqmCh\\_Jc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-dVqmCh_Jc)

**Artwork** – Share the artwork by Grace Lee from the Shake! Anthology: *I feel therefore I can be free* (reproduced in full on opposite page)

**Text** – Collective reading of *The Cry* section of the Anthology Introduction<sup>16</sup>. Extract reprinted below:

### **THE CRY**

The cry is the moment of politicisation, the awakening of the cry within oneself. It is the cry of the moment, the cry of our people. It is our own birthing into liberation work, into political practice through the rigour of emotional, intellectual and spiritual labouring against oppression.

We know, we feel, we intuit that this cry is necessary: when 'You are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it' (Zora Neale Hurston) and 'In times of dread, artists must never choose to remain silent' (Toni Morrison). A voice and language must be sourced for incomprehensible and unspeakable injustice.



The Victorian-styled politician Jacob Rees-Mogg, a key proponent of the UK's brutal austerity policies, was asked in a recent interview 'What makes you cry?' His answer was instructive – 'Pah, no I don't cry. No [I have not cried] in adulthood. No. I'm not in favour of this new-age drappiness . . . I think the British did best when they applied a little starch to their upper lips!'

Moving in opposition to this white colonial hetero-patriarchal project of dehumanising us into self-policing, shame-filled objects, and against the criminalising and punishment of our coping mechanisms, grief, pain and expressions, Shake!'s approach is about rehumanising. We know that the work of the initial cry is a bridge in seeking ways to connect, to feel, to honour pain, to cleanse, to create space for vulnerability and accessing our wholeness. As inspired by the Dagara tribe and Sobonfu Somé's griefwork, grief is about affirming worth and dignity. What we offer our tears to lets us know what matters and is valued. We cry to affirm Black lives matter, our bodies matter, we matter against the backdrop of everything that tells us we do not.

As oppressed, minoritised and marginalised people there is no neutral terrain. Our existence is never in a void or vacuum – the cry becomes the contextualising and establishing ground by which we acknowledge the ancestral and generational voices that carry within us. It is the first expression of dissent against compounding and cumulative harm and violence that can no longer go unheard.

As Audre Lorde reminds us: 'The white fathers told us: I think, therefore I am. The Black mother within each of us – the poet – whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free.'

The cry is the invitation to refuse our 'stiff upper lip', let our throat roar, and even if our mouths tremble, we hold on to our humanity as we overturn oppression.

16 From Introduction: Mapping Movement – A Decade of Shaking Futures, by Farzana Khan and Sai Murray in *Voices that Shake! An Anthology of Creative Movements*, page 9.

## Annex D

# Shake!'s Growth & Partnerships

### Initiating Shake! – 2010–12

Shake! was initiated by **Platform**, the London-based arts-activist organisation in 2010. The pilot programme was conceived by **Ben Amunwa**, with **Jane Trowell** from Platform, poet-facilitators **Zena Edwards** (@VerseinDialog) and **Sai Murray** (Liquorice Fish), **DJ Kirenga Kirengera Eric Soul** (AFROGROOV), **Ana Tovey** (Chocolate Films) and educator **Ed Lewis**. For the pilot, we collaborated with partner-venue the **Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust**, London. Thank you also to **Kadija Sesay** of **African Writers Abroad** for advice and support. Platform has hosted Shake! since the pilot. This involves supporting the director/coordinator role; financial, fundraising, comms and advisory services; office space and resources as needed. [www.platformlondon.org](http://www.platformlondon.org)

### Establishing and growing Shake! – 2012 onwards

In 2012, **Farzana Khan** was appointed to lead and guide Shake! to a new level of impact. Relaunching after the pilot, together with Shake!'s young people and the Shake! core team – lead artists Zena (til 2016) and Sai; new facilitators **Paula Serafini** and **Dhelia Snoussi** – Farzana stewarded Shake! into the deeply transformative, youth-centred practice for which it has become acclaimed. As Creative and Strategic Director, Farzana also developed Shake!'s community building processes and healing justice ethos which Shake!'s young people have recognised again and again as core to their experience. Over this time, Shake!'s youth-led cultural productions, showcases and events achieved sell-out status for the calibre of artwork and the power of young artists' performance. Shake! has packed audiences into venues such as **Brady Arts Centre**, **Free Word Centre**, and via **Numbi Arts**, our regular venue of **Rich Mix**, London.

In 2017, Farzana founded and is Executive Director of **Healing Justice London**, which she acknowledges is inspired and informed deeply by the work of Voices that Shake! Healing Justice London is partner to the **Shake! the System** trilogy of publications.

From 2019, the Shake! the System trilogy of publications has been overseen by **Farzana** and Artistic Co-Director **Sai**, in close collaboration with the rest of the editorial team, **Tiffany Webster**, **Rose Ziaei**, **Jane Trowell**. This *Guidebook*, the *Anthology* and the *Research Report* honour 10 years of Shake!'s pioneering work – supporting, editing and amplifying young writers and artists, many of whom are published for the first time.

The following organisations have helped establish and grow Shake! over the decade. This is a non-exhaustive list. Some have been with us throughout and some for short periods of time and some in a seasonal way:

**AFROGROOV**, **Bernie Grant Arts Centre**, **Brady Community Arts Centre**, **@VerseinDialog**, **Free Word Centre**, **Globe Poets**, **Granville Community Kitchen**, **Healing Justice London**, **Liquorice Fish**, **Nawi Collective**, **Numbi Arts**, **Nuwave Pictures**, **Rainbow Collective**, **Raven Row Gallery**, **Rep the Road**, **Rich Mix**, **Stop the Maangamizi**, **Stuart Hall Foundation**, **Skin Deep**, **Stephen Lawrence Centre**, **The Albany**.



## Partner to Shake! the System

### **About us and our values**

Healing Justice Ldn creates capacity for transformation. We dismantle oppressive structures and systems. We repair and build community health and healing.

We believe that liberation is a practice – an emerging process which requires our radical vision and creativity to nurture well-being, joy and abundance for people subject to marginalisation. We develop strategies that restore our individual and collective agency and allow us to self-direct our needs. We are informed and inspired by healing justice, disability justice, transformative justice and intersectional feminisms.

Healing Justice Ldn foregrounds heart-led and embodied approaches, turning away from systems of oppression that fragment and disconnect us from our bodies and communities. We are lived-experience led – honoring our ongoing survivorhood, and the intuition and wisdom drawn from our experiences. We understand our spiritual, cultural and indigenous traditions to be valid sites of knowledge that move us towards our wholeness.

We acknowledge that every event is experienced differently by each one of us. We are in a constant state of collaborative learning, acknowledging that we may not always know, and we need wisdom from others. We stay in alignment with our values and priorities, and as they adapt, our approaches adapt to meet them. We strengthen ourselves by becoming skilled and resilient in our journey towards collective liberation.

We move from positions of trust to build cultures of accountability that keep us brave, true, and caring. We honour the vulnerability and courage it takes to do this, practicing compassion for what we are surviving, and knowing that change and transformation are possible.

We use the powers of radical dreaming, imagination and visioning to realise well-resourced communities that are generative, equitable and thrive beyond us.

**[www.healingjusticeldn.org](http://www.healingjusticeldn.org)**

# SHAKE! THE SYSTEM SQUAD



**ANNICK MÉTÉFIA** Lead Researcher

Annick is a youth worker and racial justice activist from France, now based in London. She supports young Black and Brown people in researching the history and developing a collective response to police violence, racism and LGBTphobias. She writes poetry and is a member of the ballroom community.



**HANEEN HAMMOU** Secondary Researcher

Haneen is Sudanese. She grew up between home and the UK. She is a Shake!r, pursuing work in the field to end detention migration, and is currently Secondary Researcher for the Voices that Shake! 10-year anniversary Shake! the System Research Report.



**FARZANA KHAN** Editor & Strategic Advisor (Voices that Shake! Creative and Strategic Director, 2012-)

Farzana is a cultural producer and award-winning arts educator. She is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Healing Justice London and former Creative and Strategic Director on Voices that Shake! She has over 15 years experience in community and youth organising. Farzana is a Fellow at the International Curatorial Forum. @khankfarza



**SAI MURRAY** Editor & Art Director (Voices that Shake! Artistic Co-Director, 2010-)

Sai is a poet, writer, graphic and performance artist of Bajan/Afrikan/English heritage. His poetry collection Ad-liberation and novella are published by Peepal Tree Press. He is the founder of artist/activist organisation Liquorice Fish, a founding Artistic Director of Shake!, member of Virtual Migrants and trustee of the Racial Justice Network. @saimurai



**ROSE ZIAEI** Programme Manager & Editor

Rose is an Iranian educator, programme manager, participatory researcher and healer. She has been working at the intersections of social justice, healing and liberation practice, creativity, arts and culture, youth and community work for the past eight years. She managed the legacy programme at Shake!, leading on the Anthology, Research Report and Guidebook. @roseziaei





**TIFF WEBSTER** Art Director & Editor

Tiff (she/they) is a creative practitioner, storyteller and socio-environmental activist of Kittitian and Galician heritage raised in north-west London and Galicia, Spain. Her experience of navigating both IRL and URL as a Black, working-class, queer creative, have played a crucial role in informing her practice and how she chooses to disrupt space/s.



**PAULA SERAFINI** Research Mentor

Paula is a London-based Argentinian researcher, educator, artist and activist working for socio-environmental justice. She has published extensively on art activism, cultural policy, extractivism, social movements and care.



**JANE TROWELL** Coordinator 2010-12 & 2021

Jane is an art educator, curator and Londoner. She works with Platform and is currently completing a PhD in whiteness and coloniality in art and art education. She was part of the founding team for Voices that Shake!, 2010–2012, and has supported Shake! through fundraising and advocacy. She is coordinator of Shake! 2021.

**DEBORAH AJIA** Comms and Social Media Lead

Deborah is a south-London based Digital Media professional and illustrator. Fostering togetherness and collaboration between different communities is important to her, hence she is an avid volunteer at South London Cares and Incredible Edible Lambeth. She thoroughly enjoys painting, photography, international cinema and dabbling in the culinary arts.

**GRACE LEE** Events Producer

Grace is an artist, designer and illustrator of Jamaican and Scottish descent from Sheffield. Her practice incorporates paintings, animation, sound design, installation and set design. She is a selected portrait artist for the Museum of Colour. @somegalart | www.somegal.co.uk

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Illustrations by **ANNI MOVSISYAN**

# Credits

## ARTWORK

- Front Cover – rework by Tiff Webster (2021), original image by Grainne Aldred & Liquorice Fish (2016).  
P.27 – from *Surviving the System detail*, Anni Movsisyan (2016)  
P.33 – *Britain on Trial Portraits*, Patricia Bongani (2011)  
P.61 – *I feel therefore I'm free*, Grace Lee (2017)  
PP.64-65 – *Shake! the System Squad*, Anni Movsisyan (2020)  
P.68 – rework by Tiff Webster (2021), original image by Grainne Aldred & Liquorice Fish (2016).

## PHOTOGRAPHY


- P.8 – *Food Fight @ May Project Gardens*, Voices that Shake! (2015)  
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P.53 – *Flip Charts @ Stephen Lawrence Centre and Platform London*, Voices that Shake! (2015-2017)

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For seeds you have sown  
For the bonds you forged  
For the systems you nourished  
For the audacity of your visions  
For trying, and trying again and again  
For your movement, your improvising  
For the call and response of your songs  
Echoing in the air all this time later

~ extract from 'Voices that Shake!' soundscape  
by Teju Adeleye



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