



United We Dream[®]

**UndocuHealth
Project**

**Transforming Hate, Fear and
Anxiety into Love & Resiliency
to Uplift Our Families**

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INTRODUCTION

Every day, our community is under attack by Trump’s administration, racist lawmakers and the voices of white supremacists who make it their job to terrorize our families. When we wake up in the morning, go out to work, eat, study, and even sleep, the constant fear and anxiety that we carry is slowly inhibiting us from living and thriving in our lives and constantly pushes our families to be in “survival mode.”

We at United We Dream say “no more living in fear, no more in living in the shadows, and no more living under under unhealthy stress.” As a network, we must address the mental health of our community and transform it with love.

The United We Dream UndocuHealth Project was started to facilitate the incorporation and daily practice of self-love, community healing, and wellness when organizing in times of trouble, turbulence, and chaos. We acknowledge that much of our community is under heavy pressure, high levels of anxiety, depression, panic, and in a state of physiological and psychological distress. If not treated and transformed, this can lead much of our community to be burnt-out and inhibit us from thriving and breaking our chains in pursuit of liberation. The UndocuHealth Project will allow organizers and community members to come up with innovative ideas to keep our community healthy and align our minds, bodies, emotions, and energies to keep fighting for the dignity and respect our communities and families deserve as beautiful human beings.

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

The UndocuHealth Project Toolkit was designed to alleviate not only the stress and anxiety of folks across the nation and keep our families secure, but also to give the reader tools that will allow them to conduct safe zone events and incorporate stress reducing activities within their community work and daily lives.

The first section titled The Seven Steps to Keep Calm & Continue Organizing is designed to give you a step by step process in how to set up a safe zone for your community and how to follow up with simple healing events. The 101 Mindfulness Breathing section is for you to explore the power of breathing through meditation and use it in the your group before and after organizing such as events and/or meetings. Under Mental Health Resources you will find a list of online resources that address. Under Fight or Flight vs Rest and Digest you will find the correlations between trauma and the physical effects of stress.

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THE 7 STEPS TO KEEP CALM & ORGANIZE

In a moment of chaos and panic, it is difficult to effectively organize a whole community who are being directly impacted. Bad news can occur without notice and leave you and fellow community organizers in panic mode. This section is to aid you in reducing panic and effectively gather everyone in the community.

1. Set a time of gathering

Use the momentum that has build up in the rapid response to the termination of DACA to uplift the community and let them know your organization will be holding safe spaces for healing in the upcoming days.

2. Pick a safe place

Most members of the community already have safe places established in the community. These can be a community center, a local food market a church, a mosque, a spiritual place, a park, etc. Be aware of spaces where your community already feels safe to be themselves and utilize them to gather.

3. Call healthcare professionals, leaders of the community, mentors

Reach out to healthcare professionals that are willing to help the undocumented community in times of struggle. Reaching out to community leaders, mentors, and educators, and other allies who can be present to offer their time, active listening and other resources can also be beneficial. It can be helpful to have someone be there for you who is not going through the same crisis as you are.

4. Facilitate a healing circle for all to share how they feel and what their emotional state is

- a. Provide food and non-alcoholic beverages
- b. Once everyone looks comfortable, make a circle with everyone present at the event.
- c. Start the conversations by first burning sage or doing a quick 5 min. mindful meditation.
- d. Begin the conversation by asking "How are you truly feeling with the news we have received?"
- e. After the first cycle, ask "What grounds you and helps you feel that you are still a human being?"

5. Transform a moment of chaos into a moment of resistance.

- a. After everyone has shared everything they wanted to share, end with a hopeful activity.
- b. If anyone in the group wants to offer an exercise to transform the low and painful energy, let them take the lead.
- c. If no one steps up, a hopeful activity can be another mindfulness breathing session for 10 minutes. Another option is to ask your group to share a song or chant, do art, or play music. Try to end with a hopeful chant such as “I believe that we will win!”
- d. Don’t rush people out of the space. Give them space to process and feel safe.. Some folks are able to process their emotions through the sharing of food and water with others.

6. Provide resources.

- a. Suggestions can include next steps on your community’s response to DACA, legal resources, mental health crisis hotline numbers, and more.
- b. In pages (5 - 8) of this toolkit you will find different resources on reducing stress, anxiety, herbs, hotline numbers, and others to give out to people.

7. Follow up: Set another time to meet just do Healing activities mentioned here or other activities led by people in your community.

Most of the time, healing is not done in one day. Repetition and daily practices are recommended. Setting up another time to meet and recreate these transformative practices will help people start a healing process. Start again with the 1st step.



OUR BODY RESPONDS: FIGHT OR FLIGHT vs. REST & DIGEST

In your body you have two different response mechanisms: the Fight or Flight response, and Rest & Digest response. These two response systems are based in our nervous system and help your body to decide how it will respond to its surroundings.

The **Fight or Flight mode of your nervous system responds in situations where you feel threatened.** Here's an example of how it works:

"You are walking through the jungle, when you suddenly feel suspicious that something is following you. You turn around and you realize that a hungry tiger was following you. You panic, your body has to make a decision: to Fight or to run away. You decide to run, and you run like you have never ran before and you make it out alive! YAY!"

In times of emergency, you use your sympathetic nervous system to get out of danger. The problem is that your body doesn't know whether this danger is a lion, tiger, rent, bills, deadlines, Trump, or ICE and border patrol. Your body reacts the same way no matter what may be threatening you.

The Rest and Digest mode of our nervous system gets triggered in the following scenario. Here's an example of how it works:

"You find yourself calmly laying down at the beach. You have nothing worrying you. Trump doesn't exist, there is no such thing as borders. Discrimination based on racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia doesn't exist on the earth and all you are doing is simply breathing. "

For us to heal, and transcend trauma, we must be able to use our Rest & Digest response during hard times. The truth is that it will take many decades for racism, sexism and all other phobias that cause hate in our world to end. We have long path ahead to freedom. That's why, we, as freedom fighters, must be able to live and sustain ourselves despite the trauma that could trigger our Flight or Fight response system. We must heal in order to continue the fight.

There is a simple, indigenous practice that allows your body, mind and emotions to purify and turn on Rest & Digest response. It is called....
BREATHING!

101 MINDFUL BREATHING

Mindful breathing is an indigenous praxis that has served throughout the globe as the base spiritual practice for humans to relax and ground themselves in times of turbulence. There are many ways to practice mindful breathing. Three will be presented here.

There is one simple rule in how to the practice of mindful breathing: **Focus on your breathing.** When truly and compassionately focusing on your breath, your body will relax and turn on a parasympathetic nervous mode. Practice these 3 techniques 5 to 10 min a day.

1. There is a passage from the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying by Sogyal Rinpoche that describes the way we should breathe:

".. When you meditate, breathe naturally, just as you always do. Focus your awareness lightly on the outbreath. When you breathe out, just flow out with the outbreath. Each time you breathe out, you are letting go and realising all your grasping. Imagine your breath dissolving into the all-pervading expanse of truth..."¹

It is important to recognize that there will be thoughts that will come to your mind. Do not judge them, and just like your breath is dissolving out to the infinity of pachamama (mother earth) and the universe let your thoughts and worries be dissolved into the infinity as well.

2. This second way of meditation is for those who cannot sit with eyes closed. Leave your eyes slightly open and concentrate on an object that represents peace for you. It could be something from **nature** or any valuable thing to you. Let your mind be at peace with the same method as mentioned above.

Thoughts will come by, simply **let them go like you let go of all things through your exhale** and focus on the **existence** of the object you are meditating with.

3. Recite a Mantra. A mantra is a verse of a chant that is sang with mindfulness and with intentions of **loving and healing**. If you have a prayer of your own, or are inspired by a phrase and/or song, recite it when you are meditating with your eyes closed. Slowly realize how your mind, the sound of the mantra and your breath are **unified**.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:

24/7 Hotline: Confidential

English: 1-800-273-8255

Español: 1-888-628-9454

[Después de un Intento de Suicidio:](#) this resource takes you step-by-step on how to start taking care for one another when someone goes through a suicide crisis.

<https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SVP06-0158SP/SVP06-0158SP.pdf>

[For a virtual safe space you can have in your room:](#) If you want a calming activity that you can do while you are at your computer, this resource will take you to three virtual spaces which you can use with your breathing and reflection practices.

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/safe-space/>

[Rights you have in a relationship:](#) a reminder of your rights in a relationship and boundaries for a healthier relationship.

<http://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Relationship-Rights.pdf>

[Illinois Resources for Mental Health:](#) This link will guide you to another compiled resource list of different support systems for stress and crisis as well as as local resources in Illinois.

http://thekennedyforumillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Lurie_Post-Election-Support-for-Marginalized-and-Youth-in-Crisis_Preliminary-Resource-Listing.pdf

Crisis Text Line: If a loved one or you are in a moment of crisis, you need support, but wish not to talk to someone over the phone: you can text The Crisis Text Line. Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via the medium people already use and trust: text. Your opening message can say anything: simply send a text to the number 741-741