



A Self-Reflection Journal for Supervised Visitation Staff

Created by Beth McNamara, Jennifer Rose, and Erin Fairchild





Inspire Action for Social Change offers this journal as a tool to not only improve your practice supporting families accessing supervised visitation, but to support you in this work—which can be inspiring, hopeful, fun, overwhelming, hard, and stressful all at once. Our hope is that you will engage with this journal as a form of personal and professional care, and a way to help you navigate the complexities of the supervised visitation world. We believe you are incredibly valuable in keeping children and families safe; we offer this tool in gratitude.

Why is Self-Reflection Important in this Work?

Many of us who work with families impacted by violence are drawn to the work because we ourselves may have had experiences as children and/or adults. This means we may be especially skilled and compassionate. It also means we may experience traumatic reminders that impact our quality of life and work, and not even know it. Just like we hope that the parents who come to our centers will have the support and resources to engage in self-reflection that ultimately strengthens and heals relationships with their children, we are ourselves must engage in self-reflection to bring our best selves to this complex work.

Self-reflection, and taking the time to explore who we are in relation to this challenging work, can actually help us build professional resilience and prevent burnout. We all have multiple social identities that intersect, and can have different meanings at different times. These identities can show up in our work in a variety of contexts, and can sometimes create feelings of connection AND disconnection to our co-workers, our clients, the work itself, etc. Reflecting on identity can help us build self-awareness and professional resilience.

We also all have biases and prejudices about people we interact with. Some biases are conscious and some are not, but they all have the potential to cause harm—even when we don't mean it. A crucial step in creating centers that are inclusive to people from many backgrounds is self-assessing our biases, and giving ourselves permission to learn and grow in this area.

Building Personal & Professional Resilience

We are at particular risk for vicarious trauma & burnout when:

- * The crisis of the people we support feels like it's "running the show" and dictates organizational culture.
- * Organizational culture doesn't create space to elevate hope and the rewards of the work.
- * Our workloads are unmanageable.
- * We are given excessive responsibility while being denied considerable power.
- * Our own trauma histories are triggered by the work and we don't have proper support.
- * The hierarchy in organizational culture isn't transparent or clearly stated.
- * Workplace expectations are not clearly stated.
- * Unchecked microaggressions occur in the workplace, and there is no supportive system to work through them in an emotionally safe manner.

"Our willingness to own and engage with our vulnerability determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose; the level to which we protect ourselves from being vulnerable is a measure of our fear and disconnection"
-Brene Brown, Daring Greatly

How to Use Your Self-Reflection Journal...

- * There are no right and wrong answers. You aren't being graded and no one will see your work, so we encourage you to be as honest with yourself as possible.
- * You do not need to complete the self-reflection exercises in order, though we do believe that focusing on self care and personal and professional resiliency before you think about the challenges of the work could be helpful.
- * Some of these reflection exercises are not simple or easy, though we believe they can help strengthen your work and your experience doing the work. Please feel free to skip questions and come back to them if they are overwhelming, and remember to take care of yourself as you explore these exercises and questions.
- * There are coloring pages throughout. Please use these to take a break, help you process and think, or to create calm and relaxation for yourself as needed.
- * Centers should consider creating dedicated time for staff to engage in self-reflection, and many of the pages can be used as discussion guides with other staff members as people feel comfortable.
- * Please use any creative medium to respond to the questions in this journal: writing, painting, drawing, doodling, etc.
- * We believe that self-reflection = self care. We hope that you will be kind to yourself as you engage in your exploration.

It is with deep gratitude for the work you do everyday to keep women and children safe that we are sharing this journal with you. We wish you luck as you embark on your exploration and journey to do more, do differently, and do better for the women, children, and men who come seeking an opportunity to heal.

-Beth McNamara, Jennifer Rose, and Erin Fairchild

"Without courage we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest." - Maya Angelou

Before you begin, clear your mind.

Fill this blank page with words or doodles,
and/or color the following page.



Identify the words that describe you, or how you would like to be thought of...

RISK-TAKER

WILD

Gifted

quiet

Creative

Crafty

Smart

Energizer

calm

DECENT

Funny

Comedic

MIGHTY

Talented

frugal

PASSIONATE

Careful

Amusing

CLEVER

Ethical

Dependable

BRAVE

compassionate

Shrewd

Fair

Endearing

Skilled

HONORABLE

Witty

introverted

Spectacular

welcoming

Spontaneous

EXCEPTIONAL

loveable

Enchanting

Capable

Strong

SERIOUS

outgoing

...add your own words!

Make a list of what you want in life right now, from the teeny-tiny to the **GIGANTIC...**

Who Are You?

What identities do you hold?

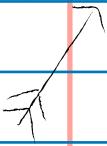
Who do you consider your people?

How do you think you are perceived by others?

Do you think you are perceived by others
differently based on who they are?



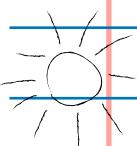
Write a short narrative about yourself...



What part of your narrative is most commonly known by others?



What part of your narrative is less known by others?

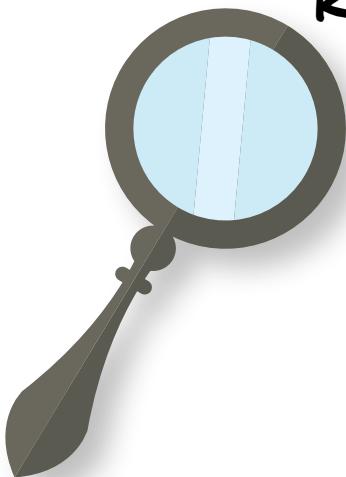




KEEP SOME
ROOM IN YOUR
HEART FOR THE
UNIMAGINABLE.

-Mary Oliver

Reflection Questions



I'm grateful for...

I'm appreciated for...

I don't feel appreciated when...

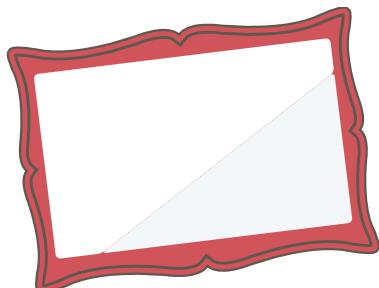
When I don't feel appreciated, I...

When you feel sad, is there something you consistently find yourself doing?

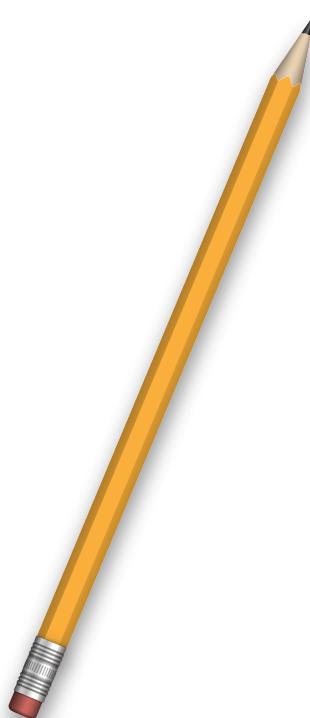
When you feel angry in a situation, is there something you consistently find yourself doing?

When you realize there is something you would like to change about yourself, how do you go about changing?

When you are engaging in a practice or activity that you really appreciate, how do you sustain it?



Draw a picture of the place or activity
that you identify as your "Happy Place."



Identify and define the qualities of your happy place.



In this work we can see or hear about violence and injustice every day. We can also see or hear about healing and love.

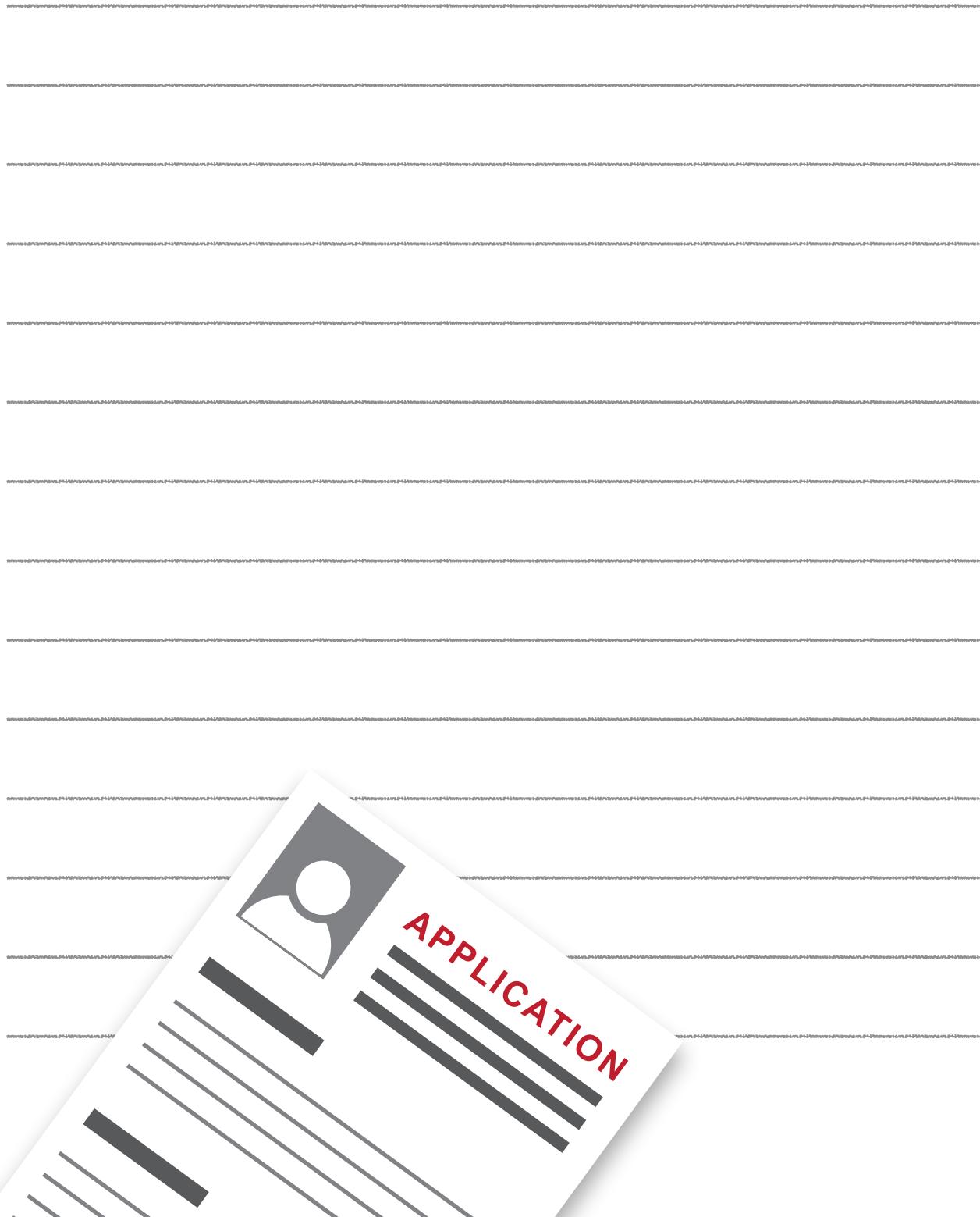
❤ Draw or write about what healing and love look like to you in this work.

❤ Draw or write about what forgiveness looks like to you in this work.

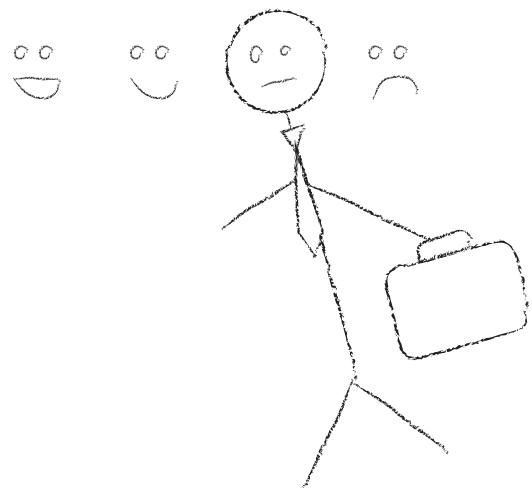
❤ Draw or write about what justice looks like to you in this work.

❤ How do you hold sadness, hurt and pain while also finding joy, happiness and hope?

Describe why you initially wanted your job.



Describe or draw a picture of how you feel about your job right now.



What inspires you to keep coming to work?

Describe when you feel stressed/distressed/challenged and/or not comfortable at work. How does your body feel?

Who do you look to for support?

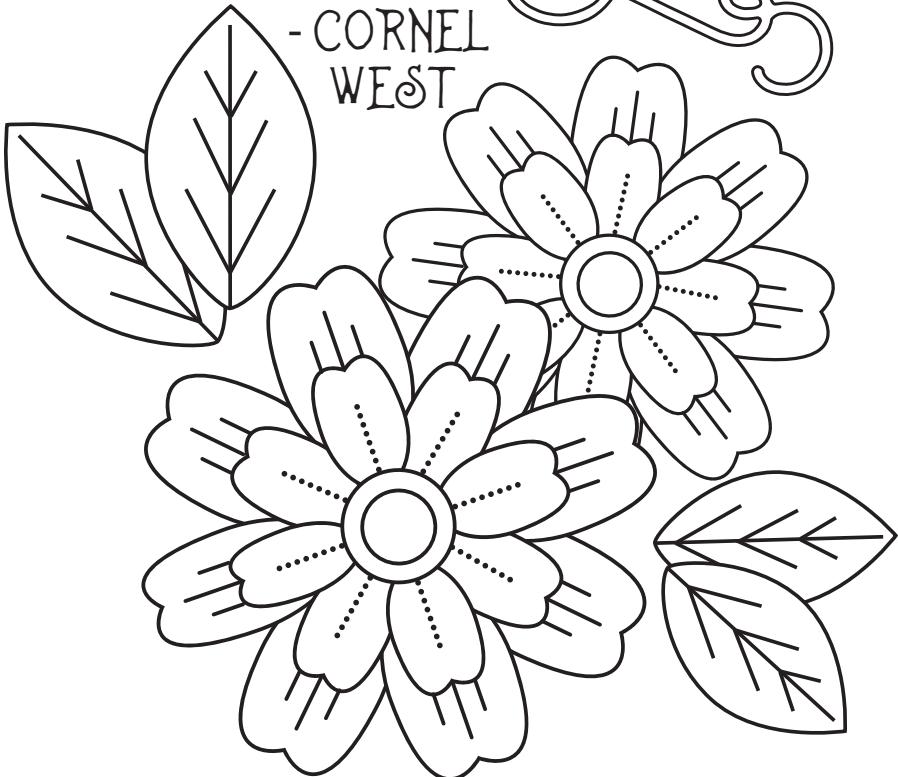
Describe three of the best and/or most rewarding moments you have had in your job.

-
-
-

Who do you celebrate these moments with?

JUSTICE
IS WHAT
LOVE
LOOKS LIKE
IN PUBLIC

- CORNEL
WEST



My Professional Resilience Implementation & Support Plan

What on-going, communal practices do you engage in that fill you up, confirm positive worldviews and beliefs that are important to you, contribute to mind/body/spirit wellness:

How many times per day can you engage in these practices?
Who can help you?

Are there any cultural events, practices, or rituals that you engage in that fill you up, confirm positive worldviews and beliefs that are important to you, contribute to mind/body/spirit wellness?

How many times per week or month can you engage in these practices? Who can help you?



What practices or habits can you engage in with co-workers (without needing permission or organizational change) that contribute to your wellness at work? Are these daily or weekly practices? Who can help you?

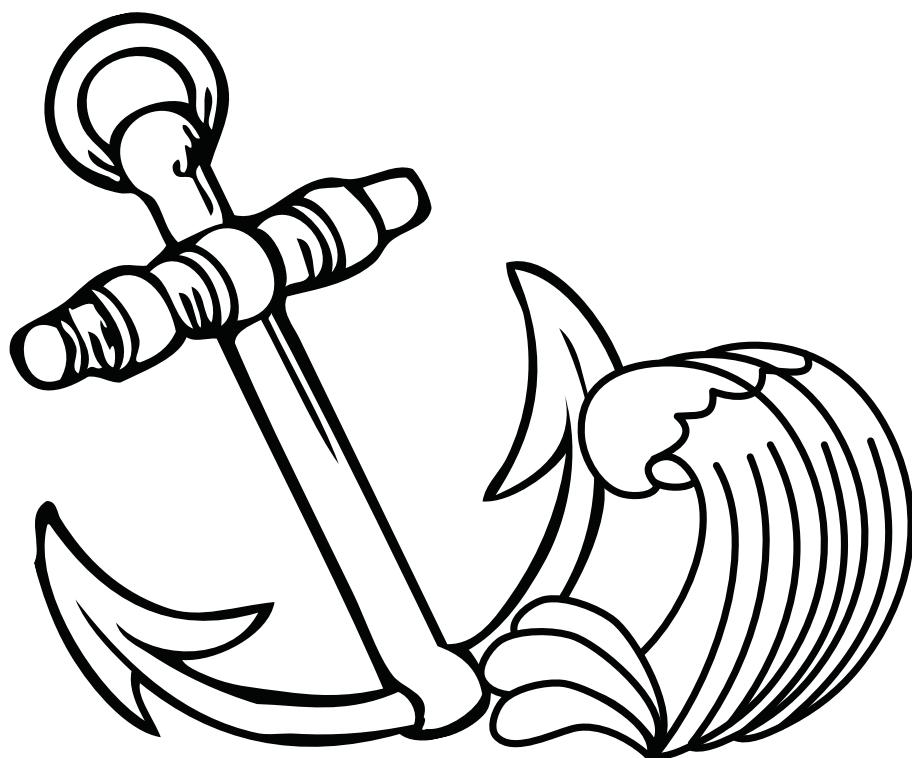
What do you need from leadership at work for wellness? Are you able to share these needs with leadership? Why or why not?

During a particularly stressful day, what can you do to maintain wellness and decrease stress symptoms for yourself? Who can help?

After a particularly stressful day, what can you do to re-center your own wellness when the day is over? Who can help?



Identify an anchor for why you do this work so you can come back to it when the work is overwhelming.



What I Need From My Team

AT WORK....

I feel accepted and included when...

On a good day at work, I feel....

I feel the most competent when...

What do you need from a workplace culture/team to feel supported?

You can't care for others if you have not cared for yourself.

Are there things that you think need to be changed for you to do your work more productively and positively?

If so, what are they (attitudes, relationships, physical environment, policies, etc.)?

What changes that need to be made are in your control?

What changes that need to be made involve other people?

What would your ideal staff meeting look and feel like?

How does your work team celebrate successes for both the center and families you work with?

Are there opportunities for professional resilience built into your work days?

Understanding Identity

What is my first memory about learning what gender is?

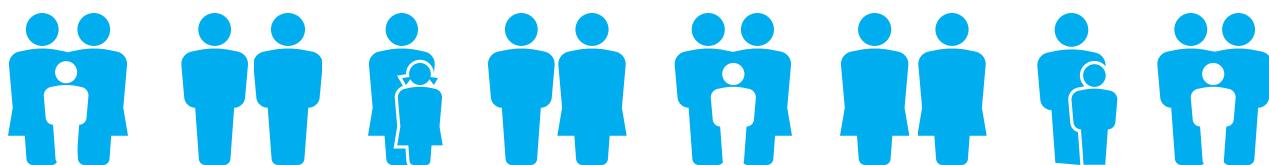
What is my first memory about learning what sexual orientation is?

What is my first memory of learning what race is?

In my culture, what position do elders hold
(in words and action)?

In my culture, what position do children hold
(in words and action)?

What do you think of the statement,
"children should be seen and not heard"?

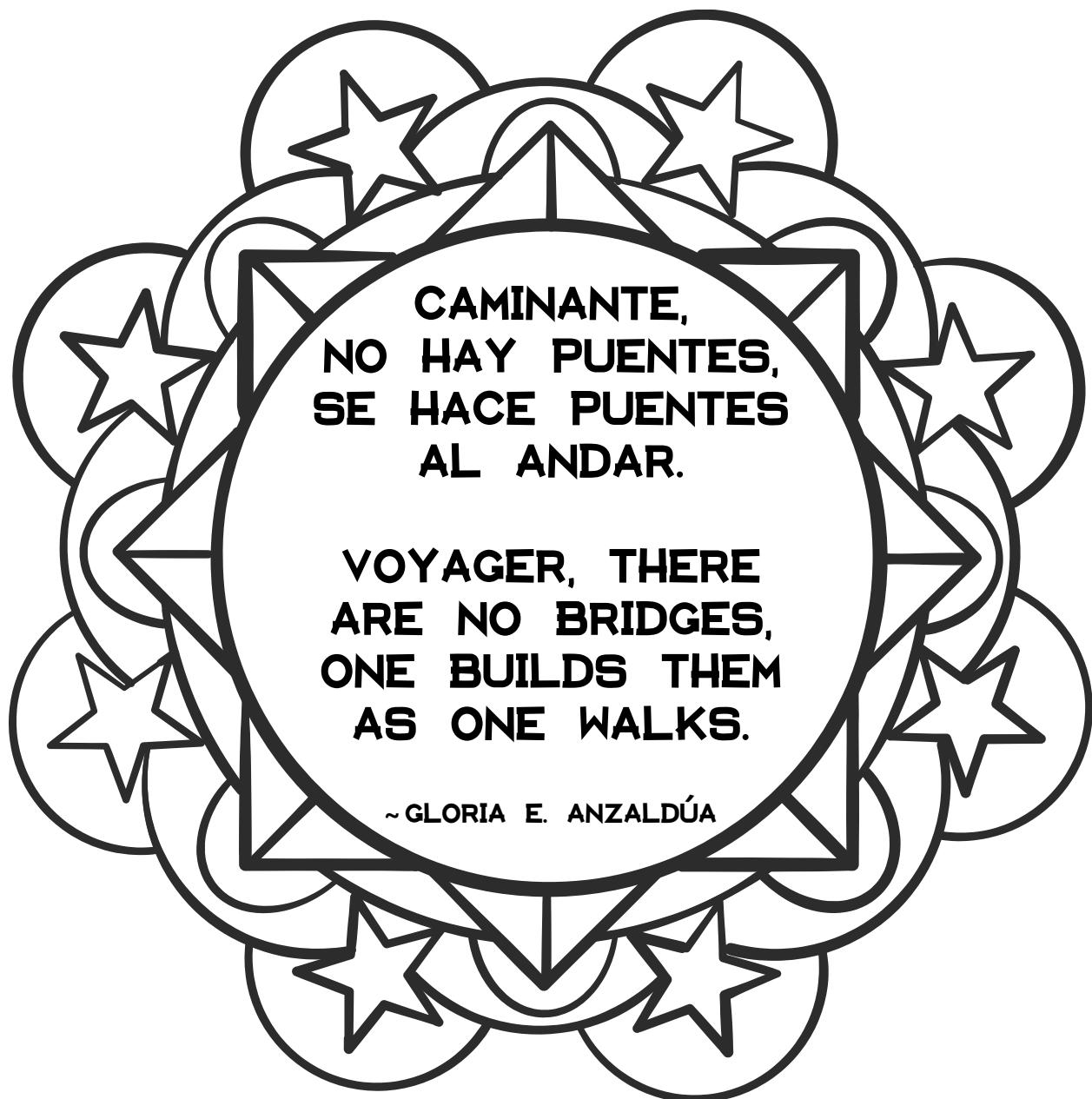


How do you think race and culture shape parenting?

How do you think gender shapes parenting?

What do you think is joyful about parenting (whether you have children or not)?

What do you think is hard about parenting (whether you have children or not)?



Think of a family you have worked with in the past and complete the following:

Write down three ways you are different from the father of this family:

1.

2.

3.

Write down three ways you are similar to the father of this family:

1.

2.

3.

Write down three ways you are different from the mother of this family:

1.

2.

3.

Write down three ways you are similar to the mother of this family:

1.

2.

3.

Mindfulness encourages being in the moment, understanding your thought process, developing awareness, and challenging assumptions.

Write down three ways the child(ren) are different from the children you are close to in your life:

1.

2.

3.

Write down three ways the child(ren) are similar to the children you are close to in your life:

1.

2.

3.



What comes to mind as you re-read each list?

What surprises you about these lists?

How do you think these perceived differences shape your work with families?



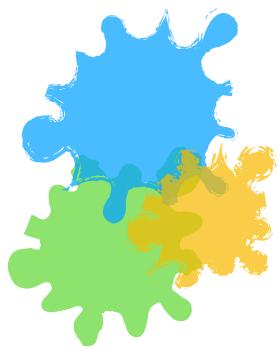
How do you think these perceived similarities shape your work with families?

Have you ever come to discover that what you perceived as either differences or similarities were incorrect?

What will you take away from this process?

Everyone you will ever meet knows something you don't—take time and be willing to learn from others.

doodle...draw...scribble...



My Guiding Values & Beliefs In This Work

Respond to the following statements...

Women who are abused by their partner are often...



Men who are violent to their intimate partner are often...



Moms with children in their care living with domestic violence should...



Men with children in their care living with domestic violence should...



Children who live in a home with violence are often...



Children experiencing domestic violence need....



All children deserve....



The perspectives and worldviews of children are...



The perspective and worldviews of teens are...



A child who doesn't follow directions is....

A child is disrespectful when....

A teen is disrespectful when....

Children and youth are difficult to be around when....

Children are respectful when...

Teens are respectful when...

The first word that comes to mind when I think of working with children and youth is:

Children and youth are most fun to be around when....

In order to heal from trauma, a child needs...

Race and culture impact childhood in these ways...

For children, culture has the power to...

For children, community has the power to...



Race and culture impact parenting in these ways...

For parents, culture has the power to...

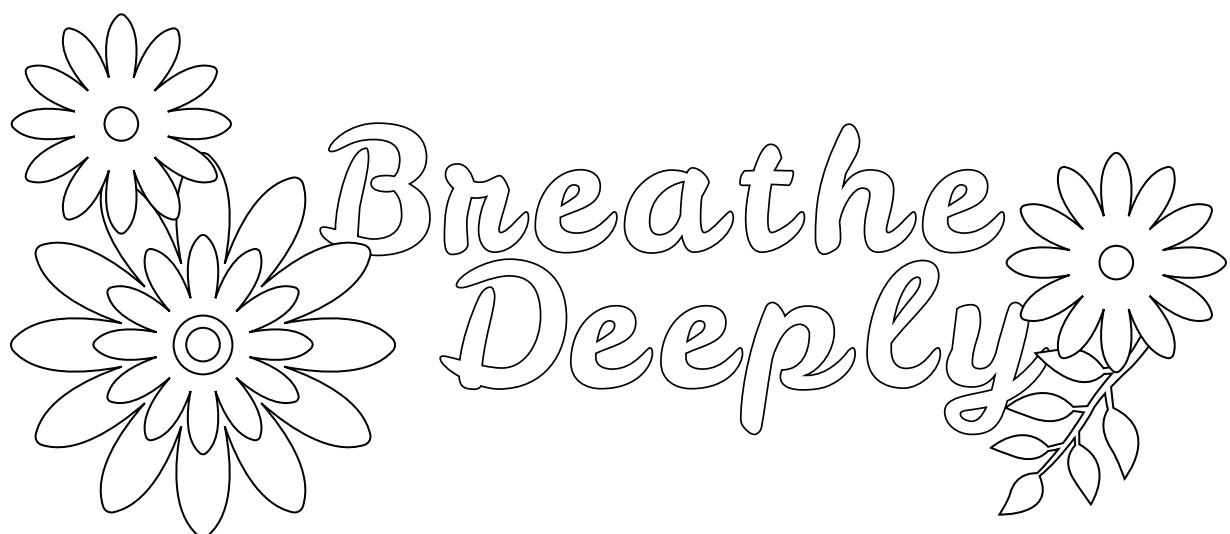
For parents, community has the power to...

Remind yourself to pause and be aware of what is going on for ourselves and others around us.

Parents with infants should...

Parents with small children should...

Parents with teenagers should...



Education is not
the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire.
~William Butler Yeats



What are your beliefs about the role of a supervised visitation program in supporting healing and change for women, children, and men who have experienced domestic violence?

What are your beliefs about the capacity for people who use violence to change?

What are your beliefs about the role of culture, community, and family in supporting individuals and families who have experienced domestic violence?

Parents who are separated from their children should...

Parents who don't pay attention to their children are...

A parent who tells their child they are stupid is...

A parent who yells at their child is...

A parent who says to their youngest child "why can't you be more like your brother?" is....

A parent who says to their six-year old child who is crying, "Look at what a crybaby you are" is...

Reflecting upon your responses, how do you think these beliefs impact your work with...

Women

Children

Men

Does anything stick out to you about your responses? What are the themes or values that emerge?



Are these themes and values in line with how you see yourself?

Yes

No

Are these themes and values in line with how you want others to see you?

Yes

No

Why or why not?

Explore your assumptions & judgements about parents and children who are ordered to supervised visitation.

Describe a time you felt judgmental about a family.

What did you think?

What did you feel?

How did you manage your response?

What would be helpful to you to when your judgements surface and you need to be present and supportive to a parent and/or child?

Identify at least three strategies you can put in place when you feel stressed/challenged.

1

2

3

How will you support each strategy?



Take a peek back at your responses so far. What are three specific things you want to focus on, change or support doing?

-
-
-

How will you make these things happen?

How will you know it's working?

Who can support you?

In closing, we would like you to think about bringing your whole hearted self to this work.

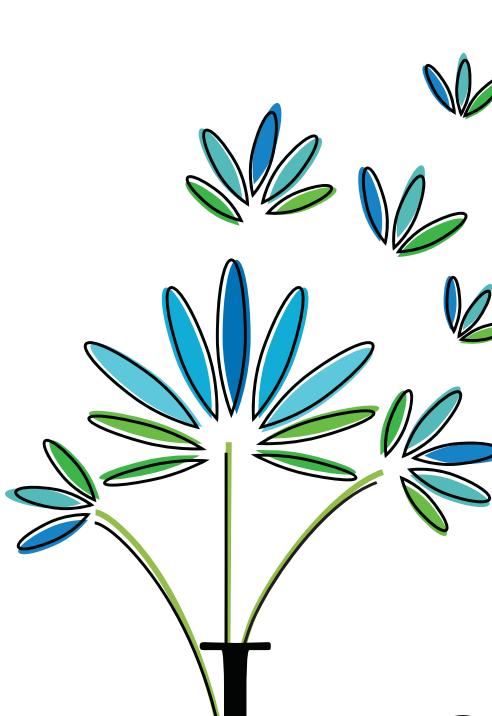
Your Whole-hearted Self

Using the following blank page, create an image that represents your heart. Feel free to use other craft supplies available to you to add to your heart design.

Now imagine/describe how your heart is connected to you, your people, your culture, your work, your whole self. Cut out this heart and consider hanging it at your desk or work space if you feel comfortable.

Keep your whole-hearted self ever present as we do our work together.

WORK TO PRESERVE
PERSONAL LONGEVITY AND
HAPPINESS, RELATIONSHIPS,
AND YOUR CAREER.



Inspire

Action for Social Change

Inspire Action for Social Change is a nonprofit organization that works to create change and improved opportunities for women and children experiencing barriers to safety as a result of domestic and sexual violence. We do this through customized trainings and individualized support designed to meet the unique needs of organizations, communities, and institutions working to end violence against women.

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